

- Systemic Teaching about Christian Life -

# Reaching Forward to Those Things Which Are Ahead

Series:  
New Creation in Christ

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## General Considerations about Using This Material:

The subject presented in this material aims to provide support to knowledge and an in-depth study of the Bible and the Christian life.

Based on the understanding that in the Christian Bible is contained the consolidation of fundamental and formal records of the writings inspired by God for humanity and each person of it, the contents exposed in this material are not intended to add, ever, anything to the Bible, nor ever remove anything from it. The aim through this subject is to contribute to the exploration of what already was registered and passed on to us over thousands of years of history by the One Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

The contents presented on the next pages, of course, intend to address just a portion of the essential themes of life displayed with such great amplitude in the Bible. On the other hand, however, this subject is presented in a grouped, colligated, organized and systematized manner with the objective to serve as an aid to knowledge and understanding of the Christian life without losing sight of the main aspects of it.

*Ecclesiastes 12: 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.*

Related words put together, as told in the biblical text above, serve as goads and nails for fixing supports and help for the life of people that hear and receive them. Therefore, one objective of this material is to study and seek a broader understanding of the truths handed down to us by the Unique Pastor and God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

We would still like to suggest that the reading and studying of this material also should always be accompanied by prudence and proper investigation, believing that this is a very healthy habit to be practiced toward any material presented to a person.

The act of acceptance, rejection, or “retaining what is good,” is a personal and individual attribute given to those who receive the wisdom from God and which should be exercised or used by them toward all that comes into their hands.

*Proverbs 8: 12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion.*

*Acts 17: 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.*

*Proverbs 16: 1 The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.*

*2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits.*

*3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established.*

More details about these initial considerations are posted at [www.zoominchristianlife.org](http://www.zoominchristianlife.org).

Ronald Gortz and Irmelin Gortz, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ!

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*Revelation 21: 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."  
6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

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*1Timothy 2: 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,  
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

More details about these initial considerations are posted at [www.zoominchristianlife.org](http://www.zoominchristianlife.org).

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## **C1. Together with the Call to Forget those Things Which Are Behind, the Christian Is Also Called to Advance to the New**

This new material is a continuation of the themes about The New Creature in Christ and Forgetting Those Things Which Are Behind, and aims to address some real or practical positions that God desires to be adopted by those who have come to experience the new condition of life granted to them through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first subject of the present series on the New Creature in Christ focuses on some considerations about how the condition of the new creation is given to a person, what are some principal and essential characteristics of the new creature, as well as on various aspects of human life that cannot be combined with the new position that is given to those who receive Christ Jesus in the heart as the Lord and Savior of their lives.

Already in the second subject, associated with the theme Forgetting Those Things Which Are Behind, the approach is focused more on practical actions regarding what a person born again in Christ is called to leave behind, to stop to be involved with, or even to forget. Remembering, yet, that the practice of “*forgetting*” does not necessarily mean ceasing to have knowledge about the aspects which are behind, but, rather, not returning to them and never seeing them again as a possible useful or beneficial alternative of life.

On the other hand, however, **a new condition of life cannot be limited by forgetting those things which are behind, for if it were so, it actually would not be an offer of a newness of life.**

Therefore, Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ, seeks to awaken Christians, through various letters, about the importance of them to be attentive to the different angles of the new life granted to them in Christ Jesus, as well as he seeks to do so also by the narrative of the testimony of his conduct of life in the face of what was offered him by the grace of God. Through various writings, Paul shows us which are the two great groups of appropriate actions that Christians are called to practice when they come to receive the condition of a new creature in the Lord, as exemplified in the text below:

- Philippians 3: 4 **Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:***  
*5 **circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;***  
*6 **concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.***  
*7 **But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.***  
*8 **Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ***  
*9 **and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;***

- 10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,*  
 11 *if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*  
 12 *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*  
 13 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.*  
 14 *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*  
 15 *Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.*  
 16 *Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.*

Through the above mentioned text, and as one of the apostles or envoys of the Lord Jesus to announce the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, Paul, after knowing Christ as the Lord of his life, teaches us that he came to have a central purpose in his heart, showing us what this purpose was by declaring that “***one thing I do,***” which in turn is: “***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***”

Nevertheless, to do this “*one thing,*” that is, to pursue the goal that is proposed to each Christian, as already mentioned in the subjects referred to in this introduction, Paul practiced two main sets of actions jointly, namely:

- ⇒ 1<sup>st</sup>) ***Forgetting those things which are behind;***
- +
- ⇒ 2<sup>nd</sup>) ***Reaching forward to those things which are ahead.***

Through his particular testimony of the actions that he practiced in following the Lord Jesus Christ and the new life granted to him by God, Paul shows us that he willingly and deliberately “*forgot those things which are behind,*” but that he as well “*was dedicated to reaching forward to the things that were ahead of him.*”

To practice the first large group of actions toward the new goal of life of those who are in Christ, which are associated with the practice of forgetting those things which are behind, it is essential for a Christian not to remain associated with the inappropriate aspects that are behind or which before the eyes of the Lord express no value or are antiquated. However, it is equally essential to practice the second large group of actions towards the new target of life, the group of attitudes that are relative to advancing to what is ahead of the Christian, because it is also to enjoy the new that a person is called to abandon the things which are behind.

**So, the purpose of this new material is to emphasize the crucial importance that there is for the life of a Christian by indeed taking a position, attitude, or posture, voluntary and continuous, of also reaching forward to what God puts before him or her after being made new in Christ Jesus and new according to the heavenly kingdom.**

In life in general, and also in the Christian life, there is often the possibility that people may come to think that some things may happen automatically as a result of others, but this is not the case all the time, and this may not always occur in this way even regarding the growth in the condition of a new creature in Christ.

Let us look at a very simple example: Let us say a mother asks her son to change the old water from a jar, glass, or bottle for new or fresh water.

For the son to perform the task requested by his mother, the first action he needs to do is to remove all the old water from the container to later be able to say that a real water exchange has been made.

If, however, the son does not take all the old water out of the container and even so adds the new water to make the recipient full, he does not really perform what he has been asked to do. By doing so, the son just mixed the old water with the new one, and the result presented by it is not a container with fresh or new water indeed.

On the other hand, if the son takes out all the old water and brings the empty recipient to the mother, he also did not change the water, he just took the old water from the container.

In the above example, for the son to complete the task requested by his mother, he needs to take out the old water, an action that could resemble the forgetting of the things which are behind, but he also needs to put the new water in the container, which could be an action comparable to an attitude of indeed reaching forwards to the new.

Although the mother has made a single request to her son, this request requires more than one action to be performed, which in the latter sense can also happen similarly in the life of a person who comes to be constituted as a new creature in the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ calls all people to be indeed new creatures in Him. However, it is possible for a person to aspire to the condition of a new creation but, at the same time, still like to keep oneself associated with many parts of the old nature, thus insisting on the attempt to make a combination of the two.

Although the Lord Jesus warned people that they should not try to put new wine into old wineskins and should not try to put the leaven of the things which are behind in the new condition granted to them by the grace of God, there are people who insist on trying to combine what is not appropriate to be mixed, thus failing to take advantage of the new life that God wants to grant them, for the newness of life offered by the Lord really does not refer to a mixture of old and new wine, or vice versa.

On the other hand, a person may pay so much attention to the objective of forgetting the old that one may also be held to the point of not paying attention to the aspects of the novelty of life and to the necessity of advancing in fact to the new that is proposed to him or her in Christ Jesus.

Therefore, in his testimony, **Paul announced the joint practice of two attitudes or two sets of actions according to the light and wisdom that the Lord was granting him. He practiced the forgetting of the things that God was showing him as being those which are behind, but, at the same time, he also kept advancing to the new aspects that the Lord was revealing to him in his life in Christ.**



**The practice of “forgetting those things which are behind,” as soon as a Christian becomes aware of them, (+) the practice of “reaching forward to the things which are ahead of a Christian according to the will of the Lord” result in a real advancing to the goal proposed by God in Christ Jesus to the one who has already experienced the new birth in the Lord.**

We understand that it still is important to be highlighted here, that **it is also by the increasing knowledge and access to the novelty of life in the Lord that even several things which are behind become more evidenced as such and more widely recognized as having this characteristic or as being old or obsolete things in the eyes of God.**

There are many examples in the Word of God that give instructions on how to stand in opposition to what is contrary to the Lord's will and which are also accompanied by instructions on the practice of moving forward to what conforms with the will of God, of which we exemplify some below:

- ⇒ 1) Do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, **but** be filled with the Spirit;
- ⇒ 2) Put off the old man, **but** put on the new man;
- ⇒ 3) Do not walk in darkness, **but** walk as children of light;
- ⇒ 4) Flee from the love of money and the desire of becoming rich, **but** pursue the life that is according to godliness, gentleness, and the righteousness and love of God.

Thus, some main points that we aim to highlight by the present subject is that:

- ⇒ 1) **The practice alone of forgetting those things that are behind is no guarantee of a new life;**
- ⇒ 2) **The new life in the Lord also becomes manifested when the novelty that is offered in it is indeed received, welcomed, and practiced;**
- ⇒ 3) **The novelty of life in the Lord is experienced and established in a more firm and growing way in the life of a Christian also when this newness of life, as a matter of fact, is received and lived by him or her.**

As mentioned in the example of the son who was given the task of changing the water, it is notorious that removing the old is part of the process to be filled with the new, but the abundance of the new life is not limited only to the removal or to the practice of forgetting the things which are behind.

**A person becoming able of departing from those things which are behind and forgetting them is an integral part of the new life in Christ, but this is far from being all that is offered by God to the individual who becomes a new creature in the Lord.**

**The offer of a newness of life granted by God is not related to leading a person into an emptiness of life, into a state of a life vacuum, to a place where nothing happens, or where those things which are behind are removed without a real addition of new aspects.**



**The offer of life according to the new creature granted by God is an offer that indeed gives novelty of life in substitution of an old or outdated model of life and which, therefore, has no reasonable or useful purpose.**

The Lord Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh into the world and died on the cross of Calvary to steal, cause damage, or annihilate the hope of life of human beings; instead, as the Life-giving Spirit, He came to give abundant life and not just a little of life.

*John 10: 9 **I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.***

*10 **The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.***

Paul understood that he was not called by God only to forget the things which are behind, however grateful it was to be delivered from what was not favorable to him. Paul also wanted the newness of life that God had for him and for which Christ died on the cross so that it could be offered to him, adopting, therefore, a voluntary, steady, and objective posture of reaching forward to that for which he was made free or redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Philippians 3: 12 (b) ... **I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.***

## **C2. The Practical Need of the Christian Moving Forward to That Which Is Set Ahead of Him by the Lord**

*Philippians 3: 13 **Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.***  
*14 **I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

In the world or natural life in general, many things are not used or enjoyed by people because the access to them is very difficult or complicated.

Nevertheless, not always the non-use of something is associated with the impossibility or difficulty of access to some particular aspect. There are many things that are widely accessible to humans, but which are just not used because people do not know about them or are not willing to access them.

And it seems to us that also the things that were close were those to which Paul was referring to in the text above. He was not referring just to something that was far or unavailable for access, but he also was mentioning what was “*in front*” or “*closely ahead*” of him.

Through his testimony, Paul exposes to us the fact that there are things that can be close to people, but which are only accessed if people move toward them or take practical actions to use them or associate with them.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ, God has already made provision for the forgiveness of the sins of all human beings and has already made the provision that can save all people. However, the fact that salvation has been made to reach all human beings does not mean that it will be imposed on all. The fact that salvation has been provided by the grace of God to everyone does not imply that God obligates all people to receive it.

God did indeed pay off the debt of sin of all people, and God did indeed pay the price for the salvation of every person. This act in reference is already done, it can never be undone, and nothing in the present or eternity can be added or subtracted from this divine work for the benefit of humankind.

Regarding the provision for the forgiveness of sin, what is done is done, it is finished in full, as announced, for example, in the following texts:

*John 19: 30 **So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.***

*Hebrews 10: 12 **But this Man (Jesus), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.***

*1 John 2: 1 **My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.***

***2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.***

The Lord Jesus Christ made the unique, full, perfect, or complete sacrifice, and then He was seated by God at His right hand as the Eternal King of Righteousness and Peace, with nothing more to be added to the sacrifice itself.

Nothing in Heaven nor on Earth can bring the slightest change in the work of Christ Jesus performed on the cross of Calvary once and forever in favor of every human being of all generations, nations, peoples, races, tribes, and languages.

Nevertheless, even the salvation being so great or wide, God presents the salvation provided from heaven to people as a free and generous offer, letting people decide whether they want to accept it and receive it in their lives or if they prefer to reject it.

The Gospel of Salvation is addressed to every person, to every human being. However, since this salvation and all that accompanies it is equivalent to an offer, a gift, a present from God, it needs to be accepted by the recipient as a gift to become a part of the one who receives it, for a gift freely offered to someone is not imposed to be received.

Even on the natural level, it is often the case that parents give gifts to their children who do not indeed use what they received, and even forget what was given to them.

For children to use the gifts received freely from their parents, they need to “reach forward” to what has been put before them and need to take action to access and interact with what has been given to them.

When faced with the fact that Christ had placed a new condition of life before Him and before all people in the world, Paul also recognized that this freely available offer needed to be accepted, as well as being accessed and used in fact.

As he moved in a practical way toward what the Lord offered him, Paul gave a clear demonstration that he did not despise the gift that had been placed before him. Paul did not despise what Christ had conquered for him on the cross of Calvary, and therefore he did not actively or passively reject what the Lord offered him, that is, he did not abstain from using what was already available to him in Christ.

Paul exalted the work of the Perfect Lamb, Whose body was broken for him and Whose precious blood was shed on the cross of Calvary in favor of his life, acknowledging Christ and accepting Him in his heart as his Lord, but also for reaching forward to actually live and walk in accordance with what was being proposed and made available to him in God.

Paul understood that the fact that God was offering eternal salvation through divine grace and under the characteristic of a free gift in no way denigrated the Lord's offer, on the contrary, it greatly exalted the goodness of the Lord and made evident how much this gift of God should be received and indeed accessed intensely, as shown in some more texts below:

***2 Corinthians 6: 1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.***

***2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.***

- Hebrews 2: 1* **Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.**
- 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,**
- 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.**

*Romans 6: 23* **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

When Paul said that he was advancing to what was ahead of him, he was making a reference that he indeed did dispose himself and acted objectively and practically to meet what God had made possible for him to attain, and he did it because he was reaching forward to live and walk according to what he could already experience in his life by the grace of Christ.

How many times in the world are not manifested the situations in which people cry out to God for deliverance or salvation, but then indirectly they despise or take it in vain when God grants it in such a way where living and walking according to the novelty of life also depends on people reaching forward to it?

Not advancing to what is offered by God is also a form of rejection, where apathy or a mere passive contempt may turn out to be even worse than an active opposing position.

- Revelation 3: 15* ***I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.***
- 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.**
- 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing;' and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.**
- 

The one who thinks that one does not need the novelty of the life offered by God in Christ Jesus, showing it by neglecting the call to advance to what has been offered him or her in the Lord, also disregards the offer of God and may come to despise it in a way no less critical than the one who actively rejects it.

*Luke 23: 11* **Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.**

*Acts 13: 32* **And we declare to you glad tidings, that promise which was made to the fathers.**



- 33 **God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’**
- 34 **And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’**
- 35 **Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’**
- 36 **For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption;**
- 37 **but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.**
- 38 **Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins;**
- 39 **and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.**
- 40 **Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:**
- 41 **Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.**

*Romans 1: 28* **And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.**

*Romans 2: 4* **Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**

**If not practicing the attitude of “forgetting the things which are behind” may come to lead a Christian to return to the position of an old wineskin, the attitude of “not advancing to what God puts ahead of a Christian” also may come to be a great loss for him or her.**

Now, if the new life in Christ can only be lived by the instruction and power granted by Christ, not advancing to an appropriate relationship with these gifts of the Lord is also an option to continue to live according to the carnal man or in conformity with the strength, direction, and longings of the soul and the flesh, even though a person verbally may declare not to reject Christ.

**As for experiencing the life according to the new creation and growing in it, there is no way to leave those things which are behind without engaging in practical attitudes of reaching forward to live and walk in the path of the newness of life that God grants.**

In other words, **not living and walking in the novelty of life offered by God, in a way, is also a manner of staying in the old, even if a person comes to leave or forget some things which are behind.**

A person may leave many things behind, but if one does not really advance to the point of being led by the Lord, one has not indeed left the

**walking according to the flesh or walking according to the ancient models of the natural man.**

Here we recall again that one of the central points of what Paul left behind in his life was:

*Philippians 3: 4(a) + 7(b) ... though I also might have confidence in the flesh, ... these I have counted loss for Christ.*

*8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

Thus, Paul did not leave the confidence in the flesh in order not to trust anything else or to become a person devoid of trust. Paul left his confidence in the flesh, but continually also advanced to trust in Christ and to trust in the words and directions of life instructed to him by the Lord, which expresses one of the principal purposes of the Lord's redemptive work, as also presented to us by Peter in the following text:

*1 Peter 1: 17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;*

*18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,*

*19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

*20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*

*21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are (or might be) in God.*

Trying to practice the attitude of forgetting those things which are behind, but not reaching forward to a life of faith in Christ, is still to continue not trusting in the Lord, remembering that trust in God is the crucial work for which the Lord calls the people so that they may receive salvation in order to live and walk in consonance with the eternal grace offered from the heavenly kingdom. (What comes to be faith is a topic more widely discussed in the subject on the Gospel of the Promise and on the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, and in the latter, the theme is more specifically addressed in the chapter on Christ being the Author and Finisher of the Faith of the Christians).

*John 6: 28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"*

*29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."*

*Romans 1: 17* ***For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."***

*Hebrews 11: 6* ***But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

The position actively opposed to God or to stay in the state of just not advancing to trust in the Lord and His words, instructions, guidance, and strength are similarly attitudes of unbelief toward God, for trusting in Jesus Christ and reaching forward to live and walk according to eternal life, granted to those who have become new creatures in the Lord, refer both to aspects that go hand in hand.

Although eternal salvation is granted by God through His grace to those who open the heart to receive it, the attitude of advancing in faith in God, in the newness of life offered by the Lord, and in knowing more the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is an aspect that cooperates for a person to remain firm and grow in what is offered to him or her in the Lord, for this posture also expresses one of the essential points to which a person is called in his or her new condition in the Lord.

*John 3: 16* ***For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.***

*17* ***For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.***

*John 17: 3* ***And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.***

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We understand it to be relevant to point out here again, that a human being is alienated from the condition of experiencing God's salvation by remaining in a position of not believing and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God and sent by the Heavenly Father to save him or her, and not just for leaving some things which are behind or stopping to believing in some concepts, practices, or religions that are opposed to the salvation by the grace of the Lord.

Leaving or forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forward to what God offers in Christ Jesus, are two distinct attitudes with the same purpose, but not necessarily people practice both. Even if they stop to follow some aspects which are behind by the fact that they have understood that there are works in the world that no longer make sense in the light of the work of God in Christ Jesus on the cross of Calvary, there are several people who do not advance to the position of depositing their trust in the Lord.

Although the position of stopping to believe in what cannot save a person is part of the actions for the salvation offered by the Lord, as, for instance, not believing in the attempts to obtain salvation by the works of the law of Moses or similar to it, it is not just the practice of leaving the things which are behind that expresses the principal action in favor of receiving the salvation. The main actions by which a person receives eternal life from God and is sustained in it are the practices of believing in Christ Jesus, receiving Him as Lord in one's life, and remaining believing or trusting in Him.

*John 1: 12 **But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:**  
13 **who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.***

*Hebrews 10: 37 **For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.**  
38 **Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.**  
39 **But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.***

As much as forgetting the things which are behind, a Christian should also seek to understand more specifically what it means “reaching forward to those things which are ahead” so that he or she may practice more accurately the attitude of advancing toward what is offered by God for the new living and walking in Christ.

Therefore, according to the considerations associated with Strong's Greek lexicon in the Online Bible, we find that the concept related to the expression “reaching forward to” encompasses:

- 1) *To reach forth to;*
- 2) *To stretch out to or towards;*
- 3) *To stretch (one's self) forward to.*

When Paul describes that he was advancing to what was ahead of him, he gives us his personal testimony that he stretched himself out toward what was put before him, that is, he inclined himself favorably, stretched out, or stepped forward to reach and to make use of what was offered to him as a novelty of life, repeatedly declaring to Christians that they are also called to adopt the same position or attitude, as described by another example below:

*Romans 6: 12 **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.**  
13 **And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**  
14 **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.***



- 15 ***What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!***
- 16 ***Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?***
- 17 ***But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.***
- 18 ***And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.***
- 19 ***I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.***

*Romans 8: 6 **For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.***

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One of the issues in focus in the previous paragraphs, and as well in the last text exposed above, is the fact that in a person's life there is not a possibility of him or her to be inclined to anything. Although so many would like this to be possible, in the life of an individual, there is not a state of neutrality regarding some essential matters of life, a long-term position of staying "sitting on the fence," or the condition of not being inclined to one side or the other.

*Matthew 12: 30 **He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.***

**If a person does not advance to the newness of life that God offers to him or her or places before him or her, one ends up cooperating in the maintenance of the things which are behind, as much as one intends to forget what is behind.**

**If an individual does not advance to place his or her trust in God, one continues, in one way or another, relying on the creation or one's own thoughts instead of trusting in the Creator of the heavens and the Earth, remembering that:**

*Jeremiah 17: 5 **Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD."***

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7 ***"Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD.***

8 ***For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit."***

Likewise a tree that has or does not actually have access to water, since there is no neutral state in this sense, or just as light and darkness have no communion, so it may also happen about the reaching forward to the new that is offered in Christ, where a person, by not actually extending oneself to the offered newness of life, also deprives oneself of several of its gifts.

In his testimony, Paul states that he actively practiced “forgetting the things which are behind,” but also that he, at the same time, always sought to keep practicing the “reaching forward to the things that were ahead in the Lord.”

**When a person hears the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ and advances in faith in the direction pointed out by Him, the Lord grants this person freedom to be able to leave and forget the things which are behind. However, the granting of this freedom is also accompanied by the purpose that this person may advance from faith to faith in the Lord in order to grow even more in the freedom of Christ and so that one may be more and more grounded and strengthened in God.**

Some people may even be very busy to know all that God has to offer them, but despite that not advancing in fact to those that God has already made available to them.

Many people may stop themselves from enjoying the newness of life in God by not stretching out, inclining, and advancing in a practical way to what is already available to them in the Lord and in the power of the Spirit of God, reminding further that the Gospel of God is also the Gospel of the Power of God.

*1 Thessalonians 1: 5 **For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.***

*1 Corinthians 1: 24 **But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.***

*2 Timothy 1: 7 **For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.***

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One of the basic aspects of the new life in Christ has, for instance, the fellowship with Christ as an essential principle. However, many Christians simply do not separate a proper time in their lives to come in prayer and humility to Christ to ask Him to manifest Himself to them. Many people may even mention and know that they are called to a living relationship with the Lord, and may even refer to some techniques they have heard about how to practice fellowship or a sort of so-called “devotional with God,” but who, in fact, do not perform the simple act of quieting before the Lord or personally addressing themselves to Christ by means of a prayer which indeed comes from their heart, thus demonstrating that they are not indeed reaching forward to the newness of life offered to them in the Gospel.

God has sent Christ that we may be reconciled with the Heavenly Father, with His Beloved Son, and with the Holy Spirit, but once the new and living way is already made available, it is necessary to move forward and come to God in faith, in prayer, and to enjoy this reconciliation that is already available before us.

*Hebrews 10: 19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,*  
*20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh,*  
*21 and having a High Priest over the house of God,*  
*22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*  
*23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

*Hebrews 4: 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*  
*16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

*2 Corinthians 5: 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*

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Reaching forward to what God has already set ahead of us, in many parts of it, is very simple and requires only a disposition and practical action in actually doing it, even though it may at first appear that it will not work.

**When a person reaches forward to what is ahead of him or her in the Lord, God continues to reveal or add more and more aspects to his or her new life, but as long as the person does not advance to that which is ahead, one imposes limits on oneself that abstain him or her from experiencing many aspects of what is already available by the divine grace.**

A person who does not take the attitude of advancing to that which is already available to him or her resembles the situation in which, without climbing the first stairs of a ladder, an individual intends but cannot directly climb the higher steps.

Yet another example that perhaps could be considered to understand the joint action of forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to the new, would be the situation in which a person is holding on to something that sustains him or her so that one does not fall from a great height, but whose attachment, on the other hand, also prevents him or her from being able to grab to another aspect offered to him or her as a real salvation.

In the last example, for the person not to fall from the high one finds oneself, there is a need for two almost simultaneous actions to achieve the desired salvation, namely:

- ⇒ 1) Withdraw from the old or give up on that in which one still deposits his or her trust, but which cannot indeed save;
- ⇒ 2) Cling to the new or surrender in confidence to it, which can both sustain during the transition from leaving the old and can save to a safe place in which one can live and walk as redeemed.

If a person is in danger and needs to make the transition from detaching oneself from something to attach to another that is new, he or she must effectively take the two steps.

In describing his testimony, Paul first declares that he has detached himself from **“having confidence in the flesh,”** for he understood, by the Spirit of the Lord, that this kind of life does not harmonize with the condition of life of the new creature.

Nevertheless, Paul did not leave the confidence in his flesh to become a person without hope and faith, but together with letting behind the confidence in his flesh, he as well stepped forward to trust in God to become full of faith, hope, and love of the Lord.

Paul understood that he had not been called to be in God to divide his trust by directing one part of it to himself and another to God. He did not choose a double or dubious behavior of relying on himself in what he thought he was strong, as an attachment to some remnants of what he had left behind, and, on the other hand, of trusting in God regarding the aspects in which he thought of himself being weak. Paul knew that by doing so, he would have one foot on a foundation and the other on another, situation by which he surely would not subsist at the end.

Paul did not stick to the antiquated concept that part of the flesh is trustworthy. He quoted that nothing good had been dwelling in his flesh, but even though he did not see himself in despair, for he redirected his hope toward the Lord, as was pertinent to the faith according to his new condition in Christ.

By actively choosing to advance to the things which are ahead, Paul did not try to “park” his life in an emptiness of trust. Paul did not try to give up the confidence in the flesh, and the law that he previously followed, with the goal of casting himself into some vacuum of faith, to some idea of nothingness, even because this possibility does fit in the eyes of God, before Whom a person is not called to serve two masters.

**“Confidence in the flesh” and “not trusting in God” are both, and in summary, very similar attitudes regarding the contempt for the trust in the Lord, where each of these attitudes is only a variant of incredulity or unbelief, just presented with distinct details and names.**

**Unbelief toward God, even if it is practiced passively or subtly, remains unbelief, and it should always be rejected no matter by which form or appearance it is presented.**

*Mark 16: 14 **Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.***



*Hebrews 3: 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*  
 13 *but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*  
 14 *For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.*

*Romans 4: 18 Abraham, who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be."*  
 19 *And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.*  
 20 *He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,*  
 21 *and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.*  
 22 *And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

Paul chose to move forward with practical steps of trust in God and was not limited only to the actions of abandoning the service to the law of Moses, the confidence he had in himself, his titles, and the natural aspects that the world was proposing to him.

Paul advanced or went further in God, inclining himself in a real way to learn to live dependent on God or through confidence in the Lord. He "stretched out" to advance to the point where "the just lives by faith in God."

And finally, in this chapter, we would like to highlight that the choice for this practical life of trust in God was not limited to just one specific moment in Paul's life, but it was a choice that was renewed and strengthened with perseverance every new day.

In part, Paul's trust in the Lord was manifested when he met Christ, but it was also being renewed and strengthened by daily walking in the way of faith in God. When he came face to face with the light of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, the light which initially blinded him, but that also opened the eyes of his understanding, Paul soon recognized the sovereign position of Christ. On the other hand, Paul did not confine himself to his first remarkable experience with the Lord, but continually grew in the proposition of the newness of life offered to him by God, constantly perceiving ahead of him a renewed hope and new aspects in the Lord, and for which he kept reaching forward in the strength of the Spirit of the Lord.

*Philippians 3: 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,*  
 14 *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Leaving or forgetting something that is not beneficial does not automatically mean that a person already knows how to follow or practice what is right, and this is the testimony that Paul gives of his proper life. Paul declares that he forgot the things which are behind, but that he as well actively proceeded to the new that the Lord had put ahead of him to learn, also through the newness, to live and walk as a new creation in Christ.

Every new day, at each new stage, the challenge of advancing in the Lord was repeated in the life of Paul, and he knew how vital it was to keep walking in that for which the Lord was calling him and how crucial it was not to abstain from what was proposed to him in Christ, so that in the final days of his life he could confidently come to declare:

*2 Timothy 4: 7 **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.***

**God grants everything that is necessary for a Christian to the newness of life in Christ Jesus, but it is also needed a practical disposition of the Christian in wanting to live it, for the Gospel is an offer or an invitation from the Lord, and God does not impose a life according to the new creature to any person.**

*John 7: 17 **If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.***

*Matthew 16: 24 **Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.***

*25 **For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."***

And again here, just as in the material on Forgetting Those Things Which Are Behind, it can be seen that **the Lord Jesus offers us in Him both the provision and the strength to leave and forget what lies behind, as well as to advance in a real way to reach the newness of life offered in Him to all who believe in the offer of life according to His Gospel.**

**In Christ, a person finds deliverance from the overloads of the things which are behind, but it is also by receiving the yoke of the newness of life in the Lord that one advances to salvation, rest for the soul, instruction, and new condition of life in God.**

*Matthew 11: 25 **At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.**  
26 **Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.***

*27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.*

*28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

*29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

### C3. New Garments for Fellowship with the Lord

One way or figure used in the Scriptures to refer to the practice of forgetting those things which are behind and the practice of reaching forward to what is ahead is respectively the reference made to undressing old garments or the old nature and to dressing new clothes or the new nature in Christ.

The reference to the garments can be particularly useful, for it teaches us the process of putting off something to be able to put on something new, but also including the very work of taking on or putting on the new.

In general, for example, when a person prepares to attend a special invitation for dinner, one gets ready for this event by first putting off the regular garments used previously to after also put on the clothes for the specific occasion.

And similarly to the example of the preceding paragraph, the Christian is also called to proceed regarding his Christian life.

When a person receives the Lord in his or her heart and by the new birth receives the condition of a new creation, one is instructed to put off, in one's mind and practices, the old garments, thus practicing the forgetting of those things which are behind.

Following, the Christian is also instructed to expose oneself to the Lord to be washed (cleansed) from unrighteousness in the heart and that which is not beneficial to his or her life. When a Christian exposes oneself to God, the Lord Jesus Christ helps him or her to see and understand the thoughts and practices that need to be forgotten, but as well gives this Christian all the assistance to be cleansed of all the guilt one may still bear in his or her heart. (A theme addressed more broadly in the material on The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, more specifically in the chapter that describes on the aspect of Christ being the Advocate of Christians before the Heavenly Father.)

Before the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the fellowship with Him, a Christian can put off everything that the Lord shows him or her as being unfit. One also can open his heart and present to the Lord his or her sorrows, burdens, guilt, bitterness, and all that which is beneficial for him or her to be removed, so that the Lord of Righteousness may purify him or her from all the unrighteousness with which one became associated.

***1 John 1: 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

Nevertheless, even after a person has put off the clothes that are inappropriate for a specific event and has properly bathed, it is not commonly pertinent for a person to leave one's place and go to the referred dinner without first dressing properly.

When a person has appropriate garments to go to the specific event in which one intends to be, it is also necessary to enter into the garments that are in front of him or her to find oneself indeed clothed with them.

**Thus, a person who leaves and forgets the things which are behind accomplishes just a part of the process to which one is called in Christ Jesus, that is why putting on the garments of the novelty of life also completes the acceptance of that which is offered to him or her from the heavenly kingdom.**

Considering that an individual has in God the possibility of receiving instruction and help to put off the old and to be renewed in Him, the Lord, in due time, does not want anyone to appear for the feast of fellowship with Him and with other fellows dressed in old robes, but also not without having put on the new garments.

The position of the Lord regarding what is described in the preceding paragraph is perfectly pertinent since the Lord Himself has already provided deliverance from the old, but also by the fact that the Lord offers and furnishes new garments for the new creature in Christ.

If a person goes to the banquet of fellowship with the Lord without proper clothing, knowing that they are already available to him or her in Christ, one places oneself in a position of risk in which one may even be exposed to rejection before the Lord.

When the Lord rejects fellowship with someone who refuses to put on the new that is already available to him or her, God is not unfair, for He beforehand provides new garments and grants them to people. And when an individual chooses not to dress oneself with the new which is offered to him or her by the Lord, it is the person oneself who is despising the Offeror and what has been offered, and not the other way around.

***“Reaching forward to the things which are ahead” in the Christian life also encompasses entering the garments of the “new man” that the Lord grants to those who receive Christ Jesus through faith in Him. However, if a person deliberately does not do so, one expresses in a practical way that one rejects or despises the garments that the Lord in love has offered, and by this action shows that one does not appreciate the will of the Lord.***

There are people who, by themselves, even seek to leave behind various aspects of the old life that is according to the concepts of the models “Jew <\_\_\_\_\_> Greek,” “circumcision and uncircumcision.” However, by the fact that many of them try to cease their involvement with the referred aspects because of the disappointments they had with all the human attempts to please God, these people also are not motivated (willing) to advance to clothe themselves with the spiritual things from God, causing their carnal bitterness to distance them from some obsolete aspects, but also to interpose their advancing to the novelty of life in God.

*Hebrews 12: 12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,  
 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.  
 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:  
 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.*

When a person accepts to disassociate oneself from various aspects of the old clothes but does not advance to put on the new garments, one may find oneself spiritually walking naked through the streets, the plazas, and even in the fellowship feasts of Christians around Christ. And because of the shame to which one exposes oneself by doing so, one may be tempted to appeal again to the old robes of dissimulation or dissolution.



The new creature in Christ is called to advance and clothe oneself with the new life which one has received or is called to walk in the light of that which is given to him or her in God. And before the Lord, there is no acceptance of the attempts to establish a half-new condition of life, where, on the one hand, an individual tries to leave the old, but on the other hand, seeks to avoid reaching forward to the attributes of the new.

A Christian is not called only to reject the lie, inappropriate religiousness, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of the world's life, but one is also called to live the new life in Christ after receiving Him as Lord in the heart.

A Christian is called in the Lord to be instructed to reject effectively that which is opposed to living and walking in the will of God, but one is also invited to be in the Lord so that, through the Lord Himself, one may be made alive in the spirit and clothed with the novelty of life in Christ Jesus aiming at practicing the will of God.

A Christian is not called to be in a condition devoid of any garment, in the position where one does not want the old, but also does not put on the new, nor is a Christian called to receive life according to the new creature and yet want to insist on clinging to the old nature, as can be seen respectively in the two texts below:

- 2 Corinthians 5: 1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*
- 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,*
- 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.*

- Matthew 22: 1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:*
- 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,*
- 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.*
- 4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'"*
- 5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.*
- 6 And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.*
- 7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.*
- 8 Then he said to his servants, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.*
- 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding."*

***10 So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.***

***11 But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.***

***12 So he said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless.***

***13 Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.***

***14 For many are called, but few are chosen."***

In the texts exposed above, it may be observed that in the world, many people simply do not want God's invitation to be a new creature in Christ because they are too involved with their natural or temporal lives. They are individuals who have come to regard their works, jobs, services, resources, riches, relationships with their fellows, and earthly pleasures as the treasures in which they place the whole heart instead of paying attention to the brevity of life and the imminent need for salvation that they as well need so much.

On the other hand, still in the same texts mentioned above, it may be observed that in the world, there are also those individuals who accept the invitation of the Lord's salvation, no matter how despised they may have been in their lives until then and even if they are devoid of virtues to be invited to a feast of fellowship in the kingdom of God. These are the ones who accept to forget the things which are behind and as well accept the new garments necessary to find themselves appropriately presentable at the event to which they were invited.

Nevertheless, among those who accepted the invitation, there was a third type of people, presented by the narrative of an individual in particular and who attended the calling and came to the feast, but who did not wear the garments that were requested by the king for the event in reference.

When the king saw this man who was at the feast but who did not dress himself with the proper garments, the king promptly expelled him from the event to which he had come, saying that he too had been called, but he was not chosen because he had not advanced to the new clothes that were proposed to him.

At this point, we return once more to some aspects already covered in the first materials of this series on the New Creation in Christ, as well as on The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, where it was seen that the Lord is ready to receive, forgive, and redeem all sinners who come to Him for these purposes. However, this is something entirely different from a person expecting that the Lord will endorse a deliberate posture in which one wants eternal salvation and at the same time also wants to walk according to the old man, to remain in the use of the old garments, or to walk in accordance with the dissolution of the old wine.

Those who choose to live a double-minded life, where they want the heavenly salvation, but do not want to give up life and fellowship with darkness, also end up choosing to put themselves deliberately under a very misleading and dangerous condition, mistakenly thinking that God does not see them in all the intents of their hearts, remembering, however, that:

*Hebrews 4: 12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

*13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

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People who think that by declaring themselves “Christians” they will not reap the results of their actions guided by the flesh and that so they also will be free from the condemnation of their deeds, but who deliberately still want to continue in subjection to darkness or wear the garments of a carnal life, are subject to the risk of harvesting the same harvest from those who rejected God's salvation or give no heed to God's invitation to them.

*Galatians 6: 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*

*8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.*

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Those individuals who want to live the newness of life offered by the Lord without indeed having the goal of putting on the understanding and the attitude of practicing the conduct of the new life in Christ are subject to become unable to remain and participate in the celebrations of a life of fellowship with the Lord.

A person may come freely to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Heavenly Father to present oneself as sinful and unrighteous with the goal of obtaining from the Lord forgiveness, salvation, and the cleansing of all unrighteousness, and yet or even in this condition be readily accepted by the Lord. However, this is very distinct from the person who has already received salvation through the righteousness of the Lord and yet deliberately insists on putting on the life propositions that have already been declared as behind in the face of Christ's work in behalf of all human beings.

Therefore, as Paul teaches us in his personal testimony of life, the salvation to which a Christian is called by the saving grace is a call to forget indeed those things which are behind, but it is also a call to actually clothe the “new being” in Christ Jesus offered by the same heavenly grace.

It is the joint practice of walking in the two actions mentioned above that expresses a real and an appropriate position of the individual who indeed wants to press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus, as it is also stated in the text which we recall below:

*Colossians 3: 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*

*2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

*3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

*4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

- 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*
- 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,*
- 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.*
- 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.*
- 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,*
- 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*
- 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.*
- 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;*
- 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*
- 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*
- 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*
- 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*
- 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*
- 

The new creature is called to put on the thoughts and practices of life according to the new creation so that his or her life, in the most diverse areas, may come to glorify the Lord who granted this new living condition to him or her.

The new garments that the Lord sets ahead of those who are called according to His purpose may be modest or humble, but they are powerful for the Christian to advance to the life in the Lord and the eternal fellowship with Christ and with those who also believe in Him.

Moreover, besides granting the possibility that we may wear new garments according to the new creation, the Lord Himself sends us the Helper, the Holy Spirit, to guide us in all things according to the heavenly truth so that we may be in Christ and, once being in Christ, that we may neither be found without garments nor wearing unsuitable clothes for the fellowship feast with the Eternal Lamb and the Heavenly Father.

The Holy Spirit is granted to a Christian to assist him or her to be continually dressed in the garments of the righteousness of the heavenly kingdom and bestowed upon all who believe in the Lord and rejoice themselves in the newness of life and the gifts which are offered to them by divine grace.

*John 14: 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.*

*17 The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

*John 14: 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*



## C4. Walking According to the Degree Already Attained

Before going deeper into what is ahead of a person who has become a new creature in Christ, aiming at the purpose of reaching forward to the newness of life, we consider it to be of high value to highlight the principle where Paul, as described in some translations, mentions that Christians are called “to walk according to what is already available to them” or “to walk according to the degree they have already attained”, as follows:

*Philippians 3: 12* ***Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.***

***13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.***

***14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

***15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.***

***16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.***

“To walk according to the degree we have already attained” is also presented in other translations or languages as walking in consonance with what a person has already reached or with that to which a person has already arrived.

**So, when someone receives Christ, the possibility of experiencing a new life through fellowship with the Lord is already placed before the one who has just become a Christian, that is, a new degree for the relationship with God is already accessible to all those who receive the new birth by the Spirit of the Lord.**

**He who receives Christ in his or her heart also receives a made alive spirit that immediately enables him or her to seek, hear, and begin to comprehend the counsels from the Lord and the heavenly kingdom for his or her life.**

Thus, after receiving the condition of a new creature, a Christian is expected to make use of the newness of life already available to him or her, beginning with the act of presenting oneself to God for fellowship with Him and in which he or she is invited to engage in conversation (in prayer) with the Lord on the most diverse subjects of one's life and in the most distinct moments and places.

**The initial or primary aspect of a person's life as a new creation, and which is granted to all who experience the new birth, is the possibility of reconciling the relationship with God, which is one of the central points, a step, a degree, or an initial condition in which a Christian is called to walk according to what is already within his reach. An aspect that is so vital that Paul, in the name of God, comes to the point of pleading that every Christian may indeed reconcile oneself with the Lord.**

*2 Corinthians 5: 17* **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

*18* **Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,**  
*19* **that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

*20* **Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.**

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Since one of the central aspects of forgetting those things which are behind is a person to leave the trust in one's own flesh, in one's own thoughts, or in the creation, and instead turning to trust in God, and considering that life according to the new creature is granted in such a way that it is also accompanied by the necessary provision for a person to live and walk in conformity with it, we may conclude that having the possibility of access to God, to be instructed in how to trust the Lord and how to walk according to His heavenly will, is an indispensable or vital aspect for a Christian already since his or her new birth.

Still, in other words, God does not call a person to walk in conformity with His will without granting first him or her the conditions to do so.

The Lord does not call Christians to practice actions or perform works, labors, and services, large or small, without first placing His instruction and help at their disposal.

Therefore, **when Paul declares that Christians are called to “walk according to what they have already attained” or “according to the degree or the condition in which they already are as new creatures,” he is calling them to pay attention firstly to what is already available for them in the Lord and to simply move on according to what is already within their reach.**

The Lord does not call Christians to walk as children of light without first offering them the light and without first showing them how they can obtain the light according to the heavenly kingdom, as exemplified once again below:

*Ephesians 5: 8* **For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.**

*Ephesians 5: 14* **Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."**

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And who are those who are considered dead before the Lord?

Are they not those who are asleep in their trespasses and sins, as we are taught in chapter 2 of the letter to the Ephesians?

What, then, is “*arise from the dead to be enlightened by Christ?*”

The answer to this last question is that which has already been answered above, namely: ***We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God***, or still:

*Colossians 3: 1* ***If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.***

***2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.***

***3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***

***4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.***

*James 1: 5* ***If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.***

***6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.***

*Jeremiah 33: 3* ***Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.***

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When a person reaches the condition of a new creature in Christ, regardless of whether one has a lack of resources, few resources, or many natural resources, and regardless of whether one is considered small or great by world standards, one already from his or her heart has, in Christ, the possibility of access to God. And once an individual already has access to God available, one can cry out and invoke the Lord and have direct and personal fellowship with Him, for reconciliation in Christ Jesus is extended to him or her firstly or primarily for fellowship with the Lord.

*1 Corinthians 1: 9* ***God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***

*Psalms 51: 17* ***The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart, these, O God, You will not despise.***

**When a person receives Christ Jesus as the Lord of his or her life, one, at the same time, reaches a new heart that comes from the Lord. One is made alive in Christ according to a contrite spirit, and yet, one is given a heart to which the kingdom and the love of God are bestowed through the granting of the heavenly peace and the Holy Spirit, as we can see in several texts of the Scriptures and of which we highlight the two presented below:**

*Ezekiel 36: 26* ***I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.***

***27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.***

*Romans 5: 1 **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**  
2 **through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.***

*5 **Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.***

A person who receives Christ should undoubtedly or always remain in the condition of gratitude for the deliverance that God has provided for him or her regarding the bondage to sin to which one was previously subject. However, in relation to the instruction of walking according to what one has already attained, one is also exhorted to perceive the new position in which one “already finds oneself,” as well as to be attentive to the new aspects that have been poured into his or her life along with the granting of a new heart.

Soon after receiving the condition of a new creature, a Christian may still not be aware of many of the Lord's instructions for many areas of his or her life, but a Christian is no longer deprived of the possibility of access to the living God Who knows every aspect for all areas of one's life and Who also came to dwell in his or her heart. On what depends on God, the way of the access to the Lord is already reconciled or available so that everyone who is already a new creature in Christ may also live and walk by it.

**In Christ, from the beginning, we have come to a new interior state of life, a life reconciled with the Heavenly Father, the Son of His Love, and the Holy Spirit. And it is first and foremost toward this condition made available from the beginning to everyone who becomes a new creature in the Lord that every Christian is called to advance, as well as remain, also as an expression of “walking on the degree which one has already attained in Christ.”**

*John 15: 5 **I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.***

**The condition of being able to abide in Christ is a position or gift that every person attains when one receives the new birth according to the Spirit of God. And this is a vital condition for every new step or action in the life of a Christian.**

Just as the human being needs oxygen, water, and food to stay alive on the natural level, so does the new creature need to remain in the fellowship with the Lord to be strengthened in one's new position. And the possibility of practicing this fellowship has always been available or within reach to everyone who already has received the new birth in Christ Jesus.

**And once a person is already on the degree where he or she can be and can abide in Christ, it is also in this condition already achieved that a**

**Christian should proceed towards the other aspects of the *prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

*Colossians 2: 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,*

*7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

*8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.*

*9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

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When a person receives the new creation in Christ, one is not given a mission to believe in a hope in which one will only receive something of the new life in God in a distant future, but rather that life according to the new creation is already granted in the Lord, although most of the fullness of this new life will indeed be revealed just in eternity after life on Earth.

*Ephesians 2: 1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*

*2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,*

*3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

*4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*

*5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*

*6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

*1 John 5: 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

*12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

*13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*

Although a Christian still does not know how several aspects of his new life in the Lord will be, the condition of having a new life in Christ Jesus is a position available to him or her from the moment of the new birth.

The novelty of life in the Lord, therefore, is in fact for the future or the eternal period, but also, at the same time, it is indeed already present daily with a Christian, allowing the one who has received Christ in the heart to



have already available the instruction and the strength to walk according to what he or she has already attained in the Lord or in conformity with what is already available to him or her in Christ.

All other actions that will be instructed by God to a Christian in the course of his or her life are the result of the first aspect of the newness of life, which is to receive Christ in the heart and to remain trusting in Him as the Lord and Eternal Savior.

Thus, walking according to what a Christian has already attained, as a result of faith in the work of Christ Jesus on the cross of Calvary, or walking in conformity with what every person who receives Christ as Lord has received in his or her life, may also be expressed as walking in the instruction and direction of the Lord through the Holy Spirit, Who in beforehand is available to all who already have received the position of a new creature in Christ.

As someone who were born of the Spirit of God, coming in this way to be made son of the Heavenly Father and joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ, a Christian is an heir of the Spirit of the Lord since his or her new birth, having, therefore, reached the point or the degree on which the Holy Spirit has already been bestowed by God to guide him or her in life.

*Romans 8: 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

*15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*

*16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*

*17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

*1 Corinthians 2: 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.*

*13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

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Walking according to what has already been achieved in Christ Jesus continually encompasses to access the fellowship with the Lord according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as well as to practice, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, what the Lord instructs the Christian through the fellowship with Him.

Looking to make a short description, advancing to what is ahead of the Christian or to walk according to what one has already attained, or still to walk in the condition that is already available to the Christian in the Lord, is, in a sense, a reference to several equivalent expressions or with the same meaning presented in the Scriptures, because

by the salvation granted by God, a Christian has already reached Christ, and it is the reached Christ and ahead of him or her that a Christian is called to follow.

**John 8: 12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying: "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."**

**Hebrews 12: 1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,**

**2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

To the one who is a new creature in Christ Jesus is granted to know the Lord and to have fellowship with Him, it is allowed for him or her to pray to God and listen to His answers. Through fellowship, the Christian is granted the possibility of knowing what one needs to know of the mind of Christ, and Whose fellowship is already within reach or is before the Christian to be practiced.

Walking in consonance with what is already available, or with what God has already granted to be accessible to the Christian, also encompasses making use of the newness of life by the fellowship to which the Christian has already been called beforehand by the Lord, as well as it also comprehends the posture of continuing to grow and develop the salvation in accordance with the instruction that is in Christ for each of God's children who are willing to advance in the way of the Lord.

**1 Corinthians 2: 16 For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.**

**2 Corinthians 10: 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,  
5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**

What the Lord will instruct every Christian specifically to be followed in one's days to come is between each person and the Lord Himself. However, all Christians, in every day of their lives, are equally called to walk according to what is already within reach of all, and which is the possibility of personal fellowship with the Lord every new day, and regarding which all Christians should have great appreciation and be zealous to remain in it.

*Philippians 3: 16 **Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.***

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After receiving instructions about the specific will of the Lord for his life, Peter addressed a question to the Lord about what John's future would be. However, on this question, the Lord Jesus answered Peter that which always matters to be kept by each Christian as a central aspect of his life, as presented below:

*John 21: 22 **Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me."***

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**Walking according to what has already been achieved in Christ Jesus is first expressed by practicing fellowship with Him and following Him according to the instructions that the Lord grants to each one through this same fellowship.**

*Isaiah 48: 17 **Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go."***

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As an observation, and considering that the theme of "Living and Walking in the Spirit" or "Living and Walking in Christ" has already been broadly addressed in other subjects, we will limit ourselves here to reaffirm that the great gift already granted from the beginning to every person who attains the condition of being a new creature in Christ Jesus is also to have the possibility or to be able, by the Spirit of the Lord, to be in continual fellowship with one's Creator and Eternal God to be strengthened and guided by Him.

(The theme of Living and Walking in Christ or the Spirit of the Lord is more specifically addressed in the material on The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, The Core Principal of Life for a Christian, The Law of Understanding, Every Good Gift and Every Perfect Gift, and throughout the series on Walking in Newness of Life).

*Isaiah 41: 13 **For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, "Fear not, I will help you."***

And finally to conclude this chapter, we mention below a text that exposes more broadly what a Christian has already "come to" in Christ Jesus when he or she came to be made new, but a text which also reports much of what the Christian "did not come to" when he or she came to receive the condition of newness of life in the Lord.

*Hebrews 12: 18 **For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest,***

- 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore.
- 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.")
- 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")
- 22 **But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,**
- 23 **to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,**
- 24 **to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.**
- 25 **See that you do not refuse Him who speaks.** For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,
- 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."
- 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.
- 28 **Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.**
- 29 **For our God is a consuming fire.**

## C5. What, then, Is Ahead of a Christian in His Position of a New Creature?

In the material presented under the title Forgetting Those Things Which Are Behind, we addressed a part of Paul's personal testimony and through which he shows us very clearly several aspects about what were the things he chose to forget as being those which are behind, and this, so that he as well could move freely to what was ahead of him.

Nevertheless, does the Scripture similarly also make clear to us what has come to be ahead of Paul or every Christian after one knows the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord of his or her life?

If we return to the text in which Paul mentions forgetting those things which are behind and that he reaches forward to the things which are ahead, we also see his statement affirming that: ***“I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”***

What, then, was ahead of Paul and for which he also inclined oneself, pressed on, stretched out, or advanced to lay hold, reach, or grasp firmly and consistently?

**Paul declares that the things which are ahead, and to which he also reached forward, encompassed all that for which Christ redeemed him or for which Christ bought him with His precious blood through death on the cross of Calvary.**

**Everything that was associated with the purpose of Christ giving His life to redeem or save Paul, and all other people, encompassed what he went on to lay hold. That is, all things or all the abundance of life to which a person who is saved in Christ Jesus is called by God, was that which composed the goal of Paul or for what Paul was stretching out to make use.**

**All that for which Christ Jesus came in the flesh into the world to die on the cross of Calvary, to be buried, and to be raised by God on the third day, and to be seated as High Priest, King of Righteousness, and King of Peace at the right hand of the Heavenly Father, according to the Order of Melchizedek, and not of Aaron, and which was applicable to the life of Paul, was also what Paul advanced or stretched out to reach.**

Since Christ conquered for Paul all provision for the forgiveness of his sins, it was also the forgiveness of his sins that Paul wanted to experience in all areas and days of his life.

Considering that Christ conquered for Paul the perfect path of reconciliation with God, to the point that he personally, directly, and continually could have a fellowship with the Lord, it was also for the permanence in the reconciliation and fellowship with God that Paul was reaching forward or inclined to practice every new day.

Once Christ had conquered for Paul the full provision for eternal life, which was available to Paul if he just maintained his faith in the justification and provision of righteousness offered to him in Christ Jesus, it was also for the abiding in the trust in Christ and the righteousness of God that Paul was reaching forward every new day and until the end of his life in the natural body.



Every person who receives the condition of a new creature in Christ Jesus also receives the opportunity of a new beginning of life in Christ and according to the will of God. He or she receives a spirit made alive by the same power that raised Christ from the dead. One is given the possibility of living a life guided eternally by Christ through the Holy Spirit, and one still receives the opportunity of remaining in the Lord by faith to also receive the crown of eternal life from the Lord.

Moreover, every person who receives the new birth also receives in Christ Jesus the possibility of seeing the glory of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit of the Lord becoming manifested in his or her life, no longer needing to be continually subject to the fruit of the flesh.

*Colossians 1: 26* **The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.**

**27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

*John 7: 38* **He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.**

**39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

*Galatians 5: 19* **Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,**

**20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,**

**21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,**

**23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

**24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

**25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**

Therefore, since all the above gifts, and many others, were already available on the degree or in the condition of new creation that Paul had attained by receiving salvation in Christ, it was also toward them that Paul advanced as being that which was ahead, for each of these points represented one of the aspects for which he was also redeemed or saved by Christ Jesus.

When Christ Jesus, through the work on the cross of Calvary, His burial, and His resurrection, revealed the absolute or perfect right to redeem all sinners, He also manifested the full possibility of giving them newness of life, instruction, and guidance by the Holy Spirit, and, still, the complete power of granting eternal life even after the life in the world to everyone who believes in Him and who in the heart receives Him as Lord. And it was for the most diverse aspects of what was included in each of the

benefits revealed in Christ Jesus that Paul was reaching forward and willing to advance till the time of the end of his days on the Earth.

**Whether for the present life or the future life in the eternal glory of God, Paul was reaching forward to live and to walk continually and increasingly in the set of benefits, gifts, instructions, virtues, and conditions for which he was saved in Christ Jesus, understanding that the salvation that had redeemed him from subjection to sin and darkness also embraced a newness of life always renewed to be accessed by all who received Christ in the heart.**

And even in the face of his eminent physical death, Paul continued to advance to what was before him in Christ Jesus, for the aspects to which he was conquered by the Lord continued to be available to him in Christ and because they are conquests according to the heavenly kingdom, which, therefore, are not limited to the natural or temporal life of human beings, as exemplified below:

*John 11: 25 **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.***  
*26 **And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"***

*James 1: 12 **Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.***

*2 Timothy 4:8 **Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.***

The novelty of life that the Lord Jesus places before those who receive it already produces newness when it is manifested by the new birth, but it also goes far beyond a temporal newness of life, it is a life that never can be overcome or annihilated, not even by the power of physical death, because it is life according to an indissoluble kingdom.

A new beginning, the life of a made alive spirit, and the possibility of being led by Christ through the Holy Spirit begin when a person, still on Earth, receives Christ as Lord, but these are the first gifts placed before the Christian, which, in Christ, extend into eternity as eternal gifts from the Heavenly Father.

Even in the face of the eminent physical death and even though one has not received God's salvation until the moment when life on Earth is about to end, a person still may advance to that for which Christ died on the cross of Calvary and may have a new beginning in the Lord to enjoy eternal fellowship with God, as it is reported in the case of the criminal who was crucified beside the cross of Christ as described in the following passage:

*Luke 23: 39 **Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."***

- 40 ***But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"***
- 41 ***And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."***
- 42 ***Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."***
- 43 ***And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."***

Even the person who is facing eminent condemnation according to the natural judgments, according to the judgment of men, has been conquered by Christ Jesus so that he or she may receive new life in the Lord, for the judgments of men are not an impediment for an individual to experience the gift of the new life that God offers him or her.

The grace of God is equally available to those who have come to the point of being sentenced by people or human courts. If in the heart they genuinely repent before God and believe in the provision of the mercy, grace, and divine righteousness that there is in Christ Jesus, even those who have lived a life given intensely to evil may receive the benefits that the new life of God offers them.

Whether they have been judged rightly or unjustly by humans, many people find themselves in a situation where they will no longer have the chance to see their earthly sentences become extinct, but regardless of this, if they advance in faith for the provision of salvation offered to them in Christ Jesus, they have the opportunity to receive the grace of God and to see the accusations and condemnations against them erased before the eternal tribunal.

Under the perspective of the last paragraphs, let us look at some more texts below:

*Romans 5: 8* ***But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

*Ephesians 2: 1* ***And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,***  
***2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,***  
***3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.***

*1 Peter 4: 5* ***They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.***  
***6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.***

*Romans 8: 1 **There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.***

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One of the criminals crucified beside Christ did not stay only in the contemplation of seeing the Son of God being crucified, but when he realized that the one who was by his side was actually the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior, this criminal “advanced to what was before him,” and he did so by simple and sincere words which he addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ, saying, “***Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.***”

And because the criminal “reached forward” to the Son of God Who was before him, he attained a new beginning, the condition of a new creature for eternity, a made alive spirit, and a life to be guided in eternity by God, even that in the eyes of men he was found guilty and worthy of death on a cross.

At the end, the criminal was not enraged by the condemnation that men had given him, recognizing that he had committed the crimes for which he was accused. But he left behind what became behind with his crucifixion, including the judgment of the men concerning him, and advanced to the One Who stood before him and Who was the One Who could give him a new opportunity of life, despite it could only be lived in eternity with God. This situation reminds us once again of the words of Christ below:

*John 11: 25 **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.***  
*26 **And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"***

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Therefore, again: What, then, is that which is ahead of those who have received Christ Jesus as Lord and in Whom is the newness of life to which they may reach forward after having received the Lord in the heart?

In summary, we perhaps could say that the answer to this last question is very straight, that is: **When a person receives Christ as Lord of his or her life, one receives the Lord Himself, in Whom is provisioned everything one needs and everything which Christ conquered in behalf of those who through Christ were conquered by the bestowal of His body and His blood shed on the cross of Calvary.**

When the Scriptures instruct us to reach forward to the things that are ahead, they are informing us that what is before us for us to be achieved has already been conquered, for Christ has already conquered it in our favor when He has conquered our life and freedom through the work on the cross of Calvary and His resurrection from the dead, thus triumphing over death. Recalling here also once again, that the conquest of Christ in our favor aims, as a priority, our reconciliation with God and the possibility of personally knowing the Lord, an aspect that is also expressed as the essence of eternal life, according to the text that we as well repeat once again below:

*John 17: 3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.***

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What was ahead of Paul and to which he was reaching forward, therefore, was the life in the risen Lord Himself, the Lord who had died for him on the cross of Calvary to do beforehand all that had to be done so that Paul could have access in the Lord to everything that he needed for life according to the new creature. And because of this, Paul was called to reach forward first in the work of knowing the Lord in Whom is already available everything that has already been conquered by Him and everything that a Christian needs.

**Paul understood that what he needed to achieve or gain was Christ and knowing Christ, for in Christ he had the perfect provision and access to everything for which he was conquered by Christ.**

*Philippians 3: 7 **But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.***

*8 **Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ***  
*9 **and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.***

Similarly, **Peter also testifies that it is in the Lord that everything is available in advance for life according to the new creature, where fellowship with the Lord and knowing Him are the way so that what is available in God may also be made available in the different circumstances of the life of those who believe in Him.**

*2 Peter 1: 1 **Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:***

*2 **Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,***

*3 **as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.***

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Briefly spoken, **it is firstly Christ Who stands ahead of the Christian so that he or she advances towards the fellowship with God, from which comes the possibility of knowing the Lord in a growing way and which, in turn, is the path to the other instructions and provisions that are necessary and pertinent to life according to the new creation.**

**Christ Himself, through Whom a person becomes a new creation, is ahead of the person who has been made alive in Him, which is why it is from Christ that all other aspects of the novelty of life are also unveiled and**

bestowed upon those who come to the Lord to advance in Him or to live and walk in consonance with the divine will.

**The Lord Jesus Christ:**

- ⇒ 1) Is the door of the new beginning, the new path.
- ⇒ 2) Is the One Who makes alive the spirit of those who believe in Him so that they may live and walk in a new way.
- ⇒ 3) Is also the One Who knows how to lead those who trust Him to the eternal paths of life to which they are called to reach forward, whether one is on Earth or has already been led by God to be with Him in His eternal glory.

*Colossians 2: 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,*  
*7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

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So, at this point in the present subject, it may seem that this matter is already highly evidenced, but still we repeat here that the Scriptures teach that **the call to the “Christian life” is never a call to be lived in a dissociated way from the fellowship with Christ Jesus, the Unique One Who has been designated by the Heavenly Father to go before or to be ahead of all who receive the invitation to the newness of life in the Lord.**

This call presented so explicitly, however, often does not seem so evident in the understanding of many people. Many people think that the Christian life is a call to the fulfillment of Christian principles just as people strive to fulfill the law of Moses by the human effort to try to please God, not paying attention to the fact that the Christian life can never be lived appropriately by a person dissociated from the strength and instruction of Christ, and which are granted to the Christian by the quickened spirit of his or her heart.

Trying to live Christian principles in a condition dissociated from personal fellowship with Christ or a dependence on God is to try to live the Christian life through self-effort, and this, as mentioned above, is equivalent to life under the model or style of the law of Moses, circumcision, the Levitical priesthood, or the priesthood according to the order Aaron. This practice refers to the attempts of returning to the things which are behind rather than advance to the things which are ahead, and it does not represent walking according to what a Christian has already achieved or to what is already available to him or her in the Lord.

Before he knew Christ personally, it was the trust in his flesh that was ahead of Paul and guided him, but when he knew Christ, Paul continually watched so that the Eternal Lord of his life would always be ahead of him.

**By pronouncing the expression “*if anyone desires to come after Me,*” Christ implicitly was saying that He will be ahead and that the person who wants to “come after Him” necessarily needs to have the Lord always before him or her, and it is also for following this instruction that a person may advance to what the Scriptures call “to gain Christ” or “to be in Him.”**



If a person who trusts in his or her very understanding and the strength of his or her flesh wants to be ahead of Christ in the different ways of his or her life, one will no longer have Christ before him or her, one will not be walking according to the Christian life, and neither will he or she find oneself expressing a life guided by the Spirit of God.

Therefore, in a more synthesized analysis, **what a person is called to forget as things which are behind, is the practice of guiding the personal life by leaning on one's own thoughts or the propositions of the basic principles of the world. And the best one can do along with the practice of forgetting those things which are behind, is to walk under the guidance of Christ or have Him ahead to advance on the path to which the Lord is calling to follow Him.**

*Matthew 16: 24 **Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."***

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**The proper condition for a person to be guided in consonance with the eternal life and to the abundant life in the Lord is the condition of having Jesus Christ before him or her as the Unique Guide, Teacher, Leader, Pastor, or Bishop of his or her life.**

**No one is called in God to follow two masters.**

Still, in other words, **whoever wants to follow the Lord Jesus Christ cannot lean on one's own understanding or cannot have oneself, other people, or other created things ahead as one's referential point.**

*1 Corinthians 6: 20 **For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.***

*1 Corinthians 7: 23 **You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.***

*1 Corinthians 12: 2 **You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.***

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*Jonah 2: 8 **Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy.***

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*1 John 5: 21 **Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.***

When a person becomes a new creature, any other guide, leader, pastor, priest, and so forth who wants to determine what is the path of one's life is one of those aspects which are behind, for Christ teaches that he alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Christians may act and even are called to act as co-workers of God to share what they have learned from the Lord, and may be used in the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the strengthening of the faith in Christ of their brothers and sisters in the Lord, as seen on

the subject named Every Good Gift and Every Perfect Gift. However, the final direction for the life of every Christian, and which should always be ahead of each one of them, is in Christ Jesus, in the Heavenly Father, and in the instruction that God gives him or her through the Holy Spirit.

**Christ explicitly stated that those who follow Him should not consider others or name others with the attributes and the names that are pertinent only to Him and the Heavenly Father, as follows:**

- Matthew 23: 8* **But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’ (or master, or teacher); for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.**
- 9* **Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.**
- 10* **And do not be called teachers (or guide, or leader); for One is your Teacher (or Guide), the Christ.**

*Galatians 3: 25* ***But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.***

*Romans 8: 14* ***For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.***

A Christian is not called by God to lead one's own life, to go ahead in one's plans and actions, nor is one called to have his or her life guided by other people. A Christian is called to advance in the learning of voluntarily placing his or her trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and as well to walk in the world according to what the Lord instructs him or her.

At several moments, a Christian may have other Christians by his or her side who personally also walk and follow Christ, and may even receive encouragement from them and encourage them to keep looking to Christ, but “in front” or “ahead” of a Christian should only be He Who is the only One worthy to be there. The One Who gave His own sinless life, to grant redemption and newness of life to the human beings who were subject to eternal death by their proper offenses and sins, is also the Unique One Who should stand before those who received Him as Lord.

If Christ is not ahead of a Christian, but another person or some aspect of the creation is, it is because the model of life revealed as outdated in the face of the righteousness of Christ has not yet been left by this Christian indeed or because one has returned to what one should not submit anymore, for Christ has opened the new and living way so that each person can come personally and continually to His and the Heavenly Father's presence.

When the Lord Jesus calls those who “are His” out of the “sheepfolds,” which are subject to the invasion of thieves, He calls them for the purpose that everyone who is called out hears His voice clearly and follows Him, as well as that they do not continue to follow others who seek to take over the flock even though it is not in their right.

- John 10: 1* ***Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.***
- 2* ***But he who enters by the door is **the shepherd of the sheep.*****

- 3 *To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and **he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.***
- 4 ***And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.***
- 5 *Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.*
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Going even further, **what is ahead of a Christian, and to which Paul reached forward to experience because he was redeemed or bought by Christ, is a life of relationship with God according to the “New Covenant,” in which is not accepted, under no circumstances, another mediator between God and human beings except the Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Hebrews 8: 6 **But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.***

*1 Timothy 2: 5 **For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,***  
*6 **who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.***

Brethren of faith in Christ, and also people in general, may be on the side of a Christian at some moments to assist him or her when the Lord instructs so, but before or ahead of a Christian should only be Christ and the voice of Christ, being the walking of a Christian because of this a walking in a new and living way, and not in the outdated paths of men. The old formula of a person following oneself or others, hoping so to reach the path of a novelty of life, is left behind for those who walk after the Lord Jesus Christ and Who is designated by the Heavenly Father as the Eternal Shepherd and the Eternal Singular Light to go before them.

**In the world, many things are used to try to confuse Christians in the goal of pursuing what should be ahead of them, but Christians, in no way, should abandon the practice of reaching forward to the central point of what is put before them, which is the direct and personal fellowship with Christ, a testimony that is due to have in the heart continuously.**

Dissociated from personal fellowship with Christ, even the Scriptures, as worthy of respect as they may be, do not represent the essence of what should be ahead of the Christian, for the relationship with the Scriptures, if seen only under the perspective of the letter or a set of rules to follow, can lead an individual to the path in which “the letter kills.” An aspect which is more widely covered in the material on The Letter or Life and regarding which we remember the following texts:

*John 5: 39 **You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.***  
*40 **But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.***

*2 Corinthians 3: 6 **Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.***

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Having in mind the joy of seeing our salvation through the grace of God, Christ endured the cross of Calvary so that the heavenly salvation came to be revealed to all humankind as a gift widely available and to be received simply through faith in the Lord and His work for our justification.

Christ endured the shame of the death of the cross so that the salvation offered by the Heavenly Father would be within reach of all and that it may be received by all who open the heart to receive the gift of the eternal novelty of life in God.

**And because the Lord Jesus Christ has fixed His eyes and His trust in the Heavenly Father and His will, the Heavenly Father has established the Son of His Love as the One Who is called to be always ahead of His people. And this is a central aspect that a Christian should always keep alive in his or her heart to continually and increasingly advance in the One Who was presented before him by the eternal grace of God.**

**Christ is the foundation and central point of reference of the novelty of eternal life that God places “before, in front, or ahead” of the new creature.**

*2 Corinthians 5: 15 **And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.***

In describing parts of his testimony, Paul states that after personally knowing Christ, and being able to have the Lord as a referential for his living and walking in the world, he also refused to continue living subject to the direction of the flesh (soul and body). Paul no longer wanted to know how to live and walk the way he did before he knew the Lord, and he steadily chose to go away from this way of living. After being instructed about his condition as a new creature, Paul no longer exercised himself in the possibilities and abilities of living and walking in the old patterns.

Nevertheless, as already mentioned several times, Paul not only abandoned the old type of life, but he also advanced to the new condition of life that the Lord placed before or ahead of him, which had one and always the same reference, namely:

*Galatians 2: 20 **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.***

**Through Christ and in Christ is available (1) the new beginning of life, (2) the power of the made alive spirit for a new condition of life, but also (3) the light, the reference point, the path, or the guidance for a Christian to walk according to this new life in God, whether this walking is yet on Earth, as long as the Lord so determines, or whether it is in eternity. A reason why Paul also always had the Lord Jesus Christ and the life in Christ Jesus as his**

primary objective and as the central aspect of the announcement of the Gospel of the Lord.

*Colossians 1: 26* ***The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.***

*27* ***To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

*28* ***Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.***

*29* ***To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.***

When a Christian does not stop at what is behind and does not stop at the inertia regarding the offer of the newness of life that is in the Lord, reaching forward to be and abide in Christ, Who is also ahead of all of those who recognize him in the heart as Lord, this Christian indeed advances to the novelty of life that is already available to him or her in his or her heart through the presence of Christ, for it is in Christ that the prize of the upward call of God for each of His children is found.

*Romans 8: 32* ***He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?***

We understand that here again, it should be highlighted that although the newness of life in Christ is already available to every Christian, the Lord calls Christians to advance to what is already available to them, for as seen throughout the series on The Gospel of God, the gift of salvation and life in the Lord is the expression of an offer that God presents to all human beings, which, therefore, is also granted in response to how a person receives what the Lord offers him or her.

Thus, having Christ as the central reference of what a Christian is called to reach forward in a practical or active way, and although this advance is also associated with the voluntary action of the Christian in receiving what God offers him or her or the attitude of opening, in fact, the heart for fellowship with the Lord, let us see once more the text quoted from the beginning of the present material:

*Philippians 3: 12* ***Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.***

*13* ***Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do:***

***(1) forgetting those things which are behind and***

***(2) reaching forward to those things which are ahead,***

*14* ***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.***

*15* ***Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.***

*16* ***Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.***

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Finally, we would like to highlight that **once a person establishes that it is the Lord Jesus Christ that one always wants to have ahead of him or her, in order to advance in the knowledge of God and to be guided by Him, what is ahead of this individual is a succession of renewal of strength in the Lord and the novelties of life found in Christ, and which the Lord will know how to manifest to guide the Christian in His goodness, mercy, love, and grace.**

Considering that it is in Christ Jesus that all the treasures of the knowledge and wisdom of God are hidden, and that it is also in Him that dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily and the eternal glory of the Lord, when a person chooses to have Christ in front or ahead of him or her, one also chooses to have ahead of him or her the abundance of virtues and gifts that are in the Lord.

*2 Corinthians 4: 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.  
6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

In the other themes that are still presented in the sequence of this same series, as well as in the subjects of the series Walking in Newness of Life, we will try to address other several practical aspects of what is to walk according to what we have already attained or what is to advance to what is ahead of the Christian in his or her new condition as a new creation. However, we did not want to do so without first highlighting that any action of the Christian toward that which is before him or her should always be preceded by the One Who redeemed him or her to stand before and to go ahead of them who were saved by Him.

*Colossians 3: 4 When Christ who is our life appears (or manifests Himself), then you also will appear (or be manifested) with Him in glory.*

*Micah 2: 13 The one who breaks open will come up before them; They will break out, Pass through the gate, And go out by it; Their king will pass before them, With the LORD at their head.*

*Psalms 85: 7 Show us Your mercy, LORD, And grant us Your salvation.  
8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak, For He will speak peace To His people and to His saints; But let them not turn back to folly.  
9 Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, That glory may dwell in our land.  
10 Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed.  
11 Truth shall spring out of the earth, And righteousness shall look down from heaven.*



- 12 *Yes, the LORD will give what is good; And our land will yield its increase.*
- 13 *Righteousness will go before Him, And shall make His footsteps our pathway.*

## Bibliography

Note on Biblical Texts referenced:

- 1) The biblical texts without explicit indications of reference were drawn from NKJV Bible, as indicated below.
- 2) Highlights in the biblical texts, such as underline, bold, or similar were added by the author of this study.

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