

# Assembly of Eloah

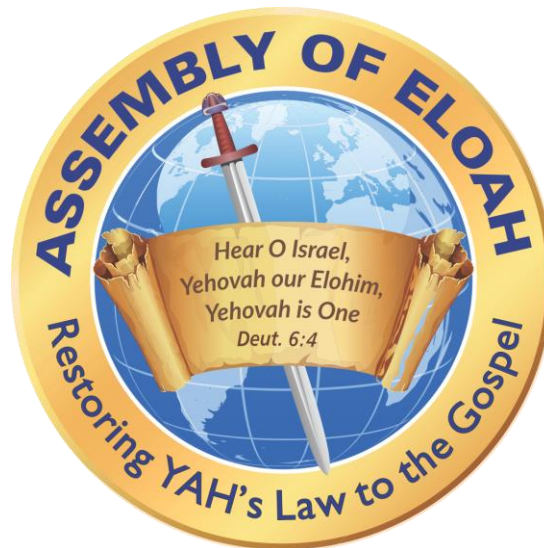
This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent -- Jesus Christ. Jn. 17:3

## Do You Not Know?

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Edition 3

The phrase "know you not" is used 15 times in the New Testament. This paper examines what it is the writers felt to be important and should have been understood by the early church.



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## Do You Not Know?

The apostle Paul is known for speaking in a very direct manner. He was not shy in speaking his mind. In speaking to the Roman and Corinthian churches, Paul used the phrase "do you not know" no less than thirteen times. Paul was frustrated with these churches because it seemed they were either not grasping the concepts he was attempting to relay or they had "backslid". In Paul's mind, these were basic concepts of which these churches should have been well aware.

What was Paul so frustrated about? Is it pertinent to us today? The Bible was written for our admonition.

1Cor. 10:11 ESV Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

What Paul wrote to these churches is relevant to Christians alive today at "the end of the age". Given the context of the phrase, it should be plain to all that Paul was clearly upset by the fact that the brethren of his day were apparently not absorbing his message.

Rom. 6:3 ESV Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

One has to examine the context of what Paul is saying in order to gain a true understanding. Romans 6:1-13 says:

Rom 6:1-13 ESV What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? (2) By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? (3) **Do you not know that all of us who have been**

**baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?** (4) We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. (6) We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. (7) For one who has died has been set free from sin. (8) Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (9) We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. (10) For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. (11) So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (12) Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. (13) Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

Paul is obviously dealing with the subject of sin. He is chastising the church for its apparent lack of righteousness. Christians that have received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands after baptism are a new creation. As such, they are to be living a new life in righteousness not the old life they lived in sin.

This is what Paul is saying. We were baptized into Christ's death. He died as a result of sin, albeit not his own. We "die" in the waters of baptism as a result of our own sin. Once Christ died, sin no longer had any impact on him. He was raised from the dead by the Father as a

new creation just as we are raised from the waters of baptism a new man. The old man having died, we are to live a new life apart from Sin.

A baptized individual has a duty to separate him or herself from sin and strive daily to live a life of righteousness. A Christian can't maintain a life filled with sin and just get absolution on a weekly basis.

Luke 9:62 ESV Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

We must move forward in our Christian development and leave the life we lived before baptism behind.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on verse 3 says:

Baptism teaches the necessity of dying to sin, and being as it were buried from all ungodly and unholy pursuits, and of rising to walk with God in newness of life. Unholy professors may have had the outward sign of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness, but they never passed from the family of Satan to that of God. The corrupt nature, called the old man, because derived from our first father Adam, is crucified with Christ, in every true believer, by the grace derived from the cross. It is weakened and in a dying state, though it yet struggles for life, and even for victory. But the whole body of sin, whatever is not according to the holy law of God, must be done away, so that the believer may no more be the slave of sin, but live to God, and find happiness in his service.

Notice his reference to the fact that the body of sin is whatever is not of the holy law. In Paul's day, the Gnostic movement was alive and well. One of the major doctrines of the Gnostic

system was that the law of God is evil and the adherence thereof makes a person more carnal. To rise above their own materialism, people had to separate themselves from the law. This is one point Paul is making here when he says, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Grace without law was a Gnostic and Antinomian view and had crept into the early church and Paul was disputing this position.

We can't give in to the desires of the flesh and practice lawlessness and think we are covered by God's grace. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God, but this doesn't give us license to sin, as the extreme Gnostics believed. When we sin, we ask for forgiveness and move on. We don't continue in the same sins as a matter of practice.

Rom. 6:16 ESV Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Let's again look at the context of the verse. Verses 14-23 read:

Rom. 6:14-23 ESV For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (15) What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! (16) **Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?...**

Verse 16 has many important implications for Christians in the modern era. We are faced with an ever expanding governmental control over

everyday life. We are duped into entering into marriage contracts and other contractual agreements that put us under the rule and control of government rather than God.

There is no doubt that we are to obey government as long as it doesn't conflict with the laws and statutes of God.

Rom. 13:1-2 ESV Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. (2) Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

That being said, however, we are to obey God rather than men.

Acts 5:29 ESV But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.

We must be ever vigilant in our effort to ensure we are not duped into putting ourselves in a position where we have replaced the authority of God with the authority of the state.

...(17) But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, (18) and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. (19) I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. (20) For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. (21) But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. (22) But now that you have

been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. (23) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Again we see references to the Gnostic belief that grace did away with the law. Paul points out the fact that just because we are under grace does not abrogate us of our responsibility to keep the law as he points out in verse 15.

Many of us saw what happened when the church of God in the 20<sup>th</sup> century decided they didn't have to keep the law. That church has been spewed out of God's mouth, ripped apart and its leader killed 40 weeks after making this public proclamation.

The law we are no longer under is the law of the sacrificial law not the law of God that stems from the ten commandments.

Gal. 3:19 ESV Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.

The "law" was **added** as a result of transgression. But:

1John 3:4 ESV Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

Sin is defined as the breaking of the law! God's law is life not death.

Rom. 8:2 ESV For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Clearly, the law Paul referred to was not the moral code laid down by the Father from the foundation of creation. This law was added as a result of sin. There could be no sin if there was no moral law.

Rom. 4:15 ESV For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.

Paul's writings are difficult to understand for many and many twist his words to suit their own agendas.

2Peter 3:15-16 ESV And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, (16) as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

A good barometer is, if it seems to contradict itself, then there is a problem with our understanding.

Rom. 7:1 ESV Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives?

This is a direct refutation to the Antinomian lawlessness prevalent in Paul's day. Paul goes on to say in verses 2-25:

Rom. 7:2-6 ESV For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. (3) Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. (4) Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. (5) For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful

passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. (6) But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

As we have seen, the "law" Paul is discussing is not the moral law of God. The real point Paul is attempting to make is that we are no longer under that sacrificial system. Christ paid the penalty. He was the ultimate sacrifice to which the sacrificial system pointed.

Heb. 10:1-18 ESV For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. (2) Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? (3) But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. (4) For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (5) Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; (6) in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. (7) Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" (8) When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), (9) then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. (10) And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (11) And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. (12) But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, (13) waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. (14) For by a single offering he

has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (15) And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, (16) "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," (17) then he adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." (18) Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

We are no longer bound by the sacrificial system.

Rom. 7:7-13 ESV What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." (8) But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. (9) I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. (10) The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. (11) For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. (12) So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (13) Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

This is indeed a difficult saying. Sin is only realized once one becomes aware of the law. If one knows nothing of the law, there is no knowledge of sin. It is only through this awareness that sin can be revealed for what it is.

The carnal mind is enmity toward God and His ways.

Rom. 8:7 ESV For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

It is not the law that brings death but the realization of it. Once we are aware of our sin, then we can be held responsible and convicted of our trespasses. Those trespasses bring about the death penalty.

Thanks be to God that we have a propitiation for sin in the sacrifice of the Messiah. We have been rescued from the death brought on by the sin that dwells in each and every one of us. As Paul stated:

Rom. 7:24-25 ESV Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? (25) Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

We must be spiritually-minded and that is what Paul is trying to impress upon us.

We are now being judged by our behavior. We are no longer free to behave any way we please. Our conduct must be beyond reproach and as we uncover sin, we must repent and strive to overcome. We can't sit on our laurels and say, "I'm better than that guy". Our measuring stick is Christ.

1Cor. 3:16 ESV Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Let us get a better look at the complete picture by looking at 1Corinthians 3:1-19 which says:

1Cor. 3:1-2 ESV But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people

of the flesh, as infants in Christ. (2) I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready,

It's not difficult to sense Paul's frustration. He obviously expected a higher level of spiritual maturity from the church at Corinth. Christians must take charge of their salvation. No one is going to care for your spiritual condition the way you do and we have all been given the injunction to work out our own salvation.

Phil. 2:12-13 ESV Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, (13) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Ministers are responsible for caring for and teaching the flock but each member of the body of Christ is ultimately responsible for themselves.

1Cor. 3:3-19 ESV for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? (4) For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human? (5) What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. (6) I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. (7) So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. (8) He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. (9) For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. (10) According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. (11) For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid,

which is Jesus Christ. (12) Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw-- (13) each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. (14) If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. (15) If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. (16) **Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?** (17) If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. (18) Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. (19) For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness,"

In the process of working out our own salvation, we build upon the foundation laid by those that teach us. Our works and effort will be made manifest as we are tested. We can't hide who we really are from the One who created us.

We are to discern the truth and ensure we are not led astray by false doctrines. God will test us in our understanding of and our loyalty to the doctrines that we espouse. All false doctrines will be destroyed. It is our responsibility as Christians to make absolutely sure we are not allowing the temple to be defiled by false doctrines.

It is God that works in us and develops us into spiritually mature Christians. As we study and gain understanding, we act on that understanding. The more we do so, the more our understanding increases. It all depends on our actions.

Prov. 16:3 ESV Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

By studying, we learn what we need to be doing. By doing, we learn why we need to be doing it. God gives us understanding through our obedience to Him.

In 1Corinthians 5:1-13, we read:

1Cor. 5:1-13 ESV It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. (2) And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. (3) For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. (4) When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, (5) you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. (6) Your boasting is not good. **Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?** (7) Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. (8) Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (9) I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-- (10) not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. (11) But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler--not even to eat with such a one. (12) For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? (13) God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

The body of Christ, the individuals that make up the church, has a responsibility to ensure that it stays pure. If we allow any of the members, including the ministers, to habitually act in a manner contrary to God's law and we do nothing, then we are not living up to our responsibilities.

We have an obligation not only to the congregation, but also to the individual, to remove them from the congregation. Sinful behavior is like a cancer. It will spread throughout the body, if not removed. It must be removed to preserve the life of the body.

Paul makes reference to sin being a type of leaven. Sin, left unaddressed will eventually permeate the entire congregation. Brethren will become callous to it and it will eventually become acceptable. This is the real and present danger.

We remove the leaven of sin from our presence to protect the congregation, but also so that the individual being removed might see his or her error and repent. If they choose not to repent, then they will be relegated to the second resurrection. If, on the other hand, they choose to repent, then they will be restored to the congregation and the first resurrection. Either way, they have to decide as they are working out their own salvation.

In 1Corinthians 6:2-3, we read:

1Cor. 6:2-3 ESV Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to



try trivial cases? (3) Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!

Lucifer was perfect from the day he was created. That is, until iniquity was found in him.

Eze. 28:15 ESV You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.

The faithful host, those angels that have served God faithfully, are still perfect. Presumably, no iniquity has been found in them. How would we judge their actions, if they have remained faithful?

It seems ludicrous to assert that we will judge them when they are considered righteous already. It is the fallen host that are being judged by our actions. They are condemned when we obey the Living God.

We should not be so presumptuous to believe that we will judge those who have been given the dubious honor of watching over us!

What was Paul's main point in writing this?

1Cor. 6:1-8 ESV When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? (2) **Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? (3) Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!** (4) So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? (5) I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a

dispute between the brothers, (6) but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? (7) To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? (8) But you yourselves wrong and defraud--even your own brothers!

Brethren in the Corinthian church were going to the gentile courts instead of taking their matters before the congregation to be settled. Paul was chastising the church for their lack of spiritual understanding.

Christians are taught to:

Mat. 7:1 ESV "Judge not, that you be not judged.

However, Paul is telling the Corinthian church that they should be judging these matters. Christians apply the principals of God when they apply judgment to a situation.

What we are cautioned against is implying motive or spiritual outcome. We are not to condemn someone but we are to judge their actions. That is Paul's point. Only the spiritually mature can judge righteously and we are to become ever more spiritually mature as we move through the physical life.

The leadership of the church has a responsibility, as do we all, to ensure their judgments are just and righteous. One of the big problems in God's church in the twentieth century has been its inability to exercise righteous judgment.

We, as Christians, have a responsibility to stand up for what is right and just. We

can't allow unrighteous judgments within the church, or it will force the brethren to go outside the church to obtain justice.

What does it say about an organization claiming to be God's church, if the members can't receive justice from its leaders? We must be well versed in the laws and principals of God in order to judge rightly and it is the responsibility of every Christian to study and understand these principals and be able to execute judgment.

Reading 1Corinthians 6:9-14, we gain a better understanding of what Paul is saying.

1Cor. 6:9-14 ESV Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, (10) nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (12) "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. (13) "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"--and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (14) And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

Verse 8 connects verse 9 to the previous verses. Paul then goes on to describe in detail those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. As Paul points out, many of us practiced such things before our calling and baptism, but we should

no longer be practicing such things. We are a new creation through the spirit of God.

Many have used verse twelve to assert the law no longer applies. As we have already seen, the moral law of God is in full force today. Without it, there could be no such thing as sin is defined as lawlessness. Paul's proverb in verse twelve is limited to those things that are already deemed lawful. Paul is in no way claiming that the law can be broken without penalty.

Rom. 2:13 ESV For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

What Paul is saying is that even though something is permitted by law, it may not be the best thing to do. Liberty is not license. We still have an obligation to be careful of offence.

We all have free moral agency and are free to do what we will. That doesn't mean it is lawful or good for us. God has given us the freedom to do whatever we want. As Christians, we have to make choices regarding our behavior and it's up to us to choose right or wrong; life or death.

1Cor. 6:15 ESV Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!

Just as our own bodies are the temple of God, the body of Christ, the individuals that make up the church, are also a type of the extended temple. Each individual body is a member of the larger body.

1Cor. 6:16-18 ESV Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." (17) But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. (18) Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

As members of the body, we are joined with Christ and with each other.

Eph. 4:15-16 ESV Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, (16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

We are joined through the spirit and, just as a man and woman become one through the union of marriage, the individual Christian becomes joined with Christ, the bridegroom, and with all other members of the church, the bride. The church is one body made up of many parts.

1Cor. 12:13-27 ESV For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (14) For the body does not consist of one member but of many. (15) If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. (16) And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. (17) If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? (18) But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. (19) If all were a single member, where would the body be? (20) As it is, there are many parts,

yet one body. (21) The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." (22) On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, (23) and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, (24) which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, (25) that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. (26) If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. (27) Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

By polluting ourselves with sexual immorality, we pollute the church body. By polluting the church body, we, in essence, pollute Christ.

1Cor. 6:19-20 ESV Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, (20) for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

As we have already seen, we are joined with the rest of the body through the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, which we have received through the laying on of hands, when we were baptized.

We are joined to the body of Christ through that same spirit. Paul is reiterating the fact that it is imperative for us to keep that temple pure in order to maintain the purity of the body as a whole. As we know, a little leaven leavens the entire body. This is why Paul admonished the church to remove those that continue to live in sin. If not

removed, they will contaminate the entire body.

1Cor. 9:24 ESV Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.

The metaphor used by Paul to explain the Christian development is most appropriate. We are engaged in a spiritual battle.

Eph. 6:12 ESV For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

We must be engaged in this battle to win. We must train our minds through proper study, prayer and application of the principals of God.

Paul admonishes us to run so that we might receive the prize of salvation.

1Cor. 9:25-27 ESV Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. (26) So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. (27) But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

We must be diligent in our pursuit of salvation. We have to walk with a purpose and we need to understand what that purpose is. We aren't to be halfhearted in our quest for the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection. We are to fight as if we mean to win. We need to run as if to win.

Top athletes are unparalleled in their dedication and perseverance and these are the traits we need to adopt in our

spiritual fight against the influence of the fallen host.

We can, contrary to what many would say, lose the race. There is no such thing as "once saved always saved". We have an obligation to continue the fight or we can and will lose our crown.

2Cor. 13:5 ESV Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

Let's examine this in context.

2Cor. 13:1-9 ESV This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. (2) I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them-- (3) since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. (4) For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God. (5) **Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you fail to meet the test!** (6) I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test. (7) But we pray to God that you may not do wrong--not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. (8) or we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. (9) For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for.

Our strength comes through the application of the principals of God. It is through this application that we grow in faith. As we see the outcome of our

obedience and solidify our belief in the One True God, we are made stronger.

The more spiritually-minded we become, the less susceptible we will be to outside influence, whether it be from men or from the fallen host.

As we grow, we are tested and as we pass the tests we move forward. We may have to endure the same test many times before we finally learn the needed lesson and pass the test.

Paul did not glory in his own strength but rather took pleasure in seeing those in his charge growing in strength. It pained him to see the continued lack of spiritual maturity and strength in the Corinthian congregation.

2Cor. 13:10-14 ESV For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down. (11) Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. (12) Greet one another with a holy kiss. (13) All the saints greet you. (14) The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

## Conclusion

In conclusion brethren, we need to take heed to Paul's admonishment. Through his letters to the churches at Rome and Corinth, we can see a common theme.

We need to continue to be diligent in study and prayer so that we can move

on from being spiritual "babes" to spiritual, mature adults. We need to move forward from the basic spiritual concepts to the more advanced concepts as revealed by the Holy Spirit.

We are required to keep ourselves pure so we can avoid polluting the body of Christ. We are to deal with those that refuse to keep themselves pure by removing them and by doing so, we prevent greater damage to the entire body.

We have a responsibility to work out our own salvation and take personal responsibility for our own actions. No one but us is going to have to answer for our actions.

As we grow into spiritual adults, we are to exercise righteous judgment. It is through the exercising of judgment that we grow in faith. As we apply the principals of God, He establishes our thoughts and we are able to better apply those very same principals.

Brethren, we are indeed in a battle of epic proportions. We are the principal combatants in the greatest spiritual warfare ever waged. Our very salvation is at stake. Don't underestimate the adversary. He is cunning and ruthless.

Stay close to one another. Remain loyal to the faith once delivered to the saints. Be diligent in your protection of the body of Christ and the members thereof.

If we do these things, we will win the race and we will receive the crown of glory promised to all who persevere. The battle is great but the reward is even greater.

Amen, Y<sup>e</sup>hovah