In Christ: From Adam's Loss to Inseparable Love

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The Question

To be "in Christ" is to have been moved out from under Adam and placed under Christ as your head: joined to him in his death and resurrection, and indwelt by his Spirit. Paul takes four chapters of Romans to unfold that sentence. This study follows him through them, verse by verse.

The phrase "in Christ," with its companions "in him" and "in the Lord," runs through Paul's letters well over a hundred times. Because it is so common, it is easy to hear it as a slogan. The aim here is the opposite: to let the text define the phrase before any doctrine is stacked on top of it.

The path runs through Romans 5:12 to 8:39. But it begins with a single verse in 1 Corinthians that states the whole matter in miniature.

Two Men, Two Families

Paul defines "in Christ" by setting it beside another "in":

> *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22, KJV)*

Adam is not a place. To be "in Adam" means your outcome is bound up with what Adam did. Paul uses the same preposition for Christ, so the first meaning of "in Christ" is representative headship: you share the destiny of the one you are in.

The tenses are telling. In Adam all *die*, present and ongoing. In Christ all *shall be made alive*, future and passive, something done to them by another. And the second "all" is qualified at once. The next verse orders the resurrection: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (15:23). The "all" in Christ are those who belong to him.

The broken sentence of Romans 5:12

Romans 5:12 opens the same comparison at length: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Paul begins with "as" and never reaches his "so." He breaks off to defend a point and does not finish the sentence until verse 18.

The phrase "for that all have sinned" (*eph' hō pantes hēmarton*) is one of the most debated in the New Testament. Most translations read it as "because all sinned." Augustine, following the Latin, read "in whom all sinned." The phrase alone cannot settle it, but the next two verses lean heavily on the answer.

Sin without transgression

> *"(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned*

> *after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." (Romans 5:13–14, KJV)*

Paul does not say these people never sinned. The Greek negates the *likeness*, not the sinning: they sinned, but not "after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Paul uses two different words, and the argument rests on the difference.

Term	Meaning	Who
hamartia	sin; missing the mark	everyone
parabasis	transgression; stepping over an explicit, spoken command	Adam; Israel after Sinai

Adam's transgression had a specific shape. God spoke a direct command to him ("thou shalt not eat of it," Genesis 2:17), named the penalty, and Adam broke it with open eyes: "Adam was not deceived" (1 Timothy 2:14). The generations between Adam and Moses had no such spoken command. They sinned against conscience and creation's witness (Romans 1:20; 2:14–15), and their sin was not "imputed" as a charge against a written law.

Yet they died. Their deaths cannot be explained by the feature they lacked, an explicit command broken. So they must be explained by the one feature only Adam had: his headship. That is why Paul immediately calls Adam "the figure" (*typos*) "of him that was to come." The point of comparison is not character but headship. One man acts, and his act determines the standing of all who are in him.

This also corrects a common assumption. Being in Adam does not mean every person sins knowingly, as Adam did. Verse 14 says outright that many in Adam did not sin in the likeness of his transgression, and died anyway. Being in Adam is a condition and a standing. Sins of every kind, knowing and ignorant, defiant and unintentional, flow from it (Leviticus 4:2; Numbers 15:27–31; Psalm 19:12).

What Adam Lost

Adam lost life with God, and he could not pass on to his children what he no longer had. That is the simplest way to grasp both the fallen nature and its inheritance.

The question usually goes wrong when the fallen nature is pictured as a substance, some moral contaminant passed down like a gene. The texts point instead to an absence.

What died in the day he ate

God warned, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Adam did not die physically that day. What died was life with God. Genesis 3 shows the result in real time:

- **Shame:** "they knew that they were naked" (3:7)
- **Fear and hiding:** "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (3:10)
- **Blame:** "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me" (3:12); "The serpent beguiled me" (3:13)
- **Exile:** driven from the garden, the way back guarded (3:23–24)

Paul names the condition later: "alienated from the life of God" (Ephesians 4:18). Adam was made to live with God at the center. When that life was cut off, he did not gain a new evil ingredient. He lost the life that held everything in order, and the self moved into the empty space.

He begat a son in his own likeness

> *"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." (Genesis 5:3, KJV)*

Two verses earlier, Genesis says God made man "in the likeness of God" (5:1). The same words now describe Adam's son, but the likeness is Adam's. He passes on what he has become.

A man exiled from his homeland has children born in exile. Exile is not genetic. They are born outside because that is where their father is, and they cannot simply walk back in. Every child after Genesis 3 was born east of Eden.

So something real is passed down: a genuine human nature, with body, soul, will, and the image of God still intact (Genesis 9:6; James 3:9), but in the condition Adam was now in. What cannot be passed down is the life Adam lost. Theologians from Anselm to Aquinas described original sin in just these terms, as the privation of original righteousness.

Scripture states the fact of this inheritance plainly (Job 14:4; Psalm 51:5; John 3:6). It does not explain the mechanism, and the debates over how the soul originates go beyond what the text says.

Two guardrails

The lack is not neutral. A heart without God's life does not sit empty. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). The absence leaves the self in charge, and the self in charge rebels.

The loss comes with a verdict. The privation explains the nature we inherit. Adam's headship explains the standing: "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Romans 5:18). Both are true, and the remedy has to address both.

The full statement: Adam lost life with God and came under condemnation. All who come from him are born into the same loss and the same standing, and from that loss comes a heart turned against God.

The Objection from Ezekiel

If representation is unjust when it brings death through Adam, it is equally unjust when it brings life through Christ. That is the answer to the most natural objection to everything above.

The objection runs like this. Scripture seems to say that no one suffers for an ancestor's sin: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (Ezekiel 18:20). How, then, can Adam's act count against everyone?

What Ezekiel was answering

The exiles in Babylon were quoting a proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezekiel 18:2). In effect: we are here because of our parents' sins, not ours. God's

answer removes the excuse. Their generation is guilty of its own sins, and it can still turn: "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions" (18:30).

Deuteronomy 24:16 is similar in kind. It is case law for Israel's courts: a judge may not put a son to death for his father's crime.

Meanwhile other texts affirm that the effects of sin cross generations. The Decalogue speaks of "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (Exodus 20:5). Lamentations holds both truths in one chapter: "Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities" (5:7), and "woe unto us, that we have sinned!" (5:16).

The texts stop colliding once three questions are separated:

Question	Answer	Texts
Can a court punish one person for another's crime?	No	Deuteronomy 24:16; Ezekiel 18
Do the effects of sin flow down to descendants?	Yes	Exodus 20:5; Lamentations 5:7
Can one person act *for* those under him, so that his act counts as theirs?	Yes	2 Samuel 24; Hebrews 7:9–10; Romans 5

Ezekiel 18 answers the first question. Paul's claim about Adam belongs to the third.

The idiom that changes everything

Ezekiel's phrase is "bear the iniquity" (Hebrew *nasa' 'avon*). Look where the same language appears:

- The scapegoat "shall bear upon him all their iniquities" (Leviticus 16:22).
- The Servant "shall bear their iniquities" and "bare the sin of many" (Isaiah 53:11–12).
- "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

If Ezekiel 18 meant that no one's iniquity could ever, in any sense, be borne by another, it would rule out the Day of Atonement, Isaiah 53, and the cross. The gospel depends on one person bearing what belongs to others.

So the principle cannot be applied in only one direction. Paul makes exactly this argument: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:19). The mechanism is the same. The head is different.

Jeremiah adds a final note. He also retires the sour-grapes proverb, but he places its end "in those days," inside the promise of the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:29–33). The way out of Adam's inheritance is not to deny that representation exists. It is to come under a different representative.

Not a Return to Eden

What Christ gives is not Adam's original condition restored. It is something Adam never had: a life that cannot be lost, ending in a body that cannot decay.

Paul signals this the moment he finishes calling Adam a type of Christ: "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift" (Romans 5:15). The structure is the same, one man whose act affects many. The force is not. "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

A type in Scripture is always the lesser, the shadow cast ahead of the reality. You do not restore a shadow. The reality arrives and surpasses it.

Two axes that are easy to merge

Paul works along two different lines in Romans 5:15–21, and readers often collapse them into one.

Axis	Verse	Question it answers
The scope of what is resolved	5:16, "the free gift is of many offences unto justification"	How much sin does grace deal with? All of it.
The surplus of what is given	5:15, 17, "much more… abounded… reign in life"	What is given beyond resolution? Far more than Adam had.

The first looks backward at the problem; the second looks forward at the gift. If "abundance" is read as merely "enough grace to cover a great deal of sin," the second axis disappears into the first. Even for one person with one sin, the gift would still exceed Eden.

Paul runs out of ordinary words for it. In 5:20, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," he adds a prefix to his verb: grace *hyper*-abounded, overflowed beyond overflowing.

Incorruptible

Adam was created good but able to fall, and he fell. His life depended on his own obedience. Augustine summarized the stages of the human condition in four phrases:

State	Augustine's terms	Meaning
Adam before the fall	*posse peccare, posse non peccare*	able to sin, able not to sin
Fallen humanity	*non posse non peccare*	not able not to sin
Redeemed in this life	*posse non peccare*	able not to sin, by grace
Glorified	*non posse peccare*	not able to sin

The final state is not Adam restored. It is a state Adam never had. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:42). "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (15:53). Those raised "cannot die any more" (Luke 20:36).

The KJV's "incorruption" is stronger here than the modern "imperishable." The Greek root *phthora* covers both physical decay and moral corruption (2 Peter 1:4; Galatians 6:8), and the promise reaches both.

Already, and not yet

The full incorruption of body and moral nature waits for the resurrection. Believers still sin (1 John 1:8), and the flesh still fights the Spirit (Galatians 5:17). But the seed is already planted: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible" (1 Peter 1:23).

The three aspects of salvation move at different speeds:

Aspect	When	Status
Justification	at the moment of faith	complete (Romans 5:1; 8:1)
Sanctification	throughout this life	progressive (2 Corinthians 3:18)
Glorification	at the resurrection	future, but certain (Romans 8:30)

A believer is no more justified at the end of life than at the beginning. What grows is the conformity of life to what has already been declared. And what faith now holds, it will one day see: "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Into, With, In

Romans 6 explains how a person comes to be in Christ: by being joined to his death and resurrection, so that what happened to him happened with him to them. Romans 5 established that there are two heads. Romans 6 describes the union.

The chapter opens with the objection that Romans 5:20 invites: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (6:1). Paul's answer is not a rule. It is a fact: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (6:2). A dead man does not keep his citizenship in the country he died out of.

Into

> *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3, KJV)*

"Into" (*eis*) is a word of entry. The best parallel is 1 Corinthians 10:2, where Israel was "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Israel crossed on dry ground. Being baptized into Moses meant coming under him as head and leader by passing through the sea with him.

Christians differ on how water baptism relates to this union. Some see it as the means, some as the sign and seal, some as the public picture of a union already formed by faith. In the New Testament faith and baptism come together (Galatians 3:26–27), and Paul's point stands in every view: the Christian life began as entry into Christ, and specifically into his death.

With

Paul then builds a run of compound words on *syn*, "with":

Verse	Greek	Meaning
6:4	*synetaphēmen*	buried with
6:5	*symphytoi*	planted together, grown together
6:6	*synestaurōthē*	crucified with
6:8	*syzēsomen*	shall live with

The KJV's "planted together" (6:5) keeps the botanical image the modern "united with" loses. Union with Christ is not glue. It is a graft that has taken, two living things sharing one life (John 15:5; Romans 11:17).

> *"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." (Romans 6:6, KJV)*

"Old man" is better than "old self." The word is *anthrōpos*, the same word Paul has just used for Adam, the "one man." The old man is who we were in Adam, the whole person under the first head.

"Destroyed" translates *katargeō*, from *argos*, "idle." It means rendered inoperative, switched off, stripped of power. Sin still exists; believers still sin. What has been deactivated is sin's right to rule. The goal is not "never sin again" but "no longer serve." The slavery is over.

Then comes the principle that holds it together: "For he that is dead is freed from sin" (6:7). The Greek verb is the one Paul uses everywhere for *justify*: the one who has died "has been justified from sin." Death settles every claim. Sin's legal claim (Romans 5) and its ruling claim (Romans 6) are cancelled by the same death.

In

> *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:11, KJV)*

"Reckon" (*logizesthe*) is the verb of Romans 4, where God "counted" righteousness to Abraham. God reckoned righteousness to you. Now you are told to reckon yourself dead to sin and alive to God. It is not make-believe. It is entering in your own ledger what is already true in God's.

The tense is ongoing: keep reckoning. The fact does not wear off, because Christ died to sin "once" (6:10). What wears off is our reckoning of it. When temptation arrives claiming the right to command, reckoning answers that the claim is void.

The Greek of 6:11 ends "*in* Christ Jesus," which the KJV renders "through." With it the chapter's progression is complete: baptized *into* him, buried and raised *with* him, alive *in* him.

Present yourselves

The commands follow the facts. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (6:12). Sin has lost its throne but not its voice, and the question is the one Adam faced: whose voice will you listen to?

"Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (6:13). "Instruments" (*hopla*) is usually the word for weapons. Your hands and tongue serve one army or the other.

Both halves of the verse matter. Stopping sin without yielding to God leaves the center empty, and Jesus described what happens to a house left "empty, swept, and garnished" (Matthew 12:44–45). The center must be filled, not just cleared.

Then the promise: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (6:14). Law demands and gives no power. Grace supplies what it commands.

Freedom from sin is not freedom to self. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (6:18). Adam chose autonomy and found slavery. Biblical freedom is belonging to the right Master.

The Boy Who Came Out of Confession

Gratitude for forgiveness is the right motive for holiness, but it is not the power. That distinction explains why so much sincere resolve runs out.

When I was a boy, I was Catholic. I would go into the confessional and come out a new kid. My mother loved confession day. We were so good, at least until the ability to resist had worn off.

The instinct behind that experience is biblical. "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:47). Forgiveness received produces love, and love wants to obey. Paul grounds his call to holiness in mercy: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God" (Romans 12:1).

But a feeling of being forgiven, however real, fades. If the Christian life rested on that feeling alone, it would run in a cycle: forgiven, renewed, fading, failing, forgiven again.

Romans 7 and "I myself"

Paul describes the same experience: "for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:18). The desire is there. The power is not.

The chapter first explains why the law cannot supply that power. The law is "holy, and just, and good" (7:12), yet sin used it as a base of operations: "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me" (7:11). The verb "deceived" is the one Paul uses of the serpent and Eve (2 Corinthians 11:3). In Adam, every person who meets God's command relives Eden.

The law did two things. It exposed sin, shining a light so "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (7:13). And it provoked the flesh, which reaches for whatever is forbidden (7:8). It never gave power.

Interpreters have long debated whether Romans 7:14–25 describes Paul before conversion or Paul as a believer. Paul's autobiography is deliberately paradigmatic. He calls his own conversion a "pattern" for those who would believe (1 Timothy 1:16), and he writes "I" so that every reader in Adam can recognize himself.

The phrase that may settle the debate comes in 7:25: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." "I myself" (*autos egō*) can mean "I, left to myself." It describes the person drawing on his own resources: mind on one side, flesh on the other, the law in hand, the Spirit nowhere mentioned. That is the person before conversion. It is also the believer who tries to live by "the oldness of the letter" (7:6) rather than by the Spirit.

It is also a boy coming out of confession. The forgiveness was real. What he did not know was that the master had been deposed, and that the power to live free was not his own.

Motive, break, and power

What is needed	Supplied by	Texts
The motive: why would I want to go back?	forgiveness	Luke 7:47; Romans 12:1
The break: sin's reign ended	union with Christ's death	Romans 6:2–7
The power: ability that does not wear off	the indwelling Spirit	Romans 8:2–4, 13

Romans 7 ends with a cry for a Person, not a program: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (7:24–25).

The Center Restored

The life Adam lost is restored by the Spirit of God taking up residence where sin had lived. Romans 7 and 8 trace this with a single verb.

Two occupants

Twice in Romans 7, Paul names what has moved into the empty center: "it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (7:17, 20). And: "in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (7:18). The presence of an enemy, and the absence of good. Both halves of what Adam passed down.

Compare the construction of Galatians 2:20: "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The same "not I… but" structure, with a different occupant.

Now follow the verb "dwell" (*oikeō*) into Romans 8:

Text	Who dwells
Romans 7:17, 20	sin "that dwelleth in me"
Romans 7:18	"in me… dwelleth no good thing"
Romans 8:9	"if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you"
Romans 8:11	"his Spirit that dwelleth in you"

Paul answers "sin dwells in me" with "the Spirit dwells in you." The privation that began in Eden ends here.

The Spirit of life

Romans 6:4 promised that we "should walk in newness of life." Romans 7:6 names that newness: we serve "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." Romans 8:2 calls the Spirit by what he brings: "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

The law had a perfect blueprint and no materials: "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh" (8:3). The Spirit supplies what the law could only demand. Ezekiel foresaw it: "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" (Ezekiel 36:27).

And this is the test of belonging: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (8:9). To be in Christ and to have his Spirit are the same reality.

One verse holds both heads at once, inside one believer: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (8:10). Adam's consequence remains in the mortal body. Christ's gift lives in the Spirit. That is why the struggle continues even though the verdict is settled, and why the Spirit's presence now is the pledge that "he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies" (8:11).

Adopted and born

Adam passed down two things: a standing and a nature. God gives a new one of each.

What is passed on	From Adam	From God in Christ
Standing	condemnation (Romans 5:18)	adoption as sons, *huiothesia* (8:15)
Nature	his likeness, without God's life (Genesis 5:3)	new birth as children, *tekna* (8:16; John 1:12–13)

Adoption alone would be a legal fiction; birth alone would leave the verdict untouched. In Christ a person receives both.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (8:15). Fear was the first emotion after the fall (Genesis 3:10). The Spirit does not lead back into it.

"Abba" is the word Jesus prayed in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36). Adam failed in a garden of plenty. Christ obeyed in a garden of agony. Those in him now address the Father with the Son's own word, spoken at the moment of his obedience.

When One in Christ Sins

When a believer sins, the union stands, fellowship is disrupted and restored through confession, and the remedy is walking again by the Spirit, never a return to the law. Romans 6 explains why not to sin. Romans 8 and 1 John explain what happens when one does.

No condemnation

> *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1, KJV)*

The Greek opens with its most emphatic word: "No… condemnation." None at all. The word is *katakrima*, and it appears only three times in the New Testament, all in this argument:

Text	Condemnation
Romans 5:16, 18	through Adam's offence, "judgment… to condemnation"
Romans 8:1	"no condemnation" for those in Christ Jesus
Romans 8:3	God "condemned sin in the flesh"
Romans 8:34	"Who is he that condemneth?"

There is no condemnation for the sinner because the condemnation fell on sin itself. God sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin" (8:3). "For sin" (*peri hamartias*) is the Greek Old Testament's standard term for the sin offering (Leviticus 5:6–11; Psalm 40:6). Sin was condemned once, in Christ's flesh, and it cannot be condemned again in yours.

Bathed once, feet washed often

> *"He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." (John 13:10, KJV)*

The bath happens once: union with Christ, as final as his death to sin "once" (Romans 6:10). The feet need regular washing from the dust of walking through the world. A believer who sins does not need to be re-joined to Christ. He needs his feet washed.

John gives the means and the ground in one passage: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). And: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (2:1). Romans 8:34 shows that advocate at work: Christ "who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The only one with the right to condemn is the one pleading our case.

Three levels

Level	Affected by sin?	Texts
Union and standing	No. The verdict stands.	Romans 8:1, 33–34
Fellowship and joy	Yes. Restored through confession.	1 John 1:6–9; Psalm 51:12
Consequences	Yes. A father's discipline, not a judge's sentence.	Hebrews 12:5–11; Galatians 6:7–8

David, after Bathsheba, prayed, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation" (Psalm 51:12), not the salvation itself. Yet the consequence still came: "The LORD also hath put away thy sin… Howbeit… the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die" (2 Samuel 12:13–14). Peter denied Christ three times and was restored with three questions and a commission (John 21:15–17).

The warning passages

Some texts raise the question of persistent sin (Romans 6:16; 1 John 3:6–9; Hebrews 6:4–6; 10:26). Christians read them differently. The Reformed tradition holds that true believers will persevere, and that a settled life of unrepentant sin shows a person never truly belonged (1 John 2:19). The Arminian and Wesleyan traditions hold that a believer can fall away through persistent unbelief. The Catholic tradition distinguishes mortal from venial sin.

All agree on the distinction the text itself makes. A child of God who sins and hates it, like David, Peter, and the "I" of Romans 7, is different from a person settled in sin without repentance. The second raises the question of which master the person actually serves, which is why Scripture says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Getting up again

The remedy for a failing believer is not to tighten the rules and try harder. That is "the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6), the old marriage that bore fruit unto death. The remedy is the Spirit:

> *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Romans 8:13, KJV)*

The old man was crucified once (6:6). His deeds are put to death daily, by the Spirit (8:13). So the path after failure runs: confess, stand on the Advocate's work, reckon yourself dead to sin and alive to God again, and walk by the Spirit.

What It Looks Like

Life in Christ looks like Genesis 3 running in reverse, and it shows up as overflow rather than obligation. If being in Christ restores God's life at the center, the symptoms of Adam's loss should begin to reverse.

Adam's loss (Genesis 3)	Life in Christ
Shame: "they knew that they were naked" (3:7)	"no condemnation" (Romans 8:1); clothed with Christ (Galatians 3:27)
Fear: "I was afraid" (3:10)	"not… the spirit of bondage again to fear" (Romans 8:15)
Hiding: "I hid myself" (3:10)	walking in the light, confessing (1 John 1:7, 9); coming boldly (Hebrews 4:16)
Blame: "The woman… The serpent" (3:12–13)	owning sin: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned" (Psalm 51:4)

Adam's loss (Genesis 3)	Life in Christ
Exile from God's presence (3:23–24)	"access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Romans 5:2)
The self at the center	"yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20)

Overflow

The Gospels and Acts show the reversal in actual people.

The woman at the well (John 4). Jesus promised water that would be "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (4:14). She left her waterpot, the thing she came for, and told the town: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did" (4:29). What had been her shame became her testimony. Shame and hiding, reversed.

Zacchaeus (Luke 19). Jesus called him by name before he had done anything (19:5). The change answered the welcome; it did not earn it. "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (19:8). The law required restitution plus a fifth (Leviticus 6:5). Zacchaeus overflowed past the law's measure, which is Romans 5:20 in a single life. The self at the center, reversed.

The apostles (Acts 5; 16). Beaten, they left "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (5:41). In the stocks, "at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God" (16:25). Fear, reversed.

No one commanded any of this. The response was overflow, the same "abounding" of Romans 5 showing up in human lives. Jesus described it: "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," speaking "of the Spirit" (John 7:38–39).

Not every overflow is dramatic. Romans 5:3–4 describes a slower one, in which tribulation produces patience, experience, and hope. Some branches burst into fruit; others ripen across a long season.

Testing

Scripture commands self-examination (2 Corinthians 13:5), but two questions must be kept apart. *Am I in Christ?* is a question of position, and it has no degrees. *How deeply am I living out of him?* is a question of abiding, and it does: branches bear "fruit," "more fruit," and "much fruit" (John 15:2, 5).

John wrote his first letter "that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). His tests examine the direction of a life, not its perfection:

Test	Text
Obedience: walking as he walked	1 John 2:3–6
Love for other believers	1 John 3:14
Confessing Jesus as the Son of God	1 John 4:15

Test	Text
The Spirit's presence	1 John 4:13
Sin as an enemy, not a settled practice	1 John 3:9
Affection not resting on the world	1 John 2:15

Asked as matters of degree, the same tests measure depth: Is my love deeper this year than last? My obedience more willing? My affection for the world weaker?

Feelings are a gauge, not the engine. "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart" (1 John 3:20). Yet the Spirit does give an inner witness: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Even the fight against sin is evidence of life, because those wholly in the flesh do not fight their sin as an enemy (Galatians 5:17).

Conformed to His Image

The goal of being in Christ is likeness: Adam's image, passed down as a loss, replaced by the image of the Son.

> *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Romans 8:29, KJV)*

The goal of predestination in this verse is not first a destination but a shape. "Conformed" (*symmorphos*) is one more *syn-* word: co-formed, sharing the same form. It is the same word Paul uses for the resurrection body, "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21).

This verse closes a thread that runs from the first page of Scripture:

Text	The image
Genesis 1:26–27	God makes man "in our image, after our likeness"
Genesis 5:3	Adam "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image"
2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15	Christ is "the image of God"
Romans 8:29	believers "conformed to the image of his Son"
1 Corinthians 15:49	"as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"

Humanity was made in God's image. Adam passed on his own image, the image of a man who had lost God's life. Christ is the true image of God, and those in him are being remade in his likeness. The work is underway now, "changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18), and it will be finished at the resurrection.

"Firstborn among many brethren" names God's purpose: not only a Son, but a family of sons who look like him. Adam's firstborn killed his brother (Genesis 4:8). The new Firstborn laid down his life for his brethren, and "is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11).

Creation too

Adam's headship reached past his descendants to the creation placed under him. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Genesis 3:17). Paul sees the same reach in reverse:

> *"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Romans 8:21, KJV)*

"Creature" here means the creation. Its groaning is labor, not death: "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (8:22). The pain of Genesis 3:16 becomes the pain of a birth.

Believers groan too, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (8:23). That is the final answer to the cry of Romans 7:24, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Adoption is already received (8:15) and still awaited (8:23): complete in status, not yet revealed.

The scope of "in Christ" is finally cosmic. God's purpose is to "gather together in one all things in Christ" (Ephesians 1:10). The Greek verb is built on *kephalē*, "head": to head up all things in him. Adam was the head of the old creation and dragged it down. Christ is the head of the new, and he will bring all of it under himself, restored.

Nothing Shall Separate

Those in Christ cannot be accused, condemned, or separated from God's love, because that love is located in a Person, and nothing can remove them from him.

Romans 8 ends with questions no one can answer against them. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (8:31). "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (8:32). The verb "spared not" echoes Moriah, where Abraham "withheld not" his son (Genesis 22:12). At Moriah a ram was provided and Isaac was spared. For God's own Son there was no substitute. He was the substitute.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (8:33–34). The courtroom of Romans 5 has emptied. The condemnation that came through Adam (5:18) has no one left to pronounce it.

The world keeps a different ledger: "we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (8:36, quoting Psalm 44:22). The verb is the reckoning verb again. God reckons us righteous; the world reckons us sheep. Paul says whose accounting is final: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (8:37). "More than conquerors" is one Greek word, *hypernikōmen*: we hyper-conquer. It is the "much more" of Romans 5 in the language of battle.

> *"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38–39, KJV)*

Death heads the list: the death that reigned from Adam to Moses, the death sin pays as wages. It cannot separate. And the last word of the section is the preposition this whole study has followed:

Text	Preposition	What
Romans 5:21	through	eternal life "by Jesus Christ our Lord"
Romans 6:11	in	alive unto God in Christ Jesus
Romans 6:23	in	eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord
Romans 8:1	in	no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus
Romans 8:39	in	the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord

God's love is not floating free in the universe. It is located in his Son. To be in Christ is to be in that love, and since nothing can separate the Son from the Father's love, nothing can separate those who are in him.

The answer

The study began with a single verse: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). Romans 5 through 8 has unpacked every word of it.

To be in Adam is to be born under a head who lost life with God, sharing his condemnation and his likeness, with sin dwelling where God's life should be. To be in Christ is to have been moved under a new Head: received by faith, baptized into his death, buried and raised with him, his obedience counted as yours, the old man crucified, sin's rule switched off. It is to be indwelt by the Spirit of life, adopted and born of God, crying "Abba, Father." It is to be fought for by an Advocate when you fall, and put to death sin's deeds by his Spirit when you rise. And it is to be on your way to a likeness Adam never had: conformed to the image of the Son, raised incorruptible, heir of all things with him.

Adam could only pass on what he had lost. Christ gives what he has. "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45).

A Note on Translation

Scripture is quoted from the King James Version throughout. In a few verses central to this study, the KJV renders the Greek in a way that obscures the point, and the reader should know where.

Text	KJV reads	The Greek	Why it matters
Romans 6:11; 6:23	"through Jesus Christ our Lord"	*en Christō Iēsou*, "in Christ Jesus"	Hides Paul's move from "through" (5:21) to "in"
Romans 8:1	adds "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"	the earliest manuscripts end at "in Christ Jesus"	The added clause makes "no condemnation" sound conditional; in Paul,

Text	KJV reads	The Greek	Why it matters
			walking by the Spirit is its fruit (8:4)
Romans 8:16; 8:26	"the Spirit itself"	grammatically neuter *pneuma*, but a personal Spirit who witnesses and intercedes	NKJV: "the Spirit Himself"
Romans 6:17	"that form of doctrine which was delivered you"	"into which you were delivered"	God handed the believer over into the mold of the gospel, not the other way around
Romans 6:6	"destroyed"	*katargeō*, rendered inoperative	Sin's rule is switched off, not sin annihilated
Romans 6:7	"freed from sin"	*dedikaiōtai*, "justified from sin"	Joins the justification of Romans 5 to the freedom of Romans 6
Romans 8:2	"made me free"	the earliest manuscripts read "thee" (singular)	The cry of 7:24 is answered personally: the Spirit has set *you* free

In many other places the KJV is the stronger rendering for this study: "old man" for "old self" (6:6), "planted together" for "united" (6:5), "reckon" for "consider" (6:11), "dominion" (6:9, 14; 7:1), and "incorruption" for "imperishable" (1 Corinthians 15:42, 53).