

# **I D E N T I T Y**

**The inspiration to being yourself**

**NAK Ernest**

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## **DEDICATION**

*To Prophetess Ivy Tetteh  
(Daybreak Chaple International)*

*In you I have a prophetess, a mother, and a  
counselor. Thank you for always being there for  
me.*

## **Other books by NAK Ernest**

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

Moving Forward

Rooted in Christ

The Qualities of a Giver

Overcoming Satanic Strategies

Yes! The Answer God Always Gives to Prayer

## ENDORSEMENTS

Next to salvation, the subject of our identity in Christ is probably the most crucial to our walk of faith. It is therefore such a blessing to have this often misunderstood subject so succinctly explained by Pastor Ernest in this book. It won't take you long to read, but the truths in this book could transform your Christian life forever.

*Pastor Jewel Enyonam Ewoade  
Author and Associate pastor:  
Charismatic Evangelistic Ministry  
Accra-Ghana*

I have read this piece several times and am still reading it. The information is profound and remarkably stated with Sound doctrine. I personally recommend that every Christian should take a look at it and read it. More especially for pastors, Church leaders, and shepherds. God bless Pastor NAK Ernest.

*Rev. Nathaniel Osei  
President and Founder:  
Miracle Encounter Outreach Ministries  
Ghana-Accra*

This a very challenging piece, in the sense that our foundational doctrine about salvation and what it entails is flawed to say the least. This book is to help us unlearn in order to relearn so that we can learn our capacity and abilities trapped in our identity in Christ.

*Pastor Alexander Amankwah  
President: Prayer Hub Global,  
Accra-Ghana*

Identity Crisis is one of the challenge most Christian face. Most people are not assured of their salvation in Christ. This book is an eye opener for every believer to know your true identity in Christ. A must read for every believer.

*Rev. Racheal Stuff  
Ordained Minister: Methodist Church  
Koforidua Diocese, Adweso Circuit, Ghana*

In this book you are going to come to the truth of your true identify. It lays emphasis on the root of sin and how by Christ - life - we can freely walk in righteousness. This is a must have in your library for anyone who looks to walk in his true identity.

*Rev. Justice Kweku Barnes  
Founder and President:  
Jireh Prophetic School of Ministry  
Accra-Ghana*

Without Knowledge of your identity, you may exist as a nonentity in Christianity. This book by my brother,

Pastor Ernest will open your eyes for you to LIVE all that JESUS died for you to be!

*Rev. Ebenezer Owusu-Ansah  
Great Expectation Ministries  
Dome-Accra*

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# Chapter I

## The Real You

I might not know you, but I surely know you aren't what I see: tall, short, white, black, fat, slim, white eyes, brown eyes, that's not who you are. You're not just your body. Neither are you where you come from (a Ghanaian or an American) or what you do (a pastor or a banker). The real you is your human spirit. You are made of spirit, soul and body, but the real you is the spirit (your human spirit), the deepest part of you, your very core.

*The real you is your human spirit.*

Then the Lord God formed man

of dust from the ground, and  
breathed into his nostrils the *breath*  
of life; and man became a living being.  
Genesis 2:7

Adam was not living until God *breathed* into him. That means without the *breath* of God, Adam couldn't have lived; he was as good as dead. That *breath* is the *human spirit*. This is confirmed in Proverbs 20:27, which says that “the *spirit* of man is the lamp of the Lord...”, and Job 26:4 which says “...whose *spirit* was expressed through you?” The Hebrew word (*neshamah*) translated *spirit* in both verses is the same word used for *breath* in Genesis 2:7.

This is further emphasized in Ecclesiastes 12:7 (MSG), which explains that at death, “the body is put back in the same ground it came from and the *spirit* returns to God, who first *breathed* it”. In other words, you only live whiles your human spirit is in the body. That means, the real you is the human spirit, not the body.

## **Why the human spirit**

The human spirit was created to connect

with God. The part of our being that receives and contain God is our human spirit. Adam at this stage could connect with God and commune with Him because of His human spirit. He was pure and sinless at His very core because his human spirit was the very image of God in its purest form. By this pure spirit, God was assimilated into Adam's entire being as his life and everything.

*The human spirit was created to connect with God.*

This means Adam was righteous at the core. His identity was "righteous". The real Adam was not what we saw on his body, but his spirit, at his core which was righteous. Therefore, he naturally inclined and gravitated towards God, and practiced righteousness because he was righteous. Please note that the practice of Righteousness didn't make Adam righteous; he was righteous so he practiced righteousness.

*The practice of righteousness didn't make Adam righteous; he was righteous so he practiced righteousness*

However, the problem started when Adam sinned (the fall). The human spirit was

damaged: it became depraved and flawed. At this point, Adam lost connection with God. His ability to fellowship with God was broken. It is called spiritual death. Adam might not have died physically that day, but he died spiritually. Thus, the result of Adam's sin was death – spiritual death at the very core.

*The result of Adam's sin was death – spiritual death  
at the very core.*

## Chapter 2

# The Real Problem

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so *death spread to all men*, because all sinned...  
Romans 5:12

The results of Adam's sin didn't stay with him alone. According to Romans 5:12, *death spread to all men* because of Adam's sin. That means that we were all born dead. Right at birth we were dead. We were born spiritually dead. Romans 5:17 continues to say that by the transgression of the one the *many died*.

This shows us the real problem of the world

today. Many people think our problem is sin, but sin is not our problem. Our real problem is death. Sin is just a result of our death. We sin because we are dead at the core. Before the fall, man was righteous, so he practiced righteousness, but after the fall man was spiritually dead, so he “practices *deadness*”.

*Sin is not our problem. Our real problem is death*

To “practice deadness” is to sin. To be spiritually dead is to be a sinner. When Adam was spiritually alive (connected to God) he was righteous, but when he fell, his *spirit* was flawed and he became a sinner (disconnected from God or dead). Hence, *Adams identity was changed from righteous to sinner* (which the bible calls death). It is this new identity that has spread to all men by default.

In other words, as bible says in Ephesians 2:1-5 and Colossians 2:13, we are all born dead or born sinners. Our identity right from birth is sinner or death. Why? Because our human spirit, which is the real us is dead.

*Our identity right from birth is sinner*

This explains why sin is natural to the human being right from birth. Therefore, we naturally incline and gravitate towards satan, and practice sin because we are sinners. Sin doesn't make us sinners; we sin because we are sinners, just as righteousness didn't make Adam righteous, but he was righteous so he practiced righteousness.

*Sin doesn't make us sinners; we sin because we are sinners*

To put it in another way, sin doesn't make us dead; we sin because we are dead. Furthermore, because we are spiritually dead right at birth, and our identity is death, sin becomes the inevitable consequence. We naturally practice who we are. We live our identity naturally. To live in a manner you are not is pretense. When we were righteous at the core, we practiced righteousness, now that we are dead, we practice sin. That means the problem is not sin but death. If we can deal with death, sin will have no place in us.

*We naturally practice who we are. We live our identity naturally*

## Life

That's why Jesus didn't come to solve a sin problem but a death problem. Have u ever wondered why Jesus came to give us life? Well, it's simply because the problem is death. The gospel solution is not a "behavioral fix" but life. Jesus didn't come to put us on a "behavioral improvement program", but to give us life. That's why *Christianity is not morality. It is higher than that.*

*The gospel solution is not a "behavioral fix" but life*

That's why it's funny to think that, at salvation we gave our life to Jesus. We couldn't have, because we didn't have any; we were dead! At salvation, we don't give our life to Christ; Christ gives His life to us. Jesus himself said "I came that they may have *life*, and have *it* abundantly" (John 10:10). Romans 6:23 says "the wages of sin is *death*, but the free gift of God is eternal *life* in Christ Jesus our Lord".

*At salvation, we don't give our life to Christ; Christ gives His life to us.*

It's like experiencing some symptoms of

a sickness: headache, fever, chills, fatigue, shivering and so on. Without expert's advice, many people look for drugs to cure these symptoms themselves, and they aggravate the problem. They do this because in their ignorance, they think the problem is the symptoms being experienced. However, if they consult a medical doctor, he'll diagnose and treat the underlying problem causing the symptoms. Once the underlying problem (e.g. Malaria) is treated, all the symptoms vanish.

Jesus is the expert here. He knows sin is just the symptom, but the real problem is death, so he treats death and not sin. Once death is treated sin will have no place.

The problem with the church today is that, many churches and many preachers in their ignorance are working hard to solve a sin problem. They do this by preaching so called hard sermons: "stop sinning, repent or perish" sermons. Ironically, those sermons haven't and can't solve the problem. The message is the gospel of grace. Grace is the life that cures our death. It's called the good news. Grace is the

only thing that produces life to solve our core problem of death. Jesus Christ is that grace. The question is, how did Jesus solve this *death* problem with His *life*? How does He send us back to our original identity which we lost in Adam?

# Chapter 3

# With Christ

But *by His doing* you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.

Corinthians 1:30

One thing we should never forget is that our salvation from death to life, or from being sinners to being saints (righteous), is not our doing but the doing of the Lord. When we call upon Him and ask Him to save us, then He does it all by Himself. He made Christ our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption by Himself. We did nothing to be who we are in

Christ. It is *by His doing*, not our doing.

*Died, buried, and resurrected with Him*

How does He do it then? He does it by Christ, yes, but how does he do it by Christ? Well, Romans chapter six has the answer:

<sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that all of us who have been *baptized into Christ Jesus* have been *baptized into His death*? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been *buried with Him* through *baptism into death*, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we *too might walk in newness of life*.

Romans 6:3-4

The very moment we accepted Jesus as our Lord and savior according to Roman 10:9-10, we were received into Christ. It is called salvation. However, in Romans 6:3, another phrase is introduced – “*baptized into Christ*”. Salvation is baptism into Christ, but as Apostle Paul said, many people don’t know.

*Salvation is baptism into Christ.*

Most people have explained Romans 6:3-4 as a scripture for water baptism, but they are

wrong. It's not a scripture for water baptism, but Christ baptism which is salvation. In fact, water baptism is relevant because of Christ baptism. Water baptism is a physical demonstration of what spiritually happens during Christ baptism – salvation.

Apostle Paul took his time to explain why salvation is Christ baptism: he said we are baptized into His death. Thus, we are immersed or submerged into His death. By implication, we partake in Christ death at salvation. This simply means that, we died with Christ. He further explains that, because we died with Him, we were also *buried with Him*. The story didn't end there. We also resurrected with Him. The same way Jesus was resurrected by God's glory, we also were resurrected with a new life. That is why it's baptism. We go down with him by death and burial, and we come up with Him by resurrection.

Do you see a very important thing happening during this special moment of our *baptism into Christ*? Do you realize that it's no more Jesus Christ dying for us, but we dying *with Him*? Yes,

Jesus died for us, but we died with Him. Please don't forget this fact because that's exactly where the difference between the *born* and the *born again* is. That is the distinguishing factor. That is where the miraculous happens in the life of the saved. That is exactly where we get our new identity.

*Jesus died for us, but we died with Him.*

## **The old self**

Now, this unity between us and Christ, as we are baptized into Him, happened spiritually. It didn't happen with our physical bodies. We didn't feel His nails, and obviously didn't feel the darkest part of hell as He was buried. Yet, we died with Him and was buried with Him. The reason is simply this: we are not our physical body. The real us; our real identity, died with Him. Our human spirit, which at this point is dead, and separated from God, died with Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 6:5-7 explains this.

He made Him who knew no sin to be *sin* on our behalf, so that we might become

the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21

There are two mentions of the word sin in the scripture above. The first mention is a verb: “He made Him who knew no *sin*....” This talks about the actions of sin, as in stealing, murdering, lying etc. Jesus knew no sin - He didn’t commit actions of sin - He never sinned.

The second mention of sin is a noun: “..... to be *sin* on our behalf.....”. This is about the very *nature of sin*. The dead human spirit. The so called “adamic nature”. What gives us the identity of a sinner. Thus, Jesus became what makes us sin. He became spiritually dead on our behalf. No wonder He screamed *Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani* (Matthew 27:46). He was experiencing separation and punishment from God on our behalf at that moment because of this nature of sin. However, at that same moment, He literally carried this sinful nature to the cross and put it to death.

So, this is how we died with Him. The real us at the core, died with him. Our adamic nature, our sinful nature, our dead human spirit, the

sinner that makes us sin, died with Him. Paul calls it our *old self* in Roman 6:6-7

Knowing this, that *our old self was crucified with Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

Romans 6:6

Our *old self* was crucified with Christ. Notice the word *self*. It connotes identity. It is qualified by the word *old*, because it used to be our identity. Now that we are in Christ, we no more have this dead nature, because we were crucified with Him, not about to, but crucified (past tense). Our old self is dead. Hallelujah!

*Our old self was crucified with Christ. Our old self is dead.*

## Chapter 4

# The New Identity

Our old self was crucified with Christ. Currently, it is dead, because we died with Him. Nevertheless, not only did we die with him, we also resurrected with Him.

For if we have become *united with Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection

Romans 6:5

<sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as *Christ*

was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:3-4

Just as Christ resurrected from the dead through the glory of the father, we also resurrected with him with a brand-new life. Our old self died with Him at the cross, but our new self came up with Him at the resurrection. God did a spiritual surgery on us to change our identity: He gave us a new heart and a new spirit – our new self (Ezekiel 36:26).

Paul gave a personal testimony about this in Galatians 2:20: "*I have been crucified with Christ (Past); and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (present); and the life which I live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me*". The old self died, but the new has come. The new is the very life of Christ, and nature of God (2 Peter 1:3-4).

Currently, as you read this book, if you are a born-again believer, your old self is dead, and your new self is alive. Your old self, which

had the propensity, the drive, and constant motivation to sin is dead, and now your new self which has the propensity, the drive, and constant motivation to righteousness is alive. Your old self which was spiritually alive to sin but dead to God (separated from God), is dead, and your new self which is spiritually alive to God and dead to sin is alive (Romans 6:2).

*Our old self died with Him at the cross, but our new self came up with Him at the resurrection.*

## **Not our Job**

Have you ever heard any preacher say we should kill our old self? I mean, they will tell you to kill it with prayer, fasting and reading of the word on constant basis. Well, I have heard it many times. In fact, I even preached it. But it's very obvious that it's not our job to kill the old self. Truth is, we can't even kill the old self. Moreover, it does not even exist in the believer for it to be killed in the first place. The old self is crucified (killed) the moment we come to Christ.

Prayer, fasting and reading of the word are

not meant to kill the old self. No so-called spiritual activity can deal with the old man, because the work on your identity, the human spirit is finished. Jesus finished it completely by His death and resurrection. We don't have to compliment that work with prayer and fasting. I know people who fornicated, and even committed adultery while fasting. One man, who was a renowned young pastor, narrated his story of how he broke his virginity right after returning from a 21 day fast amidst hot prayers to me many years ago.

*Prayer, fasting and reading of the word are not meant to kill the old self.*

Many people also try to deal with the old self with resolutions. Especially December 31<sup>st</sup> night resolution and New Year resolution. It's the funniest of all. You can't merely resolve not to sin. That is "works righteousness" and I promise you will fail. It's like the lady that called me on the morning of 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2019 to tell me she's not going to mess up again, she's made a promise to God, and that she's beginning on a clean slate. Guess what? She called me again

by 11pm same day crying, and even wanting to kill herself because she actually messed up. Resolution can't stop us from sinning. Only the knowledge that the old self is dead can do that.

*Resolution can't stop us from sinning. Only the knowledge that the old self is dead can do that.*

## **Single identity**

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

2 Corinthians 5:17

The old is gone, and the new has come. In Christ we are brand new creatures, period! No two ways about that. We don't have dual identity. It's either black or white, goat or sheep, darkness or light, Adam or Christ, hell or heaven. We are not the old self and the new self at the same time. We are just the new self.

The doctrine that we are both the old and new self, that is why we struggle with sin is false. We struggle because of our unrenewed mind (more in chapter six).

*The doctrine that we are both the old and new self, that*

*is why we struggle with sin is false.*

For He rescued us from the *domain of darkness*, and transferred us to the *kingdom of His beloved Son*

Colossians 1:13

Jesus' death was once and for all time, so is our old self. Our rescue or deliverance from spiritual death (our old identity or Adam) was not progressive, it was instant. It happened right at the moment we made the decision and received Christ. Salvation is instant but growth is progressive. Our learning, renewal of mind, and growing in Christ is progressive. A process that will never end till Jesus' return.

*Salvation is instant but growth is progressive.*

However, we are not talking about the mind here. Your identity is not your mind or your thoughts. Sin and flesh dwell in the mind, but your identity is your human spirit, which is now brand new because you are in Christ.

*Sin and flesh dwell in the mind*

If we didn't have dual identity in Adam, then we don't have dual identity in Christ. In Adam

we were sinners and sinners alone, so we practiced sin. In fact, even when we did good in Adam, it still didn't change our identity from sinners to saints, or give us dual identity, we were still sinners. In the same way, in Christ, we are saints and saints alone, so we practice righteousness. However, when we sin in Christ, it still doesn't change our identity from saints to sinners, or give us dual identity, we are still saints.

*Sin doesn't give us dual identity in Christ*



## Chapter 5

# Slaves of Righteousness

At the milk level we learn that He died for us, but we must grow into the bone level where we learn that we died with Him. It's very important to know this, because that is the turning point. It is the crust of the matter. Let's read the scripture in Romans again, adding verse 7 to it.

<sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of

the Father, so we too *might walk in newness of life*. <sup>5</sup>For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, <sup>6</sup>knowing this, that *our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; <sup>7</sup>for he who has died is freed from sin.*

Romans 6:3-7

We see in verse four that, the consequence of our dying with Him was so that we will walk in *newness of life*. Apostle Paul reiterates this in verse six by saying *our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.*

Again we see that because the *old man (which is actually us)* was crucified with Him, sin cannot rule over us any longer. This is emphasized in verse seven which says “*for he who has died is freed from sin*”. Thus, because we died with Christ and resurrected with Him, we are freed from sin. Sin is no more our slave master.

*We are freed from sin. Sin is no more our slave master.*

## Slaves of Righteousness

<sup>17</sup>But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, <sup>18</sup>and *having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

Romans 6:17-19

Righteousness is our new master. With our former identity (the old man) we were slaves of sin, but when we died with Christ (with the old man crucified) we were freed from sin and became slaves of righteousness.

The new identity we received from Christ, naturally wants to practice righteousness. He feeds on righteousness. In John 8:44, Jesus told the Pharisees, “you are of your father the devil, and *you want to do the desires of your father*”. Remember this Pharisees were not born again, and therefore still in Adam. Jesus said *they want to do their father, the devil’s desire*. That is the nature of everyone that is not dead with Christ (born again) *you always want to do evil*. Sin comes naturally because you are its slave.

However, when we are born again, we now want to do good; we want to be holy, we want to practice righteousness, because we are slaves to righteousness. We can't help it but be holy. A slave is controlled by his master, so are we controlled by righteousness.

That is why under grace we have no excuse to sin. Under the law you have an excuse. Your excuse is simple, "I'm dead so I sin", or "I have the Adamic nature so don't fault me if I sin". After-all sinners sin. Nonetheless, under grace that which made you sin (the old man) is crucified, and that which makes you righteous, the new man has come. No more excuses.

*under grace we have no excuse to sin*

## **I feel miserable**

I remember the story of the young man who approached me a few years ago. He was in tears telling me of his frustration. He said he is on drugs but doesn't like it. He told me anytime he does it, he feels so guilty that he wants to kill himself. So I asked him, "do you do the drugs alone", he answered no. then I asked, "do your

other friends feel the way you feel after doing it”, he said no. Then I asked him, “have you given your life to Christ”, he said “yes but it’s been a while”.

When he answered yes, I knew his problem. So I told him as I smiled, “if you don’t stop you will keep feeling miserable for the rest of your life”. You see, he was born again, but acting like he was still a slave of sin. I guess the reason his friends didn’t feel as bad as he felt was that they were not born again. They were being themselves. They were happily sinning because they were sinners in identity. However, he was righteous and sinning. He was acting outside himself so he felt bad. I explained a few things to him, gave him very important knowledge about his salvation, and without a deliverance service, and a special oil from Jerusalem being poured on him, he was set free. The truth you know always sets you free (John 8:32).

Do you know why you feel miserable anytime you sin? Have you thought about why some of the sinful things you used to do and felt happy about, have now become things you do

and you feel unhappy, guilty and sorry about? It's because you are acting outside yourself; outside of who your true identity is. You are trying to be what you are not. You're acting in contradiction to the real you. You are actually pretending and faking it. There is no one truly born again, that can be happily sinning. You will always be miserable, if you are a slave of righteousness but behaving like one of sin.

*There is no one truly born again, that can be happily sinning.*

If we keep sinning as born again believers, we are not going to lose our salvation, or our identity as righteous people or saints, but we are going to be saved and miserable. Why do you want to be a sheep and live like a goat, light and live like darkness, righteous and live like sinner? Yes, you may struggle as a believer with sin, but you are not a sinner, you are righteous. As a matter of fact, you struggle with sin because you are righteous and sin is foreign to you.

## Chapter 6

# Why do I Struggle with Sin

If I'm righteous, and the old man is dead, then why do I struggle with sin? This question has led many into thinking that, maybe we're still sinners, or perhaps we're sinners and saints at the same time. No please! The old man died once and for all never to rise again, just as Jesus died once and for all (Romans 6:10). Nobody has double identity in this world. You are either in Christ or in Adam, either a sheep or a goat, either in light or in darkness. Therefore you are either a saint or a sinner.

*Nobody has double identity in this world....You are*

*either a saint or a sinner.*

Hence our struggle with sin is not because we are sinners, or because we are both sinners and saints, but because of two things that are not us: the flesh and sin itself.

## **The flesh**

The flesh is not you. It's not your new spirit and your new heart. It's not your new identity. You are not the flesh, and the flesh is not you. Neither is the flesh the old you, what you were in Adam, the old man, or your old identity; because the old man is dead and gone but the flesh is still there.

The flesh is our attitudes and our way of thinking before we met Christ, and therefore the way we lived before we met Christ. It's putting Christ aside and finding meaning in life, and fulfillment based on the world system instead of Christ. It's putting your confidence in the standard of the world.

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble....

## 1 Corinthians 1:26

That means some people had become wise, mighty and noble but not by Christ, rather by the world's standards – the flesh. If you think the ability to lie without being caught is *wisdom*, then you are wise according to the flesh. If you think *might* is found in amassing wealth and getting into some positions, your might is according to the flesh. If you think *nobility* is when you become a member of parliament, then your nobility is according to the flesh. These are worldly ways of finding fulfillment.

The question is, do we as believers sometimes get tempted by that pattern of ways, and therefore struggle? Yes we do. In fact sometimes we fail and fall into the temptation. The reason is that, though we are absolutely saved, our pattern of thinking is still the same. We call it unrenewed mind. That's why the renewal of the mind by the word of God in Romans 12 is important. We have to intentionally with the help of the Holy Spirit, replace old information, beliefs and philosophies locked up in our minds with new ones from the gospel.

However, the renewal of the mind is an unending process. Nobody gets his mind absolutely renewed till Jesus comes. That is why we say that salvation is instant, but growth and maturity in Christ is an unending process. Hence, so long as we are here on earth, we are sometimes going to have such struggles. Nevertheless, that is not us. We are saints struggling with an external force called flesh. The flesh is up there in the mind, but we are at the core of our being. We have Jesus as our very life (Colossians 3:3-4)

However, the old man linked very well with the flesh. They were bed fellows. They were an exemplary couple. There was no struggle with the flesh because in that old identity, when you acted fleshly, you were just being yourself and not acting outside yourself. You were naturally in the flesh, but now you are naturally in the Spirit and so will always struggle with a foreign element in your mind (Romans 8:9-10).

## **Sin**

The story is same for sin. Sin is not you

as a believer. You are different, but sin is a force engineered by the enemy, to make you miserable, and a loser, so he can accuse you falsely. Right from Genesis sin was seen as a different force.

If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, *sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.*

Genesis 4:7

You could see clearly here that sin is not us. *Sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.* This is proving that we are a different entity, but sin is coming at us. Sin is described as an “it”. It’s an external power coming at us. It’s a parasite trying to feed on us. The good news is that, because of who we are now in Christ we can dominate sin and not have it dominate us.

Again, we struggle with sin because that’s not us. Our new identity in Christ has created new desires and will in us that make sin foreign. That’s why we struggle with it. We struggle with it because we don’t want to do it. We don’t

want to do it because we are completely dead to it.

<sup>17</sup>So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. <sup>20</sup>But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

Romans 7:17, 20

Paul had his own share of the struggle with sin. But here, he says that he's not the one doing it. His argument is simple: if I'm doing that which I don't want to do, then there is a power external doing it but not me.

What is that power? Sin. Where is it? In the mind. So sin is in me (the mind), but I am not it. Sometimes I may fall into its temptations but I'm still not it. When I fall into sin it doesn't change who I am.

The problem is still the unrenewed mind as explained above. Our old self didn't struggle with sin because sinners naturally sin. When we sinned at that time, we were being ourselves and we loved it. However, now we struggle with it because it is foreign to us. Our very

core hates it because we are righteous. It's only righteousness that makes us fulfilled. Sin makes us miserable.

The flesh is not you. Sin is not you. By the grace of God, you are the new self, the very life of Christ, and sin should not dominate you.

*Why do I Struggle with Sin*

# Chapter 7

# **Grace, a Reason to Praise**

Many pastors and churches say that if we preach too much grace, it will lead to too much sinning. To say that however, is to say that you either don't understand the gospel or you don't have faith in the gospel, or both. Grace is the only message we have to preach, because the gospel is the message of grace (Act 20:24). Jesus himself is grace (Titus 2:11).

You cannot preach Jesus without preaching grace. It's impossible! That will not be God the son. That will be a different Jesus. That will be preaching the law and "works righteousness",

and deceitfully adding the name Jesus. It will be like selling a stone with icing all over it as cake. That is deception, because no one can bite it. It will be like selling a house without doors and windows. Who would love to buy such a house? How do they enter? Even prisons have doors and windows. Grace is the entrance to Christ.

*You cannot preach Jesus without preaching grace. It's impossible!*

From level one to level ten, the message is grace. From primary to tertiary, the message is grace. It's grace when we are preaching to unbelievers, it's still grace when we are preaching to new converts, and it remains grace when we are talking to mature believers, even when we are preaching to arch – bishops, or preaching at “THE SINLESS RELIGIOUS PEOPLES CONFERENCE” - the *message* must always be grace.

Grace does not lead to sin. It leads to praise. It leads to your release from bondage (Galatians 5). It leads to celebrating your freedom in Christ. It leads to enjoying your liberty in Jesus Christ.

The message of our identity: who we are in Christ, is a message of grace. It's the reason why grace does not lead to sin, but to praise.

## **Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?**

This question came up because in Romans chapter five, Apostle Paul began to teach the Romans their identity in Christ: how they are justified and therefore righteous in Christ.

<sup>18</sup>So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted *justification* of life to all men. <sup>19</sup>For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made *righteous*. <sup>20</sup>The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but *where sin increased, grace abounded all the more*, <sup>21</sup>so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5:18-21

All Apostle Paul is saying here is that, just as Adam gave us the identity of sinners without

us doing anything to deserve it, Jesus also gave us the identity of saints (righteousness) without us doing anything to earn it. His death and resurrection made the way.

The problem came however, when Paul said in verses twenty and twenty-one that with this new identity, it's grace that reigns. Thus, if sin reigned in death (when we were separated from God), then grace reigns in righteousness when we are at one with God. Hence, *where sin increased, grace abounded all the more*. Paul figured the Romans might think he's encouraging sin by that statement. He was right, because we think same today by criticizing the grace message. Hence, he asked a rhetorical question in chapter six:

What shall we say then? *Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?*

Romans 6: 1

Paul's response to this in verse two was that it's impossible! He said, "How shall we who *died to sin* still live in it?" (Romans 6:2). Another way to say you are born again is to say you are dead – dead to sin. Being made righteous

in Christ means we are dead to sin. Said in another way, our new identity in Christ means we are dead to sin.

*Another way to say you are born again is to say you are dead - dead to sin*

It means we die twice. We are born dead to God, but we are born again dead to sin. As we died with Christ, we died to sin (the old man died), and at resurrection, we arose with Christ, we were alive to God, made righteous (the new man came). When we were dead to God we couldn't be saints, we were sinners. In the same way, as we are dead to sin we can't be sinners, we are saints.

*We are born dead to God, but we are born again dead to sin.*

This is what the grace message does. It opens your eyes to your true identity in Christ. It makes you know that you are dead to sin. Christ has nailed the old man on the cross and now you are free from sin. The grace message makes you more responsible.

<sup>10</sup>For the death that He died, He died

to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup>*Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.* <sup>12</sup> Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, <sup>13</sup>and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. <sup>14</sup>*For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

Romans 6:10-14

The scripture we just read is telling you to *consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.* Therefore don't allow sin to dominate you because sin has no power over you. Instead, let righteousness dominate you because you are righteous. Righteousness is your master. People say the grace message makes believers irresponsible. It's a lie! it's obvious here that it makes us responsible and brings sin under our feet. It is the law that makes us irresponsible, and turns us into hypocrites.

<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. <sup>12</sup>*It teaches us*

to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...

Titus 2: 11-13 (NIV)

It teaches us to say no to sin not by condemnation and judgmental sermons. It teaches us to say no to sin by showing us the love of Christ, because the grace that has appeared to us is Jesus Christ himself. This grace exposes us to the fact that, what the death and resurrection of Christ has done for us, to us and in us, is complete and absolutely finished: He did a spiritual surgery on us, gave us a new heart and a new spirit. We are righteous and righteousness is our lifestyle.

*The grace that has appeared to us is Jesus Christ himself.*

Grace teaches us to say no by opening our eyes to where we are and where sin is: we didn't just die with Christ, buried with Him and resurrected with Him to have a new identity. More to that, grace shows us that, this identity is the identity of Heaven: we also ascended with Him, and are seated with Him in heavenly

## places

<sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup>and *raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him* in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus....

Ephesians 2:4-7

This means that five important things happened to us the very moment we came to Christ: we died, got buried, resurrected, ascended and got seated with Christ. Our current location is heaven. Sin is far below us. The glory we have been exposed to, and are enjoying now cannot be compared in any way to the filth and stench of sin. There's no born again believer, well exposed to the knowledge of this beauty and glory of our new identity, that would love to indulge in the temporary fantasies of stinking sin.

So you see, grace is not a license to sin, but an inspiration to live holy, and a reason to praise. We thank God for grace, because by

grace sin is below us. We have control over sin. Anyone who abuses grace and uses it as a license to sin, the bible says is not a believer but an anti-Christ.

For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. *They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.*

Jude 4 (NIV)

Beloved, the knowledge of our identity in Christ (grace) is what inspires us to holiness, not a message of condemnation, judgment, fear of hell, the laws of Moses, set of rules, or resolutions. We just have to know who we are and live as such. We are righteous, slaves of righteousness, and we live as such; not because we want to avoid hell (it's not for us), not because we want to make it to heaven (we are already there), not even because we want a blessing from God (He's already blessed us), but because we are being ourselves; and that right there is the definition of true worship. God bless you.

## **BIO**

NAK Ernest is a gifted church leader, an author, and a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is currently the lead pastor of Mopheth Church in Danfa, Accra-Ghana, and the president of NAK Ernest Ministries. Ernest is Married to Esther and they have two children: Ayeyi and Adepa.

