

# We Need to be Whole Again

By T. Sean Sullivan

What is the best thing about being a Christian that you get right now? There is no denying the long-term benefits that welcome prepared souls beyond this life (Matt. 25:21, 23); but what is the greatest benefit, right now?

The answer is something that many are seeking. Too many, of those seekers, are not looking in the right places, but there are many who want it. The answer is the solution to our problem called sin. We enter this life as innocents and we are completely free from the burdens and barriers that sin imposes; then our personal responsibility dawns and with it our spiritual death (Rom. 3:23). It is in sin, that we find ourselves, much like the prodigal—awakening to the reality of our separation; feeling broken and disillusioned (Luke 15:11-17).

The greatest benefit of being a Christian, that you get right now, is the escape from sin and the sense of being whole again. We get to discover what it is to become rebuilt, renewed, and rejuvenated. Let's open the scriptures together to consider what being whole again means and why it is the best thing that we get right now.

**In Christ We are Rebuilt.** It is not easy to put a life back together. There are pieces that remain of a broken soul, and a broken heart, and maybe even a broken body, needing repair. Our soul is broken away from our Creator, because of the sinful choices we have made and spiritual death is the result (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3). Our hearts are broken by the continuous stream of failed promises of sin. We, like the Prodigal, discover this the hard way (Luke 15:11-17). Our bodies can break too, from the abuses of sinful conduct (Gal. 5:19-21).

Today's bookstore shelves are lined with self-help manuals that attempt to bandage and relieve the problems that our sinful choices have rendered. The problem with these offerings is the base of their wisdom, from the world, instead of from God (1Cor. 1:20-25). We need to find some real rebuilding. We need to have something greater than self to focus on (Heb. 11:6); God is able to provide the focus of faith (Rom. 10:17). With a more defined understanding of right and wrong we can start pulling our lives back together, through repentance (Acts 17:30; 2Peter 3:9). This is followed by an active denial of self and a discovery of a greater purpose in following Christ (Matt. 16:24). We can then solidify our commitment to this new way of living through conversion—obedience to the gospel (Acts 2:38-42). With our life rebuilt and restored to "newness" we can move forward with our whole "mind, body, and soul" (Mark 12:30).

**In Christ We are Renewed.** This newness of life is a true cleansing—a new beginning, again. In order to succeed on this side of our baptism we must trust in the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. The reason that this focus on trust must be stated is that far too many fail themselves and lose faith because they cannot seem to let go of their past guilt and shame. We can, and must, let this emotional baggage go (Phil. 3:13-14)—to succeed in Christ, we must accept our renewal (Rom. 6:4).

Of course, we must understand that our obedience does not, and cannot, make sinful activities righteous. We must repent of, and desist from, all sinful actions and/or situations. For some this is a great struggle and they are left with a large void in their life without these improper things. For them, and all of us, it is a blessing that Jesus provides plenty of righteous actions, to fill our lives with, in our renewal. Instead of continuing in sin, we have renewed actions that are true and righteous (Eph. 4:25-32). For example: Instead of lying, we speak the truth (v. 25). We apply ourselves to diligent effort to gain self-control (vs. 26-27). Instead of stealing we work hard and give charitably (v. 28). Instead of vulgar language we season our words with grace (v. 29). Instead of bitterness, wrath, clamor, and evil speaking, we fill our lives with the renewal of kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness.

Our renewal is about the refocus of our purpose in life (Ecc. 12:13). Without the old guilt and shame-filled ways we have the freshness and levity of a brand new way on a brand new day.

**In Christ We are Rejuvenated.** There is an important energy that we discover in this process. This energy is alluded to in Hebrews 12:1-3. Runners for centuries have trained by applying additional weights to their bodies; the theory being that if they could perform well while carrying extra weight, they could do even better when they throw it off. When we seek to put the pieces of our broken life back together again by seeking the rebuilding and renewing that Jesus provides, we are able to throw off the burdens of our sins (Matt. 11:28). With this relief, we discover a new energy called zeal!

Zeal is what we have in our new life when we are happy to be...reunited with God (Rom. 5:1, 6:23); relieved from our guilt and shame (Eph. 4:20-24); and filled with the true hope of Heaven (John 14:1-6; Rev. 21:22-27). This energy of zeal provides our enduring diligence toward the great reward (Heb. 10:35-39).

The sin of our lives weighs us down and breaks us down. Under the burden of sins many find themselves wanting to be made whole again. Jesus has a plan to make us whole again. Through His gospel hope we can be rebuilt, renewed, and rejuvenated. This lesson may be something that that you have already discovered, but many are still needed this renewal. We can help others find this sense of being whole again. Today, are you whole? Or are you seeking a better way to be? Jesus has a plan for you; He will give you rest.

### **Stealing By Dan Ruegg**

"Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 'Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it' (John 12:4-6).

A radio psychologist told this story that had been faxed to her. Seems as though a father's little boy had been shoplifting from the various stores he would visit with his Mom and dad. Determined to put all end to his son's pilfering, the father decided to have a heart to heart talk with his son. In a last ditch effort to get through to his son, the father appealed to Matthew 5:30 - "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."

After having his son read the scripture he sent him to get the large pair of shears that his mother kept for sewing. The son just knew his dad was going to cut his hand off. As he entered the bedroom where his dad had instructed him to go, he saw his father sitting on his bed with all of his pants stacked next to him. Methodically the father proceeded to cut the pants pockets out of each and every pair of pants the son owned. The little boy had been so frightened by what he thought his father was going to do that he never again stole another thing.

### **A Moments Wisdom**

- Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.
- People have been known to achieve more as a result of working with others than against them.
- Anxiety springs from the desire that things should happen as we wish rather than as God wills.

- The more you worry about other people's well-being, the less you will worry about your own.
- If a man could have half his wishes he would double his troubles.