

A COMMAND FOR THE BODY! MARK 12:28-34

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I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. This evening my questions to you (and myself) are four-fold:
1. Are you loving the Lord your God with your whole strength?
 2. If not, why?
 3. Do you know how to love the Lord the Lord your God with all your strength?
 4. What kind of strength is Jesus talking about when He gives this command?
- B. Before we seek to answer those questions let me review where we are right now in our series. In this series we are examining what it means to *Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength* from Mark 12:28-34.
1. By referring to these four aspects Jesus Christ is essentially stating that one should love God with one's entire being:
 - a. The heart emphasizes your affections, your inner desires; it is the control center of your human personality;
 - b. The soul emphasizes at least your self-conscious thought life;
 - c. The mind emphasizes your capacity to think, reason, and make judgments;
 - d. Strength emphasizes your bodily powers.¹
 2. Let me be clear here. I think it would be careless to say that each of these four aspects is clear and distinct from one another. Rather, it seems Jesus is referring to one's *entire* being. In order to do so, he emphasizes it by referring to one's heart, soul, mind, and strength. In other words, he is "*highlighting*" or "*emphasizing*" aspects of personhood. So, I use "emphasize" very carefully—for how can one really separate heart from mind or soul from heart into clear and distinct categories?
 3. Now having summarized this first commandment, I will now spend the remainder of time examining what it means to love God and what it means to do it with your whole strength. We can know-we can be stirred emotionally-but

¹ John Grassmick, "Mark" in *Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

until we make our decision to obey, we have not fulfilled the commandment to love Him the way God desires to be loved. Rather, we will see that the heart, soul, mind, and strength must all be involved whereby our desires, thoughts, judgment, and actions harmonize together into a beautiful symphony in the details of our daily lives. In this “*harmony*” directed to our beloved God will this commandment be fully obeyed.

In this extensive study will be turning to a number of passages in order to gain a deeper understanding what it means to love God with all your strength. So, please be ready!

II. EXPOSITION:

A. What does loving the Lord God “*with all your strength*”?

When examining this passage I realized immediately that my understanding of this word “*strength*” will have a direct impact on what it means to live out the Christian faith. Consider the relationship between strength, service, and spiritual maturity.

1. One view I was taught when I was young was if you want to live out the Christian faith you need go about doing the Lord’s work and do it in his name. The focus, aim, and goal of the Christian life is to ask yourself what you can do for God. The idea seemed to me that Christian maturity is measured by one’s activities, serving the church and the community. Thus, the upshot is that I find myself serving one church committee after another but serving him on my own strength. Though the Holy Spirit was talked about on occasion, never was His ministry in the life of the believer taken seriously.

Thus, does loving God mean coming alongside serving Him, asking what I can do for Him?

2. Later I was also taught that if I want to live out the Christian faith, to be everything that I’m called to be, I must let go and let God. In other words, if I will just rest in Christ (inward rest) I will experience outward victory. If I will simply abide in Christ, God will bring about the circumstances in my life that will show forth His power. The upshot here is that the strength given is his strength, not my own. Any strength I offer to the process will only foster fatigue and disappointment. Rather, I’m to let go and let God. So, Christian maturity is measured by how much I’m able to let go and let God do his work in and through my life. I’m to wait on Him and allow Him to do it all.

Thus, does loving God mean realizing the futility of my own strength, thus discarding my resources and allowing God to show forth His strength?

3. I’ve also been taught that if I want to live out the Christian faith I’m told to focus on the spiritual disciplines. By putting to death the deeds of my spiritual life by

promoting certain spiritual disciplines, bearing positive fruit, I might have assurance that I'm a member of the elect. So, the upshot is that by fasting, praying, serving, denial of fleshly appetites, and the practice of holy living, I will live out what it means to be a Christian. My eternal life and spiritual maturity is measured by the amount and quality of the spiritual fruit. So, one hand I am to subdue my sin nature and on the other, serve God in order to show yourself approved while waiting for the day for my soul to be delivered from my body by means of physical death whereby I no longer possess the strong inclination, tendency, and habitual appetite to sin. Victorious living in the "now" is a futile promise, an empty promise, a false hope.

Thus, does loving God mean subduing my bodily powers because they are inherently unruly and eagerly wait till I have no capacity to sin?

4. But I've also been instructed that if I want to live out the Christian faith I need to receive the "Second Blessing." By submitting myself to the Lord in a dramatic moment by means of earnest praying, the Holy Spirit may come upon me. When He does I will speak in tongues. Once that takes place I will be empowered to serve God. The upshot is that as a believer I needed a second work of the Holy Spirit if I want spiritual maturity. If I don't receive this second work...a baptism of the Holy Spirit I will be weak and immature.

Thus, does loving God mean necessarily having a second work of grace or Holy Spirit whereby I'm baptized with the Holy Spirit in order that I might be supernaturally empowered to love Him?

5. Or does loving God with your strength involve exercising the new will God has given you at the moment of salvation in dependency upon the Holy Spirit. This is what I believe the Bible to teach. When you became a new creation in Christ, God gave you a new mind, new heart, and a new will in order that you might obey the Word of God. Consider the words of Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost.

But through the new birth of salvation, when you placed your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, you were given a new mind, new heart, and new will. And when you, the child of God, exercise your mind toward God to know Him, your heart to love Him, and your will to obey Him, then you are in fellowship with God. On the other hand, if any area of your personality is not in harmony with Him, then you are not enjoying fellowship with God. And because fellowship with Him is the reason we were created and then re-created in His image, we cannot glorify God apart from that fellowship."²

So, as your will harmonizes with His will (in addition to you new mind and new heart) you will experience His strength in your life. In other words, it is not a life of personal

² J. Dwight Pentecost, *Designed to be Like Him*, 28-9.

inactivity waiting of God but one of “doing and undergoing,” one that involves active obedience and rest in Christ in such a way that your obedience is sourced in His strength. Francis A. Schaeffer describes this symbiotic, dynamic relationship as being “active/passivity.”

B. Lets not only be mindful of the different perspective regarding the relationship between strength, service, and Christian maturity, but let’s be mindful of the following questions:

1. Does loving God mean means serving Him in you own strength?
2. Does loving God mean serving Him in His strength apart from your strength?
3. Does loving God mean exercising your new capacity in harmony and fellowship with the mind, heart, and will of the Redeemer?
3. Does loving God mean asking what you can do for Him?
4. Does loving God mean asking what He can do though you?
5. Does loving God mean allowing Him to live though you in cooperation with your new capacity as a believer in Christ to obey Him? It means to abide, depend, and do.

C. In the biblical text what does “*strength*” mean? Before we look at the N.T. use of the word “*strength*” it might help us to note its correlation to the O.T. command in Deuteronomy 6:5.

1. In Deuteronomy 6:5 it states, *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might*³
 - a. Just like in the N.T. the word “*might*” appears last in the command.” Remember in Mark 12:30 the word “*strength*” is listed last in this greatest commandment.

C. When we first see this commandment in the O.T., in Deuteronomy 6:5, you see that the word “*might*” used.

1. This word “*might*” in essence, means “*strength, power.*” *It is the exerting of force in a situation* (2 Kings 23:25).⁴
 - a. One king who exemplified obedience to this command is Josiah. Like his grandfather Hezekiah, who was known all throughout the Jewish

^e Cited Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; [2 Kgs. 23:25].

³*The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Dt 6:5.

⁴James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), DBLH 4394, #2.

world as one who trusted the Lord (2 Kings 18:5), Josiah was a righteous, godly king.

b. In 622/1 BC, the “book of the law” was found during the course of Temple repairs (2 Kings 22:8-10; 2 Ch. 34:8-18). It is commonly accepted that this scroll was, or contained, the book of Deuteronomy. This collection of ancient law, fanning the already burning feeling of nationalism, led to further political and religious reform. On the basis of this book, Josiah obliterated pagan worship (2 Ki. 23:4-14), including the false priests (kemārîm, Akk. kumru; 2 Ki. 23:5) and the altar at Bethel (2 Ki. 23:15; cf. 1 Ki. 13:2). He and the people made a new covenant with Yahweh (2 Ki. 23:1-3; 2 Ch. 34:29-33) which would make this book the law of the land. He also celebrated the Passover in such a grand style as had not been seen since the days of Samuel (2 Ki. 23:21-23; 2 Ch. 35:1-19).⁵

b. In fact, 2 Kings 23:25 describe Josiah as follows.

“Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him.”

c. What did Josiah do? He very consciously observed and was obedient to God’s law. He removed all informal practitioners from Israel: mediums and spirits which God had condemned. He destroyed all household gods that were worshiped as sources of prosperity and prosperity. They along with all other idols throughout Judah and Jerusalem were destroyed. Moreover, household gods were worshiped as sources of prosperity and as oracles. These were destroyed as well as all other idols throughout Judah and Jerusalem.⁶

d. Thus, we see that Josiah loved God with all his “might” and this is demonstrated in his personal life and rulership over Israel as an expression of worship to God. So, great was his love for God that the Bible describes him who fulfilled this command in Deuteronomy 6:4...in a scroll that was once lost but was found and embraced.

2. In the N.T. the word “**strength**” [ἰσχὺς (*ischys*), ὕος (*uos*), ἦ] has two basic nuances:

⁵ D. R. W. Wood, *New Bible Dictionary* (InterVarsity Press, 1996, c1982, c1962), 615.

⁶John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary:: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 1:584.

a. **Capability:** This word implies personal potential (Mk 12:30, 33; Lk 10:27; Eph 1:19; 6:10; 2Th 1:9; 2Pe 2:11; Rev 5:12; 7:12; Lk 11:11);

b. **Strength:** Might, power (1Peter 4:11).⁷

1. On this latter nuance that “**strength**” (ischyos) is “**might**” and “**power**” consider the following way in which it is used in 1 Peter 4:11. Please turn to 1 Peter 4:11:

“If anyone speaks let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone minister, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

2. Now in 1 Peter 4:11 Peter divides Christian service into two general categories: the one who **speaks** (*lalei*) and the one who **serves** (*diakonei*; cf. v. 10). This division relates to the distinction God’s leaders made between ministry roles (Acts 6:2-4).

3. These two general ministry functions often overlap. But what is common to both groups function is *dependence* upon God’s gracious provision. The reason for relying on God’s words (cf. Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2; Heb. 5:12) and strength (*ischyos*, “power”) is that God will receive the praise through Jesus Christ. At the mention of Christ’s name Peter offered an appropriate word of praise as a benediction: To Him be the glory and the power (*kratos*, “might”) forever and ever. Amen. (Cf. the similar benediction in 1 Peter 5:11.) The praise and credit for Christian ministry should always be given to Christ.⁸

3. So, in this passage we see that these two groups are not to rely on their own strength. Rather, they should use the power God gives them to do His will.

c. The word “**strength**” also can be used to refer to **capability, implying personal potential** (Mk 12:30, 33; Lk 10:27; Eph 1:19; 6:10; 2Th 1:9; 2Pe 2:11; Rev 5:12; 7:12; Lk 11:11);

1. It is this nuance that used in Mark 12:30. But before we unpack the meaning of this nuance in the context of the Greatest Commandment, I want to show you how it is used elsewhere. This will enrich our understanding of the way it is used here.

⁷James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), GGK2709.

⁸John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:854.

Please turn your Bibles to Ephesians 6:10:

2. Ephesians 6:10: *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”*
 - a. Now the word translated *“be strong”* does not mean we are to *“strengthen”* ourselves, flex our muscles, and know 12 forms of martial arts until we have become warriors of hard driven excellence. Rather, the grammatical construction here implies that we who are set apart to spiritual battle are to receive strength from someone else. Therefore, we could re-translate this passage to read, ***“Finally, my brethren, be strengthened in the Lord.”*** In sum, we are not battle in our own strength, but in the strength given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. How is this possible? Where do we receive this strength? Look closely at the passage again. The Lord. Notice, *“my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”* So, instead of looking to our muscles and skills, instead of looking to a gifted commander and tactical officer, we are to *“direct our thoughts to the Lord, in whom we can have complete confidence as the One who will strengthen us for our daily conflict.”*⁹
3. Now go back to 1 Ephesians 1:15-23 though I will be focusing on verses 19-23. Starting from verse 15 the passage states as follows. **Read Ephesians 1:15-23.**
4. In his opening prayer for the believers at the church at Ephesus, Paul prays that they might know ***“what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the workings of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places”*** (Eph. 1:19-20).
5. In this passage, particularly, verses 19-20 He expresses his desire for the Ephesian believers to know the greatness of the power which saved them.
 - a. In verse 19-23 Paul brings attention to God’s incomparably great power for us who believe. The word *“power”* (*dynamis*; cf. 3:20) **means a spiritually dynamic and living force**. This power of God is directed toward believers. Paul then used three additional words to describe God’s power.
 - b. Look at the passage again and I will point them out to you. **Eph 1:19** *“and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working [*energeian*] of the strength [*kratous*] of His might [*ischyos*]²⁰ which He brought [*energeo*]*

⁹ Pentecost, *Designed to be Like Him*, 215.

about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,¹⁰ These three words are:

1. “**according to the working**” (*energeian*, “energetic power,” from which comes the Eng. “energy”);
2. “**of the strength**” (*kratous*, “power that overcomes resistance,” as in Christ’s miracles; this word is used only of God, never of believers);
3. “**power**” (*ischyos*) of God’s inherent strength (*ischyos*) which He provides (cf. 6:10; 1 Peter 4:11). This magnificent accumulation of words for power under scores the magnitude of God’s “great power” available to Christians.¹¹

Listen to the words of Dr. J Dwight Pentecost:

- a. “When God saves a person, he brings into effect the same power that raised Jesus Christ from physical death, elevated Him to glory, and seated Him at the right hand of the Father. The power that brought Christ out of the tomb after He bore out sins on the cross is the same power that operates to bring us into spiritual life and salvation. This is also the same power mentioned in Ephesians 6:10 as ‘the power of His might.’ That awesome, incomparable power is available to each one of us as we are strengthened in the Lord by relying on Him.”¹²
- b. Interestingly, in 2 Peter 2:11 the same word for strength we are examining also used with reference to angels; though in a different degree they share this strength. Moreover, doxologies which acknowledge and magnify God’s eternal being and Godhead ascribe ἰσχύς to God and His Christ in passages such as Rev. 5:12; 7:12.

¹⁰ **2479** ἰσχύς [*ischus* /is·khoods/] n f. From a derivative of *is* (force, cf *eschon*, a form of 2192); TDNT 3:397; TDNTA 378; GK 2709; 11 occurrences; AV translates as “strength” four times, “power” twice, “might” twice, “ability” once, “mightily + 1722” once, and “mighty” once. **1** ability, force, strength, might. *Additional Information:* For synonyms see entries 970, *bia*; 1411, *dunamis*; 1753, *energeia*; 1849, *exousia*; and 2904, *kratos*. This is a footnote just to note the relationship of all these words that deal with power, strength, and might.

¹¹ John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985), 2:620.

¹² Pentecost, *Designed to be Like Him*, 215-6.

1. Listen to Revelation 5:12: ***“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom and Strength and honor and glory and blessing!”***

6. Let’s return to Mark 12:30:
 - a. ἰσχύς, ***“ability of man,”*** Mk. 12:30: all human strength must be concentrated on the love of God. This is the teaching of the first commandment.¹³

 - b. This word stresses the factuality of the ability; the stress of this word falls on you having ***the ability*** to love the Lord with your whole strength. It is an issue of capability.

7. Let me retranslate Mark 12:30 thus far combining all three previous lessons together.
 - a. ***And you shall agape love the Lord your God with all you deep seated affections and with all your conscious thought life and with all your abilities.***

III. HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?

- A. In order to see how it all fits together let’s turn to that famous passage in Philippians 4:13. Afterwards, we will turn to Romans 6 to see how we can live this out, seeking to harmonize our will with God’s will.

Look very closely at Philippians 4:13. Take note of both of these words “can” and “strengthens.”

1. “can.” *ischuo* /is·k^hoo·o. The Apostle Paul uses the same “can” that Jesus uses in Mark 12:30 when he refers to “*strength*.” The stress falls on being able to do all things.

2. How is this possible? Even though he is freed from the penalty of sin he still possesses this inclination to sin. The seeds of destruction are from within us all. It is possible because we have a new nature with a new capacity to serve Him. Remember...in 2 Corinthians 5:17 the Scripture states, “*If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.*” In 2 Peter 1:4 it states that all believers are partakers of the divine nature.

¹³*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vols. 5-9 Edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 Compiled by Ronald Pitkin., ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 3:399.

2. The word you later see “strengthens” is not same word as “can.” Rather, this word is “*endunamoo* /en-doo-nam•o•o/
 - a. The source of all Paul’s capacity in face of the reality of human life is Christ: πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με (Phil. 4:13). He who is in Christ partakes of a power which makes all things possible. Here, then, is the source of the Christian’s power.
 - b. Thus, it is Christ who is infusing His strength into the Apostle Paul. Paul’s capacity is in harmony, yielded, and dependent upon the Lord. While he seeks to obedient, God gives him the strength to do so. It is like swimming in harmony with a current. He is swimming with all of his might but the current is carrying him along.

B. How can I love God with all my strength? As I thought about how I can love God with my all strength I was immediately drawn to Romans 6:4-13 where we are presented with three central truths regarding the use of our bodies.

1. In this passage he states that we are not to present our bodies to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present our bodies to God as instruments for righteousness. In sum, Paul offers three truths or steps to help us be all that God has called us to be-especially in view of our appetites of our former rule of life and the culture we find ourselves. I believe this is very applicable to loving God with all our “bodily powers.”
 - a. Know...we have to know something (Romans 6:6);
 - b. Consider... we have to consider something (Romans 6:11);
 - c. Present...we have to present something (Romans 6:13).¹⁴
2. Do you want love the Lord your God with all your strength? Then let’s unpack these three steps:
 - a. Step 1: You must know-really come to understand that we are not who we used to be. Therefore, we cannot live like we used to. Listen to Romans 6:6.
 1. The fact is that through union with Christ the old you died and sin’s authority over you was ended; you are a new person with a new power to live for God as your new master.
 2. Understand what is already true of you. God has declared the old you dead and the new you righteous in His eyes.

¹⁴ Charles R. Swindoll, *The Grace Awakening*, p. 119.

As Pentecost explains,

The fact is not changed by your acceptance or rejection, your belief or unbelief, your knowledge of the fact or your ignorance of it. God says you are crucified, and in God's sight you are a crucified one. God is not asking you to add to the value of the death of Christ by crucifying yourself again and again.¹⁵

b. Step 2: Consider. You must accept as true what God has said about you and keep it at always at the forefront of your thinking. Listen to Romans 6:11.

1. This word "consider" is the first imperative found in Romans and it is in present tense. It is our responsibility and something we are to do continually.
2. It focuses on the activity of the mind, but incorporates the whole person. The heart believes and the will acts on what the mind thinks. The power is in the truth, not in our thinking. But, thinking the truth enables us to believe and act on it.

3. Dr. Bill Lawrence of Dallas Seminary describes it very well,

It is imperative to remember that reckoning is not a "make believe" kind of response, not a wish trying to come true, neither positive thinking nor possibility thinking, but reality thinking. We are simply reckoning *what is true* about us because of our union with Christ. Failure to do this will result in defeat; faithfulness in doing this will result in the experience of God's constant triumph.¹⁶

4. Let me put it this way: we must change the way we think about ourselves and about our relationship with God. We must stop seeing ourselves as we formerly were in Adam and start seeing ourselves as we are presently in Christ.
5. What does "consider" mean? It is from a Greek word that means "to calculate, to take into account, to figure." It is a financial term, an accounting term. Rather than meaning "act like it is so," it means "reckon it true. Enter it in the ledger. Record it in the creases of your brain." ...By calculating (considering) all of

¹⁵ J. Dwight Pentecost, *Designed to be Like Him*, p. 121.

¹⁶ William D. Lawrence, Unpublished Spiritual Life Notes 1999, Unit 6, p. 8.

this and by taking into account the truth we know to be a fact, we *dethrone* sin and refuse to obey our lusts any longer.¹⁷

6. Therefore, victorious Christians are not those who have psyched themselves up from some crippled state of slavery to sin. Instead they have laid hold of the liberating truth of the new person they are and the new power they have in union with Christ. They can say no to sin (Rom.6:12) because they choose to believe what God has said about them is true.
- c. Third step: Present. Act on what you know and believe to be true by rebelling against sin's rule in your life and by offering your whole self to God for righteous service. Listen to the words of Romans 6:12-13.
1. Paul allows no room for our attitude to be divorced from our action, our belief from our behavior. Sin no longer has the right to rule our lives and we have no reason to allow it to usurp authority. A second imperative follows hard after the first. It too is a call to continuous action (present active imperative). Sin exerts influence most often through our "*mortal body*" and always with "*evil desires.*" (6:12).
 2. "*Instruments*" is an old word for tools used in a workshop or weapons used in war. Our bodies are like weapons used in war. We must choose which of two military commanders will have the use of our weapons (body). Both the negative and the positive are included. We must withhold the use of our weapons by the old commander (sin nature) and actively devote our weapons to God our new commander-in-chief.
 3. Lastly, it is important to notice that Paul changes tenses in this verse as he moves from the negative to the positive.
 - b. The first "*present*" in the present tense indicates continuous action. **Everyday** we must deny the sin nature the use of our bodies.
 - b. The second "*present*" is aorist tense indicates that this "present" is also to be a qualitative mindset, a lifestyle commitment of our bodies to God. This is in keeping with Paul's use of the aorist in the once for all presentation of our bodies as a living sacrifice in Romans 12:1. Noting that it is the same word, but different tense, to the struggling believer Paul says, "Stop debating it, start doing it!"

¹⁷ Charles R. Swindoll, *The Grace Awakening*, p. 121.

IV. CONCLUSION:

Two Final Thoughts:

- A. First we need to remember that we as humans are a paradox. Listen to this famous statement by Blaise Pascal. *“What a Chimera is man! What a novelty, a monster, a chaos, a contradiction, a prodigy! Judge of all things, an imbecile worm of the earth; depository of truth, and sewer of error and doubt; the glory and refuse of the universe.”*
~ Blaise Pascal.

- B. And second, let us never think that we can rest on our own capabilities in order to love God with all our strength. Listen to these wise words by B.B. Warfield:

“There is nothing in us or done by us at any state of our earthly development because of which we are acceptable to God. We must always be accepted for Christ’s sake or we cannot be accepted at all. This is not true of us only when we believe. It is just as true after we believe. It will continue to be true as long as we live. Our need of Christ does not cease with our believing. Nor does the nature of our relation to Him or to God through Him ever alter, no matter what our attainments in Christian graces or our achievements in behavior may be. It is always on His blood and righteousness alone that we can rest.”