

# The Divine Exchange

## Our Response

*“He who does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.” Matthew 10:38-39*

The working of God’s eternal purpose in our life involves two phases to His divine exchange. The first part is done at God’s initiative. We have discussed this aspect of the divine exchange in a previous teaching tract. We shared how God used the death of Christ to accomplish this divine exchange. God so loved the world that He sent His only Son who willingly bore our sinful nature on the cross with Him so that His holy seed of divine life might be planted in us. Thus when Christ died on the cross, God exchanged our sinful nature with His Son’s holy nature. This is our salvation and new birth. This is the divine exchange that occurred within us when we received Jesus Christ into our heart as Lord and Savior and were born again of the Holy Spirit.

However, our salvation is only the beginning and not the end of God’s eternal purpose. “For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but to sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:7).” Our sanctification (practicing obedience) to Jesus Christ is God’s “love language.” Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love Me, does not obey My teaching (John 14:23-24).” Therefore, God does not want us to walk in sanctification for sanctification’s sake; He wants us to walk in sanctification so we might see Him and know Him. “No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him (1 John 3:6).”

With this in mind, let us look at the next phase of the divine exchange, which is our response to God’s initiative. In this phase, we willingly bear our own cross (identify with Christ’s death and recognize that our sinful nature died with Him) and give up our soul-life (stop being governed by

our soul and walk with Him in obedience) so that Christ’s divine life might bear fruit in us. When we bear our cross, we exchange our soul-life (our attitudes, affections and abilities) for Christ’s attitudes, affections and abilities. Jesus said, “He who loves his soul-life loses it, and he who hates his soul-life in this world will keep it to life eternal (John 12:25).” This is how we walk in sanctification so that we can know the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). Remember this second part of the divine exchange is impossible without the first. In other words, we cannot bear our cross and lose our soul-life for Christ if we do not believe and act on the Biblical truth that we have been crucified with Christ and that God has replaced our sinful nature with Christ’s nature.

What does it mean to bear our cross and lose our soul-life for Christ? First, let’s look at what it does not mean. God does not want to destroy our soul nor does He want us to try to annihilate it. He wants to transform and restore our soul to its proper place of submission to His Spirit. When we were born again, our spirit was regenerated but our soul-life did not automatically transform and come under Christ’s Sovereignty. Losing your soul-life does not mean that you now simply trade in your “worldly” lifestyle for a “Christian” lifestyle. Many so-called “Christians” have done this without ever giving up sovereignty of their soul-life to Christ. Sanctification is not a cultural change; it is a kingship change – we give up being our own king and make Christ our King. If you do not know (believe and act) that you died with Christ, you have no alternative but to rely on the power of your soul (your natural ability) to serve Christ and mistake your self-effort for faith. As a result, many Christians are strengthening and fulfilling their soul-life through “Christian” ministry instead of losing their soul-life for Christ. Bearing your cross also does not mean you “deaden” your soul-life and “cut off” your feelings. This is spiritually unhealthy and only increases sin. The overcoming Christian life is an exchanged life. When we give up our soul-life to follow Christ, we should experience His life more and more in all we think and do. Jesus becomes

the great love of our life and our obedience to Him becomes our chief joy.

So what does it mean to lose our soul-life? Although we no longer have a sinful Adam nature, we can still have an Adam way of thinking. We must put aside our “unconverted” thinking by faith in the divine truth of the cross so that our soul-life can be transformed “to the image of God who created us (Colossians 3:10).” The apostle Paul taught, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is (Romans 12:2; see also Ephesians 4:23).” Paul instructed, “Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).” By identifying with Christ’s death on the cross to the point that we “put to death” the old Adam way of thinking, we progressively lose our unconverted soul-life by acting on the truth that we have died to sin. “For he who has died has been freed from sin (Romans 6:7).” Paul exhorted believers to “count yourselves *dead to sin* (Romans 6:11).” This is what Paul meant when he said, “By the Spirit you *put to death* the misdeeds of the body... those who belong to Christ Jesus have *put to death* on the cross the flesh and its passions and desires (Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:24).”

The divine exchange of the cross is the work of the Holy Spirit and the gift of God. Therefore, let us respond to God’s grace by faith. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus and bear our cross by losing our soul-life for His sake so we might know Him as our King. If we abide in Christ’s death and this complete exchange of the cross, we will certainly bear His fruit. Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing (John 15:5).” When we bear the fruit of sanctification in this dark world of sin, we prove we are His disciples and bring glory to God.

*“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” Philippians 2:12-13*