

**It is an enduring joy**

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and *your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.* JOHN 16:22 NET

**The joy is present even in trouble**

*They [churches in Macedonia] have been severely tested by the troubles they went through; but their joy was so great that they were extremely generous in their giving, even though they are very poor.* 2 CORINTHIANS 8:2 GNT

**Wisdom and Knowledge****God gives his people wisdom and knowledge**

*But if anyone is deficient in wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without reprimand, and it will be given to him.* JAMES 1:5 NET

He [Jesus] answered them, “*You have been given knowledge about the secrets of the kingdom of heaven ...* MATTHEW 13:11A ISV

**God’s people are given spiritual sight**

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him, <sup>18-</sup> *since the eyes of your heart have been enlightened* – so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the incomparable greatness of his power toward us who believe, as displayed in the exercise of his immense strength. EPHESIANS 1:17-19 NET

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *Open my eyes so I can truly see the marvelous things in your law!* PSALMS 119:18 NET

God opens his people’s eyes to spiritual truth.

*Pray for persecuted Christians*

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## I. General

God transforms his people by giving them the invaluable gift of spiritual life, in which they are “reborn” in a spiritual sense. Additionally, God makes them holy and accordingly begins to transform them to be like Jesus Christ and himself. God does this through such things as teaching and disciplining them.

### God Makes His People Spiritually Alive

#### God’s people are given spiritual life

[JESUS, TO HIS FOLLOWERS:] *The Spirit is the one who gives life; human nature is of no help! The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.* JOHN 6:63 NET

Jesus’ words together with the Holy Spirit bring life. This spiritual life involves being “alive to God” (Romans 6:11) and comes through having God’s Holy Spirit. Each believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, renewing and nourishing them spiritually. Consequently believers have a spiritual consciousness that enables them to live in communion with and in dependence on God. As such they are “alive to God”.

#### In union with Jesus Christ, their sinful selves have “died” and they are now spiritually alive

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *We know that the persons we used to be were nailed to the cross with Jesus. This was done, so that our sinful bodies would no longer be the slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup>We know that sin doesn’t have power over dead people. <sup>8</sup>As surely as we died with Christ, we believe we will also live with him. ... <sup>1</sup>... Christ Jesus has given life to you, and you live for God.* ROMANS 6:6-8, 11B CEV

In our union with Jesus Christ we are identified with him in his death and resurrection. In a spiritual sense our old sinful selves have died with him in his death and we have been made alive spiritually with him in his post-resurrection life.

## Peace

The OT speaks of God giving inner peace (including being at ease) and outer peace (the absence of war and adversity). In addition to peace with God, the NT speaks of God (and Jesus Christ) giving an inner, spiritual peace – even amidst adversity.

#### God gives his people peace . . .

... *the LORD blesses his people with peace.* PSALMS 29:11B NCV™

#### . . . Jesus Christ gives his people peace

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be distressed or lacking in courage.* JOHN 14:27 NET

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have trouble and suffering, but take courage – I have conquered the world.* JOHN 16:33 NET

Because Jesus Christ has overcome the world, in him believers have peace amidst the trouble that the world causes them.

#### It is a great peace

*The LORD gives perfect peace to those whose faith is firm.* ISAIAH 26:3 CEV

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.* PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 NET

## Joy

#### God and Jesus Christ give joy to their people

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* ROMANS 15:13 NET

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete.* JOHN 15:11 NET

## II. Spiritual Attributes

The spiritual attributes that God bestows on his people far exceed anything that this world can offer. Attributes or blessings such as love, hope, joy, peace and wisdom are longed for by most people, and sought after in many ways. But it is only from God that they can be gained in their highest form.

### Love, Faith and Hope

#### God and Jesus Christ give their people love and faith . . .

Peace to the brothers and sisters [believers], and *love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* [EPHESIANS 6:23](#) NET

#### . . . God teaches his people to love

*God has taught you to love each other.* [1 THESSALONIANS 4:9](#) GW

#### God gives his people hope by what he has done through Christ

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] Because of his [God's] great mercy *he has given us a new birth to an ever-living hope through the resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah, from the dead* <sup>4</sup>and to an inheritance kept in heaven for you that can't be destroyed, corrupted, or changed. [1 PETER 1:3-4](#) ISV

Through Jesus Christ's resurrection, God has brought believers into an "ever-living hope" (v. 3). This encompasses the hope of their own resurrection and an everlasting inheritance in heaven (v. 4).

#### God's promises give his people hope

[THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] *To those who were to receive what he promised, God wanted to make it very clear that he would never change his purpose; so he added his vow to the promise.* <sup>18</sup>*There are these two things, then, that cannot change and about which God cannot lie. So we who have found safety with him are greatly encouraged to hold firmly to the hope placed before us.* [HEBREWS 6:17-18](#) GNT

This indicates that "the hope placed before us" (v. 18) by God is based on his promise that is referred to and his confirmation of it with an oath – the "two things... that cannot change" (v. 18).

#### God's people are spiritually reborn of God

But to all who have received him [Jesus] – those who believe in his name – he has given the right to become God's children <sup>13</sup> *children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband's decision, but by God.* [JOHN 1:12-13](#) NET

References to being born by God (v. 13) – or born again – refer to the spiritual rebirth people undergo when they come to faith, and by which they have spiritual life. It is accomplished by God through the work of the Holy Spirit within a person's heart or mind, along with exposure to God's word. This spiritual birth means that believers are in a real sense children of God. It also begins a process of growing more like God, as believers share in his Spirit which transforms them.

#### God's people are a new creation

So then, *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away – look, what is new has come!* [2 CORINTHIANS 5:17](#) NET

#### God Makes His People Holy

Being made holy concerns being set apart for God - dedicated to him, for such purposes as doing his work and worshiping him. This involves them being made pure from sin.

Being made holy has a couple of phases or facets. Firstly, when a person comes to faith their sins are forgiven and as such they are holy. Secondly, believers are made holy in that they are continually being transformed by God, becoming more like Jesus Christ and increasingly devoid of sin. This process is often referred to as "sanctification".

#### God makes his people holy

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Now *may the God of peace himself make you completely holy and may your spirit and soul and body be kept entirely blameless* at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>*He who calls you is trustworthy, and he will in fact do this.* [1 THESSALONIANS 5:23-24](#) NET

### God's people are primarily made holy through Jesus' sacrifice

So Jesus also suffered outside the city to make his people holy with his own blood. [HEBREWS 13:12](#) NCV™

### God's people are in fact being transformed to be like Jesus

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *We all show the Lord's glory, and we are being changed to be like him.* [2 CORINTHIANS 3:18B](#) NCV™

Paul has the development of the believer's sanctification in view, with their characters growing more like Christ. As such believers increasingly reflect and even manifest Christ's glory.

## God Teaches His People

### God teaches his people how to live

*He shows those who are humble how to do right, and he teaches them his ways.* [PSALMS 25:9](#) NCV™

[GOD:] *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.* [PSALMS 32:8](#) ESV

### God enables his people to know the truth

Then Jesus said to those Judeans who had believed him, *"If you continue to follow my teaching, you are really my disciples <sup>32</sup>and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* [JOHN 8:31-32](#) NET

## God Disciplines His People

### God disciplines his people as his children, who he loves

[THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] And have you forgotten *the exhortation addressed to you as sons? "My son, do not scorn the Lord's discipline or give up when he corrects you. <sup>6</sup>For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he accepts." <sup>7</sup>Endure your suffering as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>But if you do not experience discipline, something all sons have shared in, then you are illegitimate and are not sons.* [HEBREWS 12:5-8](#) NET

### God's discipline is done in righteousness and faithfulness

[LEVITES, PRAYING TO GOD AND MAKING REFERENCE TO FOREFATHERS:] You prolonged your kindness with them for many years, and you solemnly admonished them by your Spirit through your prophets. *Still they paid no attention, so you delivered them into the hands of the neighboring peoples. <sup>3</sup>However, due to your abundant mercy you did not do away with them altogether; you did not abandon them. For you are a merciful and compassionate God. ... <sup>33</sup>You are righteous with regard to all that has happened to us, for you have acted faithfully.* It is we who have been in the wrong! [NEHEMIAH 9:30-31, 33](#) NET

As well as speaking of his patience and mercy, vv. 30-31 beautifully illustrate God's righteousness and faithfulness in his discipline and dealings with his people, affirmed in v. 33.

### God's discipline and testing can be intense, but God brings his people through

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *You have put us to the test, God; as silver is purified by fire so you have tested us. <sup>11</sup>You let us fall into a trap and placed heavy burdens on our backs. <sup>12</sup>You let our enemies trample over us; we went through fire and flood, but now you have brought us to a place of safety.* [PSALMS 66:10-12](#) GNT

*Pray for persecuted Christians*