

“INTEGRITY”—A Closer Look, Part 3: Wholeness Lost, Restored, and Completed

A follow-up to Parts 1 and 2 on “Integrity”

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Unless otherwise noted, scripture quotations are from the ESV®.

1. Whole at the Beginning

Parts 1 and 2 looked at what integrity means: wholeness, completeness, being one thing all the way through. Part 3 asks a bigger question. Where does that wholeness come from, and what happened to it? To answer, we start where the Bible starts.

Three parts, made on purpose

The Bible’s account of the first man is short, and every phrase counts. “Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” ([Genesis 2:7](#)).

Two things are going on in that one sentence. First, a body is **formed** from the ground. Second, God **breathes**, and the man becomes alive. We can call that second part *breath-life*. It is what the Bible usually means by the “soul”: the life that animates a living body. Both have a clear ending. When a person takes a last breath, the body returns to the dust, as the Bible spells out later: “you are dust, and to dust you shall return” ([Genesis 3:19](#)).

Body and breath-life are real and good. But the Bible reveals there is more to the first man than these two, and more to what it means to be made in God’s image.

The image of God

The Bible says something more about people: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” ([Genesis 1:27](#)).

That raises a fair question: an image of what? Part of the answer comes with the breath-life itself. When God breathed, the man became a sentient being, one who can reason, feel, make choices, and, perhaps most importantly, believe. He also had a conscience that is aware of right and wrong, unless it has been trained otherwise. In those ways people reflect the God who made them. But the Bible says more, and the simplest statement comes from Jesus: “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” ([John 4:24](#)). God is not a body and is not a creature. If human beings were made in the image of a God who is spirit, then the image must also include something of the same kind. That is the **spirit**. In the beginning it was the part of the man and woman that made a direct connection with God possible, spirit to spirit. So the image of God is not strictly or totally spirit. It includes the mind,

emotions, and conscience that came with breath-life, and the spirit that made direct fellowship with God possible.¹

So the first man was a whole person in three parts: a **body** from the dust, **breath-life** from God's breath, and **spirit**, the image of God. Paul uses the same three in his prayer that believers be kept whole: "your whole spirit and soul and body" ([1 Thessalonians 5:23](#)). We will come back to that verse.

Whole, and at one with God

This is the first picture of integrity in the Bible, and it comes before any rule or command. The first man and woman were whole in themselves, with nothing missing and nothing divided. And they were at one with God. In Genesis 3 they hear "the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" ([Genesis 3:8](#)). The word "walking" is the same word Part 1 followed through Job, David, and Proverbs. In Part 1, walking was something people were asked to do. In the garden, walking with God was simply how things were.

That is wholeness in the full sense of the word: not only a person who is complete, but a person in unity with the God who made them. The next section looks at how that was lost.

A family in view

God's first words to the man and woman were a blessing and a charge: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" ([Genesis 1:28](#)). From the beginning, God's purpose was not only a whole individual but a whole *family*: many children, made in his image, who would walk with him as the first man and woman did. Everything that follows in the Bible's story is, in one way or another, about that purpose and what it took to recover it after the fall.

2. Division

Section 1 ended with a whole person in unity with God. Genesis 3 tells how that unity broke, and the way it broke matters for everything that follows.

One command, two voices

God gave the man a single restriction. Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" ([Genesis 2:17](#)). Then a second voice enters. It begins with a question, "Did God actually say...?" and goes on to contradict him: "You will not surely die" ([Genesis 3:1, 4](#)).

Notice what is being asked of the woman and the man. It is not mainly a matter of reasoning, or feeling, or even of choosing. It is a matter of **belief**: whose word to believe. They believed the serpent's version and acted on it. The first break in the human story was a break in belief, and the break in wholeness followed. This is the pattern from Part 2, where Paul feared that the serpent's cunning would lead the Corinthians' minds away from a single devotion to Christ ([2 Corinthians 11:3](#)).

¹ This should not be understood, as it is by some, as a "spark of the divine within" that just needs to be fanned into life. The capabilities that came with breath-life are just that: capabilities that make human beings more "God-like" than the animals.

Death on that day

God said they would die “in the day” they ate, yet Adam went on to live for centuries ([Genesis 5:5](#)). Something did end that day, and it was a relationship. The New Testament describes people outside of Christ in exactly those terms: “dead in the trespasses and sins” ([Ephesians 2:1](#)), and “alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them” ([Ephesians 4:18](#)).

The division also ran in every direction. The man and woman hid from God (Genesis 3:8–10). They were ashamed in themselves (3:7). They blamed one another (3:12), and a few verses later brother killed brother (4:8). Even the ground became hard to work (3:17–19). Everything that had been whole was now divided.

What was lost

The body did not stop, and breath-life kept running until the last breath. What was forfeited was the **spirit**, the part that had made a direct connection with God possible. The Bible can speak of people as “devoid of the Spirit [spirit]” ([Jude 19](#)), which would be impossible to say of someone if everyone simply had it.²

This is the most important claim in the section, so it is worth saying plainly what is and is not being claimed. Losing the spirit did not make people less than human. They were still bodies with breath-life. But the unity with God that depended on the spirit was gone.

What remained

A great deal remained. People still had the capabilities that came with breath-life: they could reason, feel, choose, and believe. They still had a conscience. Paul says that even people without the written law “by nature do what the law requires,” because “the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness” ([Romans 2:14–15](#)). And what can be known about God is “plain to them,” since his attributes “have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world” ([Romans 1:19–20](#)).

This is the world of Part 1. Abimelech, who had not been given the law, was held accountable for a standard he knew. Job lived a life of integrity long before Moses. Some people did live by right and wrong.

A conscience, though, can be trained in either direction. Paul speaks of consciences that are “seared” and “defiled” ([1 Timothy 4:2](#); [Titus 1:15](#)). It works as an instrument, and an instrument can be calibrated badly.

The handicap

Being only body and breath-life was a serious handicap. Spiritual matters are hard to see and understand at depth without the spirit. A person in that condition leans heavily on the senses, which tends toward self-focused and sense-driven behavior. The first temptation shows the pull: the fruit was “good for food,” “a delight to the eyes,” and “desired to make one wise” ([Genesis 3:6](#)). John later

² In this study, “holy spirit” (lowercase) refers to the gift given to believers, and “Holy Spirit” (capitalized) refers to God, the giver. Quotations from the ESV keep the ESV’s capitalization, which does not make this distinction. Where the ESV’s wording refers to the gift, a bracketed lowercase form follows it.

describes the same pattern: “the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life” ([1 John 2:16](#)).

The exceptions

After Eden, some individuals did have the spirit, but it was the exception, and it was given for a particular purpose. Two good examples show how it worked. Saul received it, and then lost it: “the Spirit [spirit] of the LORD departed from Saul” ([1 Samuel 16:14](#)). David, who knew what that loss looked like, prayed, “take not your Holy Spirit [holy spirit] from me” ([Psalm 51:11](#)). Others had it before them, but these two are well documented.

The point of these examples is how unusual the situation was. For most people, for most of history, the direct connection with God was not available.

The need

A division this deep cannot be repaired by better behavior alone. A person with a divided heart who tries harder is still divided from God. What was needed was the repair of the relationship itself. The Bible has a word for that, and it is the subject of the next section: reconciliation.

3. Reconciliation: The Repair of a Division

Section 2 ended with a division that better behavior cannot repair. The Bible’s word for repairing it is **reconciliation**, and the choice of that word tells us a good deal about the problem.

A word for broken relationships

You only reconcile people who were once together. Strangers who have never met do not need reconciling. Paul uses the same word when he says that a wife who has separated from her husband should “be reconciled to her husband” ([1 Corinthians 7:11](#)). The word describes a relationship that was good, was broken, and is being restored.

That fits the picture in Sections 1 and 2. Mankind was once at one with God, “walking” with him in the garden. Reconciliation is the word for getting that back.

God’s part and ours

Two passages set out how reconciliation works. The first is in Romans: “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life” ([Romans 5:10](#)). Notice the timing. The reconciliation was accomplished “while we were enemies,” before anyone had done anything about it. A few lines later Paul says that through Christ “we have now received reconciliation” (5:11).

The second passage is in 2 Corinthians: “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.” It goes on: “We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” ([2 Corinthians 5:19–20](#)).

Put those together and you can see two sides. God has already done what was needed, and each person is invited to receive it. That is the same pattern Part 2 found in a different place: wholeness is **received** first, and **lived** afterward.

Breaking down the wall

Paul describes the condition before reconciliation in strong terms: “separated from Christ,” “strangers to the covenants of promise,” “without God in the world” ([Ephesians 2:12](#)). Then he says what Christ did about it: he “has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility,” so that he might “reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross” (2:14, 16). Paul is talking first about Jews and Gentiles, but the logic reaches further. Where there was a wall, there is now one body. A divided humanity becomes one, and the division from God is what is overcome first.

Presented whole

The clearest statement of what reconciliation is for comes in Colossians. Paul says that the readers were once “alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,” but that Christ “has now reconciled” them “in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him” ([Colossians 1:21–22](#)).

Two of the words in that verse should look familiar from Part 2. “Blameless” is *amōmos*, the word for the unblemished sacrifice, and “above reproach” is *aneklētos*, the word for someone against whom no charge can be brought. The purpose of reconciliation is wholeness. It is a person presented to God with nothing divided and nothing held against them. Paul then adds, “if indeed you continue in the faith” (1:23), which is the pairing Part 2 found: what is received is meant to be lived.

More than a pardon

A pardon cancels a debt. Reconciliation restores a relationship. Both are needed, and the Bible speaks of both, but they are not the same thing. Section 4 looks at the cost of the legal side, what Christ did to pay for sin. Section 6 will look at the other side, how the direct connection with God that was lost in the garden begins to be restored. Reconciliation is the word that holds the two together.

4. What Christ Accomplished

Reconciliation needed a way to be accomplished, and the New Testament is clear about how: through one person, who did what the first man did not.

A life without a second voice

In Section 2, the first man and woman listened to a second voice and followed it. The New Testament presents Jesus as the one who never did. “I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me,” he says ([John 5:30](#)), and again, “I always do the things that are pleasing to him” ([John 8:29](#)). In the garden of Gethsemane, with the cost fully in view: “not my will, but yours, be done” ([Luke 22:42](#)). The writer of Hebrews says he was “in every respect tempted as we are, yet without sin” ([Hebrews 4:15](#)).

This is the undivided man of Part 2. Even his opponents could say he did not care about anyone’s opinion and taught the way of God truthfully (Matthew 22:16). Paul sets the two men side by side: “as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous” ([Romans 5:19](#)). The first man’s break began with unbelief and disobedience. The repair began with belief and obedience.

Obedient to the end

The obedience went all the way. Jesus “humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” ([Philippians 2:8](#)). Hebrews says it this way: “Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” ([Hebrews 5:8–9](#)). “Made perfect” is the same word family (*teleioō*) that Part 2 followed through the New Testament: brought to completion.

The perfect sacrifice

The law of Moses required that an animal offered for sin be without blemish. The Hebrew word is *tamim*, the “whole” word from Part 1. The point of the requirement was that the offering had to be complete and sound to stand in the place of someone else. But the Bible says plainly that animal sacrifices could not do the job: “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” ([Hebrews 10:4](#)). They were a picture of something yet to come, and they pointed to a payment that would be made in full.

The New Testament says that Christ is that payment. Believers were ransomed “with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” ([1 Peter 1:19](#)). The word translated “without blemish” is *amōmos*, which Part 2 identified as the Greek counterpart of *tamim*. And [Hebrews 9:14](#) says that he “offered himself without blemish to God.” The offering was whole, and so the payment was complete.

Legal standing, good for all time

Because the payment was made in full, the question of standing before God is settled. Paul puts it this way: all “are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” and this is “to be received by faith” ([Romans 3:24–25](#)). “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” ([Romans 5:1](#)).

This is the legal side that Part 2 met in 1 Corinthians 1:8, where “guiltless” means no charge can be brought. Romans 8:33–34 says it in a similar way: “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died.” It is offered to everyone, and it is received by believing: it comes “for all who believe” ([Romans 3:22](#)). Once received, it holds “for all time” ([Hebrews 10:12, 14](#)).

What this does and does not do

The payment settles the legal question. It does not by itself restore everything that was lost in Section 2. The direct connection with God, which depended on the spirit, comes through something else, and Section 6 will look at that. First, there is God’s answer to Christ’s obedience. God did not leave him in death. That is the subject of Section 5.

5. Raised as a New Kind of Man

Section 4 ended with Christ’s obedience carried through to death. The next question is how God answered it.

God's answer

The New Testament treats the resurrection as God's response to that obedience. Jesus was "delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" ([Romans 4:25](#)). He was "declared to be the Son of God in power ... by his resurrection from the dead" ([Romans 1:4](#)). Peter puts it bluntly: "God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it" ([Acts 2:24](#)). Death had a claim on those who sin. It had no claim on the one who had not.

Paul adds that "therefore God has highly exalted him" (Philippians 2:9), the "therefore" in that verse connecting the exaltation back to the obedience. In Part 1, David looked for vindication that would answer his accusers. The resurrection is the answer to the question of Jesus' righteousness. In the scriptures, righteousness and life go together ("he is righteous; he shall surely live," [Ezekiel 18:9](#)): the one who is righteous cannot be held by death.

Not like Lazarus

The Gospels record other people being raised from the dead. Lazarus is the best known ([John 11](#)). But Lazarus came back to the same kind of life he had before, and he would die again. The resurrection of Jesus was different in kind. Paul says, "Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" ([Romans 6:9](#)).

Jesus was recognizably the same person. He still had the marks of the cross, which Thomas was invited to touch ([John 20:27](#)). But he was not simply restored to his old life. He was raised to a new one.

A new kind of man

Paul explains the difference by going back to the first man, which is why Section 1 matters here. "Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit" ([1 Corinthians 15:45](#)).

The first half of that sentence quotes Genesis 2:7, the verse Section 1 started with: the man who became a living being by breath-life. The second half says the risen Christ is something new. He is not animated by breath-life any longer but by spirit. Paul says the same thing about the body: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" ([1 Corinthians 15:44](#)).

The Bible, in other words, describes the risen Christ as a new kind of man. He is the first of a new line, as Adam was the first of the old.

At home in both worlds

The accounts of the resurrection appearances show a person who could move between two realms. On one hand, he was physical. "Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have," he told the disciples, and then he ate a piece of fish in front of them ([Luke 24:39-43](#)). On the other hand, he came and stood among them "the doors being locked" ([John 20:19](#)) and then was no longer seen.

He was neither a ghost nor a resuscitated body. He could access the physical world and the spiritual world, which no one before him could.

Taken up

The pattern ends with his departure. “As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight” ([Acts 1:9](#)). He was taken up into the spiritual realm, which a man animated by spirit can access. There the New Testament describes him as seated “at his right hand in the heavenly places” ([Ephesians 1:20](#)), “seated at the right hand of God” ([Colossians 3:1](#)). That is figurative language, a way of describing the spiritual realm and Christ’s place of honor and authority in it.

The firstfruits

The resurrection of Jesus is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of something. Paul calls Christ “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” ([1 Corinthians 15:20](#)) and Colossians calls him “the firstborn from the dead” ([Colossians 1:18](#)). A firstfruit is the first part of a harvest, and it promises the rest. What happened to him is the pattern for what will happen to those who belong to him, which is the subject of Section 9.

Before he left, though, he made a promise about what the disciples would receive in the meantime. That promise, and how it was fulfilled, is Section 6.

6. The Promise and Pentecost

Section 2 described what was lost in the garden: the spirit and, with it, the direct connection with God. Section 6 is about how the Bible says it came back.

The promise

Before his death and again before his departure, Jesus told his disciples that something was coming. “Behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” ([Luke 24:49](#)). At the Last Supper he described it in more personal terms: “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit [spirit] of truth.” He added a detail worth noticing: “You know him [it], for he [it] dwells with you and will be in you” ([John 14:16–17](#)).

The word translated “Helper” is *paraklētos*, which other translations render “Comforter” or “Counselor.” It means someone called alongside to help, and here it is figurative language. The disciples were troubled that Jesus was leaving, so he spoke of what was coming as if a person would arrive to take his place beside them. The gift is not a second person standing next to them. It is a living and active capability, one that can inform and instruct, as Jesus says a few verses later: “the Helper, the Holy Spirit [holy spirit], whom the Father will send in my name, he [it] will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” ([John 14:26](#)). Jesus also said that the timing depended on his own departure: “it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him [it] to you” ([John 16:7](#)). That connects directly to Section 5. Christ had to be taken up before the promise could be fulfilled.

Just before he was taken up, he repeated it: “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit [holy spirit] has come upon you” ([Acts 1:8](#)).

Promised long before

The promise was not new. The prophets had looked ahead to a time when what had been rare would become common. “I will pour out my Spirit [spirit] on all flesh,” said Joel ([Joel 2:28–29](#)). Ezekiel put it

more intimately: “I will put my Spirit [spirit] within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes” ([Ezekiel 36:26–27](#)). Notice the word “walk” again. In Section 2, the spirit was given to a few people for particular purposes. These prophecies describe a time when it would be given to many. They also reach further than Pentecost, to a time when “this perishable body must put on the imperishable” ([1 Corinthians 15:53](#)).

Pentecost

Partial fulfillment of those prophecies came on the day of Pentecost. The disciples were together in Jerusalem, “and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit [holy spirit] and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit [or spirit] gave them utterance” ([Acts 2:1–4](#)).

Peter explains what had happened, and he ties it to Section 5: “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit [holy spirit], he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing” ([Acts 2:33](#)). Christ, seated at God’s right hand, sent what he had promised.

And it was not limited to the apostles. Peter says to the crowd, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit [holy spirit]. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off” ([Acts 2:38–39](#)). It is called a **gift**. It is offered, and it is received by believing. Paul asks the Galatians, “Did you receive the Spirit [spirit] by works of the law or by hearing with faith?” ([Galatians 3:2](#)).³

How people knew

The New Testament does not leave the receiving of this gift as something invisible. In the accounts in Acts, speaking in tongues is how people knew it had happened. At Pentecost, it was tongues ([Acts 2:4](#)). When the household of Cornelius received the gift, the Jewish believers with Peter “were amazed,” because “they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God,” and Peter concluded that these people “have received the Holy Spirit [holy spirit] just as we have” ([Acts 10:44–47](#)). At Ephesus, “the Holy Spirit [holy spirit] came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying” ([Acts 19:6](#)). The evidence was visible and audible, and it could be recognized by the people around.

What this restores

This completes, at least in part, the story that began in Genesis. In Section 2 the spirit was lost and the direct connection with God went with it. In Section 4 the legal question was settled. Now, the spirit is given as a gift, and the connection that depended on it is available again. Mankind has the option of both: the legal standing before God that Christ’s sacrifice made possible, and the gift of holy spirit that begins to restore what was lost.

The next section looks at what that restoration means for the person who receives it.

³ In scriptural contexts, believing, faith, and trust are used somewhat synonymously. The core idea is that there is some truth that is fully accepted.

7. Body, Soul, and Spirit Again

Section 6 ended with the gift of holy spirit being given. Section 7 asks what that does for the person who receives it.

Three parts again

Section 1 described the first man as three parts: body from the dust, breath-life from God's breath, and spirit as the image of God. Section 2 described the loss of the spirit. Here is how Paul prays for believers: "May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it" ([1 Thessalonians 5:23–24](#)).

It is the same three, in a different order, and now the spirit is back among them. Part 2 met this verse as a picture of wholeness: "kept" whole, "blameless," and God as the one who does it. Read next to Section 1, it says more. A believer is again a person of body, soul, and spirit.

Joined to the Lord

What the spirit makes possible is a direct connection with God, which is what was lost in the garden, and also a direct connection with the risen Christ. Paul describes it with one of his plainest statements: "he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" ([1 Corinthians 6:17](#)). The unity that depended on the spirit, spirit to spirit, is available again.

Romans 8 says it from the other side. "You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit [spirit], if in fact the Spirit [spirit] of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit [spirit] of Christ does not belong to him" ([Romans 8:9](#)). A few verses later: "The Spirit himself [may refer to God or Christ] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" ([8:16](#)). The gift is not an idea or a feeling. It is a living and active capability in the person, and it connects the believer to God at the level where Section 2 said the connection had been broken.

There are now two kinds of unity with God. One is **legal**: the standing that Christ's sacrifice made possible (Section 4). The other is **direct**: the connection of spirit to spirit that the gift restores. The first is a verdict, and the second is a relationship in operation.

Restored, but in part

The New Testament is careful about how much has been restored so far. The gift is described as a down payment. Believers "were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit [holy spirit], who [which] is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it" ([Ephesians 1:13–14](#)). Paul says that God "has given us the Spirit [spirit] as a guarantee" ([2 Corinthians 5:5](#)). A guarantee is real, and it is also a promise of more.

Romans 8:23 shows what is still to come: "we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit [spirit], groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." The spirit has been received, but the body has not yet been redeemed. Believers still have bodies that age, suffer, and die. So the wholeness described in this section is real and also partial. The spirit is restored now, and the body waits. That is the subject of Section 9.

This is also where the pattern from Part 2 shows up again. What is received is given first, and the rest follows. The believer has what Adam and Eve lost, but having it does not mean it works automatically. The next section asks what it takes to live from it.

8. Living It Out: Integrity Does Not Display Automatically

Section 7 ended with a believer who has what Adam and Eve lost: the legal standing and the gift. That is the capability for a life of integrity. It is not the same as the life itself.

Received is not the same as displayed

Part 2 found the same pattern throughout the New Testament. Wholeness is **received** first and **lived** afterward. A person can have the standing and the gift and still live in ways that are divided: saying one thing and doing another, trusting God in some areas and not in others, or acting on the old habits of body and breath-life that were all a person had before. The Corinthians in Part 2 were an example. They were “sanctified” and “enriched in every way,” and also quarreling and immoral.

So the New Testament does not stop with what has been received. It goes on to tell believers what to do with it. Two things come up again and again: renewing the mind, and using the gift.

Renewing the mind

Parts of the old life remained, because the mind had been shaped for years without the spirit. Paul’s instruction is direct: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” ([Romans 12:2](#)). The word “perfect” there is *teleios*, the “complete” word that Part 2 followed.

In Ephesians the picture is one of changing clothes: “put off your old self... and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” ([Ephesians 4:22–24](#)). Colossians says the new self “is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” ([Colossians 3:10](#)).

Two things in those verses connect to earlier sections. “Likeness” and “image” take us back to Section 1, to what it meant to be made in God’s image. And “knowledge” takes us back to Part 1’s principle that integrity of heart is bounded by knowledge. A person cannot be undivided about what they do not know. Renewing the mind is how that boundary moves outward. Hebrews describes mature believers as those “who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil” ([Hebrews 5:14](#)). That training takes time and effort, and it begins with the truths this section and the earlier ones have been laying out.

Using the gift

The second thing is to use what has been given. Paul says, “walk by the Spirit [spirit], and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” ([Galatians 5:16](#)). The walking language from Part 1 appears again. And the same letter says, “If we live by the Spirit [spirit], let us also keep in step with the Spirit [spirit]” ([Galatians 5:25](#)).

To use a gift is to put it to work. Paul’s own example is praying in a tongue, and he does not set it against the mind but alongside it: “I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also” ([1 Corinthians 14:15](#)). He also warns against neglecting it: “Do not quench the Spirit [spirit]”

([1 Thessalonians 5:19](#)). The mind and the spirit are meant to work together, and the believer who uses both is living from the whole person that Section 7 described.

Walking by the spirit includes walking by the word. To walk by the spirit is not a separate track from obeying what God has said. Ezekiel's promise joins them: "I will put my Spirit [spirit] within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" ([Ezekiel 36:27](#)). Paul says the same of believers: the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in those "who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit [spirit]" ([Romans 8:4](#)). The word and the spirit work together, which is why Paul also tells believers, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" ([Colossians 3:16](#)). The word gives the mind the truth to be aligned to (the "straight" of Part 2), and the spirit within is the capability that inclines the believer to follow it.

What the spirit does within. When the spirit within is at work, it inclines the heart toward obedience and fruit rather than toward disobedience. Paul describes the two pulls: "the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit [spirit], and the desires of the Spirit [spirit] are against the flesh" ([Galatians 5:17](#)). Those who are "led by the Spirit [spirit] of God" ([Romans 8:14](#)) are being led away from the one and toward the other, and the result is the fruit described below. An inclination is not a compulsion, though. Paul still says, "if by the Spirit [spirit] you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" ([Romans 8:13](#)). The believer has to act, and the spirit makes the right action both possible and natural.

What the gift includes. The gift is more than speaking in tongues. Paul lists nine capabilities that come with it: "to one is given through the Spirit [spirit] the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit [spirit], to another faith by the same Spirit [spirit], to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit [spirit], to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues" ([1 Corinthians 12:8–10](#)). The first two are often called a word of wisdom and a word of knowledge. Paul states the purpose just before the list: the capabilities are given "for the common good" (12:7).

More like Christ. These are the capabilities that Jesus himself used. Peter says that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit [holy spirit] and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" ([Acts 10:38](#)). Jesus healed, worked miracles, spoke with wisdom and knowledge, and prophesied. And he said, "whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do" ([John 14:12](#)). In that sense, the gift enables a person to be literally more Christ-like.

The fruit. The gift is not only about what a person can do. It is also about who the person becomes. "The fruit of the Spirit [spirit] is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" ([Galatians 5:22–23](#)). This is the moral side of wholeness. Notice that Paul says "fruit," singular: one fruit with many aspects, not a menu of separate qualities to choose from. It is a picture of a single, undivided character, which is what this study has been after since Part 1. The capabilities and the character together describe the whole person.

One body. Receiving the gift also joins a person to others. Paul says, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit [spirit] we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit [spirit]" ([1 Corinthians 12:12–13](#)). The result is called the body of Christ: "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (12:27).

This is wholeness at the level of a community. It answers the division described in Section 3, where the wall was broken down so that there could be "one body" (Ephesians 2:16). It answers the Corinthians'

divisions from Part 2, too. God arranged the body, Paul says, “that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another” (12:25). A person who has been made whole is not an isolated whole person. He or she is a member of a body, and the capabilities and the fruit above are meant to be used for it, “for the common good.”

Whole and straight

Part 2 described the walk in two words, whole and straight. The first is undividedness, and the second is alignment with what is true. Both partners are in view here. Renewing the mind supplies the truth that the walk is aligned to, and using the gift keeps the believer connected to God, so the walk is not divided in itself. In Galatians 2:14, Paul says that Peter’s conduct was “not in step with the truth of the gospel.” In Galatians 5:25 he gives the remedy: keep in step.

Where this leaves us

The believer in this section is real, and changing, and not yet finished. The spirit has been received, and the body still waits. The mind is being renewed, and the old habits still pull. The life of integrity is being lived, imperfectly, by someone who has been made whole in some ways and is still waiting to be made whole in others. The last full section looks at what completes the process.

9. The Culmination: New Hearts, New Creation

Section 7 said that the restoration is real and partial. Section 8 said that the life of integrity is being lived by someone not yet finished. This section is about what finishes it.

What is still missing

Section 8 described a believer who is still waiting and still changing. But it is not only believers who wait. The world around us is part of the picture. Paul says that “the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” ([Romans 8:21](#)). The restoration has begun, but it has not been completed, and the Bible speaks plainly about the completion.

New hearts

The prophets promised more than the spirit. They promised a new heart. Jeremiah looked ahead to a new covenant in which God would say, “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts” ([Jeremiah 31:33](#)). Ezekiel adds, “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” ([Ezekiel 36:26](#)).

There is a promise in Jeremiah that readers of Part 1 will recognize at once. “I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever” ([Jeremiah 32:39](#)). Heart and way, *lev* and *derek*, are the pairing Part 1 followed through Job, David, and Proverbs, tied to *tom*. And “one heart” is the opposite of the “double heart” of Psalm 12:2. It is the answer to a prayer David offered long before: “Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name” ([Psalm 86:11](#)). What David asked for, God promises to give.

Some of this has begun, as Section 6 described. But the new heart, in the fullest sense, belongs to the time when the process is complete, and no part of a person is still divided.

A new body

The body will be made new as well. Paul says, “we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye... For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality” ([1 Corinthians 15:51–53](#)). And he says what the new body will be like: Christ “will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body” ([Philippians 3:21](#)).

This is where Section 5 pays off. Christ was raised as a new kind of man, the “firstfruits,” and what happened to him is the pattern. John says, “what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” ([1 John 3:2](#)). Believers will not simply be restored to the old condition. They will be raised to the new one.

A new heaven and a new earth

The last part of the story is larger than any one person. Isaiah spoke of it: “I create new heavens and a new earth” ([Isaiah 65:17](#)). Peter picks it up: “according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” ([2 Peter 3:13](#)). The word is “dwells.” Righteousness is not a visitor there. It is at home.

Revelation shows it: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God... Behold, I am making all things new’” ([Revelation 21:1–5](#)).

This closes the circle that opened in Section 1. In Genesis, God walked in the garden and the way to the tree of life was closed ([Genesis 3:8, 24](#)). At the end, the tree of life is there again, and the redeemed “will see his face” ([Revelation 22:2, 4](#)). The unity with God that was lost is restored, and it is no longer partial.

Integrity through and through

Put the pieces together and the picture is complete. A person of body, soul, and spirit, in full unity with God, both in legal standing and in direct connection. A heart that is one heart, with one way. A mind no longer bounded by what it does not know: “Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” ([1 Corinthians 13:12](#)). A body that does not decay. A community in which there is no division. And a world where righteousness is at home.

The family complete. This is what God had been working toward since the fall. Paul says that creation waits “for the revealing of the sons of God” ([Romans 8:19](#)), and Revelation closes the circle: “The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son” ([Revelation 21:7](#)). What God wanted in the garden, he has in the end: a family of righteous children, whole in body, soul, and spirit, living in his presence, and “God himself will be with them as their God” ([Revelation 21:3](#)).

That is the fullest meaning of the word this study started with. Integrity as the Bible uses it is wholeness, completeness, being one thing rather than two. In the new creation, believers will be that, through and through.

10. Conclusion

Looking back

This series set out to understand a word that hardly appears in the Bible. Part 1 followed the Hebrew words *tummah* and *tom* and found one core sense: wholeness, completeness, being undivided. Part 2 followed that idea into the New Testament, where it is spread across many Greek words, and found that wholeness is **received** first and **lived** afterward. Part 3 went back to the beginning to ask what is received and what has changed.

The answer is a single story. Mankind was made whole, in body, breath-life, and spirit, and at one with God. Disobedience divided that unity, and the spirit was lost. Christ's obedience, sacrifice, and resurrection made reconciliation possible, and the legal question was settled for all time. The gift of holy spirit began to restore what was lost, and the believer is called to live from it, with a renewed mind and the use of the gift. And at the end, in the new heaven and earth, the work is finished: new hearts, new bodies, complete integrity, and a family of righteous children.

Hebrew and Greek

One more observation looks back across all three parts. In Hebrew, one root family carries the idea of wholeness: *tom*, *tummah*, *tam*, and *tamim* are applied to a year, a body, a heart, and a single act. In Greek, many words each carry a piece of it: *holoklēros*, *haplotēs*, *akeraios*, *anenklētos*, *amōmos*, and *teleios*. That difference follows, at least in part, from how the two languages build words. Hebrew builds many words from a root, so the family is easy to see. Greek uses prefixes and compounds, so related ideas show up as words that look unrelated.

It does not mean that the New Testament writers thought about wholeness in a different way. They knew the Hebrew scriptures well, and the Greek cluster often carries the Hebrew idea. Philippians 2:15 draws on Deuteronomy 32. So the two parts of this study belong together. Part 1 shows the root, and Part 2 shows the pieces. In Hebrew, one root carries the idea of wholeness; in Greek, many words each carry a piece of it, and the picture only comes together when they are read side by side.

The question again

The question at the center of this study was never “are you good enough?” It was “are you divided?” The Bible's answer is that the divided can be made whole. God has done what was needed, it is received by believing, it is lived out by a renewed mind and the use of what has been given, and it will be completed.

Paul says it in a sentence: “I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” ([Philippians 1:6](#)). The One who makes people whole will see it through.