

LIVING AS A CITIZEN OF  
God's  
Kingdom

Embrace His Blessings, Fulfill His Calling



TIMO GROOT

Timo Groot

Living as a Citizen of God's Kingdom  
Embrace His Blessings, Fulfill His Calling  
By Timo Groot

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## FOREWORD AND PREFACE

### Foreword

If we have to summarize the message of Jesus during His time on earth in one sentence, it is: the Kingdom of God is near. Jesus, Himself said the following to the people in Capernaum: “I must preach the kingdom of God (good news) to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.” (Luke 4:43)

In His ministry, He constantly spoke of the Kingdom and demonstrated its power through miracles and signs. After His death and resurrection, He spent another forty days with the disciples, where He was *seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God* (Acts 1:3). In short, the gospel is good news, but what is that good news? The Kingdom of God is here, and you can be part of it.

Despite what has been said above, it is impressive that many Christians cannot give a clear answer to the question: What is God's Kingdom? Timo took no satisfaction in not understanding these things, and his subsequent study resulted in this beautiful book!

Throughout this book, Timo takes you on a journey to explain God's Kingdom and its aspects. Timo has a simple, straightforward writing style that makes it easy for readers to comprehend the context of this book.

I remember how it impacted me when I first understood what the Kingdom or Kingship of Jesus meant. The result was that I wanted to live to the fullest, my fears disappeared, and I steadily grew in faith to apply the authority Jesus owned and shared with us.

Many people around the world are eagerly awaiting the return of Jesus. Me too. I believe He will come soon, but until then, He wants to prepare His bride. The church is His bride, and Jesus isn't returning for a weakened church without strength. He is returning for a glorious bride. For that reason, we will see one more mighty revival on this earth, and I bet it will result in a revival of the whole church. This means that all members will be active because *for the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God* (Romans 8:19).

## FOREWORD AND PREFACE

But to witness this, we need to return to the basics—the message that John the Baptist proclaimed, that Jesus preached and that the disciples followed—the message of the Kingdom. This book is a wonderful tool for realigning believers to our true essence in Christ, and I pray that as you read it, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you will take the message and step out in faith! God's Kingdom is within you, and it is time for the world to see that.

**Robbert-Jan van Capelleveen**

Youth worker and speaker

## **Preface**

What exactly is God's Kingdom? Throughout the Bible, it is all about God's Kingdom. God desires to establish a Kingdom where He is King and ruler. We see this already in the Old Testament, where God made a covenant with one group: the people of Israel. God planned to rule as King and bless the people abundantly if they kept His commandments. At times, this went well, but unfortunately, it went wrong many times because of the people's sins. God decided not to throw in the towel but devised a great plan. Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, a new Kingdom was created: God's Kingdom. Jesus rules in this Kingdom, and her citizens are abundantly blessed. This Kingdom already exists, yet not entirely. This Kingdom is spiritual but only becomes genuinely physical in the future. All believers are in this Kingdom, but not everyone knows the blessings and missions of the Kingdom.

This is why I decided to write a book about God's Kingdom. I had heard about the Kingdom myself, but if you asked me what the Kingdom meant, I couldn't get further than a few words. By researching the Bible and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I created a whole book about God's Kingdom. This book will significantly bless your personal life, and you will fully realize what Jesus' sacrifice on the cross brought us. God's blessing!

**Timo Groot**

GOD'S KINGDOM

# Royal blessings

PART 2



2



## C5 CITIZENS' BLESSINGS

Now that we know that God's Kingdom is spiritual and the Lord Jesus is the great King with all power, let us look at what this Kingdom does. In America, you have various laws and obligations that you must comply with, and at the same time, you are protected and receive services from the government. For example, citizens can access the police, emergency medical services, or the fire department. The government tries to protect its people and provide roads for its citizens. Citizens with lower incomes receiving allowances or food stamps from the food bank is feasible. Americans have rights and obligations. This is also the case in the Kingdom of God. God wants to bless us in various ways. This is a great grace of God and is entirely in His will and sovereignty. At the same time, God asks for something from us in return so that He can bless us. In this chapter, we cover the blessings of the citizen and the "laws" that come with these blessings.

### The Blessings

When Jesus came to earth, He taught about the Kingdom and demonstrated its principles. When Herod Antipas imprisoned John the Baptist, John sent two of his disciples to the Lord Jesus to ask if He was the One who was to come. John thought of the Messiah, the anointed King.

*And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him: Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said to them: Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me. (Matthew 11:2-6)*

In this list of the Lord Jesus, we see parts of the Kingdom of God. The Old Testament depicts these signs concerning the millennial Kingdom (Isaiah 26:19, 29:18, 35:5-6, 42:7, 42:18, 61:1). Jesus

showed that these parts were already happening under His Kingdom. These parts will be completely fulfilled during the millennial Kingdom, but Jesus has made all these parts available to His followers now. Here is the list.

- Blind will see
- Lame will walk
- Lepers will become cleansed
- Deaf will hear
- The dead will be raised
- To the poor, the gospel is proclaimed

This is already possible today in God's Kingdom. God's Kingdom is bigger and more powerful than we think. God wants to bless us with more than we can imagine. We will cover the following blessings of the Kingdom in the coming chapters.

- Forgiveness of sins
- Redemption from sins
- Justified and sanctified
- In Christ: a sacred life
- In Christ: a life with authority
- Salvation from death and eternal life
- Healing from diseases
- Liberation from demons
- Breaking the curse
- Giving the blessing
- Living in prosperity
- Receiving the Holy Spirit
- Direct connection with God
- The body of Christ
- Protection
- Victories
- Grace
- Wisdom
- Peace and joy

## How to Cope with God's blessing?

This is a large list of blessings that God wants to give to His citizens. Before we examine this list, I want to clarify some points in this section. We cover these points briefly and vigorously with a few Bible texts.

1. God wants to offer us blessings out of His love. God wasn't initially obligated to give us things regardless of our actions or how much we prayed. It was God's will to allow us into His Kingdom and give us the blessings of His Kingdom. God is sovereign. This means God Himself decides what He wants to do. God has chosen in His sovereignty to bring blessings to the people of the earth and have their best interests at heart. This is solely because of God's grace and the works of our Lord Jesus. Now that God has allowed us into His Kingdom, He wants to give us everything we need. Earthly parents want to give their children presents, nice clothes, good food, and enjoyable trips. A parent loves their child and wants to see them grow up happy and prosperous. The same is true with God. God is our Father, and He loves His children.

Therefore, God wants to offer us blessings as a gift and ensure that we bless those around us. The greatest thing God has given to us is His own Son, the Lord Jesus.

*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)*

God wants to offer us all of it. If God the Father has already given His Son to us, how much more will God want to bless us with other blessings? We have a God who wants to give us blessings as a gift. It is God's will that we be blessed.

2. Looking at my own life, I enjoy the intimacy and relationship with God. We shouldn't "claim" or "demand" these blessings without entering into a relationship with God. Seek first God and His Kingdom. Put God first in your life and walk with God out of love. If you do that, God will bless you.

*But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33)*

In Greek, "seek" means we unceasingly seek God's Kingdom. We must always put God's Kingdom first, and not just on Sundays between 10 a.m. and noon. Making God and the things of His Kingdom a priority will cause Him to provide us with everything we need. Let's see God's blessings as a relationship between man and God. We love God and want to serve God. God loves man and wants to serve man, just as Jesus washed the disciples' feet and healed the sick.

3. Because God wants to bless us doesn't imply that things can never rage or nasty things never happen. Most of the twelve disciples were mistreated and eventually killed. Paul also experienced moments of difficulty that weren't always going well. Conditions were sometimes appalling, yet the blessing of God remained in their lives.

*From the Jews five times I (Paul) received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. (2 Corinthians 11:24-27)*

Sometimes, things can get complicated, and we may not experience God's blessing for a specific duration. Despite the Bible text above, Paul experienced many blessings and prosperity (Acts 20:34 and Philippians 4:18). He was a Roman citizen with rights, and God often supernaturally protected him during challenging periods on earth. This happened, for example, during the shipwreck that Paul suffered. Despite this challenging time, he and the crew were saved (Acts 27:22). Even during difficult times, God remains faithful and wants to bless us.

This is something we see in Joseph's life. Joseph had experienced difficult times, yet God's blessing was always present. This was the case when he was with his family; he was a slave of Potiphar, imprisoned, and then became a ruler. God's blessing was always in his life despite the unsteady circumstances.

*The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field. (Genesis 39:2-5)*

Circumstances showed that Joseph was struggling, but God's blessing continued. Not only on Joseph but also on his work, blessing his master's house. Then, through a trick of Potiphar's wife, Joseph had to go to prison.

*Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison. But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper. (Genesis 39:20-23)*

While in prison, Joseph also prospered and proved to be a blessing to all. Even when conditions were harsh, Joseph continued to receive blessings from God. Eventually, Joseph became the vice-roy of Egypt. Conditions were favorable then, and he was a bless-

ing to the entire nation. Because of Joseph, the people didn't perish during the famine, and Egypt could even sell food to other countries also affected by the famine.

4. We must study the Bible and relate closely to God's prophecies and promises. God wants to bless us supernaturally; however, it is essential first to know that God wants to bless us and in what areas of our lives He wants to bless us. It is necessary to receive revelation about a blessing and ask God for it. The following text illustrates that God the Father has blessed us with every possible blessing. The blessings we will discuss in the coming chapters apply to everyone who is a son or daughter of God, but it is essential to be aware of these blessings.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (...).* (Ephesians 1:3)

What is the meaning of spiritual blessings? First of all, it refers to every spiritual blessing. It demonstrates that God's blessing is not limited to one or two blessings per person; God wants to bless us with all the blessings and promises of the Word of God. Secondly, it refers to spiritual blessing. This doesn't mean that God's blessing is only immaterial or available only in the future. It means that these blessings are made available to believers by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in the hearts of believers so that they share in all the blessings of God through the Holy Spirit. Finally, the word "blessing": according to the dictionary, this word means "salvation," "prosperity," "help," or "a gift from God." When God blesses us, He helps us, makes us prosperous in our work, and gives good things and gifts to His children.

*And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.* (2 Corinthians 9:8)

The Bible illustrates God's desire to lavish us with beneficial gifts. Simultaneously, many gifts function through a relationship

with God. God asks us to do certain things and then rewards us with gifts. We will discuss this later.

5. A critical action that applies to God's blessings is believing God wishes to give us something. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)*

What does it mean to have faith? Hebrews 11 answers this.

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)*

At times, we cannot yet see the blessings of God with our physiological eye. It is crucial to believe that God wants to give us what He promises, even if there is an occasional deficit. We should know that God never lies and does as promised. Faith is firm ground and doesn't mean "maybe" or "maybe not." Faith is a reality, and it will happen. Faith is an assurance of things you don't see (immediately, but to be revealed in the future). Some blessings are still distant, and you may experience deprivation. However, believe in the invisible blessings of God, and they will become visible.

God asks us to believe in Him and rewards those who seek Him. Without faith, it isn't possible to claim the blessings of God. In addition, God rewards those who seek Him, that is, those who have a relationship with Him. We covered this in point 2.

6. God wants to bless us. It is, however, essential to ask God for the blessing. There is an expression in Dutch that says, "Who asks, gets skipped." In other words, someone who asks for certain things will not receive it. Regarding God, it is the exact opposite, and we can say, "He who asks will receive."

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and*

*he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)*

If someone needs healing, the key is to ask God for healing. If someone needs provision, it's essential to ask God for provision. According to step 5, this should go hand in hand with faith.

7. It matters to take action. In the following chapters, we will discuss some of God's blessings. Some blessings work according to instructions. God asks us to do certain things and gives us blessings in response to our actions. We will address this point in the following chapters for each blessing.

8. Many of God's blessings work extraordinarily, as we can see in the stories of Abraham and Joseph. God blessed Abraham and Joseph, and in the end, they received many assets. However, Abraham and Joseph weren't the only ones who were blessed. In the story of Joseph, we learn that Joseph's lord was also blessed. Joseph's blessing affected those around him. This also applies to Abraham and us.

*Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:1-3)*

God's blessing was on Abraham and also on the people who were kind to Abraham. Similarly, God's blessing on our lives also benefits others. For example, consider your workplace. If you are prosperous, the workplace will be thriving. Simultaneously, we shouldn't only ask God for things and blessings for ourselves but also ask God to bless others. It would be best to grant others what you want to receive yourself.

*Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men (...). (1 Timothy 2:1)*

9. Express gratitude to God for all He has done and will do in your life. Gratitude is an essential part of our relationship with God, and being thankful to God in every circumstance is equally essential. Whether we feel happy, sad, or angry, we thank God for all His good gifts and who He is.

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God (...). (Philippians 4:6)*

*In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)*

10. Be patient to receive your blessing. There are times when God responds immediately to a question. Lazarus was a man who had died and had been lying in a grave for four days. The Lord Jesus, by the power of God, told Lazarus to come out of his grave, Lazarus immediately arose. God may answer our questions or requests immediately. But it is also possible that we must be patient and wait a moment. We find this principle in the story of Joseph. When Joseph was living with his family, he received a dream from God. His family members would bow down before him and honor him. For years, it appeared nothing would happen, and it seemed as if God had withdrawn His promise. Finally, this dream was fulfilled, and Joseph's family members knelt before him. Joseph's promise was fulfilled, but he needed patience. This was also true of Abraham. He received his promise of a son and offspring at an advanced age. Both situations were no longer possible naturally, but God's promises endured. Be patient, and God does what He promises!

## **Summary**

In God's Kingdom, there are many blessings. Out of His sovereignty, God has decided to give us many blessings and gifts. We

will deal with these blessings in the following chapters. Before we discuss these blessings, knowing how we deal with them is essential. God likes to provide us with things, but this doesn't always happen automatically. The key elements we have discussed in this chapter are:

1. God wants to give us blessings out of His love.
2. We receive blessings through intimacy and a relationship with God.
3. It remains possible for circumstances to look bad. Yet God continues to bless us even in those circumstances.
4. We need to know God's blessings and how they work.
5. We must believe in God for the blessings.
6. We must ask God for the blessings.
7. We must take action to receive the blessings.
8. We are a blessing to be a blessing.
9. We should be grateful to God for all He does.
10. Be patient to receive your blessing.

## C6 FORGIVENESS AND REDEMPTION

The most renowned blessing of God the Father is that He has forgiven us of our debts. But did you know that God has forgiven us and delivered us from the power of sin? In chapter 4, we read that we have been transferred from the devil's Kingdom to God's Kingdom. We have become citizens of heaven and citizens of the Kingdom. The general will of God is that everyone should resemble the Lord Jesus; therefore, by the power of the Holy Spirit, God has redeemed us from sin and made us sacred. We may be exemplary citizens in God's Kingdom, not by our strength, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)*

### **Forgiveness of Sins**

God is willing to forgive us of our sins. Often, sins aren't depicted as particularly bad; it can be something exciting, something naughty, or sneaky that is, in fact, forbidden. When the Bible talks about sins, sin isn't considered mischief or doing something naughty. Sin is terrible and is rebelling against God. Because of sin, man fails to fulfill his purpose and destiny. God had placed Adam and Eve in the garden to rule it, maintain it, and walk with God. Through the Fall, Adam and Eve missed this purpose and calling, and they missed the blessing and presence of God. In addition, sin destroys yourself, your fellow man, and the world. God's intention is for us to live in peace with one another. Sin causes peace to disappear. For example, this happens the moment we steal, cheat, kill, be unfaithful, or act unkindly. God equates sin against another human being with sin against Him. We can also sin directly against God by replacing Him with idols or not acknowledging Him as God. Sin destroys us. God thinks sin is so bad that He wants and must punish sin. The penalty for sin is very high, and God cannot simply condone it. It is an eternal punishment.

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)*

Furthermore, sinning is dangerous. It is a spiritual power that wants to take over your life and cause you to sin more frequently. We see this with addictions. It often starts very "innocently" with one time doing something: one time bullying someone, one-time doing drugs, one-time seeing porn, or a single lie. But when sin has you in its grip; it doesn't let go easily. Starting it is easy; quitting is, on your own, complicated. This is because sin wants to take over your life and gain dominion over your soul. Sin wants to be the lord of your life, so you are a slave to it.

*Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34)*

*For when you were slaves of sin (...). (Romans 6:20)*

*While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. (2 Peter 2:19)*

Sin is an enslaver, a very nasty and unpleasant enslaver. The power of sin destroys lives. Think of the wars, addictions, broken families, debts from gambling, or the deterioration of the body through drugs and alcohol. In the end, God punishes every sin.

The first blessing we deal with is the forgiveness of sins. God has to punish sins and forgive everyone who trusts the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus paid the price through which our debts and sins could be ransomed. We deserve punishment, but God gives us the blessing.

*Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins (...). (Acts 13:38)*

When we say that God forgives our sins, it means that God no longer thinks about things we have done wrong in the past. God

overlooks our past mistakes and shortcomings. They are forgiven and forgotten, and God has taken away the charges and punishment we once deserved.

*And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Colossians 2:13-14)*

When we come to faith, all our wrongdoings are forgiven. Without any merit or any performance on our part, God decided to forgive us and erase the handwriting (in Paul's time, handwriting was a document in which a debtor wrote down his debts) against us. All our sins and disobedience are written in this handwriting. God has erased this handwriting. It has become a blank sheet, and we are no longer in debt to God. God does this because He loves us.

*For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You. (Psalm 86:5)*

Let us read a few more verses that let us know that God wants to forgive us through the work of the Lord Jesus.

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (...). (Ephesians 1:7)*

*To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins. (Acts 10:43)*

*And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:47)*

### **Walking in Forgiveness**

God is keen to forgive us of our sins. This is free, but at the same time, God urges us to do certain things to live well in this blessing.

1. God has said that He forgives all our sins. Yet repentance for sins is supposed to be a healthy attitude of a Christian. Repentance means that we regret something we did wrong. A healthy attitude of a Christian is that he wishes, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be like the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, we may commit wrong acts. At such times, we regret our choices and realize we are wrong. Sometimes, this feeling can be so intense that we can no longer talk or walk with God. This is a lie. God always wants to forgive us if we come to Him with repentance, no matter what we have done wrong.

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:9-10)*

When we confess, we may trust that Jesus is loyal and righteous and wants to forgive us. John says that Jesus does this when we confess our sins. To confess sins means that in repentance, we say what we have done wrong and lay the sin before God. In response, God forgives us for our sins.

*For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. (2 Corinthians 7:10)*

We show repentance at the beginning of our walk with God. We live in the world and do some wrong things. Then we confessed and repented of our evil walk. That sorrow is according to the will of God. That sorrow causes repentance, and we do not regret this repentance. A sinful attitude of being forgiven is that we have a desire not to want to do the sin we have done again. We change our thoughts and walk. This doesn't only apply to the beginning when we came to faith; this applies to every day of our lives. God wants to forgive those who repentantly ask Him for forgiveness.

*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord (...). (Acts 3:19)*

Repent of your sins and change your walk with God. If we do, our sins will be erased.

2. The Bible calls at different times to forgive others. This isn't an option; it is a condition from God to be forgiven. If you fail to forgive others, God cannot forgive you, and your debts will not be discharged. Forgiving others can sometimes be difficult. Know that you don't have to do this alone. God wants to give you strength and grace to forgive others.

*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14-15)*

*And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses. (Mark 11:25-26)*

We see this principle in Jesus's answer to Peter, who asked how often he should forgive someone.

*Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, I repent, you shall forgive him. (Luke 17:3-4)*

Forgiving doesn't mean avoiding hurtful or sensitive topics. For example, imagine someone steals fifty dollars from me, and I know it. Then, I may address that person. I may correct him in love and teach him that this is wrong. If this person repents and confesses, it is my job to forgive this person. As God forgives us, may we forgive others around us.

## **Redemption from Sins**

God wishes to forgive us for our sinful acts. That is a great miracle. But God even wants to do more for us. God not only desires to forgive us of our sinful acts but also wants to redeem us from

the power of sin. To redeem means to deliver someone from an unpleasant and threatening position or to rescue them from danger. Thus, we are delivered from the devil, sin, and spiritual death. The moment we are born again, we are delivered from sin. This means that God empowers and authorizes us to serve sin no longer but to live in the freedom of the Holy Spirit. Sin, our early enslaver, has no control over our lives. When the angel visited Joseph to tell Joseph that Mary would give birth to the Messiah, the angel said:

*(...) and she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)*

The Lord Jesus has saved the people from their sins. The power and consequences of sin no longer influence believers. Jesus has saved us from this power. Sin no longer requires an influence on our lives. We don't have to serve sin as an enslaved person.

*Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. (Romans 6:6-7)*

Our old man, namely the life we lived before our being born again, has been crucified along with Jesus. Our old man is full of sin and disobedience. As a result of being crucified together with Jesus, this life has been canceled out. This life has lost its power over us. Consequently, we no longer have to serve sin as an enslaved person. This means that sin must no longer have a grip over our lives and shouldn't have power over our lives. This is because our old man died on the cross. In Israel, there was a Jewish law that a person who had died was no longer liable for the sins he had committed. Thus, the death of our old man ensures that we can no longer be punished for the things we used to do and that we no longer live under the dominion of sin. Suppose you have an employer and an employee. If the employee is alive, he has to work for the employer. If the employee suddenly dies, the employer cannot require him to work. That is out of the question.

The first sin was our enslaver. Now, our old man has died, so sin can no longer demand us to sin. We see this in John's first letter.

*Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. (1 John 3:6)*

*Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 John 3:9)*

These texts are often perceived as offensive, or readers understand them incorrectly. I believe that wasn't John's intention. John says that believers can no longer sin. This doesn't mean we can accomplish this through our works; it is God's work in the believer. We can no longer sin when we are born of God (born again). We receive the Holy Spirit, who gives us the power to break free from the chains of sin. We may sin and do wrong things, but according to John, we may confess our sins, and God forgives us. Jesus went to the cross to forgive us and deliver us from sin.

*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:2-4)*

This is a rather complex text. Let's put the NIV next to it, which explains what it says well. It is important to read this text several times because it is powerful.

*Because of what Christ Jesus has done, you are free. You are now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit who gives you life. The law of the Spirit frees you from the law of sin that brings dead. Jesus does for us everything the holy law requires. The power of sin should no longer control the way we live. The Holy Spirit should control the way we live. (Romans 8:2-4 NIV)*

When we are born again, we receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit intends to guide our lives, and as a result, we live as God wants us to. This Bible text also states that we first lived under the power of sin and were, therefore, slaves to sin. After being born again, this is no longer the case. We are saved from sin. Jesus has set us free from sin.

*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*  
(John 8:36)

*But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God (...).* (Romans 6:22)

Please remember that the Romans letter says God has already set us free from sin. This doesn't happen at our death; God did it already. God sets us free from sin, which isn't death's work.

### **Walking in redemption from sins**

Two things are essential to walk in this blessing. The first is that Jesus dwells in us, and we are in Jesus. We are unable to stop sinning without the Lord Jesus. Deliverance from sin is a blessing from God, and we must trust that He has delivered us from the power of sin; as John 8:36 says, Jesus set us free, and therefore, we are indeed free. Because we are in Christ, we can overcome sin. This is because our old man died in Christ on the Cross of Calvary, and we live a new life with and in Christ. In a later chapter, we will return to being in Christ.

The Lord Jesus paid the price that allows us to live in redemption from sins. It is the Holy Spirit who performs this in believers. The Holy Spirit overcomes sin in our lives. We read this in Romans 8.

*Because of what Christ Jesus has done, you are free. You are now controlled by the law of the Holy Spirit who gives you life. The law of the Spirit frees you from the law of sin that brings dead.*  
(Romans 8:2, NIV)

The Holy Spirit has already done this. This is not something of the future; this is the current situation. At the same time, the Holy

Spirit has no desire to take over our lives like a dictator. The Holy Spirit wants to establish a relationship with us. This means that we may listen to the Holy Spirit and obey Him.

*I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* (Galatians 5:16)

To conclude, a few practical tips. First, this fundamental principle must be established for you, even if it is not yet reality. Build your faith and know that you are dead to sin.

*Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 6:11)

Second, it is essential to say no to sin. Now that we know that sin is no longer the enslaver of our lives, we may say this to the temptations.

*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.* (Romans 6:12)

Jesus released us from sin. It has already happened, and as a result, we no longer allow sin in our lives. We say no to sin and say yes to the things of God. We commit ourselves not to the service of sin but to the service of God.

*And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.* (Romans 6:13)

Third, it is important to confess our faults to God, and after we have sinned, make the decision to obey God again and walk according to the ways of the Holy Spirit again.

## **Justified and Sanctified**

God has forgiven and redeemed us from sin. And God's grace doesn't stop there. God has decided that everyone who is born

again is justified. When God looks at you, He doesn't see sin, but He sees the righteousness of Christ in you. Jesus has made you righteous and declared you righteous. Righteous means everything is fair, and we do what Jesus did. It is often said, "But we all remain sinners anyway." This is not Biblical. Nowhere in the Bible is a letter begun with the initial greeting, "Dear sinners at ..." In our old life, we were sinners. In our new life, after being born again, we are righteous and saints. In many letters, Paul addresses the opening salutation to "the saints at ..."

*To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints (...). (Romans 1:7)*

*(...) to the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints (...). (1 Corinthians 1:2)*

*(...) to the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia (...). (2 Corinthians 1:1)*

*(...) To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus (...). (Ephesians 1:1)*

*(...) to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi (...). (Philippians 1:1)*

*(...) To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse (...). (Colossians 1:2)*

Our identity is no longer that of a sinner but that of a justified one and a saint. Let us first look at the concept of justification.

*(...) and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:39)*

Justification is the identity of the believer. Justification has nothing to do with following the law correctly; it is the position God has put us in. We cannot become justified by our works, and we

can only be justified by faith in Jesus. This happens in the future when we meet Jesus; at the same time, it is something we can walk and live in today. If you have accepted Jesus, you are not a sinner but a righteous one. When God looks at you, He sees the righteousness of Jesus in your life. It is a gift of grace from God.

*But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:21-24)*

This text says again that God's justice applies to everyone who believes—not for a select few, but for all. Paul says the same thing in Galatians 2:16. We receive this righteousness because we have become one with the Lord Jesus. Because of this, we have received the righteousness of God. God's righteousness is in you through the power of the Holy Spirit and the work of Jesus on earth.

*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

We are also saints of God. We read that Paul addressed many church members as "saints." Saints aren't just exceptional Catholics who are said to have done miracles and must be worshiped to receive a miracle. Every believer is a saint of God.

*And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight (...). (Colossians 1:21-22)*

In God's eyes, we are sacred, immaculate, and flawless. This isn't because of our good deeds but because of the atonement Jesus brought—as displayed on the cross of Calvary. When we stand before God's throne in the future, God will see us as believers without sin. All our sins have been forgiven, and we have been

delivered from the power of sin. Because of this, God can accept us. This applies not only to individual believers but also to the church of Jesus—globally.

*(...) that He might sanctify and cleanse her (the church) with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:26-27)*

Through water baptism, the congregation is purified. As a result, it is without spots or wrinkles, making it holy and spotless. Without spot or wrinkle means that the congregation has no defects, and holy means that the congregation has been set apart by God and has become the property of Jesus.

God plans to place believers spotless and sacred before Him. Before the earth was made, this was already God's plan.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Ephesians 1:3-4)*

We are chosen to be holy and immaculate. By "chosen," we shouldn't think that God has chosen some to be saved and others to be unsaved. God wants everyone to be saved and no one to be lost (2 Peter 3:9). "Chosen" involves not who is chosen and who is not. It is about the One whom God has chosen to bring about salvation for believers and how He is to do so. It is about Jesus Christ, who can reconcile people to God through His death on the cross.

Let us return to the opening verse of this chapter.

*For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)*

The Kingdom of God consists of righteousness. It is a significant part of the Kingdom, and only through the Holy Spirit can we receive and apply righteousness in our lives.

### **Walking in Righteousness**

We receive God's righteousness when we are born again; it is a work of the Holy Spirit in the believer. If we want to apply righteousness in our lives and our relationships with others, it is imperative to be guided by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit searches God's depths and knows what is righteous and what isn't.

*But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:10)*

I and the people around us sometimes think we know what is correct, but we remain limited. The Holy Spirit knows what is righteous and how we should treat others in every situation. The first step is listening to the Holy Spirit and doing what the Spirit tells us to do.

The second step is realizing that you are a saint of God. Even though circumstances say different things and you sin daily, God sanctifies and justifies you. You don't have to look at yourself and say, "I am a sinner; I remain a sinner, and it will always go wrong." You should say about yourself, "I am holy and righteous." Come to the realization of who you are in Christ and speak about yourself according to what the Bible says about you. Be aware of the position and identity God has given to you. At the same time, God wants to redeem us from the power of sin and forgive us from sin, which we have already covered in this chapter.

Step 3 is implementation. God says we are holy, immaculate, and justified; let us put that into practice. We can only do this by the power of the Holy Spirit. We may become as Jesus was on earth and walk as Jesus walked.

*But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides*

*in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:5-6)*

Those who claim to be in Jesus must walk as Jesus walked. On the one hand, our righteousness is a gift from God and the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, God asks us to be holy, keep His commandments, and walk as Jesus walked. We must be holy because God is holy.

*As obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written: Be holy, for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:14-16)*

In our walk with God, we are His children. As children, we may obey our heavenly Father and imitate Him on earth. God is holy, and we are holy. Therefore, let us refrain from doing evil and chasing after our lustful desires and live sacredly in all our walks of life. Be holy because God is holy. Our whole life should be devoted to God and submitted under His rule. In addition, it says, "in all your conduct." This means we are to be holy on Sunday mornings between 10 a.m. and noon and throughout the week. Even on Monday mornings with that annoying co-worker or student.

*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:1-5)*

So, living holy entails the following steps:

Step 1: Get rid of all the wrong things.

Step 2: Desire the things of God's Kingdom and God's Word.

Step 3: Focus on Jesus and taste that He is good and holy.

Step 4: Be guided by the Holy Spirit and be holy.

## Summary

The first three blessings of God's Kingdom that we covered are forgiveness, redemption from sins, and justification by God. Sin is a terrible enslaver that wants to take over our lives. The consequence of sin is that we live—forever separated from God. All our misdeeds are recorded, and eventually, we are punished for them. God has decided to forgive us, which means He forgives, forgets, and erases all our wrong deeds forever. To walk well in this blessing, we must repentantly ask God to forgive us and others when they have done nasty things. God has not only forgiven us but also redeemed us from sin. This means that the power of sin has been broken, and we no longer have to sin. We may live free from sin because we are placed in Christ, and the Holy Spirit helps us overcome sin. Finally, we are justified by God. This means that God sees us as righteous and holy. This is a position God put us in at regeneration. It is essential to realize this and show it in our walk of life. On the one hand, this is a gift from God, and on the other hand, God asks us to live sanctified lives because He is holy. We do this by obeying the Holy Spirit, putting away all our wickedness, and focusing on the things of God's Kingdom, His Word, and the Lord Jesus.

## C7 IN CHRIST

If we are born again, then we are in Christ. This subject is often discussed yet remains challenging and mysterious. I hope this chapter makes the term being in Christ practical and illustrates how we can live in Christ.

There is a mascot to entertain the audience during baseball or basketball games. In a theme park, we also find mascots entertaining children and older people; it is an additional feature. Disneyland, for example, has Mickey Mouse. Everyone thinks of him as a mouse. Did you know that this mascot doesn't exist at all? Did you know that it is either a man or woman dressed up as a mascot? Did you know that there is a man or woman representing Mickey Mouse? We are in Christ with our spirit and have 'put on' Jesus. We are no longer living alone; for ourselves, we are now living in Christ, and for Christ, and we have become one. We look like Jesus and have received authority from Him to heal the sick, expel demons, and perform signs and wonders in His name.

### **In Christ: A Sacred Life**

In the previous chapter, we read that we have been forgiven, redeemed, justified, and sanctified. We are justified because we have received the righteousness of Jesus. This is because we came in Christ when we were born again. Water baptism significantly impacts coming in Christ, and Paul often links water baptism to being in Christ. Let's have a look at Paul's teaching.

*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. (Romans 6:3-8)*

This is a long passage with complicated explanations. Let's examine it together to understand what is written here. Paul says that we came into Christ through baptism. Spiritually, we have experienced the events of Jesus' crucifixion. Through baptism, we are spiritually crucified and resurrected with Jesus.

*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?* (Romans 6:3)

The first thing that happened was that we were baptized into Christ's death. Before we came to faith, we were in sin and living for ourselves. This life was wrong and must disappear before we can walk in God's Kingdom. Our old life must be slain, and this happens during water baptism. Through baptism, we descend into the baptismal water. Spiritually, at that moment, our old life is slain and crucified in the Lord Jesus on the cross. Our old life, full of sin and unrighteousness, is slain through baptism.

*Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.* (Romans 6:6)

Our old life has been crucified with Him, so our old and sinful life has been wiped out. Our old life is gone, and therefore, we no longer have to serve sin but live in freedom from sin. The power and reign of sin are gone, allowing us to live a sinless life.

Imagine this: a father abuses, bullies, and scolds his children. He does this every day, and the children are used to it. One day, the children return from school and walk into the room. They expect to be scolded, but nothing happens. Their father lies motionless in the chair and has died. The father can no longer sin because he is dead; the same happens to our old life. Our old life is dead and no longer affects our present life.

However, we might still need to deal with the sins of the past. As it were, our old life has convulsions, sometimes allowing a thought or pleasure of sin to creep into our thinking. Paul urges us to leave our old life on the cross, even after water baptism. We are living a new life and must leave our old life behind.

*And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24)*

*Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth (...). (Colossians 3:5)*

Because our old self has been crucified, the power of sin no longer has any control over our lives. We are free from sin.

*For he who has died has been freed from sin. (Romans 6:7)*

Our old self has died. The second thing that has happened is that we have been buried in Christ.

*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death (...). (Romans 6:4)*

I suppose everyone has walked across a cemetery before. At the cemetery, you have headstones, and underneath is the coffin with the deceased. Everyone knows that the deceased remains dead and cannot be resurrected from the dead. (We ignore for a moment now that God brings everyone back to life at the end). No one expects anyone to come back to life. The same is true of our old life. Our old life was crucified, was slain, and is now buried. It would be unreasonable for our old life to resurrect and return to life. In Christ, our old life has been buried, and it remains buried. We have said goodbye to our old life. It is gone.

The third thing that happens during baptism is that we rise into a new life with Jesus Christ.

*Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)*

Our old life is gone, but this doesn't imply that we have nothing left after baptism. In fact, we receive a new life founded in the Lord Jesus. We no longer live alone but with Christ and the Holy Spirit with a new sacred walk of life. We receive the new life as

a gift from God, and at the same time, God asks us to walk in this new life. In verse 5, Paul further elaborates on our new life.

*For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection. (Romans 6:5)*

We have been united with Jesus in His death; therefore, we will also be alike in His resurrection. If you have become one with Jesus, why would you still sin? Why, then, would you not lead a sacred life? This is a question Paul asks the church in Rome (Romans 6:2). This is because our old life has died, so we can no longer enjoy the sinful world. We were made new and live in Christ. We are a new creation with a new identity.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

After baptism, you become a new creation. The old sinful life is gone, and the new sacred life in Christ has begun. God has given this identity to all His children.

*But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. (Galatians 6:14-15)*

The only thing we can boast of is the cross of Jesus. The cross means the sinful world has been crucified for us, and we no longer have to look at our old lives. As a result of the cross, we have been redeemed from sin. Wherever you come from, no matter what your background is, we have all become new creations in Christ.

In Colossians 3, Paul explains what it means to slay our old life and put on our new life. We must no longer walk in fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, greed, anger, wrath, slander, and obscene language. We may walk in compassion, kindness,

humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, gratitude, and love. We are mindful of the matters above.

*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3)*

You've probably seen wristbands that say WWJD on them. This is an abbreviation of What Would Jesus Do? By asking yourself this, you will know what is right or wrong. What would Jesus do to a homeless man? What would Jesus do in this situation? Paul says in Colossians that we should seek and consider the things above, where Christ is. Since we are now living in Christ, it is also appropriate for us to think and do the things of Christ and stop the world's sins and distractions. We do this because we are new creations; we believe in the things of Jesus and are filled with the Holy Spirit.

By being born again, you are in Christ. God has given you a new sacred identity, and you live in a new realm: the Kingdom of God. In this Kingdom are the people God appointed as His own—and you are a citizen (1 Peter 2:9). You belong to God and may increasingly resemble God and Jesus.

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)*

### **Steps to Be in Christ**

How can we walk in Christ? It is essential to realize that this is the identity in which God puts us. When we are born again, we are in Christ. Our job is to recognize this and apply it in our lives. Because we now live with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we desire to stop sinning and live sacred lives. The most crucial step to being in Christ is water baptism. Through water baptism, we come in Christ and are made equal in His death, burial, and resurrection. Then, the Holy Spirit guides us, and we receive the power of the Holy Spirit to walk in our new life in Christ. Additionally, the

Bible calls us to slay our earthly desires and lusts and renew ourselves continuously so that we increasingly resemble Jesus.

### **In Christ: A Life with Authority**

Being in Christ does not only mean we live sacred lives and resemble Jesus in His righteousness. It also means that in Christ, we have been given power and authority to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom on earth. When the Lord Jesus resurrected from the dead, He instructed the disciples He appeared to and told them about the Kingdom of God.

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. (Matthew 28:18-19)*

The Lord Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. Everything is subject to the Lord Jesus; therefore, we may go and teach the people. The Lord Jesus doesn't have a little power or isn't a little more powerful than the devil and the demons; Jesus has all authority and stands well above the devil and the demons. We are in Christ, and that means we are together with Christ above the demons and devil. Jesus has given us the authority to heal the sick, for example. Our spirit is set in the heavenlies together with Jesus.

*(...) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (...). (Ephesians 2:6)*

It has already happened. By the heavenlies, we should think of different areas in heaven. For example, there is a part where the devil and demons have a say (Ephesians 2:2). The Lord Jesus and God the Father are seated in the supreme part of the realms, and we in Christ are also seated there. Just as Christ is above all power, strength, and dominion, we in Christ are also above all power, strength, and dominion.

*(...) and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working 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, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:19-23)*

In Ephesians 1, Paul explains the power given to believers. The power that made Jesus rise from the dead is present in believers, and as a result, we have become a new creation. We are not powerless on earth but are full of power and authority. This is a power given by God to those who believe. God has given us some realms of authority and power to rule over these realms in Christ. We get to these parts in the following chapters, which include healing the sick and casting out demons. Jesus now sits at the right hand of God the Father and is far above all powers and forces. Since we are in Christ, we are also far above all powers and forces. We still have to battle against these powers (Ephesians 6:10-18), but we should know that we can overcome these powers if we remain in Christ.

Jesus received all authority from God the Father. Jesus also has all authority over the church, for He is the head of the church and thus leads the church and says what should be done. The Lord Jesus has delegated His received authority from God the Father to the believers. This doesn't imply that a believer can claim and manifest everything because Jesus has given limits to our authority. Nevertheless, it does mean that Jesus has given us realms to execute authority. Some realms are given to all believers, like healing the sick, and others are granted to individual believers, like a father over his family or a pastor over his congregation. Jesus has given us authority, and we have received it because we are in Christ. In the remainder of this chapter, let us examine what authority biblically means and how it works in God's Kingdom.

When the Lord Jesus was walking around on earth, a centurion (a rank in the Roman army) came to Him to ask Him to heal His servant.

*Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." (Matthew 8:5-9)*

In the Roman army, everyone is submissive to the emperor. All must listen to the emperor. However, the emperor cannot personally order everyone to do something. Therefore, the emperor appointed men under his authority and delegated certain authority to them to control the people under them. We also encounter this in the US Army. For instance, we know the ranks of general, colonel, major, captain, lieutenant, corporal, etc. Everyone is accountable to the one above him—from whom they receive authority over those below them. The centurion lived in such a system; hence, he knew he was under the authority of his superiors and had soldiers under him. He observed that the soldiers listened to him and did what he said. The centurion knew this was true not only in the physical world but also in the spiritual one. This works similarly in the Kingdom of God, and the centurion saw this from the authority of Jesus. This is how it works for us, too. We are all under the authority of God and have received authority from God so that those under us do what we say. So, who is under us? If we are in Christ, what/those under us are all powers, authority, and dominion in the spiritual world. When God gives us a mission, He also gives us the means and authority to accomplish that mission. We already see this in the ministry Jesus gave to His disciples.

*And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. (Matthew 10:1)*

The Lord Jesus didn't only do this with these 12 disciples. Later on, seventy others joined them. They were given the same assignment.

*After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (...) heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you.'" (Luke 10:1-9)*

In the same way, Jesus gave these disciples the power to cast out demons and heal any disease, the Lord Jesus also gives His followers the power to heal the sick and cast out demons today. For believers it is normal that these signs follow. (Mark 16:17-18). It is what God wants to give to all believers, and our job is to pray for workers who will use their authority. Besides, what is the point if workers have no tools, are not allowed to do anything, and cannot do anything? I thank God that we may do the same as the disciples and do the same as Jesus.

*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. (John 14:12)*

Jesus has all power and authority and has given us power and authority to do the same as Him and even more than He did. We can and may do all the works Jesus did on earth because we are in Christ.

### **Steps to Be in Christ**

God has put us in Christ, and that is the identity we have received. God has given us the power and authority to perform miracles. To function well in this, obeying God and understanding why and for

what God has given us authority is essential. We do this by studying the Bible and looking at what Jesus and God have given us and God's will in a situation. Besides the decision of will in the Bible in general, the Holy Spirit can reveal personal decisions of will to us. It is essential, therefore, to listen to the Holy Spirit. Subsequently, we stand in faith before the miracle that God will perform. Since we receive this authority in Christ, it is important to be born again and baptized. Later in this book, we will return to some areas of authority that God has given to citizens of the Kingdom, such as healing the sick and casting out demons.

## **Summary**

When we are born again, we are placed in Christ. Our old sinful life is behind us, and from baptism, we live a new sacred life with the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The old has passed away, and the new has come. This means that we no longer have to sin but may live sacred lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul, therefore, calls us to put to death the sins and works of the earth, and in Christ, we live a holy life. In addition, in Christ, we live a life of authority. For example, God has given us the authority to cast out demons and heal the sick. We are workers of God, and God wants us to reap His harvest. God has given us various tools and authority to do this job well. Being in Christ is the identity that every believer has received from God and is allowed to walk in.

## C8 HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

Miracles and signs. It is beautiful to see God at work, and that is why evangelism, healing, and deliverance services are so utterly fabulous. We serve a mighty God who wants to bless us abundantly and has our best interests at heart. We serve a God of salvation, healing, and deliverance. Not only pastors or important people can heal and deliver; God has given these blessings to all His followers.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases (...).* (Psalm 103:2-3)

In this chapter, we study redemption from death, the healing of our diseases, and the deliverance from demons. Each topic requires more pages of text to give a full understanding, but this chapter only briefly discusses these topics. We are aware that there is much more to be written on this subject.

### Redemption from Death

God has redeemed us from death. But how is that possible? Until now, everyone has died, and everyone will take their last breath at some point. This is because God talks about two different kinds of death. The first death is the death that everyone experiences. At some point, the body is exhausted, and a person passes away. His body stays on earth, and this is buried or cremated. The second death is a spiritual death, an eternal separation from God the Father. The Bible proclaims two kinds of death, as we read in Revelation.

*Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.* (Revelation 20:14-15)

Everyone experiences the first death, whether you have faith in God or not. However, not everyone experiences the second death; there is one exemption, and that is the people who are written in

the Book of Life. These are the followers of Jesus, and by Jesus' righteousness, they are redeemed from the second death.

John writes about future things in the letter of Revelation. You can order the book 'A Revelation of the End Times: Why the Pre-Tribulation Rapture is Biblical' from our web shop to learn more about this. John spoke here about death and the realm of death (Hades). Death is destroyed forever at the end of the present heaven and earth and will not happen again. Hades will be cast into the lake of fire (hell), and this will be an eternal destination. Hades is already here today, and this is a waiting room where the dead wait for God's judgment. After God's judgment, everyone present in Hades will be cast into hell. This is the second death. No one escapes it except those written down in the Book of Life. Let us read a few verses about the second death and see how a person's name enters the Book of Life.

*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)*

God cautions people in Revelation 21:8. A fantastic future is available in God's presence. Yet the people in the above listing won't have any part in this future; they will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone. What an awful future! The key is to reach as many people as possible with the gospel of the Kingdom and tell them that they can be redeemed from the second death. The following Bible text illustrates the same idea.

*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the Kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)*

When we talk about God's Kingdom in the text above, we shouldn't think about the present Kingdom we live in today. This refers to the future Kingdom, which will be eternal, where God will dwell with people. Again, a list of people who won't participate

in this. They won't enjoy eternity with God. Galatians 5:21 and Ephesians 5:5 also list people who won't obtain the Kingdom. Simultaneously, the following verse of Corinthians expresses hope. You can maybe identify with something from the above summary. By the grace of God, it is feasible to stop being a fornicator, idolater, adulterer, etc., and to live a completely new life in Christ. Indeed, Paul wrote to the church at Corinth:

*And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)*

Paul says some people failed to live righteously but were cleansed and sanctified by God, something we studied in the previous chapters. Therefore, a fornicator can become a saint. This is accomplished through the sacrifice of Jesus and His forgiveness of sins.

To be redeemed from the second death, the key is to live in Christ and apply this in our lives. We should not serve the sins of this world but live as saints. Again, this book doesn't aim to show how to be saved with the minimum conditions. This book wants to illustrate how to achieve the maximum output with God. I don't know who will and won't be saved from the second death; that's up to God. Nevertheless, 1 Corinthians 6 shows us a significant warning that we should not take lightly.

God wants to redeem us from the second death. The implication is that we won't be cast into the lake of fire but will be allowed to walk and live with God in the new heaven and earth. We can only do this if our names are written in the Book of Life. This is a book in which Jesus wrote down the names of His followers. These are His believers who have endured to the end. Being redeemed from death means having eternal life with God. When a believer experiences the first death and leaves his earthly suit, he enters heaven and will live forever. Let us look at a few verses about this glorious life.

*Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of*

*heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new. And He said to me: Write, for these words are true and faithful. (Revelation 21:1-5)*

A fantastic future will come where we can live with God forever. It will be better than we can imagine. Everything will be brand new, and pain, sorrow, or trouble will no longer exist. Are you looking forward to this time?

The Lord Jesus often spoke about eternal life and said people only get eternal life if they believe in Him.

*He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36)*

Faith implies not only that a person believes that Jesus lived but also obedience. That is why the second part of this verse says that those who disobey (i.e., fail to have faith) won't see eternal life. Believing in the above text means that we obey God's words, accept His testimony, and are faithful to His words. Then, God will give us eternal life.

### **Walking in Redemption from Death**

*He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:10-13)*

In this paragraph, we already noticed some areas where we may walk to be redeemed from death. Of course, the important thing is to have faith in the Lord Jesus. In addition, the Bible warns us that some people, such as fornicators and thieves, don't gain the Kingdom of God but are cast into the lake of fire. Finally, we study one more aspect: perseverance. It is often said, "Once saved, always saved," but this is not Biblical. The Bible warns that we can still lose our salvation. Therefore, it is essential to persevere in faith and continue to run the race from start to finish.

*And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight, if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Colossians 1:21-23)*

The text above reveals the condition for eternal life: a firm and established faith. Of course, we cannot do this alone, but the Lord Jesus helps us, as the following text shows.

*Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)*

With the Lord Jesus, may we live sacred and immaculate today, remain in God's presence, and obey Him forever—both today and in the future. In addition, we must do God's will today to stay with Him forever.

*And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:17)*

## **Healing Diseases**

In God's Kingdom, there is health and healing. The first important thing is to live healthily and treat our bodies well to remain healthy. If diseases occur because of unhealthy use or diseases

that we cannot do anything about, God, by His grace, wants to heal us of the diseases. We cover this topic briefly.

How can we know that God wants to heal us? God has given Himself Names to make Himself known to us. The Lord God says to us that He is our Healer.

*And he said: If you diligently heed the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the Lord who heals you.* (Exodus 15:26)

God manifests Himself to us as Healer. Exodus is an Old Testament book and not a part of God's new covenant (including the blessings we discuss). If God had already included this in the old covenant, He would definitely include it in His new covenant.

*So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you.* (Exodus 23:25)

If we serve and obey God, He will eliminate all diseases. We have a Healer! Let us read some verses that will let us know that in God's Kingdom, there is health and healing.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases (...).* (Psalm 103:2-3)

*Wherever He entered into villages, cities, or in the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.* (Mark 6:56)

*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.* (Isaiah 53:5)

*Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes. (Mark 9:23)*

*Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed. (1 Petrus 2:24)*

*Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. (James 5:14-15)*

Health and healing are blessings of God's Kingdom, and God wants us to walk in them. Healings aren't exclusive to the time of Jesus or the apostles but are also available today. I have seen plenty of healings and experienced them myself. God is the same yesterday, today, and for all eternity! God wants to heal us from our sickness. Whether we have a slight headache on one occasion or a severe health issue, God wants to set us free from disease. In the future Kingdom of God, the millennial Kingdom, no sickness will occur, and death will be rare. Everyone will live out their days, and many will live for a thousand years. Today, the followers of Jesus are already living in the spiritual Kingdom of God, and God gives the promise of health and healing. We see this in the book of James, where James says that faithful prayer will preserve the sick person. James did not say, "Maybe you will get well" or "Fast first to see if it is God's will for you to get well," but James said, "The sick person will get well. For James, there was no doubt that God wanted to do this. Finally, I advise the doctor to determine it after the illness has healed. This increases the value of the testimony, which is not unbelief but is found in the Bible.

*Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! So when He saw them, He said to them: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. (Luke 17:12-14)*

### **Walking in Healing**

The first step to healing is believing that God will and can heal you. With the healings of Jesus, we can read that faith established the healing.

*But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well." At once \* the woman was made well. (Matthew 9:22)*

Before the blessing of healing can occur, faith is essential. You can build belief by studying the Word of God and listening to the testimonies of others. To have faith involves more than just hoping things will work out. It means actively engaging with God and saying goodbye to illness. It is trusting that God has made us healthy through the sacrifice of Jesus and that illness, therefore, bears no right to our lives. The disease is an illegal intruder and must disappear, and we may speak against this disease and thank God for the health we have received from Him in our new life.

*For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain: Be removed and be cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:23-24)*

I recommend that you read the above text repeatedly. A great miracle is stated there, and God created us to speak against the mountain (for example, sickness). If we don't doubt in our hearts, it will happen. We read that healing and health are God's will for everyone. Therefore, we may know that we prayerfully desire healing and health. I want to give you many more tips and advice on this subject, but unfortunately, this cannot be done in the format of this book.

### **Deliverance from Demons**

The following blessing we discuss is the deliverance of demons. Demons are spiritual beings that seek a home, a human being, to

live in. Because of this, demons may possess a person, or a demon may influence a person's life. For example, demons can gain entrance through the following:

- Repeated sins or grave sins.
- Sexual relations outside of marriage between husband and wife.
- Occultism, such as divination, horoscopes, tarot cards, summoning spirits, yoga, etc.
- Worship of demons or idols.
- Wrong things that ancestors have done.
- Curses.
- Deviations from sound doctrine. (In the Bible, this is also called the doctrine of demons.)
- Addictions.
- Drunkenness.

This can happen when someone isn't yet a believer and also when someone is a believer. For this reason, it is essential always to be wary of opening the door for demons. If someone suffers from demons or supernatural things, there is good news. In the name of Jesus, demons will depart because Jesus wants to free us from demonic powers. We see this in the lives of Jesus and the disciples. People were delivered from unclean spirits (demons).

*For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. (Acts 8:7)*

*(...) who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. (Luke 6:17-18)*

Many people have been freed from evil spirits by sending them away in Jesus' name. Through the authority we have received from Jesus, we can tell demons on behalf of Jesus to leave people. It is a blessing of God's Kingdom that people are delivered from demonism and set free.

*But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you. (Luke 11:20)*

As it were, people are freed from chains and released from prison. Because of demons, people find themselves tied and can live a life of loneliness, fear, illness, drugs, alcohol, pride, addiction, anger, or other unpleasant problems. Demons lock a person in a cage and make him live a life where he needs something to feel suitable for a specific moment. Demons prefer to destroy people and influence other people through them (Mark 5:1-13). It is a spiritual prison. When Jesus came to earth, He had come to free people from this spiritual prison.

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)*

Jesus came to preach liberation—freedom from sins, addictions, the law, and demonism. The King preaches to prisoners that they become free and their spiritual shackles are broken. Sin and the enemy don't have to lead us; we can live freely in the Kingdom of God. We are meant to be free. The demons are not allowed to influence a son or daughter of God.

*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. (John 8:36)*

### **Living in Liberation from Demons**

God wants His children to be free from demons. God wants to give this blessing to everyone, like all other blessings. If you suffer from demonism, sin, or addiction, the important thing is to express this to God and ask Him to set you free. You can pray for deliverance, but it can also help you confide in people and share the problem. In many churches, you have good brothers and sisters with experience in deliverance, and it helps to speak with them to expose the issues and ask them for prayer.

Finally, I would like to give a few tips for breaking free from demonism. The first tip is to avoid opening doors to demons. God has given all Christians who are born again all powers over demons, but at the same time, it is better not to allow the devil and demons to enter in the first place.

*And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. (Matthew 10:1)*

The second tip is to speak against demonic influences. The Bible says demons left people because Jesus spoke (one word). Speak in faith and authority, and demons will depart.

The third tip is to remove the influences through which demons have entered. You can think of Buddha statues, horoscopes, or stones. Should demons have entered through repeated sins, bad sins, or sexual relationships, it is necessary to terminate these sins and relationships and make the decision to live sacred before God. Concerning ancestral events or curses, it is important to break these curses and pronounce God's blessing over your life.

The fourth tip is to forgive people who have hurt us. We had read that God can only forgive us if we also forgive others. If we continue to walk in unforgiveness, it can significantly obstruct the process of deliverance.

The fifth tip is to find people with experience and ask them to guide you in delivering you from demons. God has given us—each other to encourage, comfort, and help one another. Go to the pastoral team and be honest about the problems.

## **Summary**

In God's Kingdom, we are redeemed from spiritual death. We no longer have to live a life in isolation from God in a terrifying place. We are allowed to live a life in the presence of God. In addition, we can live in health during our time on earth. God wants to heal everyone and wants to touch people who are sick, causing them to receive health. The most important thing to be healed is having faith in healing. Finally, God wants to set us free so we are not under the influence of the devil and demons.

## C8 HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

Through open doors, demons can enter, and in the name of Jesus, we may send them away. It is vital to be conscious of open doors to demons and close them immediately.

## C9 LIVING IN GOD'S BLESSING

Imagine you are a parent and you have children. What would you want to happen to your children? Every good parent wants their children to thrive and discover Jesus. In addition, we would like our children to be healthy, do well in school, and make friends. When they get older, we hope they have a reputable and excellent job, are blessed with a partner and children, and can afford a lovely house. Bottom line: we hope our children will be blessed. It would be unhealthy for a parent to expect that their children are sick every day, experience a terrible life, or watch them remain lonely. God is a good God and wants to give us good gifts. If an "ordinary" good parent already wants his children to be happy and joyful, how much more does God want to provide us with good things?

*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him. (Matthew 7:7-11)*

In this chapter, we examine blessings and curses. God wants to bless us and doesn't want to curse us. Yet, it is often thought that God brings the curse on His children. For example, it is said, "God blesses you with this sickness," "Know that you live in poverty if you work for God's Kingdom," or "If you begin with God, you must know that misery begins." On the contrary, God wants to bless us with good gifts.

### **The Blessing and the Curse**

The book of Galatians states that God has freed us from the curse and brought us under the blessing.

*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written: Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:13-14)*

In God's Kingdom, we experience God's blessing. We have been freed from the curse contained in the law and placed under the blessing of Abraham. Before we discuss this, in this section, we look at what the blessing and the curse entail.

The curse comes from the Greek word "*kataras*" which means "doom," "curse," or "trouble." The phrase implies a supplication or wish at someone's expense. If we return to the beginning of the Bible, we see that the curse came because Adam and Eve disobeyed God. As a result, the woman must painfully bear children, and the earth is cursed, leaving the man to toil to get food (Genesis 3). The curse influences a thing to be accomplished with effort. Here, you can consider many different things; this doesn't just apply to earning bread and money. When we read the Bible, we read about Moses and the people of Israel. The people were allowed to choose between the blessing of God or the curse. If they obey God, they receive a blessing; if they disobey God, they receive a curse.

*Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law. And all the people shall say: Amen! (Deuteronomy 27:26)*

With what, then, is man cursed? The greatest curse is that man can no longer live with God and, as a result, lives forever separated from God. Thanks to Jesus's work, every Christian born again is redeemed from this great curse. Yet, at the same time, the curse also involves other parts of our lives. It involves not only spiritual adversity but also material adversity. This overview can be found in Deuteronomy 28, beginning in verse 15. We list several curses after we have dealt with the blessing.

In contrast to the curse, we have God's blessing. God wants to bless us, and the first thing God did with man was to bless him.

*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them: *Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth!* (Genesis 1:27-28)*

Before man could do anything or provide anything for God, God had already blessed him. There is nothing man can do or perform that makes God obligated to bless him. It is God's free will to bless man, and God wants to bless all who are obedient to Him. Whether you are a man or woman, young or old, or whatever country you come from, God wants to bless you. We have a good God!

God's blessing not only applies to spiritual things but also to material things. God wants to bless us physically, spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and financially. According to the dictionary, blessing means "to favor" or "to give abundantly." God wants to provide us with abundance and give us (spiritual) things according to His wealth.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.* (Ephesians 1:3-4)

According to the law, let us see what is subject to blessing and curse. This overview comes from Deuteronomy 28 but is incomplete. For a complete overview, I recommend reading Deuteronomy 28.

<b>The blessing</b>	<b>The curse</b>
Financially blessed. (Verse 3, 5, 8 and 12)	Financial deficit. (Verse 16, 29, 30 and 33)
Everything you do is blessed, no matter where you go. (Verse 3 and 6)	Everything fails, and disasters occur. (Verse 16, 19 and 20)

Blessed and abundant is the food that you eat. (Verse 5)	Cursed and insufficient is the food you eat. (Verse 17)
Blessed are your offspring. (Verse 4)	Infertility and miscarriages. (Verse 18)
Your work and business thrive. (Verse 4)	Your work and business don't thrive. (Verse 18)
Victory against (spiritual) enemies. (Verse 7)	Losing the battle against (spiritual) enemies. (Verse 25)
Health, strength, and power. (Verse 13)	Disaster, sickness, and misery. (From verse 15)

Let us obey God and thereby enjoy the fruits of God's blessing.

### **Free from the Curse**

In the previous paragraph, we saw a list of curses. I don't think anyone wishes to suffer curses but rather to enjoy life with God's blessing. Yet, the curse primarily belongs to everyone. From Jew to Gentile, from the less educated to the more educated, everyone falls under the curse of the Law of Moses.

*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written: cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. (Galatians 3:10)*

All of us fall under the curse of the law. No one has succeeded in complying with the law, and everyone has made mistakes. As a result, the curse applies to everyone. It doesn't necessarily have to be that someone suffers all the curses of the law. For example, it can also be that someone suffers one curse in his life. A rich man or woman is financially blessed but may face divorce, illness, or lose the battle against a terrible sin. The worst curse is losing eternal life with God. Even if someone spends one hundred and twenty years living happily and blessed on earth, if that person doesn't believe in Jesus, everything has lost its value. Unfortunately, the curse applies to everyone because no one is righteous.

Yet there is a great blessing in God's Kingdom, for the inhabitants of this Kingdom are freed from the curse and brought under the blessing.

*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written: Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree (...)). (Galatians 3:13)*

Jesus accomplished this by becoming a curse for us. The Old Testament mentions that anyone who hangs on wood (the cross) is cursed (Deuteronomy 21:23). Jesus became a curse for us when He was nailed to the cross. In addition, the Lord Jesus had the curse of the earth on His head because of the crown of thorns He wore (Genesis 3:18). Consequently, the curse we deserved was borne by One who didn't deserve it. Jesus was turned into sin and a curse on the cross of Calvary. The One who never sinned became sin, and all the world's sins fell on Him. Because Jesus bore the penalty and curse of sin, we are no longer punished for sin but are made righteous in Him.

*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)*

Therefore, the curse has no claim over our lives anymore, for we have received God's righteousness. Jesus carried the sin and the curse, so we no longer have to live under the power of sin or the power of the curse. The curse has been broken, along with all the negative consequences enshrined in Deuteronomy 28.

We have been freed from the curse and ransomed from the law that contains the curse.

*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)*

We no longer fall under the authority of the law with all the curses of sins. We are now children of God and don't commit sin. Not

because we keep things written on stone but because God has renewed us and we have received the Holy Spirit, who leads us to sanctity. The book of Galatians says that we shouldn't enslave ourselves by keeping the law, but we should live in freedom of the Holy Spirit and reign in our lives. The power of the law has lost its power, and we have been adopted as children of God, and thanks to God's grace, we may live a holy life.

## **Brought Under the Blessing**

We have been redeemed, ransomed, freed from the curse, and brought together with Jesus under God's blessing.

*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written: Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:13-14)*

Through Jesus' work, Abraham's blessing extends to Christians. When we read the story of Abraham, we observe how God gave Abraham many blessings.

*I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:2-3)*

In studying the life of Abraham, we notice that God blessed him to an extraordinary degree. He had many possessions, livestock, excellent health, and children. Abraham died at an advanced age under the blessing of God, who had blessed him in everything.

*Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. (Genesis 24:1)*

After many years, the Lord Jesus was born from the offspring of Abraham. The Lord Jesus had complete entitlement to the promise God made to Abraham because He was Abraham's offspring

and kept to the law. Jesus had the right to receive the full blessing. But Jesus decided to bear the curse on the cross, allowing us to experience Abraham's blessing in Him. We have been redeemed from the curse and may live in blessing. A great transformation took place during the crucifixion. Jesus had the blessing but accepted the curse for a while. We were under the curse, but through being born again, we may receive the blessing forever. The greatest blessing is that we get to spend eternity with God and receive the Holy Spirit as pledge, but at the same time, we also claim the blessings in the book of Deuteronomy. According to Galatians 3:14, we lay claim to the blessing of Abraham. In Genesis 24, we read that Abraham was blessed in all things, so may we also be and become blessed. We receive this blessing by faith. It is essential to always keep sight of the cross because, on the cross, the finished work of Christ was accomplished. This applies to forgiving sin, breaking the curse, and receiving the blessing. This applies not to a few believers but to every believer.

*So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. (Galatians 3:9)*

This isn't limited to just a few spiritual areas of our lives but to all areas of our lives.

*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)*

Our faith incorporates us into the same covenant promises as Abraham. Let us look at several verses that reemphasize God's desire to bless us.

*The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it. (Proverbs 10:22)*

*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:7-8)*

*So keep the words of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do. (Deuteronomy 29:9, NAS)*

We read about God's blessing to the Israelites in the Old Testament. However, After Jesus' death and resurrection, He became a Mediator of a better covenant. The new covenant of Jesus surpasses the Old Testament covenant. If the people in the old covenant were already blessed, surely this applies to the people of the new covenant.

*But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. (Hebrews 8:6)*

In this new covenant, the promises are better. We discuss these promises in this section of the book, with all the great blessings of God. The greatest blessing of God is written in the same chapter of Hebrews. We now belong to God's people (Kingdom), and He wrote His laws in our hearts and minds because we received the Holy Spirit. God even gave His son to us, so why shouldn't God give us everything else we need?

*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)*

## **Free from the Curse and Living in the Blessing**

We no longer live under the curse but in blessings. But how can we walk in these blessings?

First, we need to obey God and listen to His commandments. This was true for the Israelites in the Old Testament, when they could decide for themselves whether to walk under the curse or in the blessing. If they obeyed God, they lived in the blessing; if they disobeyed God, they lived in the curse.

*Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high*

*above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God (...). (Deuteronomy 28:1-2)*

The blessings we have listed in this chapter are all in consideration. If Israel listened to God, all these blessings would be for them.

*But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you. (...). (Deuteronomy 28:15)*

It is about the curses we have listed in this chapter. If Israel disobeyed and began to worship other gods, the curse would come upon Israel. The Israelites had to make a decision. Were they going for obedience and the blessing or disobedience and the curse? This isn't the only place where God links obedience and prayer. After Moses, who passed on these laws to the Israelites, passed away, Joshua was the people's new leader. When God appointed Joshua, He told him something important:

*Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. (Joshua 1:7-8)*

Joshua could only act wisely and make his ways prosperous if he followed the book of the law in all matters. If he followed the commandments, he lived in God's blessing; if he failed to follow the commandments, he lived in the curse, and his ways weren't prosperous.

Even in the New Testament, we often read about obedience and its blessings. Let us look at some examples.

*He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36)*

*Him (God) has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him. (Acts 5:31-32)*

*But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath. (Romans 2:8)*

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. (Ephesians 6:1-3)*

Secondly, it is essential to remain patient. There may be times when the promises of blessing are delayed, and this causes us to wonder if God wants to bless us. Nevertheless, it is essential to remain patient because when God promises something, He does it. (2 Corinthians 1:20).

*And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (Hebrews 6:11-12)*

Through faith and patience, we inherit the promises of God. Initially, you can think of the promises of eternal life and eternity with God. It is good to wait patiently (or persistently) for these things. Besides this, it can involve other or specific promises from God. Think, for example, of Abraham. Only later in life did the accomplishment of an offspring manifest itself. Until his hundredth year, nothing was visible in the natural concerning this promise of God, and it was not until the age of a hundred that Abraham received a son. Abraham needed a lot of patience.

*For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying: Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. (Hebrews 6:13-15)*

We require patience to see our promises fulfilled. The following Bible text deals primarily with eternal life, but we can also apply it to other promises of God.

*For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. (Hebrews 10:36)*

The Bible is filled with waiting patiently for the promise. Moses was eighty years old when he took leadership of Israel. Joseph was first sold as an enslaved person and entered prison before becoming a great leader in Egypt. Job had to endure suffering and sickness until he was blessed. David had to wait until King Saul died before he could become king. We can study many more stories like this where God made a promise, and patience was needed before the promise materialized in fulfillment.

Third, the blessing isn't just for ourselves. Our job is to share the blessings we receive with the people around us, first to the orphans, widows, the poor, and the Kingdom of God. In the next chapter, we will discuss this in more detail as we examine financial blessings.

*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)*

We need to be generous people by all means and bless others with our time, energy, matter, money, love, attention, etc. God has blessed us (made us prosperous), and our job is to bless others.

*While you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. (2 Corinthians 9:11)*

God has no problem blessing us with material goods. In most cases, people create problems for themselves. The reason is that a servant of God has been taught that he must be poor and needy. This isn't what the Bible says. God wants to bless us, enabling us to bless others. This is also an essential condition. We must have a giving attitude and allow people to share in our blessing. But when we don't have money, energy, time, health, or goods, how can we provide good gifts to others?

We can also bless those we don't like or those who don't love us. You can think of blessing them with words or blessing them with material goods.

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (Romans 12:14)*

*But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you (...). (Matthew 5:44)*

## Summary

In this chapter, we discussed the blessing of God and the curse. Part of God's Kingdom is that we have been redeemed from the curse and put under the blessing of God. If we obey God, God wants to bless us, and we, in turn, will be a blessing to those around us. God's blessing is intended not only for ourselves but also for others. If we disobey God, we fall under the curse, and one or more curses may afflict us. We find an overview of the blessings and curses in Deuteronomy 28. In the chart below, we read again some of the blessings and curses from this chapter.

The blessing	The curse
Financially blessed. (Verse 3, 5, 8 and 12)	Financial deficit. (Verse 16, 29, 30 and 33)
Everything you do is blessed, no matter where you go. (Verse 3 and 6)	Everything fails, and disasters occur. (Verse 16, 19 and 20)

C9 LIVING IN GOD'S BLESSING

Blessed and abundant is the food that you eat. (Verse 5)	Cursed and insufficient is the food you eat. (Verse 17)
Blessed are your offspring. (Verse 4)	Infertility and miscarriages. (Verse 18)
Your work and business thrive. (Verse 4)	Your work and business don't thrive. (Verse 18)
Victory against (spiritual) enemies. (Verse 7)	Losing the battle against (spiritual) enemies. (Verse 25)
Health, strength, and power. (Verse 13)	Disaster, sickness, and misery. (From verse 15)

## C10 LIVING PROSPEROUSLY

In the previous chapter, we learned that God wants to bless us, even financially. God wants to bless our finances, so we have no deficits and live prosperously. Speaking of prosperity, we shouldn't think of a Biblical trick where our bank account is piling up with the money, and nothing is done with it. Of course, it is good to have a savings account and build up savings to have a buffer and save for retirement, but if we want to swim in our money like Scrooge Duck and be stingy, then something is wrong. In the previous chapter, we saw that God blesses us so we can bless others with our blessing. It is similar financially. God blesses us so we can live well and abundantly, but God also blesses us to accomplish good deeds with money. This can happen by supporting your church or a ministry or giving money to the poor, orphans, and others in need. We discover that God gives us prosperity when we bless others.

### Promises of Prosperity

The Bible is full of promises of prosperity. In this paragraph, let's read a few Bible verses that reveal that God wants us to prosper.

*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)*

This is a remarkable promise from God. When we read it in context, it primarily addresses our financial needs. The Philippians, for instance, gave generously to Paul's ministry, and as a result, God promised to meet all their needs according to His glorious riches. These riches are not limited to money or any earthly measure. God's wealth surpasses all human understanding. He operates on a different economic system unrelated to the world's economy. With God, we can be assured of His provision, even in times of crisis, as we see with Isaac.

*There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. (...) Then Isaac sowed in that land, and*

*reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him.*  
(Genesis 26:1-12)

What is impossible with humans is possible with God. A hundred-fold harvest during times of famine is rare. Isaac was blessed, and this is how God wants to bless us. David also experienced God's blessing and could say:

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.* (Psalm 23:1)

A shepherd was not unfamiliar to David. As a young man, he had often been the shepherd over a flock of sheep. David experienced that God was his shepherd and that He ensured that David had everything he needed. *I lack nothing.* The word "lacking" comes from the Hebrew word "*hāsēr*" which means "lacking" or "to have less or too little." David could say, "I lack nothing, I have nothing too little, I have enough." This word appears in Psalm 34.

*Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.* (Psalm 34:10-11)

Those who seek the LORD have no lack of goods. The Hebrew word for good is "*ṭôb*" which means "good," "goodness," "best," "prosperity," "precious," "wealth," "beautiful," or "favor." What a great promise from God! Paul says the following:

*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?* (Romans 8:32)

God desires to give us all things. Not some things, but all things. Let's look at two more verses about God's blessing.

*Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)

This Bible text teaches us that we have present and future things. We don't possess anything or anyone; we "own" everything. Many believe that we are blessed with God only in the future. "Only when you die is it good and prosperous." Of course, we can never compare our present with our future life. The future will be better in all aspects. Simultaneously, God wants to bless us with the present things. It is essential, however, to realize that we belong to Christ. We have been bought and paid for by Him; therefore, we are His property. Because of this, we don't ask for things that are against the will of God. Let us close this paragraph with what Jesus said.

*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)*

Jesus came so we could have an abundant life—not a life we lack or a life where we have just enough, but one in abundance.

## **Living Prosperously**

God wishes to bless us with our finances. However, it's important to follow God's rules that will allow us to live well and prosperously. At the beginning of this chapter, we read that we shouldn't love money like Scrooge Duck. Furthermore, we should not rely on our money. The Bible speaks clearly about this, as in the story of the rich young man.

*Jesus said to him: If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus said to His disciples: Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 19:21-24)*

Being rich isn't a sin; otherwise, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and many others would have had a severe problem. It is a sin,

however, to depend on your money and treat it as your possession. By the way, when this rich young man sold his possessions and donated them to the poor, he got back 100 times more. That is something Jesus says in the same chapter.

*So Jesus answered and said: Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions--and in the age to come, eternal life. (Mark 10:29-30)*

Jesus states that we can't serve God and mammon (money) simultaneously. How do you face life? Are you serving your money or God? What are you doing with your money? Is it intended only to take care of yourself and spoil yourself, or is your money God's?

To live prosperously well, the Bible gives several principles. Here are a few essential principles followed in this chapter.

**Principle 1: Be a steward.** Unfortunately, we are often too self-centered. Everything we use and we've earned for ourselves belongs to us. "This house is mine," "This car is mine," or "This bank account is mine." We view stuff and experience as our possessions. However, the Bible doesn't look at things that way and shows that everything belongs to God.

*The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein. (Psalm 24:1)*

Everything belongs to God, so all our possessions belong to God. All we possess isn't ours; it is God's. Does this mean we should offer everything we "have" to others? No. God has given it to us. God has given us understanding and talents through which we earn an income and, therefore, can buy a house, car, and stuff. God has entrusted it to us but wants us to use it properly. God has made us stewards over His property. A steward is a manager of his master's or lord's property. So, we are stewards of God's

goods, and God wants us to manage His money well. Then, we can ask, "How does God want us to handle money?"

First, God wants to care for us, which means He wants to bless us with goods and pleasant experiences. Secondly, He blesses us to be a blessing to those around us, especially those less fortunate. Third, He blesses us so we can sow back into His kingdom. This can be by blessing your church or an (itinerant) ministry of God. This is found in the book of Timothy.

*Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy; let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share. (1 Timothy 6:17-18)*

**Principle 2: Donate money.** The second principle is to donate money. You might think: How can I prosper if I donate money? This might sound like an odd principle, but in God's Kingdom, it is a great principle. We encounter this often in the Bible. Jesus and the apostles said that when we give, we receive. If we obey God and give, we can expect a harvest from God. God doesn't give us a harvest because He is obliged to; God wants to give to us because He is a good and loving God.

*Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. (Luke 6:38)*

This is something we find in the Corinthian letter. This congregation blessed Paul with a financial contribution, and in response, Paul said that God would give them things according to His riches.

*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:7-8)*

When we give, it should be a joyful offering to God, not out of compulsion or reluctance. God desires our gifts to be given with cheerfulness. We can even test God's faithfulness in our giving, as the prophet Malachi reminds us.

*Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this. Says the Lord of hosts: If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. (Malachi 3:10)*

**Principle 3: Seek first God's Kingdom.**

*But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)*

It is essential to put God's Kingdom first and involve yourself in the matters of the Kingdom. Seek God first, and God will reward you with all the material things other people want, such as clothing and food. Make God's priorities to be your priorities. Reading the Bible, evangelizing, and spending time in silence can be a general priority. You can also think about God's specific will for your life, such as starting an orphanage or missionary work in India. Focus on God, and God will provide the natural.

**Principle 4: Don't be lazy.** God wants to provide for you. This doesn't mean we have to quit working, sit on the couch, and wait for a hundred-dollar bill to appear on the doorstep daily to live on. God wants to bless us through our work. The Bible says He gives us the ability to make prosperity. Chapter 8 of Deuteronomy shows that God would bring the people of Israel to the Promised Land, where they wouldn't lack anything. If they obeyed God, there would be massive abundance and food in excess. God warned that they should never forget that this prosperity came from Him and that He was the One who made them rich. Then these two verses follow:

*(...) then you say in your heart: My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth. And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth,*

*that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. (Deuteronomy 8:17-20)*

We must remember two important things when discussing God's blessing on our income. The first is that with our strength, we cannot acquire good wealth; it is the grace of God, and we should never forget this. The second is that God gives us the power to create wealth, so we have to do it ourselves with God's grace. This means that we cannot be lazy but active and use the power God has given us to make our ability. It is a collaboration between God and man. Always try to stick to this principle, even in challenging situations. You may have been turned down at work or cannot work in a company. Nevertheless, try to see if there is anything you can do with the power God has given you. Maybe this is encouraging people (over the phone) with the Word of God or with prayer. It could be making birdhouses and selling them via the Internet. This could also be volunteering or cleaning the local shopping street. After all, God blesses the work of your hands.

*The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you. (Deuteronomy 28:8, NAS)*

In addition to work, God blesses our stockpiles. In modern times, we must think of savings accounts and other commodities such as real estate. Being rich isn't a sin; it is a blessing from God. On the contrary, ensure that you don't rely on your money, start serving the money, or see the money as your property.

**Principle 5: Honor God with the best of your income.** It is essential to give our tithes and the best to God. When we do that, God blesses us for this. By providing the best to God, I don't mean a large amount but a sacred gift. Instead of giving God the 'leftovers' of the month that happened to be leftover or the change of products (it isn't wrong to give cash), give God the first part of your salary or income. It is essential, however, to give some to

God joyfully and not do so as an obligation. Giving the tithe or first fruits is often portrayed as 'Old Testament' or 'legalistic.' Looking closer, we see that providing first fruits didn't start in the law but began with Abel and Cain.

*And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. (Genesis 4:3-5)*

Abel gave his first fruits based on faith. Cain gave the leftovers. Abel was blessed, and Cain wasn't. Even our model of faith, Abraham, gave his tithes, not because it was in the law (it didn't exist then), but because it was a principle of God. Abraham didn't offer his tithes to Melchizedek (an image of Jesus) out of necessity or poverty but because he wanted to bless Melchizedek with his love offering. Similarly, we, too, may bless the Lord Jesus and His kingdom with our tithes and first fruits.

*Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High. (...) And Abraham gave him a tithe of all. (Genesis 14:18-20)*

**Principle 6: Sow in God's Kingdom.** The last principle we focus on is that we may sow in God's Kingdom and that God blesses us for this.

*But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (2 Corinthians 9:6)*

Paul compares the process of giving to God's Kingdom to sowing. When a farmer sows, he expects a harvest. A farmer never sows without expecting a harvest; that would be foolish. Paul compares our financial gifts to seeds that we sow, just like the farmer. As we sow, we expect a harvest. If someone sows very little, he will

harvest poorly. If someone sows bountifully, he will harvest bountifully. Sow in God's Kingdom, and God will provide bread (our necessities) and more seed to sow again.

*Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. (2 Corinthians 9:10-11)*

At the same time, we need patience. When a farmer sows, he expects a harvest within six months. A farmer must be patient. Suppose the farmer sows, goes for coffee, and returns one hour later. He sees that nothing has changed and says, "See! I shouldn't have sown!" When he says this to others, they say, "That isn't correct. You must be patient; in six months, it will be harvest time." This may sound strange, but many say this concerning our financial sowing. They give seeds to God, and within an hour, they lose faith in a harvest. Let us wait patiently for God to provide us with harvest, even if it takes a few days, weeks, months, or years. God does what He promises.

## **Summary**

God wants to bless us financially. It is essential to manage this appropriately. We shouldn't love our money like Scrooge Duck and swim in it. God wants to bless us so we can bless others and God's Kingdom. To live prosperously, the six principles below are fundamental:

Principle 1: Be a steward.

Principle 2: Donate money.

Principle 3: Seek first God's Kingdom.

Principle 4: Don't be lazy.

Principle 5: Honor God with the best of your income.

Principle 6: Sow in God's Kingdom.

## C11 RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

The following blessing we discuss is receiving the Holy Spirit. We could write hundreds of books on the Holy Spirit, but we will cover this subject briefly and concisely. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and explores the depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:10). This means that the Holy Spirit knows everything about God and is part of the Trinity of God at the same time. The Holy Spirit not only constitutes a power (Acts 1:8) but is also a personality with feelings (Ephesians 4:30), has a mind (John 16:7-13), the ability to speak (Acts 13:2), and a will (1 Corinthians 12:11). The Holy Spirit knows no beginning or end and lives eternally. At Pentecost, He came to earth to fill every believer. Before Pentecost, He rested on some important people, such as prophets and kings. After Pentecost, He came for everyone who is a believer. The Holy Spirit is a promise of Jesus and the Father and was prophesied in the Old Testament and during Jesus' life on earth.

*And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, He said, you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. (Acts 1:4-5)*

The Holy Spirit is a promise of a great blessing of God's Kingdom. It is one of the greatest miracles: the Holy Spirit, God himself, dwells in believers. Although the Holy Spirit is the pledge for every believer, some may allow the Holy Spirit into their lives more and experience it more intensely than others. In addition to the topics we cover here, the Holy Spirit is also actively engaged in the blessings of the previous chapters. We cannot separate the blessings of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us look at some critical moments of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

### **The Repentance**

The life of a Christian begins at repentance when a person gives his life to Jesus and decides to follow Jesus. The Holy Spirit is an

integral part of this repentance. It is actually impossible for someone to come to faith without the Holy Spirit. This is because the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin and encourages righteousness and judgment.

*Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (the Holy Spirit) will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (...). (John 16:7-8)*

It is also grace from God that someone repents from this evil world and decides to follow Jesus.

*Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. (Acts 16:14)*

Whenever we read the Bible, we learn that God wants everyone to come to faith and no one to be lost (Ezekiel 33:11). I believe God does everything possible to reach people with His gospel. It isn't God's fault that people don't acknowledge Him as their Father. It is man's responsibility, and no one can apologize for not knowing (Romans 1:18-23).

Everyone receives the Holy Spirit during repentance. From the moment of repentance, the Holy Spirit assists us in various ways. In this section, we will briefly explore—what I believe—are five events that take place when a person Repents and accepts Jesus.

1. The Holy Spirit is 'the proof' that we belong to God and will deliver us from this evil world and take us into heaven in the future. The Bible talks about being sealed with the Holy Spirit and the pledge of the Holy Spirit.

*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of*

*our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)*

Being blessed with the Holy Spirit means that believers are the identifiable property of God. In addition, a seal implies authority and means that we have been equipped to do God's mission, which we will cover in Part 3. Pledge suggests that we have received the Holy Spirit as a down payment. We have received from God the Father His Spirit, enabling us to know that God will also pay us in total, and we may spend eternity with Him. With this 'down payment' of the Spirit, we may now stand in God's ministry, fulfill His mission, and live holy lives.

2. The Holy Spirit dwells in us. This means we no longer live according to our flesh, the sinful lusts of the past, but walk in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us in our ways and empowers us to understand what we should and shouldn't do. This is a great miracle of God: through the sacrifice of Jesus, God can dwell in us, and we don't have to spend a day alone.

*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. (Romans 8:9)*

Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we have an ongoing connection with God the Father in heaven. We don't need human intermediate connections to get in touch with God; we need the Holy Spirit. Through this indwelling, God is always close to the believer.

3. The Holy Spirit testifies that we are a son or daughter of God the Father.

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out: Abba, Father! The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. (Romans 8:14-16)*

This implies the existence of a great love relationship between God and us. God sees us as His children, and the Holy Spirit testifies this to our Spirit. We are included in the family of God and may treat God as our heavenly Father.

4. The Holy Spirit guides us in our ways. This is because the Holy Spirit dwells in us and wants to guide us in our decisions. In this context, we consider big choices, such as choosing studies, changing jobs, or entering important relationships. We can also think of the 'smaller' decisions, where the Holy Spirit tells us what is right and wrong.

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1)*

This automatically brings us to point 5. The Holy Spirit wants to sanctify us on earth, and this sanctification starts with repentance. This ongoing process leads to our final goal: to become like Jesus.

*But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)*

For all these things, it is up to us to determine how much leverage the Holy Spirit has in our lives. If we give the Holy Spirit little or no space, He can't do anything. If we give the Holy Spirit a lot of space, He can accomplish a lot, and we will become more and more like the Lord Jesus.

## **The Baptism**

After the Holy Spirit affects the believer during repentance and leads the believer in his ways, the Holy Spirit desires to do even more. This is called baptism in the Holy Spirit, and it involves a person being immersed in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This can occur during, just after, or very long after repentance. God wants to give everyone baptism in the Holy Spirit, so

it depends on when we receive it. For God, it does not matter whether you ask for baptism in the Holy Spirit one minute or eighty years after repentance: He wants to give it to us. The promise of this baptism isn't for extraordinary people but for everyone. Nevertheless, it is essential to take notice of a baptism in the Holy Spirit and ask God for it. Let us first look at what baptism in the Holy Spirit does and then at how we can be baptized in the Spirit. We study some points made available by God. It is possible that someone has been baptized with the Holy Spirit but cannot yet do everything. When this is the case, you may ask God for this, and He will provide it.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is when a person is immersed in the Holy Spirit. The experience of the Spirit is important, and I don't believe it can go unnoticed. After Jesus' ascension, the disciples had to wait for baptism in the Holy Spirit. After this baptism in the Book of Acts, the disciples walked into Jerusalem, and Peter took the floor. He said what baptism in the Holy Spirit does.

*And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maid-servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. (Acts 2:17-18)*

1. Through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, all sons and daughters of God can have dreams and see visions. God wants to reveal His plans to His children, and this occurs through dreams and visions. Furthermore, they will prophesy. This is made available today and applicable to all believers. Anyone can prophesy and communicate God's words to others. There is a distinction between the ministry of the prophet and the gift of prophecy. The prophet has received the gift and revelation from God, which gives the prophet more authority. Believers with the gift of prophecy may prophesy but must be mindful always that it is for edification, comfort, or encouragement. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul explains how prophecy works, showing that it is available to all. We can learn to prophesy, and we may aspire to do so.

*Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. (...) But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. (1 Corinthians 14:1-3)*

Prophesying, having dreams, and seeing visions are features we can learn from the Holy Spirit. The first important thing is understanding God's voice, which can also be an exercise. I recommend finding someone who has already discovered the gift of prophecy and asking to practice with this gift together.

2. Baptism in the Holy Spirit allows us to pray in tongues. Speaking in tongues is the language of the Holy Spirit and cannot be understood by anyone (unless the Holy Spirit explains it to someone). It is a direct connection between man's Spirit and God the Father with the help of the Holy Spirit. Tongue language is for your edification and is always the perfect prayer to God because the Holy Spirit prays for us.

*And these signs will follow those who believe: (...) they will speak with new tongues (...). (Mark 16:17)*

Speaking in tongues is something we can request from God. We may trust God to give it when we ask Him about it. It may be awkward or difficult to start speaking in tongues. Hence, it will help to find people who can speak in tongues and ask to practice together. It can also help people worship God with music and then move on to speaking in tongues. Let the Holy Spirit lead you to venture out speaking in tongues.

Finally, it is essential to note that there are different forms of tongues. One form is the personal tongues explained above. Another form is congregational tongues, which take place in the congregation. Congregational tongues need to be translated and serve to help the congregation. Personal tongues don't need translation and take place in personal prayer.

3. We receive power from God through baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit until the Spirit comes upon them with power.

*(...) for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. (...) But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:5-8)*

Previously, when I read this text, I assumed it entailed only the power to persevere in faith. But if we study this word, it isn't just the power to persevere; it is also a supernatural power we receive from God. The word "power" comes from the Greek word "*dunamis*" which means "power," "ability," or "strength." If we search Bible texts that refer to the same word, we learn that Jesus also possessed "*dunamis*" and was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus didn't always have this power; it came after He was baptized by John the Baptist and spent forty days and nights in the desert. When Jesus went out of the desert, it says:

*Then Jesus returned in the power (*dunamis*) of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. (Luke 4:14)*

Jesus could perform miracles because He received the power of the Holy Spirit. We can also perform miracles, not from our strength but because we have received the power of the Holy Spirit. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is present and available to us.

*(...) and what is the exceeding greatness of His power (*dunamis*) toward us who believe, according to the working 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 (...).* (Ephesians 1:19-20)

What was it that Jesus could do with this power? This is an essential question because everything Jesus was able to do with the power of the Holy Spirit, we are also capable of doing with the same power.

*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. (John 14:12)*

Let us examine some things Jesus did on earth. We have been blessed by God to do the same.

1. Healing the sick. (Luke 5:17 & 6:19)
2. Casting out demons. (Luke 4:36)
3. Resurrecting the dead. (John 11)
4. Performing supernatural miracles, such as food multiplications and speaking against the storm. (Acts 2:22)
5. Teaching and preaching the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus accomplished all this through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Part 3, we will explore this in depth. The power of the Holy Spirit is a significant and essential part of God's Kingdom because, from this power, we have been given authority and power to do the above things.

*For the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power (dunamis). (1 Corinthians 4:20)*

God's Kingdom consists of the power of the Holy Spirit, which is full of signs and wonders and transforms people's lives. The Kingdom does not consist of pious words and a powerless sermon; it consists of power and clearly showing people God is at work. The power of the Holy Spirit also consists of the gifts of the Spirit, which we will cover in Part 3 of this book. These gifts are intended to serve one another and are a command of God.

To experience the power of the Spirit in our lives, it is essential to invite the Holy Spirit into our lives and ask for the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus says we receive the Holy Spirit when we ask for Him.

*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him! (Luke 11:13)*

Furthermore, obeying the Holy Spirit and doing as He asks is crucial. This allows the Holy Spirit to work more through us (Acts 5:32). In conclusion, there is much power in prayer, worship, and fasting. It is good to worship God and elevate His Name. When we do so, we give the Holy Spirit more room to fill us with His power.

*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:18-20)*

4. The Holy Spirit provides boldness. The Holy Spirit grants us the courage to proclaim all about the gospel to those around us. God wants to make us courageous and strong, enabling us to reach others with the gospel of the Kingdom so they, too, will be blessed with the good news.

*And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:31)*

This text instantly shows how we can live in God's boldness. This is because we are praying to God for boldness, and in Acts 4, we read that the Holy Spirit immediately answered prayer and filled people with boldness. This is a blessing for ourselves, as we aren't afraid to express our deepest desires to others. Simultaneously, it is also a blessing for others as they hear the way to salvation and realize that we have a good God who wants to be their Father.

## **The Fruit**

We will conclude by discussing the fruit of the Holy Spirit, an expression found in the Book of Galatians.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness. (Galatians 5:22)*

In Chapter 6, we read about the blessing of salvation. We don't have to follow our inherent nature with all sinful lusts any more. Instead, we are redeemed from sin, which allows us to live a holy life. In Chapter 7, we read about the new creation in Christ. This creation results from the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, and consequently, we cease to do the past's sins and commit to doing God's good qualities. The fruit of the Spirit demonstrates the good qualities of God that we may apply in our lives. The Holy Spirit doesn't want us to mature into one or a few fruits. The Spirit wants us to mature in all the fruits, and we must grow in all the fruits as we progress in our journey with the Holy Spirit. Most importantly, it is the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit intends to give us these good fruits, guide us along our paths, and discipline us when we head in the wrong direction. In the second place, we shouldn't wait passively for the fruit to start growing out of the blues. Allowing the Spirit and the Word of God to guide us will enable the fruit to grow rapidly. So, these traits aren't automated processes that overwhelm us; we must allow the Spirit to actively lead us and say 'no' to our sins and lusts. From our nature, we pursue the following traits:

*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)*

These qualities are the exact opposite of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:17). In other words, we should realize, on the one hand, that a holy walk of life is a blessing from God and the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it is our responsibility that the fruit grows. We cannot blame the Holy Spirit if, for example, we are overly impatient or lack self-control. We can compare it to the fruit in horticulture. It is the responsibility of man to sow a seed, water it, and tend it well. If man handles the seed and the fruit well, the fruit will grow. If man doesn't water and look after the fruit, it will die or not grow to its full potential. The same scenario applies to the

fruit of the Holy Spirit. If we don't handle the fruit carefully, it won't develop optimally, and we will remain stuck with bad qualities. If we manage the fruit appropriately and allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit, the fruit will grow and become great.

How do we live in the fruit of the Spirit? Besides the exhortations of chapters 6 and 7, we will highlight one principle: letting the Holy Spirit lead us. In the chapter on the fruit of the Spirit, Paul writes:

*I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.* (Galatians 5:16)

Paul urges us to walk in the Holy Spirit. By 'walk,' Paul means our entire walk of life, i.e., our religious parts and every part of life—even life after Sunday morning. We should allow the Holy Spirit to lead us in everything, killing the flesh and growing the fruit. If one is led by the Spirit, the desires of the flesh will not be fulfilled, but he will live a holy life with the Holy Spirit.

This chapter isn't a comprehensive listing of everything the Holy Spirit does or can do in a believer's life. We have looked at some key points about the Holy Spirit's blessings, but the Holy Spirit wants to perform much more than has been covered in this chapter.

## Summary

The Holy Spirit is a promise of a great blessing of God's Kingdom. It is one of the greatest miracles: the Holy Spirit, God himself, dwells in believers. The Holy Spirit enters the life of a believer the moment he repents and starts following Jesus. At that moment, the Holy Spirit is the believer's pledge and seal, dwells in the believer, and testifies with our Spirit that we are children of God. We receive His guidance and are sanctified by Him. In addition, Jesus wants to bless us with baptism in the Holy Spirit, causing us to have dreams, see visions, prophesy, pray in tongues, receive power, and become bold. Finally, we covered the fruit of the Spirit and saw that the Holy Spirit guides us to develop great fruit with the good qualities of God. In allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us, we will function in all these blessings.

## C12 OTHER BLESSINGS

God offers much grace for us. It is no coincidence that Paul says he always prays that we may receive a revelation of all the blessings God wants to give us (Ephesians 1). God's goodness and power exceed all, and no book in the world can put God's complete goodness and blessing into words. In this chapter, we cover more blessings of God's Kingdom, but know that God wants to bless us with much more.

### Direct Connection with God

We have a direct connection with God. Before Jesus died, there was a temple, and inside the temple was a small space where the Ark of the Covenant stood in the holy of holies. In this space, God 'dwelt' on earth. No one could enter, and no one could be in God's presence. This space was partitioned off from the holy place by a veil, and once a year, the high priest was allowed to enter this space. Before entering this space, he had to put on linen clothes, exuding holiness (Leviticus 16:4). He also had to first reconcile by offering a bull as a sin offering to God (Leviticus 16:11). If the high priest failed to do this, there was a good chance he would die by the holiness of God (Leviticus 16:3). God is holy and man is unclean, so no relationship on earth was possible. God's holiness would cause all the unclean to drop dead instantly. Only with an offering of reconciliation was it possible for the high priest to reach God and serve in the holy of holies.

That is how it is today. Only with the reconciliation sacrifice of Jesus Christ it is possible for people and God to be together. A great blessing of God's Kingdom is our direct connection with God. When Jesus completed His work on earth on the cross of Calvary, God didn't need to live apart from people anymore. From that time onwards, God could come to people. God Himself tore the veil that separated God from people.

*And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (...). (Matthew 27:50-51)*

Jesus's crucifixion brought reconciliation to people. This means that God can live again with men. Today, the Holy Spirit's indwelling in believers achieves this. We may approach the throne and enter God's spiritual sanctuary with boldness. Jesus paved the way for us, and as High Priest, He atoned for our sins.

*Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Hebrews 10:19-22, NAS)*

In the future, this will occur in a visible form where God will dwell with people (Revelation 21:3).

### **Living in Direct Connection with God**

How can we live in direct connection with God? Hebrews 10 shows some beautiful concepts that relate significantly to a living connection with God. We may approach God with a sincere heart and solid faith. An honest heart means a genuine and committed attitude towards God. This state is attainable because our heart is sprinkled and our conscience cleansed. The reason for this is the work of Jesus, by which we are sanctified and justified in Him. In addition, we have received the Holy Spirit, who has 'written' the laws of God in our hearts and minds. When the Holy Spirit guides us, we remain pure. This work is partly accomplished by water baptism, as mentioned in verse 22. Finally, it is important to encourage one another and not neglect the church's mutual assemblies. In this way, we pay attention to one another and are on fire together for God so we do not forget God in our lives and our connection with the Creator isn't broken.

### **Speaking to God**

Despite knowing we have a direct connection with God—through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, it is crucial to know we have a direct line of communication with God—fellowship and intimacy. In an

earthly kingdom, the king has no time to speak to and build relationships with all the people. In God's Kingdom, things work differently. Every citizen of God's Kingdom has a personal line of communication with God the Father, and everyone can reach God—day and night. No matter what has happened or how 'bad' we have become because of sin, God always wants to speak to us and will forgive our sins if we come with repentance. God is always available and present to have conversations with His children. Here, we can also think of intercession, confession, a prayer of gratitude, praying blessings to others, or praise. Being grateful to God and honoring Him with our prayers is the key.

We are urged to keep praying and to talk to God continuously. This is often perceived as an obligation, but it is a great blessing from God. We may always and uninterruptedly pray and speak to God. God will not get tired of our prayers, will not become impatient, and will have plenty of time to talk to us. Indeed, God longs to speak to us all the time and show His goodness to us.

*Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. (Colossians 4:2, NAS)*

We can pray together with other believers or alone in private. When we pray alone, we know God is there and are rewarded for praying.

*But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matthew 6:6)*

Besides, prayer is a bi-directional process. God wants to answer our prayers. This may be through a voice inside us, a Bible text, or a spontaneous thought that enters our minds. For example, God can encourage us, give us a mission to build His kingdom or give us a prophecy for someone else. We have a speaking God!

Finally, God promises an answer to prayer—either spiritual or material blessings when we pray.

*Ask, and it will be given to you. (...) For everyone who asks receives. (...) If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him. (Matthew 7:7-11)*

### **Living in Answer to Prayer**

Several principles are essential for answers to prayer, which we will cover very briefly.

**Principle 1: Ask God.** This principle may sound redundant, but it is imperative. God gives us good gifts when we ask Him.

*You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (James 4:2)*

**Principle 2: Know God's will.** We receive blessings in our lives only if they are God's will. Before we pray, we need to know His will to pray in faith.

*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)*

**Principle 3: We must pray in faith.** Unless we have faith that God hears our prayer, God cannot (or has difficulty) answering our prayer.

*And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive. (Matthew 21:22)*

**Principle 4: The proper motive.** We shouldn't ask God for things to fulfill our lusts and deal with blessings selfishly and inappropriately. God doesn't think it is wrong to pray for ourselves but wants the motive to be correct. For example, asking God for a car if we need or want it is legitimate so that we become more mobile. It is wrong to pray for a car if we want to make others jealous of us or to start a competition with neighbors asking, "Who has the nicest car?"

*You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:3)*

**Principle 5: Be patient.** Sometimes, God's promises take a while to materialize. Be patient; if God promises something, He will give it!

## **The Body of Christ**

The following blessing of God's Kingdom is that we are part of the body of Christ and the global church of Christ. We don't refer to the material body of Jesus on earth but to a spiritual reality in the Bible. The body of Christ is the church of Christ on earth. It is a great blessing not to be alone in our worship, walk of life, and ministry but to have millions of brothers and sisters. Together, we are building God's Kingdom on earth. The church is the body of Christ, and Jesus is the Head of this body.

*And He (Jesus) is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning (...). (Colossians 1:18)*

The body shows diversity and simultaneously forms a unity. Looking around us, we see different brothers and sisters with various ministries. One is a speaker and can give the most beautiful sermons. Another is a prophet who can communicate the words of God perfectly. Yet another has been given the gifts of healing, and many have been healed through his ministry. God uses everyone for a particular purpose and has placed each believer in the Body of Christ. One is meant to be a hand, while another—a foot. Everyone is needed in the Body.

The subject of 'the Body of Christ' is a blessing from God and a commission to us. It is a blessing because we are encouraged, admonished, or comforted by other believers and ministries. We can learn much from a Bible teacher, receive God's words through a prophet, or be accepted in love by a shepherd. God has not placed us alone on the earth but in a body and a family so that we can serve each other in love. There should be a lot of love in the church that meets the following:

*Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)*

With this being the starting point of a congregation, it is a great blessing to join one!

At the same time, being the body of Christ is a commandment. Others encourage us, and we, in turn, may inspire others with the ministry, talents, and love we have received from God. This is how we together ensure a perfect body of Christ, where no parts are lacking. The human body needs all organs and limbs to function perfectly. In the body of Christ, we need all ministries and all believers to function perfectly.

*But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. (1 Corinthians 12:24-27)*

### **Living in the Body of Christ**

We will deal with two points for living well in the body of Christ. Firstly, we wish not only to receive from other ministries, brothers, and sisters but also to distribute ourselves with the ministries and gifts God has given us. We are the Body of Christ, and collectively, we strengthen each other. Secondly, meeting each other in a congregation. It is impossible to seek out every member of the body of Christ, as millions of people belong to this body. That is why God has given local congregations to each city or region. Paul calls us to attend mutual meetings in these local congregations to strengthen and encourage one another. (Of course, it is also possible to have an itinerant ministry to support several local congregations, like an apostle).

*And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)*

## **God's Protection**

God protects and guards us. We see God's protection extending over various Bible figures throughout the Bible. For example, think of Elisha, who was protected by an angelic army of God (2 Kings 6:16-17). Think of David, who wrote several Psalms about God's protection over his life.

*God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)*

*You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. (Psalm 32:7)*

*Because you have made the Lord, who is my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling. (Psalm 91:9-10)*

God protects us with supernatural protection. This doesn't imply that there can never be tribulation in our lives. Unfortunately, many Christians live in tribulation caused by people who want to terrorize or kill them. God protects all His followers, yet Christians cannot escape persecution or even death at times. Persecutions will remain until Jesus returns. Yet our God is our Protector and wants to protect us in our ways and guard us from danger. We may trust Him in any circumstance we encounter.

*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)*

Even if we are persecuted and Christians are killed because of their faith, God provides everyone with (spiritual) protection. We don't have to fear those who can kill the body. We have hope and security that are more powerful than death because our spirit is

secure with God in heaven. God protects us, no matter what happens to our bodies on earth. God is faithful and never loses sight of us.

*And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)*

### **Living in God's Protection**

The assaults on our lives don't come from people but from the spiritual world. The spiritual world can use people to attack us with fiery darts. It is a promise from God that He will protect us from danger. Meanwhile, Paul calls us to arm ourselves against the day of evil. Let us read Ephesians 6 to see how we can arm ourselves, preventing the fiery darts of the enemy from striking us.

*Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:11-18)*

For this paragraph, it takes us too far to analyze this text further. Our task is to arm ourselves to stand strong in any circumstance!

## Victories

God wants us to be victors and not losers. God is a victorious God and doesn't lose. When we read the book of Revelation, we see that Jesus is victorious over the devil and the antichrist. Just as Jesus isn't a loser, we shouldn't be losers. By our faith, we are victors together with Him!

*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world: our faith. (1 John 5:4)*

With Jesus, we have conquered the world through our faith. This means we have defeated the devil (1 John 2:13) and sin (1 John 2:16). We are no longer meant to be losers in circumstances but victors. Jesus has given us power and authority over our spiritual adversaries.

*Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. (Luke 10:19)*

We are expected to have a victorious faith that moves mountains and defeats darkness. The Bible contains verses and stories where God achieves victory through people.

*Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. (2 Corinthians 2:14)*

Paul lived a life of victories. Things didn't go well from a human point of view. For instance, consider Paul's imprisonment, his shipwreck, and death threats. Yet Paul could say that He lived a victorious life with Jesus. He could speak about Jesus; people came to faith, and darkness was defeated. Sometimes, the circumstances around us tell us that we are losers or in the process of losing. If we stand firm in faith and authority, we can never lose and will always attain victory in Christ. We have been given vic-

torious faith and placed in God's Kingdom that never fails. Persecutions or temptations may come, but God protects us so we can attain victory.

*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)*

Victories apply to spiritual matters, relationships, work, health, finance, or school. God has given us victorious faith.

### **Living in Victories**

There is constantly a battle. I don't refer to people fighting each other, but battles of the minds. The devil wants to attack us in our minds with lies and half-truths. To live in victory, it is essential to overcome our thoughts.

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)*

We have to battle against the strongholds in our minds. These strongholds are false reasoning, disobedience to God, and incorrect thoughts. We battle against these strongholds and are allowed to bring everything to obedience in Christ. It is essential to continuously speak against the wrong thoughts by telling them the truth of God from the Bible or personal prophecies. For example, if a thought arises that says, "Surely God doesn't forgive you," we may say, "Yes, for it is written, 'For You, Lord, are good, mild to forgive and rich in mercy to all who call on You'" (Psalm 86:5).

Victories begin in our minds and trickle down to the (physical) parts of our lives. In addition, it helps to regularly seek God by praying, fasting, or studying His Word and asking Him

what we should do on earth. If we follow and implement God's will, no enemy or spiritual power can stop us. We then have an invincible God who is on our side. And finally, we sometimes need patience. It may be a process after which victory comes. During that time, may we continue to struggle and trust God.

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. (1 Timothy 6:12)*

## Grace

God's Kingdom is a Kingdom of God's grace. We aren't placed under the law but rather under God's grace.

*And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:16-17)*

Talking about grace, people often think that we are free in our lusts on earth. We live in grace, so I am allowed to steal, cheat, commit adultery, etc. This kind of grace doesn't exist in the Bible, and I don't preach it. We are free from the law and sin. This allows us to live in the freedom of the Spirit. We don't have to obey the law involving circumcision, keeping the Jewish feasts and sacrifices. We are allowed to live in freedom and let the Holy Spirit lead us. In the letter to the Galatians, Paul explains this principle by first addressing living under the law and then living under unholy freedom. He then proclaims the right path of grace and freedom.

*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. (Galatians 5:1)*

We are told to remain in that freedom and grace and not let a yoke of slavery weigh upon us. That yoke of slavery is the law with all its provisions and the goal of being justified before God by the law. In addition, we shouldn't be servants of the world with all its

lusts (Galatians 4:3). So how can we live? If we cannot be under the law and have unholy freedom? That is the beauty of God! He has a solution that allows us to live in holy freedom, receiving all God's provisions while not being slaves to the law. God has given us His Spirit, through which God takes the initiative and sanctifies and justifies us.

*You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. (Galatians 5:4-5)*

*I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)*

Living in the grace of God means having the Holy Spirit lead our lives. Living in grace means that we (can no longer) do sin, and the power of sin no longer rules over us.

*For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace (...) you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Romans 6:17-18)*

We may serve God and righteousness because we no longer have sin ruling over us and are set free from it. What a great grace of God! He has freed us from the law and sin, allowing us to live in grace and true freedom!

### **Living in Grace**

To live in grace, we will examine one exhortation: obedience to the Holy Spirit. If we listen to the Holy Spirit and walk in the ways of the Holy Spirit, we will live perfectly in grace.

*I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that*

*you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. (Galatians 5:16-18)*

## **Wisdom**

Another blessing of God's Kingdom is wisdom. God has given us His wisdom so we can make wise decisions.

*For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:6)*

God is the only right source of wisdom. Many scholars in the world think they are wise. I don't want to argue that today's scholars are knowledgeable and can make amazing inventions and discoveries. But knowledge is very different from wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to judge correctly and choose appropriately in life. Knowledge is having a lot of information or facts about a particular subject. According to the book of Proverbs, wisdom surpasses knowledge and comes from God. At the same time, people also receive knowledge and corresponding insight from God. In the Bible, apart from Jesus, Solomon was the wisest man alive. His wisdom was so profound that people worldwide visited him to ask questions. Solomon received this wisdom because he offered sacrifices to God and asked God for wisdom (1 Kings 3). In Proverbs, he tells how we, too, can become wise. The two main principles are: 1. Asking God for wisdom, seeking wisdom well, and realizing that wisdom comes only from God. 2. Observing God's commandments and living righteously.

Solomon was extremely wise, and the apostles, too, walked in the supernatural wisdom of the Holy Spirit, so they knew exactly what to answer.

*And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. (Acts 6:8-10)*

Finally, the key is to realize that God's wisdom is foolishness to the world. The world cannot understand the gospel's 'foolishness.' At the same time, God's 'foolishness' is wiser than all men. God's wisdom far surpasses all wisdom on earth; only the world fails to see and understand that.

*(...) but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:23-25)*

God's wisdom is next level. For example, when considering provisions and prosperity, God says, "Give, and it will be given to you." The world wouldn't say this.

### **Living in Wisdom**

How are we supposed to live with the wisdom of God? James explains this to us in his letter.

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)*

James makes it quite simple: If you lack wisdom, ask God, and He will grant it to you. We may ask God for wisdom, an answer, or a solution in a particular situation. When we ask for wisdom, we must believe that God will grant it, as James says in his letter.

*But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:6-8)*

If we fail to ask or have doubts and unbelief, we won't receive wisdom (or other blessings) from God. In addition, Solomon calls us to seek God's wisdom (Proverbs 2:4). To conclude, there is one book in the world that contains all wisdom: the Bible. If you want

to be a wise man or woman, read and study the Bible, and you will receive wisdom.

## **Peace and Joy**

The last blessing we address in this section is peace and joy. These are qualities that belong to God's Kingdom.

*For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)*

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can live in peace and joy with God and our brothers and sisters. Because we are justified, we live in peace with God. No longer considered enemies of God in an unclean body, we can live in peace with Him through our faith in Jesus Christ.

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)*

Peace with God doesn't mean peace between two equal parties, as in a war or dispute. Peace is something God grants to us. Because Jesus has borne the punishment, God no longer has to punish us for sin, and we no longer have to live impure lives. After all, Jesus has borne this punishment for us. Consequently, we experience peace and serenity about ourselves that the world is unaware of. Things are working out well for us. In addition, we may live in peace and harmony with our brothers and sisters and spread God's peace throughout the world.

God's Kingdom also consists of joy in the Holy Spirit. This joy can suddenly erupt in church service while you are reading a Bible text or worshiping God. God is a God of joy and celebration.

*I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15:7)*

God is a God of joy and wants to share His joy with us. We see this in the story of the lost son, in which the son returns home. The Father is pleased and encourages his older son to be happy for his brother.

*It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.* (Luke 15:32)

### **Living in Peace and Joy**

Joy and peace are fruits of the Holy Spirit.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.* (Galatians 5:22)

This means that the Holy Spirit may guide us, and we may grow in peace and joy. It is both something God gives to us and something we can grow in.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, we have briefly discussed some of God's great blessings. God is a God of blessings, and His blessings abound. We have covered the following blessings.

<b>Blessing</b>	<b>Description</b>
Direct connection with God	Ever since the crucifixion, the distance between God and man has been removed. God dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit.
Speaking to God	We can speak directly to God through prayer or quiet time, and God answers.
The body of Christ	We have been placed in the body of Christ. This means we are in God's family, and we encourage, admonish, and comfort each other.
God's protection	God is protecting us and watching over us. We don't need to be afraid, but we can trust in Him.

## C12 OTHER BLESSINGS

Victories	God promises us victories in our lives across different areas. We aren't losers but victors.
Grace	By God's grace, we don't live under the law or unholy freedom. We live in the freedom of the Holy Spirit.
Wisdom	If we ask God for wisdom in faith, He will give us wisdom and solutions.
Peace and joy	Through the Holy Spirit, we receive peace and joy in our lives. It is a feeling unknown to the world.

## A FOLLOWER OF JESUS

Now that we have covered all these topics and the blessings of God, there is only one question left. Do you want to become a follower of Jesus so you can become a blessed son or daughter of God? You may have already made this choice. If so, I hope this book has been a revelation to you. Maybe you still need to make a choice. Know that everyone can and may come to Jesus. It doesn't matter what you have done wrong: Jesus wants you to become a child of God—but how do you become a child of God?

### **The Gospel of God**

The Bible refers to the gospel of God. Gospel means good news, but why is this good news? And does this good news follow bad news?

#### **Bad News**

The Bible says that everyone has sinned. This implies that everyone has acted in naughty and incorrect ways. This could include a mass murderer who committed an attack, but also someone who stole candy from grandma's closet or lied to his wife. Everyone has sinned, and therefore, no one can come to God in their strength (Romans 3:23).

The Bible teaches us that Adam and Eve, the first two humans, walked with God. It was perfect, and they had a beautiful relationship with God. But Adam and Eve decided to do wrong. They did not listen to God, so Adam and Eve could no longer walk with God. God is so good and holy that anything that comes near Him that is not good and holy falls dead immediately. In other words, it had become impossible for Adam and Eve to walk with God, and so it is also impossible for us to walk with God. Finally, sin has significant consequences. Sin must be condemned because otherwise, there is no justice. Today, we see injustice happening everywhere. Murderers, thieves, rapists, and swindlers come before the judge, and the judge decides the punishment they must bear. Thus, after death, everyone comes before the Divine Judge. Jesus condemns sin, and since Jesus and God the Father

are good and holy, every sin is subject to eternal punishment full of pain and sorrow (Romans 6:23 and Revelation 20:11-15).

### **Good News**

However, the story doesn't stop with the previous sentence because God Himself (the Lord Jesus) has provided a just solution through which the penalty of sin is paid, and people have a hopeful future. In other words, Jesus is both a righteous and gracious Judge simultaneously.

Jesus did the following: He set aside His divinity and entered the world as a man (Philippians 2:6-7). In the world, the Lord Jesus did everything right: He did not sin (Hebrews 4:15). This means that the Lord Jesus does not deserve punishment and may "just walk" with God the Father, as Adam and Eve did in the garden. But the Lord Jesus considered man and decided to bear the penalty of sin for all men so that man would no longer have to do this themselves. The Lord Jesus had Himself crucified and died on the cross. At that point, the Lord Jesus bore the penalty of sin (Ephesians 1:7-8). Then, the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and was given control over who would be judged and who would walk with God. In other words, people no longer have to suffer eternal punishment but may walk with God.

### **Your Choice**

God gives man the choice to utilize the payment of the Lord Jesus. Anyone who believes that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God and trusts in the work of the Lord Jesus does not have to bear the penalty of sin (Romans 3:23-27). However, anyone who does not believe in the Lord Jesus is already condemned (John 3:18). God wants no one to be condemned but everyone to walk with Him. God says, "Come!" What are you doing? (2 Peter 3:9 and Revelation 22:17.)

### **I Want to Follow Jesus!**

The Bible says, "If your mouth confesses that Jesus is Lord and your heart believes that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9, NBV). It helps to pray to God in faith, and I want to help you with a simple sample prayer that you may say out loud:

Father in heaven,

I have made mistakes, and I have sinned against You. I am unable to come to You on my own strength. I believe and trust in the work of the Lord Jesus, and I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Will You forgive me for all my faults and sins? And will You come and live in me and help me to live a good life? Lord Jesus, teach me to follow and obey You, and thank You for allowing me to become a child of the Most High God!

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

If you have prayed this with a faithful heart, you have become a child of God now! Getting to know God better and believing in the Lord Jesus is essential. You do this mainly by reading the Word of God because this is where the stories and texts describe God and show what God does. In addition, we worship a living God, meaning God wants to speak to us. You do this in your quiet time. Also, find a church near you and seek out Christians. They can help you with your questions about God and the Bible. Also, we should know that a follower of Jesus is always growing. If you have prayed the sample prayer, you have begun your beautiful walk with God here on earth. In addition, it is essential to be baptized.

## LIVING GOSPEL

In this chapter, I want to tell you about myself and Living Gospel.

### Who Am I?

My name is Timo Groot, and I grew up in a Christian family. From childhood, I attended several evangelical churches, where I experienced many beautiful sermons, good testimonies, and fellowship with my dear brothers and sisters. But the best part is that God moves in the churches and works through sermons, testimonies, and contacts! In my life, I have experienced and discovered God in various ways.

At the moment, I am working alone on this ministry and the books. Since the age of eight, I have experienced the Holy Spirit leading me to study the Bible. That year, I had read the Bible entirely for the first time, and as time passed, I read it a few more times. I have a love for God and God's Word, and I want to share God's Word with anyone interested. Many who read the book think I am an older man with his whole life behind him. This isn't the case. You may think I am old, but I was only born in 1999. I do everything voluntarily and have a part-time job besides everything I do for Living Gospel. I desire to build God's Kingdom full-time, and that time is bound to come! I want to see the world changed and for the world to be overflowing with the knowledge and power of God. People need Jesus, but many don't know it yet. With God's power, I want to reach people so that they make a radical choice for Jesus. In addition, I want to train people to evangelize and walk in God's kingdom.

Currently, I make videos with a Biblical topic and write books on Biblical topics. In these tasks, I see that God's Word is more relevant today than ever, and we have a God of miracles, and His love extends to all people. I desire to reach people with the Word of God and show that God is a living God working in believers today, as Mark 16 tells us.

*And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no*

*means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.* (Mark 16:17-18)

## **Origin and Social Media**

Living Gospel was established in April 2020. We have since reached hundreds of thousands by teaching the Gospel of God through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and the website [www.TheLivingGospel.org](http://www.TheLivingGospel.org). We look forward to the future and what God will do for the world!

You can watch Living Gospel through the following channels.

### **Website**

On the website [www.TheLivingGospel.org](http://www.TheLivingGospel.org) you will discover God's Word and see that the Bible is relevant today. On this website, you can watch videos and read Bible studies. While making the videos and Bible studies, I assume that God's Word is one hundred percent inspired by the Holy Spirit and that every Bible text can be used to learn from and educate us to live a good life. I hope this website will make you grow in faith and get to know God as He reveals Himself in the Bible. You can also find my books on the website.

### **YouTube**

Living Gospel videos are available on YouTube. YouTube is the first channel where I started posting videos, and you can find an overview of all my videos here.

### **Facebook**

Living Gospel has its own Facebook page! All videos are posted on this Facebook page, and it is possible to get in touch with me. You can find my page on Facebook via the link on my website.

### **Instagram**

Instagram is also an option to follow me. All Living Gospel videos are posted on Instagram, and I send short messages and images of current events and encouraging quotes from the Word of God.

### **TikTok**

Short videos about faith and the Bible appear on TikTok, and you receive short, encouraging quotes.

### **E-mail**

For questions, comments, or words of encouragement, please use the e-mail address [info@TheLivingGospel.org](mailto:info@TheLivingGospel.org).

## **Vision, Goals, and Working Together**

Living Gospel's vision is to ensure that you live in God's perfect grace, distribute God's grace to those around you, and live in God's perfect will and calling.

**Grace:** I mean all of God's gifts of grace, including:

- Forgiveness
- Redemption and righteousness
- Being in Christ
- Intimacy with God
- Baptism and fruits of the Holy Spirit
- Deliverance (Being free from demonic powers)
- Healing
- Provision and prosperity
- Speaking in tongues
- A life in authority.

Perfect will and calling: This is God's specific calling and plan for your life. Living Gospel wants to teach and train you to know and carry out God's plan for your life. This is achieved by:

- Uploading short Bible study videos.
- Written Bible studies and Bible subjects on the website, Biblical Characters, and commentaries on the books of the Bible.
- Writing books on Bible topics and commentaries.
- Using social media channels to spread God's word.

Are you blessed by this (e-)book and want to help me reach and equip many more people with the Gospel of God? Then, become a Living Gospel partner or make a one-time donation. Becoming

a partner can help build God's kingdom and reach people with the Gospel of God. Give your gift through the following link.

[www.TheLivingGospel.org/giving](http://www.TheLivingGospel.org/giving)

It is also possible to make a one-time donation. You can do this by using the same link. And, of course, thank you for reading this book. God's blessing!