



# GROWTH TRACK02

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# SESSION 1



# THE NATURE OF GOD

*The eternal God is your refuge,  
And underneath are the  
everlasting arms.  
**Deuteronomy 33:27a***

We relate with God based on our perception and knowledge of Him. Many Christians, however, do not know God as He really is, thus they cannot relate to Him as they should. In this lesson you will increase your knowledge of who God is, strengthening your relationship with Him.

## I. THE GODHEAD

- A. The New Testament term referring to the complete representation of God.

**Colossians 2:9 (NKJV)** - *For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

**Acts 17:29 (NKJV)** - *Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.*

**Romans 1:19-20 (NKJV)** - <sup>19</sup> *Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.*

- B. Three persons in one - The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit - From Genesis to Revelation the God of the Bible is always revealed as one undivided and indivisible essence with three eternal distinct beings.

**Matthew 28:19 (NKJV)** - *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.*

- C. Also known as – The Trinity – though this term is not in the Bible – it is used by the believers to describe the fact that God is triune in nature and being.
- D. There are two different words in Hebrew that when translated into English become the word “one” – “Yachead” which represents the single numerical value - and “Echad” which also represents one, but it speaks of a collective unity comprising more than one person. The Bible never uses the singular term to describe God. For instance, when we read Deuteronomy 6:4 we can understand that the Godhead is made of one unit with more than one person.

## NOTES

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The words used in this verse to say – The Lord is one – is “Adonai echad” – being “Adonai” the plural word for “Adon” which means Lord. So, in this verse we have a perfect example of two words displayed side by side showing us one unit with more than one person.

**Deuteronomy 6:4 (NKJV)** - Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!

**Deuteronomy 6:4 (NKJV)** - Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, Adonai echad!

- E. They are co-eternal, co-existent and co-equal in nature, power and attributes.
- F. The three persons are ascribed the attributes of God yet, they remain distinct from each other in ministry and function.

## II. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

The characteristics which make God who He is. They fall into two main categories:

- A. Essential Attributes – belong to God alone and make Him who He is:

- 1. Eternal – God has no beginning and no end – He is the everlasting One.

**Father – Deuteronomy 33:27a (NKJV)** - The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

**Son – John 1:1-2 (NKJV)** - <sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.

**Holy Spirit – Hebrews 9:14 NKJV)** - How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without [a]spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

- 2. Self-Existent - God is life and the source of all life - He does not owe His existence to anything or anyone - nor is He dependent on anything or anyone to sustain His life.

**Father – Exodus 3:14 (NKJV)** – And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

**Son – John 5:26 (NKJV)** - For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.

3. Immutable - God is unchangeable in character and being.

**Father – Malachi 3:6a (NKJV)** - For I am the Lord, I do not change.

**Son – Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV)** - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

4. Omnipotent - God is all-powerful - nothing is impossible with God that is consistent with His character, nature, and being.

**Father – Matthew 19:26 (NKJV)** - But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

**Son – Matthew 28:18 (NKJV)** - And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

**Holy Spirit – I Corinthians 12:8-11 (NKJV)** - Please read later.

5. Omniscient - God is all-knowing - He knows all things at all times.

**Father – I John 3:20 (NKJV)** - For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

**Son – Colossians 2:2-3 (NKJV)** - <sup>2</sup> That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

**Holy Spirit – John 14:26 (NKJV)** - But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

6. Omnipresent - God is present everywhere at all times.

**Father – Proverbs 15:3 (NKJV)** - The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

**Son – Hebrews 13:5b (NKJV)** - For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

**Holy Spirit – Psalm 139:7 (NKJV)** - Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

## NOTES



## NOTES

B. Moral Attributes - characteristics that God possesses in perfection and intends man to possess as well, sometimes called communicable attributes:

**Mathew 5:48 (NKJV)** - *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

1. Perfect Holiness

**Leviticus 19:2 (NKJV)** - *Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.'*

- God is absolutely pure.
- He cannot sin or tolerate sin.
- God is holy in all He thinks, says, and does.
- The Holy Spirit works in the believer to make him holy.

2. Perfect Righteousness/Justice

**Deuteronomy 32:4 (NKJV)** - *He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.*

- Righteousness is a Holy God acting in a just and upright manner toward His creation.
- This justice is seen in both punishment and reward.
- It is the conformity to God's standard of right and wrong.

3. Perfect Love

**1 John 4:16,19 (NKJV)** - <sup>16</sup>*And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.* <sup>19</sup>*We love Him because He first loved us.*

- This is the very heart of God's nature - God is Love.
- Love is not a feeling alone, but a decision.
- The perfect expression of God's love is seen at the cross where the Father gave His Son because of love, the Son laid down His life because of love, and because of that finished work of Jesus, the Holy Spirit enables us to love.

- His goodness - providential care for all His creation
  - His grace – undeserved, unearned, unmerited favor
  - His mercy – withholding the punishment man deserves
  - His compassion - sorrow for the sufferings of another with the urge to help
  - His kindness – gentle benevolence
4. Perfect Faithfulness
- 2 Timothy 2:13 (NKJV)** - *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.*
- God is absolutely trustworthy and true to His Word.
  - He doesn't lie and always fulfills His promises.

### III. THE DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GODHEAD

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit have different characteristics for their ministries and functions:

- A. Characteristics of The Father – He is all the fulness of the Godhead, invisible, without form, whom no man has seen or can see – the One who planned redemption.
- First Person, in mode of operation, in the Godhead – Genesis 1:1
  - The Begetter – John 1:10 - 13
  - The Foundation of our redemption. - John 3:16
  - The Covenant-Maker and Keeper
  - Eternally – The Father
- B. Characteristics of The Son – He is all the fulness of the Godhead, manifested, made visible – the One who effected redemption.
- Second Person, in mode of operation, in the Godhead for the purpose of redemption - not inferior, not unequal, but in submission and obedience to the Father's plan.

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- The Eternal Word. - John 1:1-3
  - The Mediator between God and man, Intercessor, Advocate – 1 Timothy 2:5
  - The God-Man - union of the divine nature in the one Person. The Word made flesh - John 1:14 - 19
  - The Only Begotten Son, the fullness of the Godhead bodily in human form - Colossians 1:19; 2:9
  - Redeemer, Savior, Grace of God personified
  - Sacrificial body and blood, the ratification of the covenant by blood – Hebrews 9:11-15
  - Eternally - The Son
- C. Characteristics of The Holy Spirit – He is all the fulness of the Godhead revealing The Father and The Son to mankind – the One who applies redemption.
- Third Person, in mode of operation, in the Godhead for the purpose of redemption: not inferior, nor unequal, but the Servant Person in the Godhead, pointing to The Father and The Son.
  - Proceeding from the Father, through the Son - John 15:26
  - The Inspirer, Revelator, Illuminator of the Word, Communicator, Teacher, Helper – John 14:26
  - The Sanctifying Power, the Indweller, the Presence in the Church – John 16:7-11
  - The Symbolized One: as Rivers, Rain, Fruit, Oil, Fire, Wind and Dove
  - Eternally - The Spirit

## CONCLUSION

“From eternity to eternity God is The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is God, but not apart from The Son or The Holy Spirit. The Son is God, but not apart from The Father and The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, but not apart from The Father and The Son. There is but One God, but in The Godhead, there are Three Persons. There are not three Gods, but in the life and being of the One God, there are three centers of consciousness, volition, and activity, and these are known to us as The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” - Dr. Dale (19th Century).

**Recommended YouTube video** – “The Christian Trinity explained in 3 minutes (Father, Spirit, Son) Christian God”

## NOTES

## SESSION 2



# THE DIVINE EXCHANGE

*But he was pierced for our  
transgressions, he was crushed for  
our iniquities; the punishment that  
brought us peace was on him, and  
by his wounds we are healed.*

***Isaiah 53:5***

The divine exchange took place at the cross of Calvary where Jesus, the Lamb of God, took our place and became sin for us that through Him, we might become the righteousness of God. The plan to reconcile man to God originated in the heart of a loving and merciful God before the foundation of the world.

**Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)** - <sup>4</sup> Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. <sup>5</sup> God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

**Revelation 13:8b (NKJV)** - The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

## I. THE NEED OF RECONCILIATION

Sin separated man from God. After the fall, man became unclean and was no longer able to stand before a Holy God. So how could this be fixed? How could man be reconciled to God? The only way this would be made possible was through Jesus Christ.

**Isaiah 59:2 (NKJV)** - But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

### A. The Holiness of God

1. God is absolutely Holy.

**Leviticus 19:2 (NKJV)** - Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God Am Holy.'

2. He cannot tolerate sin.

**Psalms 5:4-5 (NKJV)** - <sup>4</sup> For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness, nor shall evil dwell with You. <sup>5</sup> The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity.

3. Sin must be judged and punished.

**Isaiah 13:11a (NKJV)** - "I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity."

### B. The Divine Law

1. God's divine law was given to mankind as the standard to be followed. It's meant to protect man and bring order.

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2. Humans were created with a free will, but God's desire is that they choose to live within the boundaries of God's will. Anytime humans choose their own will above God's will, they break divine law. This is called sin.

**1 John 3:4 (NLT)** - *Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God.*

#### C. The Sinfulness of Man

The problem of mankind is not what he does but who he is inside, for man is sinful by nature. This sinful nature is in direct opposition to God's holiness.

**Romans 3:23 (NLT)** - *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.*

**Psalms 51:5 (NLT)** - *For I was born a sinner - yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.*

#### D. The Wrath of God

1. The wrath of God is simply the righteous anger of a Holy God against sin and happens when the holiness of God comes into conflict with the sinfulness of man.

**Romans 1:18 (NLT)** - *But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.*

**John 3:36 (NIV)** - *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.*

2. If sin goes unjudged then God's law, holiness, and justice are violated. Only as sin is dealt with, will God's character be vindicated, His throne established, the Law upheld, and God's government maintained.
3. Divine wrath is not always executed immediately because God is not only just, but He is also patient and merciful waiting for man to repent.

**Romans 2:4 (NLT)** - *Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?*

**James 2:13 (NIV)** - *Because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.*

## E. The Mercy of God

Divine wrath must be appeased in order to restore man's relationship with a Holy God. This could only be done because of His Mercy.

1. In the Old Testament, sins were forgiven by the sacrifice of innocent animals. This was done once a year on the Day of Atonement, but these sacrifices did not provide a permanent solution to the sin problem, just a temporary covering.

**Hebrews 10:3-4 (NKJV)** - <sup>3</sup> But in those sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

*Day of Atonement = Day of Covering = Yom Kippur*

2. The central issue is taking away sin permanently. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross made it as though sin had never happened. He did not simply cover sin but permanently took away sins and reconciled man to God.

**Hebrews 10:14 (NIV)** - *For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

3. In the New Testament, the original Greek language, replaced the word 'atonement', which means 'to cover' with the word 'reconciliation', which means to restore to divine favour and take away sin completely, describing the perfect and permanent solution for sin through the death of Jesus.

**Romans 5:9-10 (NKJV)** - <sup>9</sup> Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. <sup>10</sup> For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

4. The Old Testament Atonement was similar to making a minimum payment on a credit card bill – It did not resolve the problem and it did not clear the debt. The New Testament Reconciliation is like making a full payment on the bill and therefore erasing it completely. Jesus paid the price in full and made man debt free.

## NOTES



## NOTES

## II. WHAT JESUS DID FOR US ON THE CROSS

The core problem of the human race is called sin. The Bible also calls sin - iniquity, transgression and rebellion. In Hebrew, the term used is "awon". Jesus took our "awon" upon Himself hanging on the cross. And through His sacrifice, He provided for us everything we will ever need in time or eternity, whether spiritual, physical, financial, emotional or relational.

**2 Peter 1:3 (NLT)** - *By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.*

**Isaiah 52:13-53:6 (NKJV)** - **52** <sup>13</sup> Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. <sup>14</sup> Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men; <sup>15</sup> So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.

**53** <sup>1</sup> Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? <sup>2</sup> For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. <sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. <sup>4</sup> Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

## III. THE DIVINE EXCHANGE

At the cross an exchange took place. He offered Himself up, by dying on the cross, becoming sin in our place and breaking the curse that was upon us. At that moment, divine exchange took place that we might be restored to God's original plan. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice.

- A. Jesus was made a curse that we might receive the blessing of Abraham. (List of blessings and curses is found in Deuteronomy 28)

**Galatians 3: 13-14 (NKJV)** - <sup>13</sup> 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") <sup>14</sup> that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

- B. Jesus was punished that we might be forgiven. (As read above in Isaiah)

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

- C. Jesus was wounded that we might be healed physically and emotionally. (As read above in Isaiah)

**Matthew 8: 16-17 (NKJV)** - <sup>16</sup> When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, <sup>17</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses."

- D. Jesus was made sin with our sinfulness that we might be made righteous with His righteousness. (As read in Isaiah)

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

- E. Jesus died our death that we might share His life.

**Romans 6:6-11 (NKJV)** - <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, <sup>9</sup> knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. <sup>10</sup> For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. <sup>11</sup> Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- F. Jesus endured our poverty that we might share His abundance. On the cross, He was hungry, thirsty, naked and in need of all things fulfilling this curse that was upon us.

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**2 Corinthians 8:9 (NKJV)** - *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.*

G. Jesus bore our shame that we might share His glory. (As read in Isaiah)

**Hebrews 2:10 (NKJV)** - *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

**Psalms 69:7 (NKJV)** - *Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face.*

H. Jesus endured our rejection, being rejected by men and the Father, that we might enjoy His acceptance. (As read in Isaiah)

**Matthew 27: 45-46 (NLT)** - <sup>45</sup>At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. <sup>46</sup>At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

**Ephesians 1:3-6 (NKJV)** - <sup>3</sup>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, <sup>4</sup>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, <sup>5</sup>having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

## CONCLUSION

Christ is the ultimate and only solution to sin. His deity makes Him the only one that can stand between God and man. The Father loved the world so much that He gave His best to an undeserving people. The Son loved mankind so much that He willingly laid down His life for an unworthy world. Man's response to God's greatest expression of love should be a life of holiness and obedience.

**John 3:16 (NKJV)** - *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

**John 10:18 (NLT)** - No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

"All the evil due, by justice, to come to us came on Jesus, so that all the good due to Jesus, earned by His sinless obedience, might be made available to us." - Derek Prince

**NOTES**

## SESSION 3



# THE HOLY SPIRIT

*But when the Father sends the Spirit of Holiness, the One like me who sets you free, he will teach you all things in my name. And he will inspire you to remember every word that I've told you.*

***John 14:26 TPT***

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead, co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existent with the Father and the Son. You can see Him moving before the foundation of the world. Since the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ, His ministry is to reveal the Father and the Son to the believer and to convict man of sin, righteousness and judgement. This is why the present era is known as the age of the Holy Spirit. He has been active throughout the ages in bringing about the will of God on the Earth and it is His will to do that in the life of the believer too.

**Genesis 1:1-2 (NIV)** - *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.*

**John 16:8 (NKJV)** - *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

## I. THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED AS A PERSON

A. The word "Spirit" (Greek = PNEUMA) means breath or wind. It symbolizes the life-giving breath of God or His regenerating power. It also underscores the fact that the Holy Spirit is invisible as a person, yet the effect of His work can be seen.

B. Throughout the bible, the Holy Spirit is referred to with personal pronouns as "He", "Himself", and "Him".

**John 14:15-16 (NKJV)** – <sup>15</sup> *If you love Me, keep My commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.*

C. The Holy Spirit is spoken of as having personal qualities.

1. He has a mind.

**Romans 8:27 (NKJV)** - *Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

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2. He has a will.

**1 Co 12:11 (NKJV)** - *But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*

3. He has emotions.

- The Holy Spirit can be grieved.

**Ephesians 4:30 (NIV)** - *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

- The Holy Spirit possesses all the fruit of the Spirit Himself which includes many emotions.

**Galatians 5:22-23a (NKJV)** - <sup>22</sup> *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control.*

D. The Holy Spirit performs personal acts. Here are some of them.

1. He empowers the believer.

**Acts 1:8a (NKJV)** - *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.*

2. He points to Jesus.

**John 15:26 (NIV)** - *When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—He will testify about me.*

3. He teaches the believer.

**John 14:26 (NIV)** - *But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

4. He convicts men.

**John 16:8 (NKJV)** - *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*

5. He guides the believer into all truth.

**John 16:13 (NKJV)** - *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

6. He gives spiritual gifts.

**1 Corinthians 12:7, 11 (NLT)** - <sup>7</sup> A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.  
<sup>11</sup> It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

## II. THE HOLY SPIRIT OUGHT TO BE REVERED

- A. Do not blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 12:31 (NKJV)** - Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

- B. Do not lie to the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 5:3 (NIV)** - Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"

- C. Do not insult the Holy Spirit.

**Hebrews 10:29 (NIV)** - How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?

## III. THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT (Material covered in GT01)

- A. Scripture tells us that there is a separate and distinct experience from salvation and water baptism called the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 11:16 (NKJV)** - Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, "John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

- B. There is a difference between being born of the Spirit and being baptized in the Spirit. When a person is born again, the Holy Spirit dwells within him. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the overflowing of the Spirit in the believer's life. It allows the believer to operate in the gifts of the Spirit and to experience a greater measure of His manifested power and leading in their lives.

**Acts 8:29 (NLT)** - The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage."

### NOTES



## NOTES

C. The Bible shows us five different events where people were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

1. The 120 disciples on the Day of Pentecost – This event took place in the upper room fulfilling the promise that Jesus made to them.

**Luke 24:49 (NLT)** - *And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.*

**Acts 2:1-4 (NLT)** - <sup>1</sup>On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. <sup>4</sup>And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

2. The Samaritans – Peter and John were sent to Samaria to introduce the baptism in the Holy Spirit to the new believers.

**Acts 8:14-17 (NLT)** - <sup>14</sup>When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God's message, they sent Peter and John there. <sup>15</sup>As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>16</sup>The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.

3. The conversion of Saul (Paul) – Saul met the Lord on the road to Damascus and was converted. God revealed this to Ananias and instructed him to lay hands on Saul that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 9:17 (NLT)** - *So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."*

4. The household of Cornelius – Peter was preaching the gospel to Cornelius and his household when the Holy Spirit fell upon them.

**Acts 10:44 (NLT)** - Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message.

5. The Ephesians – God used Paul in Ephesus to speak to twelve men about Christ. They all received Christ and were filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Acts 19:6-7 (NLT)** - <sup>6</sup> Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. <sup>7</sup> There were about twelve men in all.

- D. The signs of the baptism in the Holy Spirit seen on the believer at the moment He fell upon them.

1. They become powerful witnesses for Jesus.

**Acts 1:8 (NIV)** - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

2. They spoke the Word of God with boldness.

**Acts 4:31 (NKJV)** - 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.

3. They prophesied.

**Acts 19:6 (NKJV)** - And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

4. They spoke with other tongues.

**Acts 2:4 (NKJV)** - And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- E. How to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

1. You must be born again as the Holy Spirit is a gift from the Father to the believer.

**Acts 1:4 (NIV)** - On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about."

## NOTES

## NOTES

2. Ask the Father with a sincere heart and receive it by faith.

**Luke 11:13 (NKJV)** - *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!*

**Galatians 3:2 (NIV)** - *I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?*

3. You can receive it on your own or by having another believer who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit lay hands on you.

**Acts 10:44 (NLT)** - *Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message.*

**Acts 8:17 (NLT)** - *Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

- F. Other things you need to know about the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

1. Know that Jesus is the one who baptizes the believer with the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 3:11 (NIV)** - *I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

2. Trust the Lord as every gift from God is good and perfect.

**James 1:17 (NIV)** - *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

3. Worship God and magnify the Name of Jesus. An atmosphere of worship invites God's presence.

**Psalms 22:3 (NLT)** - *Yet You are holy enthroned on the praises of Israel.*

4. Seek the Lord not just the experience.

5. Pursue speaking in tongues as this is one of the signs that follows the believer. This is a powerful gift from God that will not only help you build up your inner man but will also allow you to talk directly to God without any outside interference. Do this as often as you can.

**Mark 16:17 (NKJV)** - *And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues.*

**1 Corinthians 14:4a (NKJV)** - *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.*

**1 Corinthians 14:2 (NKJV)** - *For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*

**1 Corinthians 14:18 (NKJV)** - *I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all.*

## CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit is God Himself and He chooses to live inside of us. This is not something we should take lightly. Because He lives in us, we are able to live the godly lives that God intended for us to live displaying who He is to those around us.

**Recommended reading** – “*The Holy Spirit in You*” by Dennis and Rita Bennett

## NOTES

# SESSION 4



# HOLINESS

*The path of the righteous is like  
the morning sun, shining ever  
brighter till the full light of day.*

***Proverbs 4:18***

The amazing truth of the Gospel is that God takes broken sinners, cleanses them of their sins, turns them into new creations, and accepts them as sons and daughters. In Lesson 2, we learned about the divine exchange that took place on the cross of Calvary, where Jesus took away our sins so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him. The Father does not only want to give us the righteousness of Christ, but also to conform us to His image. What Jesus did made it possible for us to be holy before the Holy God. Today we are going to learn how to continue living holy lives with the help of the Holy Spirit.

## I. BEING RIGHT BEFORE A HOLY GOD

### A. What is righteousness?

Many believe that righteousness is moral perfection or a standard that everyone must live up to. However, the Bible says that righteousness is living up to the terms of a relationship.

1. In a wedding, the vows the bride and groom make to each other are the terms of the relationship. They promise to stay faithful to one another for better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health until death parts them.
2. A husband or a wife is righteous with their spouse in the marriage relationship as long as they keep the vows they promised each other.
3. In Malachi, God is very displeased with the Israelite husbands because they were being unfaithful to their wives and therefore not living up to the terms and conditions of the promise they made to them on their wedding day.

**Malachi 2:14 (NLT)** - You cry out, "Why doesn't the Lord accept my worship?" I'll tell you why! Because the Lord witnessed the vows you and your wife made when you were young. But you have been unfaithful to her, though she remained your faithful partner, the wife of your marriage vows.

### NOTES

## NOTES

## B. What is being righteous with God?

Being righteous with God is being in right relationship with Him and therefore fulfilling the terms that He has established for the relationship.

**Leviticus 19:2 (NKJV)** - *Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.*

**Matthew 5:48 (NKJV)** - *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

**Mark 12:30-31 (NKJV)** - <sup>30</sup> *'And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'* This is the first commandment. <sup>31</sup> *And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.*

## C. How can anyone fulfill the terms of the relationship and stand right before a Holy God?

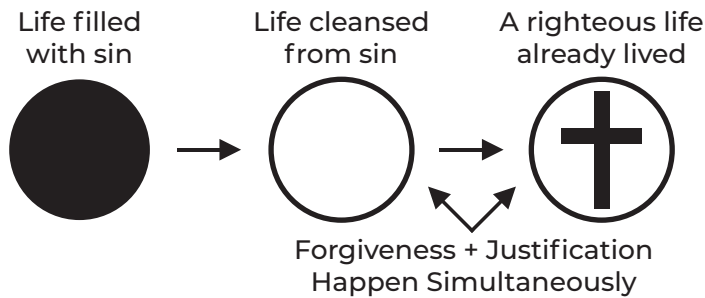
1. We were born sinners and have fallen short of God's expectations. Therefore, we are not able to live up to the terms of the relationship with God on our own. Good works and good moral standards will not make us right with God because of the state in which we were born.

**Psalms 51:5 (NLT)** - *For I was born a sinner - yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.*

**Romans 3:23 (NKJV)** - *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

2. The only way to stand right before God is by faith in Jesus Christ and by accepting His sacrifice on the cross. There is no other way and there is nothing we can add to our faith to obtain right relationship with the Lord. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are justified and therefore we are made righteous. Justification means not only that our sins have been forgiven but also that we have been credited with Jesus' perfect life.

**Galatians 2:16 (NKJV)** - *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.*



## NOTES

### D. Why did God choose faith?

Faith is the one attitude of heart that is the exact opposite of depending on self. God chose faith so that no one could boast and take the credit.

**Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)** - <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

## II. LIVING RIGHT BEFORE A HOLY GOD

### A. What is holiness?

The Bible definition of holiness is literally to be set apart for God. Holiness is the continuing work of God and man that makes us more Christ-like, freer from the bondage of sin and able to live the life that God has designed for us.

**Philippians 2:12b (NLT)** - Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear.

**1 Peter 2:1-3 (NLT)** - <sup>1</sup> So get rid of all evil behavior. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. <sup>2</sup> Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, <sup>3</sup> now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.

**Romans 6:6-7 (NKJV)** - <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin.

### B. How can we walk in Holiness?

At salvation we begin to walk in holiness. Now to continue to walk in holiness, we must allow the Holy Spirit to transform us into becoming more like Jesus. This transformation process is called sanctification.



## NOTES

**2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV)** - But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

**2 Thessalonians 2:13b (NKJV)** - Because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

C. What are some practical ways that will help us in our sanctification process?

1. Put God first.

In life, we make time for things that are important to us – How important is God for you? If we say we love God, then we should prioritize Him. Don't give Him the leftovers but give God the best of your time, talents and treasure and you will experience His abundant blessings over you.

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

2. Develop godly disciplines.

- Maintain regular prayer times – train yourself to do this – it won't be easy at first but once you create this habit you won't want to let go of it.

**1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NLT)** - Never stop praying.

**1 Chronicles 16:11 (NIV)** - Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

**Matthew 6:6 (NLT)** - When you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

- Read the Bible daily and meditate on it. It's God's voice speaking to His children. If you know His Word you know His will and will be equipped to face any situation in life and succeed.

**Joshua 1:8 (NIV)** - Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)** - <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. <sup>17</sup> God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

3. Depend on the Holy Spirit.  
Listen to His lead – He will guide you in all truth and show you things to come.

**John 14:26 (NKJV)** - But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

**John 16:13 (NIV)** - But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

4. Have a repentant heart at all times.  
Don't carry sin around with you. As soon as the Holy Spirit convicts you of any sin – Confess it and repent! And show with your actions that you have turned away from sin so that God can bless you.

**Acts 3:19 (NIV)** - Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

**Proverbs 28:13 (NIV)** - Whoever conceals their sins not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

**Matthew 3:8 (NLT)** - Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.

5. Release forgiveness towards those who offend you.  
Don't try to reason if they deserve to be forgiven – because the moment you hold unforgiveness towards someone – the Lord is not forgiving you either – so let go of any offense for your own sake.

**Luke 17:3-4 (NKJV)** - <sup>3</sup> If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

## NOTES

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**Mark 11:25 (NIV)** - And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

6. Change your thinking with the Word of God. Don't let a worldly mindset control you but allow God's Word to transform your mind so that you can experience His perfect will for your life.

**Romans 12:2 (NLT)** - Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

7. Stay away from things that tempt you. Avoid putting yourself in situations where temptation is inevitable - but when you are tempted – submit your thoughts to Christ and resist the enemy - for Jesus has provided you with everything you need in order to overcome those areas of struggle.

**James 4:7 (NLT)** - So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)** - No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

## CONCLUSION

Live a victorious life as a righteous child of God. Believe that God created you with a purpose and wants to have a relationship with you. He has given you the gift of righteousness through Jesus and seated you in heavenly places with Him. Remember that you can approach God with confidence knowing that He accepts you. And don't forget that trials and hardships are not signs of God's disapproval, but are opportunities to have Christ-like character developed in you.

**Romans 5:17 (NLT)** - For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

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

**Hebrews 10:22 (NIV)** - Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

**Romans 5:3-5 (NLT)** - <sup>3</sup> We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. <sup>4</sup> And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. <sup>5</sup> And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

## NOTES

## SESSION 5



# FORGIVENESS

*For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

**Matthew 6:14-15**

It is impossible to go through life without experiencing hurts, disappointments and feeling offended by others. Our responses to these, often lead to unforgiveness and sometimes even bitterness. As people of God, we have been called to a higher walk. Jesus challenges us to love our enemies, even those who hate and plot evil against us. Forgiveness is never easy; however, God always gives us the ability to live according to His Word and example.

## I. WHAT IS UNFORGIVENESS OR OFFENSE?

- A. The Greek word for 'offense' is 'skandalon' – it literally means the part of a trap to which the bait was attached. In the New Testament, this term is used to describe an entrapment, or a tool used by the devil to cause offense and bring people into captivity.

**2 Timothy 2:24-26 (NLT)** - <sup>24</sup> A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. <sup>25</sup> Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth. <sup>26</sup> Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants.

- B. There are two categories of offended people and many of them are unaware of their captivity.
1. Those who have been treated unfairly.
  2. Those who believe they have been treated unfairly. In this case, usually wrong conclusions are drawn from inaccurate information or distorted interpretation of information.

## II. HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE UNFORGIVENESS IN MY HEART?

Below are some signs of unforgiveness; but remember that a person struggling with unforgiveness may not necessarily present all the signs in their lives at once.

### NOTES

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- A. You have a compulsion to tell others what has been done to you.

**Matthew 12:34b (NLT)** - *For whatever is in your heart determines what you say.*

- B. You still resent what someone said or did even after they have asked for forgiveness.

- C. You cannot forget what they did, or the harm done to you or your loved ones. Your thoughts are constantly bombarded with instant replays.

**Philippians 3:13 (NLT)** - *No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead.*

- D. You avoid this person in every way you can and when in their presence you feel uncomfortable.

### III. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR ME TO FORGIVE THOSE WHO OFFEND ME?

- A. Jesus has forgiven us our unpayable debt and given us salvation as a gift. We may have been treated badly by someone else, but it doesn't begin to compare with our transgressions against God.

**Matthew 18:23-34 (NLT)** - <sup>23</sup> "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. <sup>24</sup> In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars, <sup>25</sup> He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. <sup>26</sup> "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' <sup>27</sup> Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. <sup>28</sup> "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. <sup>29</sup> "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded. <sup>30</sup> But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full. <sup>31</sup> "When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. <sup>32</sup> Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with

me. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' <sup>34</sup> Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

- B. The Bible says that if we don't forgive those who offend us, God won't forgive us either.

**Mathew 6:14-15 (NLT)** - <sup>14</sup> "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

- C. Jesus instructs us to forgive those who offend us '70 times 7' – what He really means by this is that we must forgive others without counting how many times they have offended us.

**Matthew 18: 21-22 (NLT)** - <sup>21</sup> Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" <sup>22</sup> "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"

**Luke 23:34a (KJV)** Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

- D. When we forgive someone – we demonstrate love towards them, making a way for us to lead them to Jesus. We shouldn't waste this opportunity.

#### IV. WHAT HAPPENS IF I STAY IN THE TRAP OF OFFENSE?

- A. If the offense is not dealt with - it will lead to resentment - which will eventually produce a root of bitterness - causing not only our lives to be poisoned but also the lives of those around us.

**Hebrews 12:14 -15 (NLT)** - <sup>14</sup> Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. <sup>15</sup> Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.

1. Resentment is like a fire – it needs fuel to continue to exist – we fuel resentment in our souls when we feed our thoughts with negative and judgemental feelings toward others.

#### NOTES



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2. Bitterness is like a root – it needs to be fed and watered to continue to grow – it happens when we harbor resentment, rehearse hurts, and seek to justify our unforgiveness.

B. Bitterness can cause us physical, social, and mental breakdown.

C. Satan's main goal, in trapping us with offense, is to cause our fellowship with God to be broken – Since feeling offended is a sin – it will bring separation between us and God, robbing us from His joy, peace and love.

***Ephesians 4:27 (AMP)*** - *And do not give the devil an opportunity to lead you into sin by holding a grudge, or nurturing anger, or harboring resentment, or cultivating bitterness.*

## **V. HOW CAN I OVERCOME UNFORGIVENESS AND BITTERNESS?**

A. First, we need to learn what forgiveness is:

1. Forgiveness is a choice – It is a decision we make and not a feeling. Since God requires us to forgive, it is something we are totally capable of doing. However, forgiveness can be difficult for us because it pulls against our sense of justice. We want revenge for the offense we suffered but only God can deal out just and fair punishment, we are unable.
2. Forgiveness is costly – When we forgive, we are agreeing to live with the consequences of another person's sin. We pay the price of the evil we forgave. But the reality is that we are going to live with those consequences whether we want to or not. Our only choice is whether we will do so in the trap of unforgiveness or the freedom of forgiveness.

3. Forgiveness is not forgetting – People who try to forget find they cannot. God says He will remember our sins no more (Hebrews 10:17), but God being omniscient, cannot forget. 'Remember our sins no more.' means that God will never use the past against us. Forgetting may be the result of forgiveness but it's never the means. When we are able to truly forgive someone, even though we won't forget what they did to us, remembering it won't hurt anymore. Bringing up the past against others, is a sign we haven't forgiven them.
- B. Second, we need to remember that the number one way the enemy keeps a person in an offended state is by keeping the offense hidden under pride. Those who know it is wrong to be offended may deny being offended because of pride. With time, pride will harden our heart and dim the eye of our understanding.
- C. Third, we need to recognize we have been holding unforgiveness in our hearts and that we need to release forgiveness to those who offended us. Don't waste any more time.
  1. Confess your sin of unforgiveness to God and if necessary, to the person whom you have resented.
  2. Repent of all unforgiveness, resentment and bitterness.
  3. Ask for their forgiveness by being specific, if possible, and emphasizing your sinful attitude and behavior.
  4. Release forgiveness to the person who has offended you.
  5. Resist unforgiveness and don't allow those negative feelings to take a hold of you again. And the way to do this is by forgiving the offender every time it hurts to think about what they did to you.
  6. Pray for them every time your thoughts accuse them of their past. Ask God to help you see them the way He sees them. This will help you feel free very soon.

**NOTES**

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7. Fill your mind with good thoughts.

**Philippians 4:8 (NKJV)** - Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

## CONCLUSION

When we filter everything through past hurts, we will find it impossible to truly believe God and His purposes for us. Forgiveness is key to living a life of freedom as Satan cannot keep you in his trap. Next time you feel offended, act fast on forgiving and do not give the devil a chance. Let's allow God to use us as vessels of honour and take this aspect of forgiveness to the next level. Now, if you know someone is offended with you, help this person out by approaching them and apologizing. This will be pleasing to God and it has the potential to bring this person out of Satan's trap.

**Matthew 5:23-24 (AMP)** - <sup>23</sup> So if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and while there you remember that your brother has something [such as a grievance or legitimate complaint] against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your offering there at the altar and go. First make peace with your brother, and then come and present your offering.

**Recommended reading** – “The Bait of Satan” by John Bevere



## SESSION 6



# LAYING ON OF HANDS

*<sup>17</sup> And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; <sup>18</sup> They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

**Mark 16:17-18**

The doctrine of “laying on of hands” is another tremendous truth that the Spirit of God is restoring to the church. In the book of Hebrews, we see “laying on of hands” listed as the fourth of the elementary or foundational teachings about Christ. This practice is intended for people and not things and it is defined as the placing of a person’s hand on the body of another to transfer or confer a spiritual blessing/gift or to commit the person to a specific spiritual purpose.

**Hebrews 6:2 (NLT)** - *So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely, we don’t need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. 2 You don’t need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

## I. THE IMPORTANCE OF HANDS

*“In the Old Testament, hands were thought of as an extension of the person himself. To give someone your hand meant to give yourself in commitment. To lay hands upon someone was to transfer what you were to the one on which you laid your hand.” – Frank Damazio.*

## II. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

- A. To confer blessing – It was common in Bible times that someone in authority like a father or grandfather would lay hands on his children or grandchildren to speak a blessing that would go with them for life. We see Jesus laying hands on the children’s heads and blessing them. This is something parents should do more often in their homes – to lay hands on their children’s heads and speak words of life over them – words that bless them and propel them into a successful future.

**Genesis 48: 13- 16 (NLT)** - <sup>13</sup> *Then he positioned the boys in front of Jacob. With his right hand he directed Ephraim toward Jacob’s left hand, and with his left hand he put Manasseh at Jacob’s right hand. 14 But Jacob crossed his arms as he reached out to lay his hands on the boys’ heads. He put his right hand on the head of Ephraim, though he was the younger boy, and his left hand on the*

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head of Manasseh, though he was the firstborn.<sup>15</sup> Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my grandfather Abraham and my father, Isaac, walked - the God who has been my shepherd all my life, to this very day,<sup>16</sup> the Angel who has redeemed me from all harm - may he bless these boys. May they preserve my name and the names of Abraham and Isaac. And may their descendants multiply greatly throughout the earth."

**Mark 10:16 (NLT)** - Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

- B. To heal the sick – The Bible shows us many times where Jesus laid hands on the sick and they recovered. The great commission states that this is one of the signs that would follow those who believe in Him. As followers of Jesus, He wants us to lay hands on the sick believing for their healing. This often opens a door for the Gospel to be preached.

1. Jesus heals the sick.

**Luke 4:40 (NKJV)** - When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.

2. Jesus commissions His followers to heal the sick.

**Mark 16:15-18 (NKJV)** - <sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. <sup>16</sup> He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.<sup>17</sup> And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; <sup>18</sup> 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."

3. Paul, a follower of Jesus, heals the sick.

**Acts 28:8-9 (NKJV)** - <sup>8</sup> And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. <sup>9</sup> So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed.

C. To ordain a person into the ministry – The practice of laying hands on the person being ordained is a confirming of one’s call for the appointed position. It usually takes place during an ordination ceremony. During the ordination the person is consecrated for the ministry, transferring of authority takes place, sometimes gifts are imparted, but most importantly, it gives public recognition to God’s choice of leadership.

1. God instructs Moses regarding setting up Joshua as his replacement.

**Numbers 27:18-21 (NASB)** - <sup>18</sup> So the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; <sup>19</sup> and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. <sup>20</sup> And you shall put some of your authority on him, so that all the congregation of the sons of Israel will obey him. <sup>21</sup> Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the Lord. At his command they shall go out, and at his command they shall come in, both he and all the sons of Israel with him, all the congregation.”

2. Moses follows God’s instructions for the ordination ceremony.

**Numbers 27:22-23 (NASB)** - <sup>22</sup> Then Moses did just as the Lord commanded him; he took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. <sup>23</sup> Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.

3. Moses imparted to Joshua the gift of wisdom which was needed for leadership.

**Deuteronomy 34:9 (NASB)** - Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

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- D. To commission a person to complete a specific task – In this case, the laying on of hands is to commit the person to God’s care and Divine grace that they might be able to do that which the Holy Spirit has called them to do. Before sending out a person to complete the particular work, those who are in authority may seek first the direction of the Holy Spirit through prayer and fasting until they receive a confirmation from God about the person in which to send.

**Acts 13:2-3 (NLT)** - <sup>2</sup> One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup> So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way.

- E. To impart spiritual gifts – The Bible tells us that Timothy received a spiritual gift when Paul laid hands on him and also when the elders of the church laid their hands on him. The passages do not state if these events took place at the same time or not, but one thing we are sure of is that he received a spiritual gift when they laid hands on him.

**2 Timothy 1: 6 (NLT)** - This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you.

**1 Timothy 4:14 (NLT)** - Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you.

This impartation of spiritual gifts can happen in two ways:

1. When the church eldership ministers over those who belong to the local church. Often this is accompanied by words of knowledge and/or prophecy.
2. When the presbytery lays hands on a person who is being ordained as pastors or sent out as missionary. The term “presbytery” is used to refer to a gathering of two or more elders with recognized prophetic ministry of laying on of hands.

- F. To help in the Baptism in the Holy Spirit –  
The book of Acts describes three instances (Acts 8:16-17, 9:17, 19:5-6) where believers were baptized in the Holy Spirit when people who had already received the Holy Spirit laid hands on them. Therefore, any disciple of Jesus, who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit, may lay hands on those seeking to be baptized. Keep in mind that Jesus is the One baptizing in the Holy Spirit and not the one who is laying hands on the person being baptized.

**Acts 9:10-17 (NLT)** - <sup>10</sup> Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, "Ananias!" – "Yes, Lord!" he replied. <sup>11</sup> The Lord said, "Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now. <sup>12</sup> I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again." <sup>13</sup> "But Lord," exclaimed Ananias, "I've heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! <sup>14</sup> And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name." <sup>15</sup> But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. <sup>16</sup> And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake." <sup>17</sup> So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

## CONCLUSION

"Laying on of hands" is a biblical doctrine encouraged throughout the New Testament. We should not dismiss its importance and effect. Now that we better understand this principle, there is no need to feel awkward about it, so let's welcome it and be open to practice it with our families and friends knowing that if we apply biblical methods to our lives, we will reap biblical results.

**Recommended reading** – "The Blessing" by Gary Smalley

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# SESSION 7



# GOD'S PROVISION

*And my God will meet all your  
needs according to the riches of  
his glory in Christ Jesus.  
**Philippians 4:19***

How we handle our finances is often a reflection of our relationship and commitment to God. As we obey the principles of God's Word, He does not withhold His blessings from us, but on the contrary He blesses us abundantly. The devil sometimes is able to bring fear, guilt, despair and division through attacks on our finances, many times, due to our lack of knowledge in how God operates in this area. Some have even wandered from their faith because of misconceptions and wrong attitudes toward money. This lesson will help you defuse wrong ideas about God's desire to prosper you, as you understand and learn to simply walk according to His principles.

## I. KNOW THAT GOD WANTS TO PROSPER YOU FINANCIALLY

- A. It is God's desire to prosper you and make you succeed in life.

**Joshua 1:8 (NLT)** - *Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.*

- B. As you obey God's Word and let Him be your source, His blessings can flow down to you.

**1 Chronicles 29:11-14 (NLT)** - <sup>11</sup> Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things. <sup>12</sup> Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength. <sup>13</sup> "O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name!" <sup>14</sup> But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us!

- C. God's blessing of prosperity is under both the old and the new covenant and therefore is meant for you to enjoy today.

**Deuteronomy 28:1-2 (NLT)** - <sup>1</sup> If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully keep all his commands that I am giving you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the world. <sup>2</sup> You will experience all these blessings if you obey the Lord your God.

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**Philippians 4:19 (NLT)** - *And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.*

- D. The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil and not money itself. Being wealthy is not a sin. The Bible shows us many men like Abraham (Genesis 13:2), Isaac (Genesis 26:13-14), Jacob (Genesis 30:43) and David (1 Chronicles 29:28) who were tremendously blessed in their finances as they walked according to God's will. In requiring Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, God was teaching him that you can not love the provision more than the provider (Genesis 22:2-18).

**1 Timothy 6:10 (NIV)** - *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

**Genesis 26:13-14 (NIV)** - <sup>13</sup> *The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy.* <sup>14</sup> *He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.*

## II. OBEDIENCE IS THE KEY TO WALKING IN GOD'S PROVISION

- A. Some people are under the impression that just because they have a relationship with God, they should prosper and succeed in everything they do, but the truth is that prosperity and success can only happen to those who choose to walk in obedience to God's Word (Joshua 1:8).
- B. God watches over His Word and His purposes. His Word contains spiritual laws that will lead us into victory as long as we are careful to obey them. When Joshua became Israel's leader, he learned this biblical principle very early in his journey and that led him to victory.

**Joshua 5:13-15 (NIV)** - <sup>13</sup> *Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"* <sup>14</sup> *"Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."* Then Joshua fell face down to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" <sup>15</sup> *The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.*

- C. God doesn't bail us out of difficult situations just because we are Christians. He intervenes on our behalf and turns our difficulties into victories when we obey His Word.

### III. THE DIVINE PRINCIPLES OF GIVING

- A. The divine principles of giving are found throughout the Bible under the principle of sowing and reaping. If we walk in them, we will reap blessings, but if we violate them, we will bring upon ourselves the penalties associated with them.

**Galatians 6:7 (NIV)** - *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

- B. The first time the principle of giving is found in the Bible is in the book of Genesis. In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were given a job – they were supposed to cultivate the garden and subdue the earth. As fruit of their labour, they could eat freely from any tree of the garden with the exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Even though they had to tend the tree, they could not eat from it. Its fruit was God's, and it represented the giving of their time, labour and harvest to the Lord. They were blessed while they obeyed God's order to them but were cursed the moment they ate what was not theirs but God's.

**Genesis 2:15-17 (NLT)** - <sup>15</sup> *The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.* <sup>16</sup> *But the Lord God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden" <sup>17</sup> except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.*

- C. The Bible teaches on giving financially to the Lord through tithes and offerings.

**Tithe** - the tenth part of goods or income paid for the support of the church.

**Offering** - something offered in worship or devotion; a gift.

**Malachi 3:7-10 (NKJV)** - <sup>7</sup> *Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the Lord of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?' <sup>8</sup> "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, For you have*

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*robbed Me, Even this whole nation. <sup>10</sup> 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.*

- D. Tithing is seen in the Bible in many different places and one very important time to mention is when Abraham tithed to Melchizedek. The scriptures say that Abraham is the father of our faith and therefore he represents both Jews and Gentiles. Melchizedek, on the other hand, represents Jesus as the Bible describes him as King of Righteousness, king of Peace and a priest with no recorded genealogy. So, this story is a picture of the believer tithing to Jesus Christ. (Genesis 14:17-20, Hebrews 7:1-10)

- E. Another principle the Bible teaches on giving is to give first to God. This principle is about putting God in first place above anything else. It's about giving Him from the first of our increase and not from the leftover and it's called the "Principle of Firstfruits".

**Proverbs 3:9-10 (NKJV)** - <sup>9</sup> Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; <sup>10</sup> So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

This principle is seen in effect throughout the Bible. When it was obeyed, blessings followed, but when broken, destruction came. Here are some examples:

1. Cain and Abel

**Genesis 4:1-7 (NKJV)** - <sup>4</sup> Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord." <sup>2</sup> Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup> And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. <sup>6</sup> So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup> If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."



## 2. Joshua and the Israelites

**Joshua 6:16-19 (NKJV)** - <sup>16</sup> And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!" <sup>17</sup> Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. <sup>18</sup> And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. <sup>19</sup> But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the Lord; they shall come into the treasury of the Lord."

**Joshua 7:1, 21-26 (NKJV)** - <sup>1</sup> But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel.

<sup>21</sup> When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it." <sup>22</sup> So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. <sup>23</sup> And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. <sup>24</sup> Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup> And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. <sup>26</sup> Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

- F. When giving, the Lord expects us to be generous and to give with joy. One of our VIVA core values is "Generosity is our privilege". We give because He first gave us and no matter how much we give Him, it could never even come close to how much He has given us.

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**2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NKJV)** - <sup>6</sup> But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. <sup>7</sup> So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. <sup>8</sup> 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.

**Luke 6:38 (NKJV)** - 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."

#### IV. THE PRINCIPLE OF STEWARDSHIP

- A. A steward is a person in charge of managing someone else's property. The Bible calls us stewards who will give account to God one day on how we manage what belongs to Him. Everything we have is the Lord's and therefore we turn over to him – our time, our abilities and our material possessions.

**Psalms 24:1 (NLT)** - The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.

- B. A steward has everything but owns nothing. He has the possession of the things he manages but God is the one in control of them.
- C. A steward trusts God to be the source of his life and understands that God has the ability to manage His possessions without the steward's help.
- D. A steward must be faithful to the owner's orders. So obeying God's Word and instructions is crucial. One cannot have Bible promises if he doesn't live according to Bible principles.

**1 Corinthians 4:2 (NKJV)** - Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

**Luke 16:10-12 (NLT)** - <sup>10</sup> "If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. <sup>11</sup> And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? <sup>12</sup> And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?"

- E. A steward's goal is to use his time, abilities and material possessions to advance the Kingdom of God on the Earth. There is no greater return on investment than investing in God's Kingdom.

**Proverbs 11:24-25 (NLT)** - <sup>24</sup> Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything. <sup>25</sup> The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.

## CONCLUSION

To be a godly steward you need to be responsible for what you have. The principle of sowing and reaping is showing us that we can step into something way greater than anything we have experienced in the past. To live in this realm, we must trust the fact that God is true to His Word, and if He said He will bless us, when we walk according to His principles, then He will. Always remember that we cannot outgive God. If we choose to put Him first in our finances, He will always surpass any of our expectations.

*"We have one life, one moment to serve and an eternity to marvel at the opportunity we were given. What we do in life echoes for all eternity."*  
– Bobbie Houston

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**LET'S ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS***(Excerpts from Biblical Economics by John Avanzini)***1. Are Tithes and Offerings the same?**

- A. The Tithe is a specified percentage (10%) of a person's income.  
The Offering is a discretionary amount.
- B. The Tithe is a trust relationship = obedience.  
Example: I have a property. I told you to set aside 10% (\$10 of every \$100) of what you made on the property. The other \$90 is yours to live on as long as you continue faithfully to set aside the 10% to my account.  
The Offering is a gift relationship = Love and gratitude. Gifts come not from command, but from the heart of the giver.
- C. The Tithe is a key. (Malachi 3:10)  
The Offering is a seed. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)

**2. Should I tithe on my Net or Gross Income?**

- A. Proverbs 3:9-10
- B. Matthew 22:17 – God or Caesar?
  - Will you put Caesar first by tithing after taxes, or will you put God first by tithing before taxes?
  - When you put the tithe first, you will find that your money goes farther than the original 100% would have. Why? Because the curse is gone and the Lord is rebuking the devourer.

**3. Is it right for me to give my tithe to the poor or to some other organization?**

- A. Where we present our tithe to God is not at our discretion.
- B. Malachi 3:10 says that ALL tithe goes to the house of the Lord. We should not be using God's tithe for personal trips to the mission field or blankets to the homeless.
- C. Why to the storehouse? The verse says; "So that there may be food in my house". God is not hungry but the priests who serve Him should not go hungry. (Numbers 18: 26-32)

**4. Is it right to pay the tithe first when I have bills to pay?**

A. Proverbs 3:9

B. Matthew 22:21

- “We are to give to the power company the things which belong to the power company not the things which belong to God.”
- The Tithe is not your money to pay your bills. It is God's!

**5. Should I tithe on gifts of money?**

Yes, you should tithe on your increase, but if you are given an actual gift of an item, you don't need to tithe on that.

**6. Should the wife tithe if her husband says no?**

No, if the husband does not want the wife to tithe, she should obey her husband. However, she could tell him she would like to tithe on her salary only. Many husbands are okay with that.

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# SESSION 8



# ETERNAL STATES

*Just as people are destined  
to die once, and after that  
to face judgment.  
Hebrews 9:27*

The teaching of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgements are listed among the foundational building blocks of Christianity (Hebrews 6:1-2). The doctrine of eternal states was actually one of the most preached messages of the disciples (Acts 4:2,33; 17:31-32; 23:6). This powerful and serious truth about eternity will strengthen our faith and cause us to walk in the fear of the Lord.

**Hebrews 6:1-2 (NKJV)** - <sup>1</sup> Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, <sup>2</sup> of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

**Acts 17:31-32 (NKJV)** - <sup>31</sup> Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead. <sup>32</sup> And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter."

## I. TIME AND ETERNITY

- A. God is eternal having no beginning and no end and is not limited by time. Man, on the other hand, has a beginning, is subject to time but is also created to exist eternally.

**Psalms 90:2,4 (NIV)** - <sup>2</sup> Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. <sup>4</sup> A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

**Matthew 25:46 (NLT)** - And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.

- B. The lifespan of man is a period of probation. Once this period of time is over, man dies, and his eternal state is settled and unchangeable.

**Hebrews 9:27 (NIV)** - Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment

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**II. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**

- A. The resurrection of the dead is simply the rising up of the physical body of those who have already died. The mortal man shall not only exist by the immortality of his soul and spirit but the very flesh in which he walks shall rise again and exist forever (Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 26:19, Hebrews 11:35, Job 19:25-26).

**John 5:28-29 (NIV)** - <sup>28</sup> Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice <sup>29</sup> and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.

- B. The Bible describes the believer's resurrected body as a glorious spiritual incorruptible body made of flesh and bones, but doesn't give us much information about the resurrected body of the unbeliever besides the fact that they will have a body.

**Luke 24:39 (NLT)** - Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do.

**1 Corinthians 15:42-44 (NKJV)** - <sup>42</sup> So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

**Revelation 20:12a (NLT)** - I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life.

- C. The resurrection of the dead happens in a specific order described by Paul to the Corinthians.

**1 Corinthians 15:22-24 (NKJV)** - <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. <sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

- D. The first stage of the resurrection of the dead, called “Christ the Firstfruits”, happened when Jesus was resurrected. He was the first one to be raised from the dead never to die again.

**Matthew 28:5-6 (NLT)** - <sup>5</sup> Then the angel spoke to the women. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying.

**1 Corinthians 15:23 (NKJV)** - But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.

- E. The next stage of the resurrection of the dead is called the “First Resurrection of the Dead”. It is the resurrection of those who died in Christ. This event will take place in an instant before the rapture of the church.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 (NKJV)** - <sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord.

- F. At the end of the tribulation, if one assumes a pre-tribulation rapture those who were saved and died for Christ during the tribulation period, will also be resurrected from the dead and be united with Christ to reign with Him for 1000 years. They will then live eternally in the presence of God. At this stage, what the Bible calls “First Resurrection”, will be complete. The believers have priority of resurrection, and the second death has no power over them.

**Revelation 20:4-6 (NKJV)** - <sup>4</sup> And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand

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years. <sup>5</sup> But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

**Revelation 21:3-4 (NKJV)** - <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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."

- G. The final stage of the resurrection of the dead is called the "Resurrection of the Unrighteous". This is the resurrection of the unbeliever which will take place after the 1000 years is completed. It is a resurrection unto judgement, shame and everlasting contempt.

**Acts 24:15 (NLT)** - I have the same hope in God that these men have, that he will raise both the righteous and the unrighteous.

**Revelation 20:12-13 (NKJV)** - <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

**Daniel 12:2 (NKJV)** - And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

(Check out the "Panoramic View" on page 67)

### III. ETERNAL JUDGEMENTS

- A. Before we get into the teachings on eternal judgements, we must first understand that God is both merciful and just. In His mercy, He sent Jesus to die for us to redeem us from the curse of death and give us eternal life. And because of His justice, those who reject Him, and His Word will be condemned to eternal punishment.

**John 3:16 (NKJV)** - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

**John 12:48 (NKJV)** - He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

**Matthew 25:46 (NIV)** - Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

- B. The Bible says that all men will appear before Christ to be judged. Judgement is based on things that are done in the body. Therefore, the body must be resurrected so that the total man (spirit, soul and body) is judged. The choices we make during our lives will affect our eternal state.

**2 Corinthians 5:10 (NIV)** – For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

**1 Peter 1:17 (NASB)** - If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth.

- C. The judgement of the believer is not concerning his salvation, as we know that the moment a person accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour, his name gets written in the Lamb's Book of Life, rather it is a judgement for reward. When the believer appears before the judgement seat of Christ books containing all the records of a person's works and service for the Lord will be opened and read, and he will be rewarded with crowns for the things he did (Revelation 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 1 Peter 5:2-4; 2 Timothy 4:8). These crowns will be placed before the throne of Jesus by the believer as worship to Him.

**Malachi 3:16 (NIV)** - Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name.

**James 1:12 (NRSV)** - Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

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**Revelation 4:10-11 (NIV)** - <sup>10</sup> The twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: <sup>11</sup> "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

D. The believer will be rewarded when he demonstrates good stewardship over all areas of his life. Here are some of them.

1. Stewardship of time (Ephesians 5:16)
2. Stewardship of finances (2 Corinthians 9:6)
3. Stewardship of talents (Luke 19:11-26)
4. Opportunities to witness (Daniel 12:3)
5. Personal discipline (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

**Quality versus Quantity** - Quantity will only count after quality has been tested. In other words, God will be judging the motives. The key is obedience.

E. The judgement of the unbeliever will happen when the ungodly stands before the Great White Throne of God. Like the believers, they will be judged by the choices they make during life on earth. Rejecting Jesus as Lord and Saviour will cause their names not to be found written in the Book of Life. But this is not the only account written in heaven. The Bible says that many books, containing men's works, will be opened and read on judgement day. After that, the unbeliever will then be cast into the lake of fire together with the devil and his demons and will be there for eternity.

**Revelation 20:11-15 (NKJV)** - <sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. <sup>15</sup> And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

**John 14:6 (NLT)** - Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

**Matthew 25:41 (NLT)** - Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.

## CONCLUSION

God created man to have relationship with Him and live eternally in His presence. It is God's desire that all men be saved and come to know the truth. He never expected us to figure things out on our own, and that is why He gave us His Word. Through His Word He teaches us His ways and the importance of our choices. He is a Holy God, who cares for us and wants us to walk in holiness. And when we sin, He patiently waits for us to repent. Let's then live our life bringing glory to His Name, presenting our body daily as a living sacrifice. The reward which lies ahead of us is far greater than anything we could ever attain in this life. Do not give up!

**1 Timothy 2:3-5 (NIV)** - *This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.*

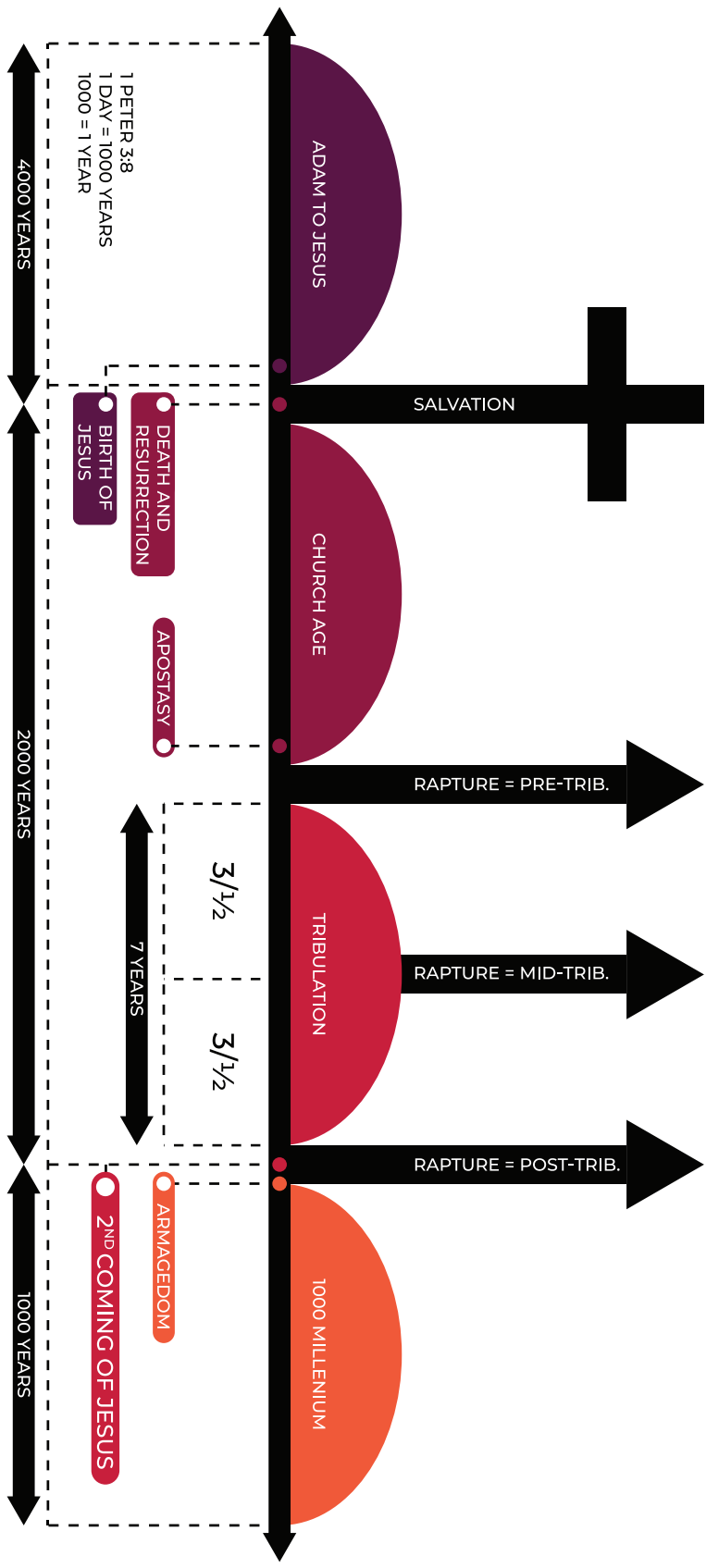
**2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)** - *The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed but wants everyone to repent.*

**Romans 12:1 (NIV)** - *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

**Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)** - <sup>13</sup> *Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

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PANORAMIC VIEW





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