

The Word of God - Lesson V A

The Believer's Position in Christ

Having looked at the Fruit of the Spirit we will now do a study on the believer's position in Christ. The purpose of this study is to set forth that which is DONE and through faith enable us, who are believers, to rest in the finished work of Christ and in our exalted position in Him.

We have many passages which teach us this wonderful truth of our position in Christ and we will look at each one of them.

We are saved from God's wrath through Him as we can read in:

Romans 5:9

Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him (Christ).

We are delivered from the law of sin as we can read in:

Romans 7:6

But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

We are beyond condemnation as we can read in:

Romans 8:1

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Through Christ the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death as we can read in:

Romans 8:2

Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death.

We have been adopted as children, as sons, as we can read in:

John 1:12-13

Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God –children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

And in I John 3:1

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And this is what we are...

And in Romans 8:14

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

And in Galatians 3:26

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

With Christ we are co-heirs as we can read in:

Romans 8:17

Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...

We are members of His Body as we can read in:

I Corinthians 12:13a

For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one Body....

We receive comfort through Christ as we can read in:

II Corinthians 1:5

For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

Through Christ, God enables us to stand to the end as we can read in:

II Corinthians 1:21

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.

We have received God's seal of ownership as we can read in:

II Corinthians 1:22

He (God) anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us...

In Christ, we are led in triumphal procession as we can read in:

II Corinthians 2:14

But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ...

We are a new creation in Christ as we can read in:

II Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.

We are reconciled to God through Christ as we can read in:

II Corinthians 5:18a

All this is from God who reconciled us to Himself through Christ.

We have become righteous in Christ as we can read in:

II Corinthians 5:21

God made Him (Christ) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

And in Philippians 3:9

And to be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ Jesus – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

We are justified by faith in Christ Jesus, and not through observing the law as we can read in:

Galatians 2:16b

So, we too have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

We have been crucified with Christ. Therefore Christ lives in us as we can read in:

Galatians 2:20a

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Through Christ we have the promise of the Spirit as we can read in:

Galatians 3:14

He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

And in Ephesians 1:13b

.... Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

We are all one in Christ Jesus as we can read in:

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ as we can read in:

Ephesians 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

We were chosen before the creation of the world as we can read in:

Ephesians 1:4

For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.

And in Ephesians 1:11

In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.

In Christ, we are the praise of His glory as we can read in:

Ephesians 1:12

In order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.

In Christ we are seen as God's possession who have an inheritance as we can read in:

Ephesians 1:13b-14

.... Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession –to the praise of His glory.

In Christ we have hope and resurrection power as we can read in:

Ephesians 1:18-19a

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and His incomparably great power for us who believe....

With Christ we are made alive as we can read in:

Ephesians 2:4-5a

But because of His great love for us, God who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions....

And in Colossians 2:13a

When you were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ....

And in Colossians 2:12

Having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead.

We are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms as we can read in:

Ephesians 2:6

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

We receive God's incomparable grace and kindness in Christ Jesus as we can read in:

Ephesians 2:7

In order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

In Christ, we are seen as God's workmanship, as we can read in:

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Through the blood of Christ we have been brought near to God as we can read in:

Ephesians 2:13

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

Through Christ we have access to the Father as we can read in:

Ephesians 2:18

For through Him we both (Jew and Gentile) have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Through peace, God guards our hearts and our minds in Christ as we can read in:

Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Through Him we can do all things as we can read in:

Philippians 4:13

I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.

God will meet all our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ as we can read in:

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

We are delivered from the power of evil. We are members of His kingdom as we can read in:

Colossians 1:13

For He (God) has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son He loves.

In Christ, we have been given fullness in Him, who is the head over every power and authority as we can read in:

Colossians 2:10

And you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

Our life is now hidden with Christ in God as we can read in:

Colossians 3:3

For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Those of us who are in Christ will rise on the day that Christ comes to be glorified as we can read in:

I Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

We are perfect in Christ as we can read in:

Hebrews 10:14

Because by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

We will never be abandoned as we can read in:

Hebrews 13:5

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.

We have an inheritance as we can read in:

I Peter 1:4

And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade -kept in heaven for you.

We are part of a holy priesthood as we can read in:

I Peter 2:5

You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We are then encouraged to begin to live a life consistent with our position. In other words, the Christian life is about becoming in our experience what those of us who are believers already are in our position in Christ.

In our next study we will look at the subject of the responsibility of the believer.

The Word of God - Lesson V B

The Responsibility of the Believer

We have studied the subject of our position in Christ, which is a position we have come into because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That position has made us acceptable to God. However, we need to then as believers, begin to make that position a reality in our lives as we can see from the following passage.

Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed –not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence –continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His

good purpose.

Many passages in Scripture tell us what we are to do as believers to make our position in Christ a reality in our lives.

For instance the Apostle Paul teaches that we who are believers are to not to give in to sinful desires as we can read in:

Romans 6:12-13

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to Him as instruments of righteousness.

And in Romans 8:12-13

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation –but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

And in Galatians 5:16-21

So I (Paul) say, “Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit to what is contrary to the sinful nature. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

And in Ephesians 4:22-24

You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in righteousness and holiness.

And in Colossians 3:5-11

Put to death therefore whatever belongs to your earthly nature; sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of such things as these; anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

The Apostle Peter likewise teaches those of us who are believers not to give in to our sinful nature as we can read in:

I Peter 2:1-3

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander

of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

And in I Peter 2:11-12

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.

The Apostle John writes along similar lines as we can read in:

I John 5:18

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe and the evil one cannot harm him.

Paul urges those of us who are believers to have a renewed mind as we can read in:

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God –this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.

And in Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable -if anything is excellent or praise worthy- think about such things.

And in Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

And in Colossians 3:1-3

Since then you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

The Apostle James too focuses on the importance of a renewed mind as we can read in:

James 3:13-18

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in humility that come from wisdom. But if you harbour envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

Peter likewise teaches on the importance of a renewed mind as we can read in:

I Peter 1:13-16

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your minds fully on the grace to be given you when Christ is revealed. As obedient children do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written: “Be holy because I am holy.

This is a reference to Leviticus 11:44a

.....and be holy, because I am holy.

And in I Peter 4:7-8

The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Paul teaches those of us who are believers that we are to honour God in everything and not be concerned about the world's standard as we can read in:

I Corinthians 10:31

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

And in Colossians 2:16

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival, a New moon Celebration or a Sabbath Day....

Paul teaches those of us who are believers that we are not to have an intimate relationship with unbelievers as we can read in:

II Corinthians 6:14-16a

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

And he teaches us that we are to avoid those who claim to be godly but are not as we can read in:

II Timothy 3:1-5

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God -having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.

Paul teaches those of us who are believers not to be envious of others as we can read in:

Galatians 5:25-26

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

James teaches us not to show favouritism as we can read in:

James 2:1

My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favouritism.

Paul teaches those of us who are believers that our speech is to be influenced by the Holy Spirit as we can read in:

Ephesians 4:25-28

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

And in Ephesians 4:29-31

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

And in Ephesians 5:3-7

But among you there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person – such a man is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no-one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes of those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

James teaches us likewise as we can read in:

James 1:19-21

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word that is planted in you, which can save you.

And in James 1:26-27

If anyone considers himself religious and does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God

accepts as pure and faultless is this; to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Paul tells those of us who are believers to rejoice in the Lord always regardless of the circumstances as we can read in:

Philippians 4:4-6

Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

He teaches us of the importance of love as we can read in:

Romans 12:9-21

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is Mine to revenge, I will repay," says the Lord.

(see Deuteronomy 32:35 It is Mine to avenge; I will repay.)

On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; in doing this you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil by evil, but overcome evil with good.

And in Ephesians 5:1-2

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us, and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

And in Colossians 3:12-14

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Peter teaches us on the importance of love as well as we can read in:

I Peter 2:16-17

Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone; Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honour the king.

And in I Peter 3:8-9

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessings, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

Likewise, John teaches us on the importance of the right kind of love as we can read in:

I John 2:9-11

Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother is in the light and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.

And in I John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

And in I John 3:16-18

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

And in I John 4:19-21

We love God because He first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother."

And in I John 5:3-4

"This is love for God: to obey His commands. And His commands are not burdensome for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

Paul teaches those of us who are believers to walk in peace as we can read in:

Colossians 3:15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

James teaches us to submit to God as we can read in:

James 4:7

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

He teaches us of the importance of patience as we can read in:

James 5:7a

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming....

James teaches us as well not to be a complaining people as we can read in:

James 5:9

Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is at the door.

Peter teaches those of us who are believers that we will suffer as we can read in:

I Peter 2:20b-21

...But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps.

And in I Peter 3:13-14a

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.

And in I Peter 4:1-2

Therefore, since Christ died in His body, arm yourselves with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

And in I Peter 4:12

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed. If you are insulted, because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

And in I Peter 4:19

So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

As we who are believers submit ourselves daily to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives we will live in a manner that is pleasing to God and honouring His Name in an increasing measure.

In our next study we will look at the subject of the authority of the believer.

The Word of God - Lesson V C

The Authority Of The Believer

Scripture teaches that believers do have authority but that this authority is founded on the authority of Christ as we can read in:

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

It is clear from this mandate that the Lord intended His disciples, from all ages and times, to obey all that He had commanded them. It is also clear that this mandate could not be accomplished unless they had authority and power; that is the reason why Jesus specifically told them the Father had given Him all authority and that they were to wait for the Holy Spirit as we can read in:

Acts 1:8

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.

Through the Gospels we read how Jesus gave His twelve disciples His authority as we can read in:

Matthew 10:7-8

As you go, preach this message: "The kingdom of heaven is near." Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

And in Luke 9:1-2

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Jesus then gave His authority to seventy-two of His followers as we can read in:

Luke 10:1:17

"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go..." "The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your Name."

And in Mark 16:15-18

"He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe; In My Name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up

snakes with their hands, and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

Those of us who are believers cannot afford to try to accomplish the Great Commission without the use of the full authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and the full power of the Holy Spirit working in and through our lives.

In our next study we will look at the subject of prayer.

The Word Of God - Lesson V D

All Kinds of Prayer

Introduction

Having learned about our position in Christ and how we are to make our position in Christ a reality in our own lives as well as our authority in Christ we will now study the topic of prayer.

When looking at the subject of prayer the first question we need to ask is:

What is prayer?

Prayer is communication with God which is expressed in words as well as in body language.

The second question we need to ask is:

What is this communication based on?

This communication is based on a relationship with God. You and I do not have a relationship with just everybody. We may meet many people but we do not necessarily communicate with them because we don't know them; we are not in relationship with them. Then there are people in our life who we do know, but not very well. Our relationship with them is somewhat distant and our communication with them reflects that; we may talk with them about the weather but we will not share with them our greatest needs, our deepest longings. We only share these needs, these longings with those whom we are in close relationship with. God has created us in such a way that we are in need of relationship with each other and in fact with Him. And communication is a very important part of a relationship because through our words we express what we think and how we feel. Now we must remember that communication is a two-way stream: we not only speak, we listen as well. After all, God has not only given us a mouth, He has given us two ears. We can read of the creation of the first man and woman in:

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, “Let us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in

number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

At that time God created them to have a close relationship with each other as we can read in:

Genesis 2:18

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

Genesis 2:21-23

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man’s rib and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.”

And to have a close relationship with Him as we can read in:

Genesis 3:8a

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the Garden in the cool of the day...

No doubt they would have walked in the Garden every day with Him, sharing freely with Him what had happened that day. Then something happened to disrupt that close relationship between the man and the woman and God: they disobeyed Him. This caused an instantaneous breakdown in their relationship with God as foretold by Him, as we can read in:

Genesis 2:16-17

And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the Garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

It was no longer possible for them to have that intimate communication with God. As a result of the first couple’s disobedience everyone born after them is born with a sinful nature and therefore separated from God as we can read in:

Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

This was our condition too. Thankfully, God in His mercy, has put a plan into place whereby the relationship between Him and people can be re-established. As we can read in:

I Peter 1:18-21

For you know that it is not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these

last times for your sake. Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Even though God is everyone's Creator He is not everyone's Father. God only becomes our Father when we recognise that we are sinners, ask God for forgiveness of our sins and accept the free gift of life in Christ Jesus as we can read in:

Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

At that moment we become a child of God and God becomes our Father as we can read in:

John 1:12

Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God.

It is only then that we can have a close relationship with Him in prayer.

That raises the following question:

Can an unbeliever pray?

We have already stated that prayer is communication with God based on a close relationship with Him. Unbelievers do not have a close relationship with Him and do not have access to God since our access to God is through Christ as we can read in:

Hebrews 4:14-16

Therefore, since we have a great High priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have One who has been tempted in every way, just as we are -yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Therefore, the only prayer an unbeliever can pray which is acceptable to God is the sinner's prayer as we can read in:

Acts 2:38

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised, everyone of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

That prayer will bring him/her into a relationship with God who will then become his/her Father. Our earthly father took care of us, based on his relationship with us. However, he would not have taken care of just anybody who might have knocked on his door, at least not in the way that he took care of us, since he was not in close relationship with these strangers. In the same way we as believers can go freely to our heavenly Father for He longs for us to come to Him with whatever we may have on our heart.

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus shows us that in the prayer that He taught His disciples as we can read in:

Matthew 6:9-13

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your Name,
Your Kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.**

We will look at that prayer in greater detail:

Our Father

These words speak of intimacy. Jesus teaches us here that we can call the all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful God, Father.

And, as I have already said, earthly fathers take care of their children. That is their responsibility. Likewise it is the responsibility of our heavenly Father to take care of us.

Hallowed be Your Name

Jesus reminds us here that God is a holy God and is to be honoured and respected when we approach Him.

Your Kingdom come

God invites us here to participate with Him in the bringing forth of His Kingdom on earth. Now we know that we will not see the fullness of His Kingdom here on earth until the return of Christ as we can read in:

Revelation 19:11-16

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice He judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but He Himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron sceptre. He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has the name written: King of kings and Lord of lords."

However, we can already see a manifestation of His Kingdom here on earth through our lives as we love and obey God. This links in with the next line of the prayer:

May Your will be done in earth as it is in heaven

Again we will not see the fullness of that happen until Christ reigns on earth during the Millennial reign, which will take place after His Second Coming as we can read in:

Revelation 20:4b

They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

But we are called to pray it in for God wants us to co-operate with Him so it will happen one day. In the meantime we are to see the manifestation of His will being done on earth through our lives as we walk in obedience to God and His Word.

It is only then that Jesus tells us to bring before God our personal needs for God does care about them as we can see from the words of Jesus:

Give us today our daily bread

Jesus teaches us here that that we can ask God to meet our daily needs for He is our Father and as our Father He is responsible to meet our needs. Our responsibility is to ask as we can read in:

Matthew 7:7-11

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks received; he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Moreover, Jesus tells us to ask “daily” because God wants us to come to Him daily just as the Israelites in the desert had to gather manna daily as we can read in:

Exodus 16:13-21

That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded, “Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.” The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed. Then Moses said to them, No one is to keep any of it until morning.” However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them. Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot it melted away.”

The next line Jesus teaches us to pray is:

Forgive us our debts

This is about confessing our sins to God and is linked to the next line:

As we also have forgiven our debtors

Jesus teaches a great deal about the importance of forgiving others in order for us to be forgiven by God as we can read in:

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

And in Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

The servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything." The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him, "Pay back what you owe me!" he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, "Be patient with me and I will pay you back." But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. "You wicked servant," he said, "I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

"This is how My heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.

Jesus then teaches us the words:

And lead us not into temptation

This is different from being tested because all believers will be tested so their faith will mature as we can read in:

James 1:2-3

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Jesus then moves on to the words:

But deliver us from the evil one"

With these words Jesus tells us to ask the Father to protect us from the evil one so that he may not harm us. However, we need to do our part in that we are to be obedient to God. Otherwise we will give room for the enemy to work in our lives as we can read in:

Ephesians 4:26-27

In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

Jesus ends this prayer with the words:

For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen

These words remind us of the words the Apostle John wrote in:

Revelation 4:11

You are worthy, our Lord and God to receive glory and honour and power...

The Apostle Paul's Prayers

The Apostle Paul teaches us about prayer in:

Ephesians 6:18

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Here, Paul tells the believers that they are to pray in the Spirit meaning to pray in accordance with the leading of the Holy Spirit.

He then tells them that they are to pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

What kinds of prayers might he be talking about?

Let us look at Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And I Timothy 2:1

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

So here we have different kinds of prayers:

Requests

They can include anything from a daily practical need to a much greater need because God cares about every detail of our lives.

An example is Paul's prayer for the believers in Colosse which we can read in:

Colossians 1:9

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Nothing is too small to bring to His attention or too big for Him to be able to deal with. That's why Paul makes this subject very broad; he simply calls it "requests".

Prayers

These are more general types of prayers and would include prayers for family, church leaders, leaders of our nation etc.

Petitions

These are prayers in which we plead with God regarding certain situations, leaving the matter entirely in His hands.

Thanksgiving

Paul gives us examples of prayers of thanksgiving in:

Colossians 1:3

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.

And in Colossians 1:12

Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

And in I Thessalonians 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

We are to always end our prayers with thanksgiving believing that God has heard our prayers and will answer them in His way and in His time.

Intercession

Intercession means standing in the gap on behalf of others. We have a number of examples in Scripture. The first person we will look at is:

Abraham

Genesis 18:16-33

“When the men got up to leave, they looked down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked along with them to see them on their way. Then the Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.” Then the Lord said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.” The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Then Abraham approached Him and said, “Will You sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will You really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from You to do such a thing – to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from You! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

The Lord said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the city because of five people?” “If I find forty-five there,” He said, “I will not destroy it.” Once again he spoke to Him, “What if only forty are found there?” He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.” Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?” He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.” Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?” He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.” Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry,

but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.” When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, He left and Abraham returned home.”

In this passage Abraham is standing in the gap in prayer before the Lord on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah. He was able to do this because of his relationship with the Lord. Moreover it was what God wanted him to do for God always desires to be merciful rather than bring judgement for mercy triumphs over judgement as we can read in:

James 2:13b

“Mercy triumphs over judgement!”

Abraham’s prayers did not save Sodom and Gomorrah but they did save the lives of Lot and his family as we can read in:

Genesis 19:15-16

With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, “Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished.” When he hesitated, the man grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and his two daughters and let them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them.

And in Genesis 19:29

So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, He remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived.

The second person we will look at is:

Moses

God had called Moses to bring His people out of Egypt into the Promised Land as we can read in:

Exodus 3:9-10

And now the cry of the Israelites has reached Me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt.

When the Israelites were travelling through the desert on their way to the Promised Land Moses spent time in the Presence of God. However, the people become impatient as they are waiting for his return as we can read in:

Exodus 32:1-14

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.” Aaron answered them, “Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.” So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who

brought you up out of Egypt.” When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, “Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord.” So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go down, because our people whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” “I have seen these people,” said the Lord, “and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave Me alone so that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.” But Moses sought the favour of the Lord his God. “O Lord,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, “It was with evil intent that He brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth”? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: “I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.” Then the Lord relented and did not bring on His people the disaster He had threatened.

In this passage of Scripture we read of Moses standing in the gap between God and the Israelites and pleading with God on their behalf that He will not destroy the people. This again is based on Moses’ close relationship with God.

We can see from Moses’ prayer that he had great insight into who God is and what God will do based on who He is. Moses reminds God of this and, it seems, God listens to Moses. No doubt, this is, because, as I have already mentioned, God prefers to be merciful rather than to bring judgement. That is why God is always looking for intercessors to stand in the gap so His judgement on people can either be limited or postponed because of their prayers.

There will come a day of final judgement but we do not know when that day will be so we are to pray for His mercy in the meantime.

The third person we will look at is:

Daniel

Daniel 9:1-19

In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom –in the first year of his reign, I Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to the prophet Jeremiah, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with Him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and confesses: “O, Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with all who love Him and obey His commands, we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from Your commands and laws. We have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. Lord, You are

righteous , but this day we are covered with shame – the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to You. O Lord, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against You. The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against Him; we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws He gave us through His servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed Your law and turned away, refusing to obey you. Therefore the curses and sworn judgements written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against You. “You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favour of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything He does, yet we have not obeyed Him. Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and made for Yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. O Lord, in keeping with all Your righteous acts, turn away Your righteous anger and wrath from Jerusalem, Your city, Your holy city. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and Your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of Your servant. For Your sake, O Lord, look with favour on Your desolate sanctuary. Give ear, O God, and hear; open Your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears Your Name. We do not make requests of You because we are righteous, but because of Your great mercy. O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For Your sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people bear Your Name.”

Daniel was in exile with the people of Israel because of their sinfulness as we can read in:

Daniel 1:1-6

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god. Then the king ordered Aspenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility – young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king’s table. They were to be trained for three years., and after that they were to enter the king’s service. Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

However, God had declared that one day they would return to their land. Daniel had understood from Scripture that the time of their return was at hand. However, he knew that prayer was needed before that could take place. Moreover, he realised that this required intercessory prayer; he knew that he needed to stand in the gap on behalf of his people so the door would be opened for the return to their land.

In this passage we see Daniel identifying with the sins of his people. He acknowledged that God was the Righteous One and that he and the people were the unfaithful ones who deserved what had happened to them. He then pleaded for the return of himself and his people. This plea was based solely on God's mercy and was for God's Name sake because Daniel and his people bore God's Name. God could then begin to act in response to Daniel's prayer, which God did and the people did indeed return to their land.

God has chosen the instrument of prayer as a way to interact with this world because He delights to have His people, the believers, participate with Him in the work He is doing in the world. Prayer is one of the activities He desires for us to be involved in. It is not the only activity He has for us to take part in but it is a very important one. And it is fundamental to any other activity.

Healing prayer

Having looked at intercession in greater depth I would now like for us to focus on a particular type of prayer which is included in the general term "prayer" and which I call "healing prayer".

This kind of healing prayer is focused on healing of the emotions.

We are after all body, soul and spirit as we can read in:

I Thessalonians 5:23

May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we are born again, the Holy Spirit comes to reside in our human spirit and we are new creations in our spirit as we can read in:

II Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

However, our soul realm, which contains our mind, will and emotions, needs to undergo a process through the renewing of the mind as we can read in:

Romans 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.

This takes place through the study of God's Word and prayer. That is how we become more Christ-like in our behaviour. However, many of us have blockages in our soul realm which hinder us from growing into spiritual maturity. Paul wrote that we are to forget what lies behind us as we can read in:

Philippians 3:13b

"... But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead."

It is this "forgetting" what I would like for us to look at because it is not always as easy to do as we might like, it may take some work.

And I am going to show you some steps to take so you can indeed learn to forget what lies behind, and teach others to do likewise.

I would like for you to see your soul realm as your “Promised Land”. Just as God told the Israelites in the Old Testament to spy out their Promised Land as we can read in:

Numbers 13:1-2

The Lord said to Moses, “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

So God wants you to “spy out your Promised Land”. You do that by asking God in prayer what are the blockages in your life that hinder you from being all that God wishes you to be.

These are the places of hurt, of grief, of wounds, of sins committed against you or even sins you have not been able to overcome as yet, as we can read in:

Hebrews 12:1

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”

Write down everything the Lord reveals to you. Some of the things He reveals may be from a long time ago, while other issues may be have happened to you very recently. When the Israelites entered their Promised Land, God showed them which city they were to attack and gave them a specific strategy for the attack as we can read in:

Joshua 6:1-5

“Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in. Then the Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. March around the city with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up every man straight in.”

Likewise, you need to ask the Lord which particular hurt He would want you to deal with first of all and ask for Him to guide you through your prayer time.

Once the Lord has shown you which particular hurt has to be brought before Him, you begin to share with Him that event. Remember to not just tell Him the details of the event, but to release to Him the emotions connected to this particular event, asking Him to give you His peace instead. As you remember this event before the Lord, you will remember the ones who caused this painful event in your life. You will need to forgive them. Moreover, you will begin to realise that very likely you have carried a measure of unforgiving in your heart towards those who have hurt you. It is therefore important to ask God to forgive you for not forgiving, them as we can read in:

Matthew 6:12

“Forgive us our debts; as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

And Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also

forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

And Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him. "Be patient with me," he begged, "and I will pay back everything." The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him."Pay back what you owe me," he demanded. His fellow servant fell on his knees and begged him. "Be patient with me and I will pay you back." But he refused. Instead he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in, "You wicked servant," he said, "I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?" in anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.

As you forgive those who have hurt you and ask God to forgive you as well for holding an unforgiving attitude towards them in your heart, let go of all of your emotions connected to this particular event and allow the Lord's healing balm to flow into you.

Once you sense complete peace, you then declare to the enemy that the door is closed to him to work in that particular area in your soul because you have forgiven those who have wronged you and you have asked God to forgive you for your unforgiving attitude towards them. God has forgiven you based on:

I John 1:9

If we confess our sin, He is faithful and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The enemy can work in our lives through our wounds, our hurts as we can read in:

Ephesians 4:26-27

In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sin go down while you are still angry and do not give the devil a foothold.

However, when we are healed of these wounds, these hurts, the enemy can no longer attack us in these areas.

Please remember that it takes time to bring Gods healing into your soul realm. After all, these hurts, these wounds did not get there overnight, they developed over time. Moreover, God wants to deal with each area one by one. Otherwise it will be too overwhelming for you.

Furthermore, God wants you to deal with each issue thoroughly so that the enemy will not have opportunity to come back to ensnare you in that particular place in your soul once again. This means that you must forgive anyone not just a little, but 100 percent. Remember that forgiveness is for your sake, not for their sake. When you forgive others, you will be set free from whatever may bind you to them. Finally, you are to bless those that have hurt you as we can read in:

Luke 6:28

Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you.

As you bless others, God will bless you.

In our next study we will look at the subject of the Church.