

The 100 most important
Discipleship topics

**"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation! ...
But these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will cast out
demons, they will speak with new tongues, ...; they will lay hands on the sick, and
they will be well ...
and the Lord confirmed the word with the accompanying signs."
Mark 16, 17-20**

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Introduction to the discipleship topics

Why discipleship topics?

The followers of Jesus were called disciples in the Bible.

They learnt as "apprentices" from their master. They spent a lot of time with him in order to integrate his wisdom and experience into their lives.

The goal is to God, our Creator.

The result is a fulfilled, meaningful and successful life.

The good news is that God loved us humans so much that cancelled what separated us from Him - our guilt. For this, His Son Jesus had to die on the cross on our behalf. This new access to God the Father applies to everyone accepts this in faith.

The Bible reports that Jesus physically resurrected, is alive and will return as King. He is a God of personal relationships.

This is what these topics are about.

1.1 Worship - a lifestyle

Introduction:

When we think about "worship", we often mean the times of praise in a church service. In this context, "worship" is often associated with music. However, "worship" has nothing to do with instruments. Worship times in church are important to honour God and can be refreshing.

Why should we worship?

1. Because of the 1st commandment (I am the Lord your God).
2. Because God the Father and his Son are worthy to be worshipped.
3. Because it is good for us (we look away from ourselves towards God).

Definition:

"Worship=Greek: proskyneō; to prostrate oneself, fall on one's knees, worship with feet.

Worship is making one thing or one person the centre of your life and aligning all areas of your life with this centre. To worship God means to exalt him for his character traits: e.g. "You are faithful, gracious, loving ...".

Praise, on the other hand, is thanksgiving for what he has done.

The most important places:

Jn 4:23-24 Jesus says:

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father also seeks such as his worshippers.

God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.

1 Chr 16:29

Give the LORD the honour of his name! Bring

Offer a grain offering and come before him! Worship the LORD in holy splendour!

Ps 81:10

Let no strange god be among you, and do not worship an unknown god!

Ps 95:6-7

Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD who made us! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the flock of his hand.

Ps 96:9

Worship the LORD in holy splendour! Tremble before him, all the earth!

Isa 2:8

...also their land is full of idols; they worship the work of their hands and what their fingers have made.

Isa 66:23

And it shall come to pass: ...all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the LORD.

Mt 4:10

Then Jesus said to him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written: "You shall worship the Lord your God and serve him alone."

Rev 14:7

and he (the angel) spoke with a loud voice: 'Fear God and give him glory! For the hour of his judgement has come. And worship him who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and the springs of water!

Rev 15:4

Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone 'are' holy; for all nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous deeds have been revealed.

Abraham is challenged by God. He is to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac to Him. It is interesting what Abraham says to his travelling servants on the way to the place of sacrifice:

If you stay here, we will go and worship. (Genesis 22:5)

Questions about how to implement the theme in my life:

- Which beloved "Isaac" do I have to bring to the altar of burnt offering in my life in order to be able to truly worship?
- What do I worship more in my life than God/Jesus? (Hidden idols) Hint: What is my favourite way to spend my (free) time? What is my favourite thing to spend my money on? What does my heart beat for? What fills my heart? What do I dream about? What is my favourite thing to plan?
- What should I do if I have discovered false idols in my life?
- What does this mean in practical terms if I make Jesus the centre of my life and align all areas with Him? (See the definition of "worship").

What does Jesus have to do with the topic?

He is the centre of worship. The key to being able to worship Jesus wholeheartedly is to love and know Jesus (develop a passionate love for Him).

Getting there is on the one hand grace (that I may recognise Him) and on the other hand my decision to learn more about Him (e.g. reading the Bible and spending time with Him).

The enemy's (Satan's) greatest desire is to be worshipped.

His greatest lie on this subject:

Sin is more fun than pleasing the Lord.

In other words:

Worshipping other things or people is more satisfying than making Jesus the centre of attention and worshipping Him.

to worship alone.

Through worship we have close contact with our living God.

Worship leads directly into his presence. Here, as a result of worship, one finds peace, comfort, encouragement, rest, healing, provision, guidance...

Worship is one of the noblest tasks of a follower of Jesus. This is where the greatest fulfilment can be found on earth. Marvelling at Him and His love and goodness changes us permanently.

The seven most important points on the topic

"Worship:

- We are called to worship (The Lord seeks worshippers).
- Worship is not just a part of worship, but encompasses every area of my life.
- Worship is making Jesus the centre of my life and aligning all areas with it.

- Music is a valuable form of worship. However, it is more important that I have the right centre (Jesus) in my everyday life.
- I can ask the Holy Spirit to show me the things that have become more important to me than Jesus.
- Worship begins when I recognise who Jesus is, what He has done for me and how great His love for me is. This realisation ignites in me an enthusiasm and a passion that leads to the worship of Jesus.
- Worship means being obedient, even if I don't understand God's instructions don't feel like it. (e.g. Naaman in 2 Kings 5:10)

Further reading:

- Graham Kendrick, *Worship as a Lifestyle*,
- Maria Emilia Baptista de Oliveira, *"Adoration"*, ISBN 3-87482-607-4 and *"Worship God"*, ISBN 3-87482-605-8
- MP3 lectures by Dr Arne Elsen (www.online-predigt.de)

1.2 How we can worship

Tip: Read daily and be aware that we enter the "throne room of God" for worship.

Jesus Christ,

You are ...

... the alpha and the omega
... the beginning and the end
... the author of life
... the only sublime one
... the good shepherd
... the beginner and perfecter of my faith
... the door
... the head of the congregation
... my guide
... the Lamb of God
... the resurrection
... the one the people hope for
... the strong god
... God Immanuel
... the beloved son of the father
... the only sovereign
... Son of God
... Son of man
... the glory of the Lord
... the great high priest
... the judge of Israel
... Image of God
... Mediator between me and the Father
... the way
... the truth
... life
... Heir to all things
... our Easter
... the bread of life
... Father of eternity
... Shepherd and overseer of my soul
... the greatest power in me
... the cornerstone
... the root of David
... the saviour
... the rose from Sharon
... lovingly
... my friend
... pure
... sublime
... the king of kings
... the majesty
... holy
... precious
... powerful
... my victory
... my happiness
... my peace and prosperity
... my strength
... my banner
... my joy
... my hope

... my healing
... my Lord
... I belong to you
... more precious than gold
... more precious than silver
... more precious than diamonds
... the scent of life
... the longed-for fragrance
... Victor, you conquered death and are the Lord of life
... You guide me and are my master
... the source of living water
... the lily of the valley
... the breath of all life
... the saint of God
... the descendant who crushes the serpent's head
... the truth
... the Lord of Glory
... of all Mr
... Lord of the Lords
... the exalted of kings
... the rising sun
... the faithful witness
... the word of God
... life
... the true vine
... the highest
... God of Israel
... the sun of justice
... my rock
... the Messiah of Israel
... the one who was and is and who is to come
... the king of kings
... the Lion of the tribe of Judah
... the light of day
... the anointed one
... the king of nations
... the Lord of Hosts
... the Prince of Peace
... the man dressed in pure white canvas
... the fourth man in the furnace
... the Jesus of Nazareth
... the only God
... the highest authority
... the king of the heathen nations
... the ruler of the universe
... the one through whom the Father made the world
... the one who owns everything
... the source of living water
... my real life
... the meaning of my life

Only You make me perfect. Jesus, you are

... tender and kind
... the resurrection and life
... the highest authority in the universe

I am like grass that sprouts in the morning, blossoms in the morning and withers and dries up in the evening (Psalm 90:5+6).

**But You, Jesus, are the water of life and eternal life.
JESUS, thank you! JESUS, I
praise you! JESUS, I you!**

**Jesus Christ
How good it is to enjoy your presence. I give you all
my dreams and hopes.**

**JESUS CHRIST...
... I long for you!**

**Every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and
under the earth, and on the sea, and all that is in them,
must worship the Lamb with thanksgiving.
To you be all honour, glory and power forever - Amen!**

**Before the mountains were born and You created the
earth and the world, You, God, are from everlasting to
everlasting (Psalm 90:2).**

**You, Lord, are great and mighty, you are the God of
truth, you are the living God and the eternal King.**

**You created the earth with your power, you founded the
world with your wisdom, and with your intelligence you
stretched out the heavens.**

**You create the lightning for the rain, and you lead the
wind out of the storerooms.**

You are the one who exists in yourself.

**You, God, are mighty!
You are the I AM,
You created everything.**

Lord of hosts is your name. I worship you,

**Jesus.
I was born to worship you.
You are my God,
You are the father of eternity,
All glory, power and honour belong to you.
All victory, all majesty come from You, because
everything belongs to You, in heaven and on earth.**

**Yours is the kingdom and the glory and the power
and the might; riches and honour come from you.
You reign above all. You are
holy, holy, holy,**

**and the whole earth is full of Your glory. Only You are
worthy to receive glory,
honour and power, for you created all things, and for
your sake they were and are created (Rev 4:11).**

**The earth proclaims your glory, O God! The firmament
proclaims the works of Your hands.
You are great, Lord; very worthy to receive my praise.**

**You created the heavens, the earth and the sea. Majesty
and splendour are before you.
Strength and joy are where you live.
Let the whole earth tremble at the beauty of your holiness, let
the sea and its fullness roar.
May the nations proclaim your glory.
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.**

**Holy, Holy, Holy, Almighty, the whole earth is full of
Your glory,
as the waters cover the sea.
Great and marvellous are your works; righteous and
true are your ways.**

O King of eternity, King of nations, only You are holy.

**All nations will bow down before You; everything and
everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth, in
the sea and all that is in it, must obey You and hear the
voice of Your command and bow down before You.**

**Let us sing a new song of worship, for only You are
worthy to open the seal and take the book.**

**For you, Jesus Christ, were dead, and with your blood
you bought people from every tribe, language, people
and nation, and you made them kings and priests for
God.**

**And we will reign over the earth with you, Jesus
Christ, the Son of the living God.
You have the key of death and hell. For you are the
victor,
You hold the key to victory in your hands.
The door you , no one closes; the door you
close, no one opens.**

***To you, Jesus, be all honour,
Glory and power forever, Amen!***

**From the booklet by Maria Emilia Baptista de Oliveira,
"God", ISBN 3-87482-605-8.**

1.3 Prayer

What is prayer?

Prayer is talking to God

- a dialogue, not a monologue.

Prayer is a commandment of

God Luke 18:1

But he also told them a parable that they should always pray and not grow weary, ...

Eph 6:18

With all prayer and supplication pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end keep watch in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

Jn 16,24

Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete!

1. Thess 5,17

Pray without ceasing!

The Bible is full of promises that confirm that God answers prayers:

Ps 91:15

He calls me and I answer him. I am with him in his time of need.

I will deliver him and bring him to honour.

Isa 58:9

Then you will call, and the LORD will answer. You will cry out for help, and he will say, 'Here I am! When you take away from among you the yoke, the stretching out of fingers and evil speaking

Isa 65,24

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear. Luke 11:9

And I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; , and it will be opened to you!

Jn 15,7

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you will ask what you wish and it be done for you.

Mt 18,19

Again I say to you: If two of you on earth agree to ask for anything, it will be given to them by my Father who is in heaven.

Reasons for unanswered prayers:

- wrong motivation, selfish request (Jam.4,3)
- Disobedience (Deut. 1:45; 1 Sam. 14:37+28:6)
- concealed sin in life (Psalm 66:18).
- Neglect of mercy (Proverbs 21:13)

- not obeying God's earlier speech - spurning instruction (Prov.28:9)
- Bloodguilt (Isa.1,15)
- Wickedness (Isa 59:2+ Micah 3:4)
- Rebellion, rebelliousness (Zech. 7:13)
- slander (Isa.58,9)
- Inconstancy (Jam. 1,6+7)

Conditions for answered prayer:

Humility:

2. Chr 7:14

...if my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear in heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.

Honesty:

Jer 29:13-14

And if you seek me, you will find 'me'; yes, if you ask for me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the LORD.

Faith:

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say to you: Whatever you pray for and ask, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Obedience:

1. John 3:22

...and whatever we ask, we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what is pleasing in his sight.

Authenticity:

Jas 5:16

Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. *A righteous man's prayer is effective.*

Jesus said:

Mt 6,6

But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Jesus prayed:

Mark 1:35

...and *early in the morning*, when it still very dark, Jesus got up and went out and went away to a lonely place and prayed there.

Luke 6:12

And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus went out into the mountain to pray; and he spent *the night* in prayer to God.

Intensive prayer of the early church:

Acts 1:14

They all remained united in prayer with 'some' women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Acts 2:42

But they persevered in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayer.

Acts 12:5

Peter was now kept in prison, but the church prayed fervently to God for him.

God uses weak people to work through their prayers:

Jas 5,16+17

Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. A righteous man's prayer is effective.

Elijah was a weak man like us; and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

Other key Bible passages on prayer:

Zech 12:10

...I will pour out the spirit of grace and prayer, ...

Ps 65:3

You answer prayer, therefore all flesh comes to you!

Matthew 21:22

And whatever you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive.

Phil 4:6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God;

1. Tim 2:1-4

I exhort now first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high places, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and honour. This is good and pleasing in the sight of our Saviour God, who wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Rev 8,3

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and much incense was given to him to put on the golden altar which is before the throne, together with *the prayers of all the saints*.

Literature:

- Thomson Study Bible, chain index 'Prayer'
- David Yonggi Cho, How I pray
- C. Peter Wagner, The offensive prayer
- Topic No.1.6: Binding and loosening

1.4 Hear the voice of God

Definition:

What does "hearing the voice of God" mean?

In this context, it means to recognise the will of God for a certain upcoming decision or to receive knowledge from God. The most important biblical passages:

Jn 8,47

Those who are of God hear the words of God. Therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.

Jn 10,3

...the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Jn 10,27 Jesus says:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; ...

John 18:37b

Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.

Isa 30,21

And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you: This is the way to go! (Good News)

Deuteronomy 13:19 (listen and obey)

... if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all his commandments which I command you today, to do what is right in the sight of the LORD your God.

Job 33:13f

Why do you want to quarrel with God because he does not answer the words of men? For God speaks in one way and in another, but people do not pay attention.

Heb.3,15

When it is said: "Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in bitterness", ...

Mt 3,17 (God's audible voice)

And behold, a voice 'comes' from the heavens, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Jam 1,5: But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all willingly and does not reproach, and it will be given to him.

Ps 25:9-10: He guides the meek in righteousness and teaches the meek his way. All the ways of the LORD are favour and faithfulness to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Help to the voice of God more clearly: Rebirth according to Joh.3 + Joh.8,47

Being filled with the Holy Spirit (What does the Bible say about the baptism of the Spirit? -Acts 1:5; 8:15; 9:17; 11,17; 19,6...) See also topic no. 6.15. Water baptism as a believer. What is God's opinion on this?

You can use these questions to train yourself to hear the voice of God!

Ask God - and expect answers.

Am I free from bitterness towards others? Express forgiveness. Living in clarified relationships. So that our prayer is not hindered.

Do not live in conscious sin.

Regularly God's Word in order to get to know his character, principles and way of thinking better.

Consciously live communion with Him every day - take time for Him.

Rick Joyner: "Satan keeps us in check by being busy."

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide me in all truth - especially at the point that is about to be decided.

How does God speak to us today?

God is very creative in how he things clear to us, yet he speaks first and foremost:

through the Bible (Heb.1-3; 2.Tim.3,16f)

through an inner testimony, an inner impression, an inner peace. We can ask God specific questions and then be silent in order to receive the answer as an inner impression. by other Christians

(Proverbs 11:14+15:22).

through circumstances, symbols, parables

through dreams (e.g. as with Joseph, Daniel)

through visions (e.g. as with Paul, Peter - Acts 16:10).

relatively rarely by an audible voice (Acts

18,9+10; Mat.3,17, Joh.12,28)

through our thoughts

...

The most important points on the topic:

Because you are the son or daughter of the loving heavenly Father, he is happy to help you make decisions.

It is not difficult to hear His voice (John 10:27). But sometimes He answers our questions differently than we expect - because God is God, He is sovereign.

In order to hear his voice, we sometimes have to become quiet. This means taking time to listen to the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit. Possibly take a day of silence, on prayer walks, support listening with fasting.

Humble yourself before God and let Him have His way (Proverbs 16:1-3, Matthew 6:10).

Submit to his rule. Proclaim: "Your will be done." Resist the adversary and use the authority that Jesus has given you (James 4:7; Ephesians 6:10-20)

Expect an answer!

Stop worrying! (Philippians 4:6+7) Do not be led by need, but by the speaking of the Holy Spirit.

Why do I sometimes not hear an answer? Do I hear nothing because God already spoken?
Have I been disobedient in putting into practice what God has said?
Does sin block leadership? (Pride, unforgiveness -Eph.4,30+31...)
Do I hear nothing because I am so busy that I cannot rest (Heb. 4:9)?

Ask if you have any problems:

What would Jesus do in my situation

(W.W.J.D.)?

Does my decision help or hinder the building of the kingdom of God?

Is the answer in line with recommendations found in the Bible? **What does the Bible say?** (This is why it is important to read it regularly so that I know what it says. stands.)

Why do I want to the voice of God?

Are my motives right, or do I just want to shift the responsibility for the consequences of the decision onto God?

What does Jesus have to with this topic? Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1).

That is why the answer to our problem lies in Jesus. This means that we can learn from Jesus. How does He judge the situation? What motives move Him?

What character trait of Jesus is needed now? That is why we need to get to know and understand Jesus. The answer lies in Him.

Further reading:

- Ursula and Manfred Schmidt, "Listening Prayer" ISBN 3-9808340-4-2
- **Loren Cunningham, "Is it You, Lord"**, page 210ff: Twelve important points for hearing the voice of God.
- J.C. Hedgecock, *"My sheep hear my voice"*
- Larry Lea, *"He who has ears to hear..."*
- Graham Fitzpatrick, *"Recognising God's voice"*

1.5 Three of our strongest weapons: Proclamation, thanks and praise

"The weapons of our battle are mighty in the service of God. With them I tear down the strongholds that Satan has built in my mind.

I take all my thoughts captive to obedience to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:4f)

The three most powerful weapons for this are: Proclamation, thanks and praise.

Proclamations

Just as Moses had a staff in his hand through which God proved his power, we also have a "staff": the Bible - the truths of God that we carry into battle against the attacks of the enemy.

When Jesus was tempted by Satan three times in the desert, He did not begin to argue, but countered each time with the word of God: "It is written..." Only then did Satan admit defeat and leave Him.

We have a very limited human potential when it to spiritual attacks. But we can speak God's authority into the situation, we can proclaim (speak out loud) the divine truth.

With this we can destroy the strongholds that Satan has built in our minds (or in the minds of others)!

Our main battlefield is our head.

Satan constantly attacks our thoughts, feelings and moods. We can only beat back these attacks if we counter them with the truth of God - this is done by speaking God's words from the Bible out loud.

God sets the standard for reality. He is the almighty Creator, the loving Father, the judge and the strongest force in the universe. He says what is true! That is why it is important to proclaim these truths, even against our feelings and emotions. This is not about convincing ourselves of something - it is not about autosuggestion. Because we do not rely on a "self-mechanism". We also do not speak things into existence by our own power, but we merely establish the truth of God. We expect Him to provide the help and the breakthrough we need. Jesus says: "I am the truth!" Every situation must be measured against Him, against His opinion.

Christians can live from the infinite treasure of grace in everyday life:

1 Peter 1, 13: "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and

place your hope entirely in the grace that is offered to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ." This is also an important proclamation:

"I live by grace today!"

Thanks to

The second weapon is gratitude. Thanking God changes our perspective. It is very healing to turn our gaze away from ourselves and towards God. When we think of the things God has already done in our lives or of the many situations in which He has intervened practically, the often dark cloud that hovers over us brightens.

Worship

Worship expresses gratitude, joy, love and longing for God and complete dependence on Him.

Thanking God and worshipping Him are two powerful weapons we have in our hands. They are the best "antidepressants"!

Daily prayer for protection Heavenly Father,

I pray this prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit!

In the name of Jesus, I bind, rebuke and void; all division, ill-feeling, uncleanness, strife, contention and anger, wrath, murder, criticism, condemnation, pride, envy, ill-will, evil speaking, exaggeration and lies, poverty, spirits that spread fear, spirits of witchcraft, the antichrist spirit and religious spirits.

I bind all the curses that have been spoken against me. I bless those who curse me and I pray that you bless these people.

I bind all the words spoken that are meant to judge me, but also all the words of judgement that I have spoken about other people.

I bind the power of the negative words of others over my life. I also bind all prayers that were not spoken by the Holy Spirit and declare them ineffective.

I bind over my life every psychic and spiritual power, witchcraft, sorcery and false tongues that have prayed against me.

I am a child of God!

I resist the devil!

No weapon aimed at me will hit me!

I put the armour of God (Gal 6:14ff - I gird myself with truth, put on the armour of righteousness, put the boots of readiness to preach the gospel. I take up the shield of faith, with which I can extinguish all the fiery darts of Satan, and I take the helmet of salvation and the sword of faith - namely the Word of God).

I take authority over this day in the name of Jesus! I declare that this day will be successful, blessed and complete in all areas!

I declare that I will walk in your love today!
The Holy Spirit leads and guides me on this day. I distinguish between the righteous and the wicked. I have authority (in my sphere of authority) over Satan, all demons, powers and authorities. I take this authority over Satan and all his demons and all the people who are influenced by them.

I am a righteous person of God in Jesus Christ - I am God's property!

I am protected by the blood of Jesus from every demonic, psychic or mental attack.

I build a protective wall around myself, my spouse and my children that stands day and night!

I ask you, Lord, in the name of Jesus, to raise up angels to surround me and my family and also to protect our home from every intruder.

I confess that I am healed and healthy.

I flourish, will live long, am constant, incorruptible, fruitful, full of peace, patience and love.

Whatever I do with my hands, it will succeed - because God takes care of all my needs.

God, I pray for the ministry you have for me. Anoint me, Lord, so that I can fulfil all that you have called me to do.

I call divine times, open doors of opportunity and God-induced encounters into existence.

I confess that my testimony and my ministry are effective and powerful.

I shoot the arrows of the Gospel - you, Holy Spirit, make sure that they hit.

I praise you, Lord, and ask all this in Jesus' name! AMEN!

© Brownsville Assembly of God Literature:

- Derek and Ruth Prince, Prayers and Proclamations

1.6 Bind and unbind

Proactive prayer

In the Gospel of Matthew, we read that Jesus gave his disciples **authority** and **power**. **authority** by "binding and loosing". Jesus speaks to Peter in Matthew 16:19:

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and **whatever you on earth will be bound in the heavens, and what is bound on earth will be bound in the heavens.**
Whatever you solve on earth will be solved heaven.

Two chapters later it is no longer about Peter alone, but Jesus speaks here to his disciples. There is an expansion from "you" to "her":

Matthew 18,

18 Verily I say to you: If you bind anything on earth, it will be bound in heaven, and if you loose anything on earth, it will be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say to you: If two of you on earth agree to ask for anything, it will be given to them by my Father who is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst.

Common prayer a key role here. The agreement of several prayers is an important basis.

Binding and loosening means: We can and should take the initiative!

What is bound and loosed through us here on earth will be bound and loosed in heaven!

In practical terms, this means that when Christians make decisions here on earth, heaven follows suit!

What a privilege! What an opportunity!

What a responsibility!

Nevertheless, God is still sovereign in his decisions. He remains the supreme authority. Another word for bind is "forbid" and for loose "allow".

Jesus saying:

I give you the authority to decide what is allowed and what is not.

Sometimes God gives his children an impression in difficult situations as if he were saying:

"It's your turn! It's your turn to be active, to make a decision and to bind and loose! And the heavens will follow."

Jesus' statement in John 20:23 is also related to this:

"If you forgive someone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain them, they are retained."

This is also about a way of binding and releasing:

Mark 11,

22 And Jesus began to speak to them: Have faith in God!

23 For verily I say unto you, If a man shall say unto this mountain, Be thou lifted up, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe, that what he says will happen, it will come to him.

24 Therefore I say to you: Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be granted to you!

25 And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

In another passage, Jesus makes it clear that the "strong" must be recognised and bound. The

"Strong" can be a demonic power that binds (controls) certain things, people or situations:

Matthew 12,

28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.

29 Or how can someone enter the strong man's house and rob his household goods unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will rob his house.

In difficult situations where you don't know how to pray, you can ask God to reveal the "strong one" the problem. It is about recognising the strong one.

God shows him to us in different ways:

Through his word, through inner impressions or through dreams, visions and images.

The strong must then be bound in the name of Jesus. There are real examples of this in the book mentioned below and in the lecture given by Derek Prince.

It is also interesting to remember that God created man to rule (i.e. to govern, to act responsibly):

1. Genesis 1,

26 And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth!"

Even at the end of time, it is the destiny of Christians to be active, to reign:

Revelation 20,

6 Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection! About this the

second death will have no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Also in Revelation 22:

5 And there will be no more night, and they will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine on them, and they will reign forever and ever.

God wants to educate his children and turn them into mature, responsible adults. to develop personalities. He therefore equips us with authority and gives us opportunities to exercise responsibility - e.g. in binding and loosing.

The three most important weapons for binding and unbinding are

- a) the Word of God (proclaiming the truths of the Bible)
- b) the blood of Jesus (pronounce the victory of Jesus, which is clear through his shed blood, over a situation)
- c) the name of Jesus (praying in his name, i.e. in agreement with him).

The basis for binding and loosing is Jesus' victory over Satan on the cross:

Colossians 2,

13 And you, who were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has given us

made alive with him by surrendering all our offences.

14 He cancelled the certificate of debt against us, the one that existed in statutes against us, and also removed it from our midst by nailing it to the cross;

15 He completely disarmed the authorities and powers and made a public spectacle of them. In him he held the triumph over them.

Jesus has already defeated the enemy once and for all. We no longer need to do that. Our task is to take the land.

This is similar to the situation back then in the Iraq war: the allied forces had the old regime was crushed - but were still attacks almost every day.

Our destiny is to bind, loose and rule in obedience and dependence on God.

Literature:

- Book: Derek Prince, *The Weapon of Prayer and Fasting*, ISBN 3-8806-013-6
- Lecture (MP3): Derek Prince, *The aggressive prayer*
- Article by Rob Bell, *Walking in the Dust of the Rabbi*, in the magazine "Aufatmen" II/2005

1.7 Ask and receive

It is about recognising the riches in which we can live as children of God. In the Bible, we are given the greatest promises. Our task is to do everything we can to discover this treasure and to lift it up. It is worthwhile to know the promises (= promises of God) and to deal with them intensively. First the promises are listed, then the prerequisites for their fulfilment are highlighted and important principles are described that help to receive what has been requested.

"If you had *faith* like a mustard seed, you would speak to this mountain: Lift yourselves up from here to there! And it would be lifted away, and nothing would be impossible for you. But this kind does not go out except through prayer and fasting." Matthew 17:20

"Again I say to you, if *two* of you shall agree on earth concerning anything for which they desire to ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven." Matthew 18:19

"Truly I say to you: If you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what happened to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive." Matthew 21:21

"All things are possible to him who believes!" Mark 9:23

"With God nothing is impossible." Luke 1:37

"And Jesus began to speak to them: Have faith in God! For verily I say unto you, If a man shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, they shall be done unto him. Therefore I say to you: **Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be granted to you!** And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. Mark 11:22-24

"And I say to you: **Ask, and it be given you; seek, and ye shall find; , and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.**

What father among you, when he his son for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks him for a fish, will he give him a snake instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he

give him a scorpion? So now, you who are bad

If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Luke 11:9-13

"Watch and beware of all covetousness! For no one's life depends on the abundance of his possessions." Luke 12:15

"And he said to his disciples, Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will put on." Luke 12:22

"Consider the ravens! They neither sow reap, they have neither storehouses nor barns, and yet God feeds them. How much more are you than the birds!

But who among you can add a cubit to his length with his worries?

If then you are not able to do the least, why are you anxious about the rest?" Luke 12:24-26

"But should not God do right by his chosen ones who call to him day and night, even if he keeps them waiting a long time?

I tell you, he will bring them justice shortly!" Luke 18:7-8

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father: and whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.**

If you love me, keep my commandments!" John 14:12-15

"If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This will glorify my Father, that you may bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father loves me, so I love you; abide in my love." John 15:7-9

"**Truly, truly, I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you!** Until now you have asked nothing in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete." John 16:23-24

"You do not obtain it because you do not ask; you ask and do not receive it because you ask amiss, that you may consume it with your lust." James 4:3

"But let patience have a perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:3

Principle No.1: As born-again followers of Jesus, we are *beloved children* of our heavenly Father.

He is infinitely rich. In Him is fullness. There is no lack in Him.

It is said of him "Mine is the silver and gold" (...)
"The earth is the Lord's and what fills it" (...) Principle no. 2: God is a *loving and generous God*.

Even in creation, we recognise its greatness, its richness and its lavish beauty.

A "shaken measure" is pleasing to Him. God's generosity is based on his love for his children. Just as a good earthly father gives and cares for his children.

Principle no. 3: God often answers our requests differently and at a different time than we expect. This requires perseverance and patience. Because God knows us, He knows what is good for us and when.

Principle no. 4: It is a spiritual law that promises are linked to *conditions*. We know this from the Old and New Testaments.

What are prerequisites for asking and receiving to "work"?

- Rebirth (John, chapter 3),
- Devotion (consecrating one's life and desires and rights to Jesus),
- do not live in conscious sin;
- forgive those who have been guilty against me,
...

1.8 24-hour prayer

As the church of Jesus, we will come to times when we will no longer be able to continue without persistent, constant prayer.

God is in the process of pouring out the Spirit grace and prayer over his body anew (Zech. 12:10). The goal is to restore the biblical normal state: a revival of prayer in the body of Jesus.

The biblical foundations for this can be found in the following passages, among others:

Acts 2:42: But they continued steadfastly in all manner of prayer.

Romans 12:12: Keep praying! 1

Thessalonians 5:17: Pray without ceasing.

Lk.18,1: Jesus said that it is necessary to pray always.

Col.4,2: Hold fast to prayer.

Eph 6:18: Pray in the Spirit at all times.

Lk.21,36: Watch therefore and pray at all times!

Phil 4:6-7: Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Ps 55:17-18: But I will cry to God, and the LORD will help me; I will *pray and wrestle* evening, morning and noon, and he will hear my voice.

Dan 6,11: ... And he (Daniel) on his knees three times that day, praying and giving thanks before his God..

Our heavenly Father wants us to come to Him as children and ask Him for the things we need:

Jas 4:2: "You have nothing because you do not ask."

Germany is currently being flooded by an unprecedented prayer movement. The Holy Spirit is bringing believers from different denominations and communities together to ask God for grace and breakthroughs for our country. The time is ripe. The battle is getting tougher. At the moment, around 200 German cities and regions are taking turns praying throughout the month, day and night - 24 hours a day. Some of the prayers are accompanied by fasting. The primary aim is for Germany as a nation to grow into its God-given end-time destiny. A survey of well-known spiritual leaders in the country showed that

"Germany's appeal" the following result:

- Leadership (organisational skills, willingness to serve)
- Blessing role for Europe (vocation in Europe, releasing important things)
- Fatherhood (fatherhood of God, being spiritual fathers and mothers - e.g. in house churches)

- "Fighting spirit" (spiritual strategists, resisting the enemy)
- Dedication - especially to youth (radicalism, willingness to suffer, renunciation)
- Thoroughness (giving the best for God's kingdom)
- Land of the missionaries (to create a modern missionary movement)
- Land of the Word (Reformation, mission, teaching gifts)
- Worship (musicians, poets and thinkers to the honour of God)
- Generosity (wealth and finances for the kingdom of God)
- Service to the Jews (key role for Israel)

In addition, the prayer chain is also about regional concerns, such as unity among the leaders, prayer for revival, the conversion of family members, for the individual churches, those responsible in politics, business, society, media, art, schools...

But also: xenophobia, unemployment, crime, abortion, corruption, anti-Semitism, etc.

Every month, there are updated prayer requests can be downloaded by those praying via the Internet. The address is: www.waechterruf.de.

All types of prayer can be varied during the prayer times. In addition to intercession: Thanksgiving, adoration, supplication, proclamation, praise, battle prayer, etc.

There are four levels of prayer:

1. Personal prayer - Mt.6,6 (alone - building intimacy with God.)
2. Prayer in groups of two and three - Mt 18, 18- 20.
3. Prayer in the house church/house group - Acts 1:13+14.
4. Prayer in the great assembly of the Christians of a place - Acts 4:24.

All the teaching about prayer does not produce prayer - you just have to start.

Further practical tips for implementation:

- House groups/house churches, friends or individuals can reserve one or two hours for themselves once a month on a specific day.
- Housewives, senior citizens, students, employees, the self-employed, etc. - everyone whom the Holy Spirit urges is invited to join in the 24-hour prayer, i.e. to move God's arm under the guidance of the Holy Spirit - through prayer.
- The time allocation is free (depending on the personal situation) and is coordinated locally.

- There is a local prayer coordinator who ensures communication with each other and passes on the latest information, prayer requests, pictures and impressions, etc.

The church of Jesus will once again become a praying church. She will receive everything decisive from her holy and almighty Lord. It will obediently do the things it has been commissioned to do and is given through the current guidance of the Holy Spirit.

No more dead programmes! No dead programmes!

Being close to the heartbeat of God, seeing the local situation more and more through his eyes.

Love as God loves,
weep like Jesus wept.

Resist the enemy - where resistance is necessary. Be vigilant,

recognise the signs of the times.

Being humble before God and people. Surrender to Jesus with everything you are and everything you have.

Living with Him in victory, in the inner peace that comes only from Him.

Rev 22,20: He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon. Amen, come, Lord Jesus!"

Literature used and strongly recommended reading:

- Peter Wenz: The Guardian Call.
- John Mulinde: Light or darkness over Europe.
- Elizabeth Alves: Lord, teach me to pray.
- Tom Hess: The Guardians.

1.9 Breakthroughs through fasting

1. What is fasting?

"Fasting" is the habit of deliberately abstaining from food for spiritual purposes. Since Moses was on Mount Sinai, fasting has been part of the relationship between God and his people (i.e. for around 3,500 years). Through fasting it is possible to recognise God's will much more clearly and deeply. Fasting is therefore part of God's perfect care. There is no substitute for fasting.

2. Why fast?

- because Jesus fasted said that his disciples would fast (Luke 5:35).
- because we want to be obedient to the word of God.
- to humble ourselves before God (Ezra 8:21).
- to come into the fullness of God's power.
- so that the power of God may be made mighty in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).
- to obtain God's support in the fulfilment of his will (Acts 13:3-4; 14:23).
- to experience breakthroughs in times of crisis (Esther 4:15+16).
- to receive guidance from God (Ezra 8:21-23).
- to receive insight and divine revelation (Jer. 36:6).
- because we in a spiritual war and must fight with spiritual weapons (2 Corinthians 10:4 + Mark 9:29).

Fasting means: "I renounce because I love you."

3. Biblical foundations

When it comes to fasting, we must also take our guidelines from the Word of God and use the Bible to check what God's will is for us.

A complete list of biblical passages can be found in a concordance under the keyword "fasting".

Here is a selection from the Old and New Testaments:

Isaiah 58,

3 "Why do we fast, and you do not see it; why do we humble our souls, and you do not observe it?" Behold, on your fast day you seek your pleasure and urge all your labourers! 4 Behold, you fast in order to quarrel and quibble and strike out with an ungodly fist; you are not fasting now so that your cries may be heard on high. 5 Do you think that such a fast pleases me, when a man tortures himself for a day and hangs his head like a reed and lies down in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast and a day pleasing to the Lord? 6 Is not this a fast, as I love it: that you open unjust bonds, that you untie the knots of the yoke, that you set the oppressed free and tear away every yoke, 7 that you break your bread for the hungry and bring the poor persecuted into your house, that when you see a naked man, you clothe him and not your flesh

withdraw? 8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will make rapid progress; your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rearguard. 9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry out, and he will say, 'Here I am! When you take away the yoke from among you, when you stop pointing fingers and speaking evil; 10 when you give your bread to the hungry and satisfy the famished soul, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your darkness will be like the noonday. 11 The LORD will guide you without ceasing, and satisfy your soul in drought and strengthen your bones; you will be like a well-watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters never fail. 12 And at your prompting the ruins of ancient times will be rebuilt, you will raise up the foundations of former generations; and you will be called a mason of breaches, a restorer of habitable streets.

2. Chr 20,3

Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and made a point of seeking the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast throughout Judah.

Ezra 8:21

And I proclaimed a fast there by the river Ahava, that we should humble ourselves before our God, to implore from him a happy journey for us and our children and all our possessions.

Neh 1:4

When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for several days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven, saying ...

Est 4:16

So go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me for three days by day and by night; do not eat or drink. I too will fast like this with my maidservants, and then I will go in to the king, even though it is not according to the law. If I perish, I perish!

Joel 2:12

But even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart with fasting, with weeping, with lamentation!

Mt 6,16+17

But when you fast, do not scowl like the hypocrites, for they disguise their faces so that people will realise that they are fasting. Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward.

But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

so that it will not be noticed by people that you are fasting, but by your Father, who is in the

And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you openly.

Luke 5:35

But the days will come when the bridegroom be taken from them; then they will fast in those days.

Acts 13:2

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Acts 13:3

So they fasted and prayed, laid hands on them and let them go.

Acts 14:23

But after they had chosen elders for them in each congregation, they handed them over to the Lord, in whom they had become believers, with prayer and fasting.

4. Different types of fasting

The best thing to do is to ask the Holy Spirit how and when fast. He often lays a burden on our hearts, sometimes we have an important prayer request. Through fasting, our prayers are strengthened. Through fasting we confess our weaknesses and God's possibilities.

The Bible shows us that there is not just one right way to fast, but that it depends on personal guidance. Here, too, we should not become legalistic.

Some are led by God to skip a meal and instead spend this time in his presence. Others fast until the evening (Judges 20:26). Others are led to fast 1-3 days, some 1 week, some 21 days (as in Daniel), a few 40 days, some 3 days without food and drink (as in Esther).

We cannot manipulate God with our fasting. It is also not about achieving some spiritual feat. God is concerned with our attitude of heart and therefore our motivation. When fasting, the desire to please God is

The benefit of is greater than the cost. The benefits of fasting are greater than the costs.

5. Community fasting

Great power lies fasting together. In the Acts of the Apostles we read: "While they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke..." (Acts 13:2 + 14:23).

The presence of God is particularly strong in such a case.

This is an encouragement for all those who move a prayer request together or for the intercessors who pray and fast together for a city (e.g. also in the watchman's prayer).

A spiritually successful strategy will help us in

2 Chronicles 20 reports:

King Jehoshaphat is attacked by a huge army. He lets proclaim a common fast, pray together, uses spiritual gifts (here: the gift of wisdom) and joint praise and worship - all this leads to the self-destruction of the enemy army.

6. The lifestyle of fasting

Leading a lifestyle of fasting means that fasting becomes a part of life. Some fast regularly on one day of the week, some fast two mornings a week, others fast for a longer period once or twice a year.

Luke 5:35 shows that fasting is a sign of true discipleship and was prescribed by Jesus himself.

Practical tips and advice on fasting can be found in the three books listed below.

Literature on the topic:

- Derek Prince, The Weapon of Prayer and Fasting
- Mahesh Chavda, The Hidden Power of Prayer and Fasting
- Michael Schiffmann, Why we fast

1.10 What power does the blood of Jesus have?

What significance does the blood of Jesus shed on the cross of Golgotha have for us today?

Even in the Old Testament we have references to the healing power of blood that saves us from death:

1. With the animal sacrifices, whose blood signalled forgiveness of sins.
2. When the Israelites left Egypt:
"And they shall take of the blood and spread it on both doorposts and on the lintels of the houses where they eat."
Exodus 12:7
3. But truly, he bore our sickness and took our pain upon himself, but we thought he was punished, beaten and afflicted by God;
But he was pierced for our transgression, he was crushed for our iniquity; the punishment of our peace was upon him, and with his wounds we are healed. Isa. 53, 4+5

In the New Testament we read about other effects of the blood on our lives:

"And he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'" Math 26:28

This results in

The blood of Jesus seals a new covenant of God with us humans.

The blood of Jesus was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus died in our place. We deserved to die because of our guilt.

"Therefore Jesus said to them: Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him." John 6:53f

By symbolically drinking his blood in the Lord's Supper, we have life in us, life for eternity and will be resurrected at the end of time.

Through the blood we have close fellowship with Jesus - we abide in Him, He abides in us.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock ... to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with the blood of his own Son. Acts 20:28

The church was purchased through the blood of Jesus.

"For there is no distinction: all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, so that they may be justified without merit, through his grace, by means of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God has made him an atoning sacrifice through his blood.

for all who believe, for the evidence of his righteousness, because of the forbearance for sins that were previously

were done under divine patience ..." Romans 3:23 ff

Through the blood of Jesus we are justified before God without any merit of our own, by grace - if we accept this by faith.

"But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Now that we have been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved by him from the judgement of wrath! Romans 5, 8+9

We are saved from the wrath of God through his blood.

"Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

So whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup; for he who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgement on himself, because he does not discern the body of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 11:25ff

The blood of Jesus (and the Lord's Supper) deserves reverence (this should not be underestimated).

"... in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished on us in all wisdom and understanding... Ephesians 1:7+8

Through the blood we have redemption and the associated liberation from the bonds that result from our sins:

"...who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins..." Colossians 1:13+ 14 Through the blood we have been saved from the power of darkness.

Through the blood we have gained entry into the kingdom of his love.

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made the two into one and has broken down the dividing wall, having abolished in his flesh the enmity (the law of commandments in statutes), so as to create in himself one new man out of the two, and to make peace, and to reconcile the two in one body to God through the cross,

having killed the enemy through him." Ephesians 2:13ff
 Through the blood of Jesus, Christians and Jews have become one in Him.
 The enmity between the two is cancelled out blood.
 "For it pleased *God* that in him should all fullness dwell, and that all things should be reconciled to himself through him (by making peace through the blood of his cross) by him, both things in heaven and things on earth." Col.1,19+20
 Through the blood, God made peace between mankind and himself.
 "...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself as a blameless sacrifice to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" Heb 9:12 Through the blood our conscience is cleansed - this enables us to come before God with confidence and serve Him.
 "... how much worse punishment, do you think, will he be held guilty who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, and despised the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and reproached the Spirit of grace?" Heb. 10,28+29 You have come "...to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel." Heb 12:14
 The blood of Jesus constantly intercedes for me before God in heaven.
 "Therefore Jesus also, to sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered outside the gate." Heb 13:11
 The blood of Jesus sanctifies us (= sets us apart for God).
 "... and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:7b
 The blood cleanses us (continually) from all guilt.
 "It is he who came with water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with water alone, but with water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit and the water and the blood, and the three are one." 1 John 5:6ff

The blood (and the Spirit and the water) testify that Jesus is the Son of God.
 "To him who loves us and has washed us from our sins in his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father: to him be the glory and the power for ever and ever! Amen." Rev 1:6

Through the blood, Jesus has made us a kingdom and priests.
 "And they sang a new song: 'Worthy are you to take the book and to break its seals, for you were slain, and with your blood you bought men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign on earth.'" Rev 5:9+10
 Through his blood, Jesus bought people from all over the world for God.
 Through the blood they will reign on earth.
 "And they have overcome him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and have not loved their lives unto death!" Rev 12:11
 We can resist Satan through our testimony and through Jesus' blood. The blood of Jesus is the best equipment to overcome the evil powers.
 What other specific behaviours result from this for us today?
 => We should thank Jesus with all our hearts: that He gave His life out of love for us.
 that He was obedient to the Father even unto death. that He brought about for us the manifold exchange on the cross described above.

=> When we are sick, we may proclaim (say out loud) with faith that He bore our sickness, that He took our pain upon Himself and that we are healed by His wounds. (Is. 53,4+5)

Literature:

- Helmut Schweiker, The Blood of Jesus
- Derek Prince, Prayers and Proclamations

1.11 "Lord, teach us to pray!" The Lord's Prayer.

An opportunity to enjoy the presence of God every day.

Jesus responded to the disciples' above-mentioned request with the "Our Father". This prayer is completely sufficient in and needs no addition or explanation. If you would like to consciously spend time with God beyond this, you will find good suggestions below.

I. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

A. Create an image in your mind of the blood Jesus shed on the cross. God that you can call him "Father" because of this blood. The almighty Creator has become your loving father (Abba = "Daddy") - marvel and give thanks.

B. Sanctify the names of God according to the five blessings of the New Covenant. Say out loud what you believe.

1. My sins are forgiven and I am delivered from their power. a. Yahweh zidqenu: Yahweh our righteousness. b. Yahweh meqaddesh: Yahweh who sanctifies.

2. I am filled with the Holy Spirit. a. Yahweh shalom: Yahweh is peace. b. Yahweh shammah: Yahweh is here. (The near, present God.)

3. Through the blood of Jesus, as a child of God I have a right to healing and health. Yahweh rophé: Yahweh heals.

4. I have been delivered from every curse and have entered into the blessing of Abraham (Galatians 3:13). Yahweh jireh: God's provision will become visible.

5. I can be free from all fear.

a. Yahweh ro'i: Yahweh my shepherd.

b. Yahweh nissi: Yahweh my banner. In him we have victory!

C. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you areas where you may be taking the Lord's name in vain.

D. Submit to the lordship of Christ.

E. Pray in the spirit, worship him and sing songs in your heart to the Lord.

II. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

A. You yourself

1. Come to terms with God.

2. Ask Jesus to sit on the throne of your life and rule over every area of your life. Give him your rights again (self-determination, time, wealth...).

3. Remain before the Lord until the course of your day is clear and the Spirit of God is at work in you.

B. Pray for your family (spouse, children and other family members).

C. Pray for your church (leaders)

D. Pray for your nation (city, country, politicians, spiritual leaders and revival).

E. Ask the Spirit of God to help you set your priorities correctly and put them into practice.

F. Be in the will of God.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you develop a regular, personal prayer life and to give you time for the Word of God so that you can have daily fellowship with Jesus.

2. Pray that the Lord will plant you in a local church and make you an active, functioning and healthy part of His body.

3. Check your work habits. Are you sloppy? Addicted to work? Ask the Lord to give you skill, efficiency, strength and balance.

4. Examine your giving. Are you obeying the Lord in giving generously (tithing is a biblical guideline)? Or are you greedy and stingy? Or are you a poor steward? Do you have a reputation for being fair and honest and keeping your word? Take some time to pray about it.

G. Remember that the kingdom of God was the topic Jesus spoke about in the forty days after his resurrection.

Therefore, our priority is also to make disciples of others.

Ask the Holy Spirit what He wants to do through you today.

III. Give us this day our daily bread.

A. Believe that prosperity is God's will for you. (Def. prosperity= Having more than enough to provide for yourself and give to others)

1. Read scriptures such as Mat 6:25-34 and 2 Cor 9:6-11 and use them as a confession as you pray in your provision.

2. Think about the Word of God until you truly understand and believe that it God's will to bless you.

Be precise.

1. Tell God precisely what you need every day.

2. Decide to pray instead of worrying.

B. Be persistent.

1. Get back everything the devil has stolen from you. Discouragement and unbelief have robbed you of the answers to your prayers. Bring these

Ask again and hold out until the answer comes.

2. Praise the Lord, for he is Yahweh jireh: he sees your needs in advance and provides for everything.

IV. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

A. Ask God to forgive you.

1. Fix your own sins. Ask the Holy Spirit to you areas of your life where you are disobeying God.

2. Confess your sin. Accept God's opinion of this sin. Ask him to help you to hate this sin from your heart and to free you from its dominion.

3. Do not tolerate any feeling of condemnation. Do not forget that you are the righteousness of God in Christ. You are perfected in him.

B. Forgive as often as you want to receive forgiveness.

1. Think about the great guilt of sin that God has forgiven you.

2. Visualise what Jesus suffered on the cross because of your sin. Create a mental image of the blood that was shed for your forgiveness.

3. Forgive all those who have sinned against you out of a decision of the will. Pray for those who have wronged you.

C. to forgive everyone who sins against you today.

1. Make a conscious decision, by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit within you, to repay evil with good.

2. Confess: "I will love my enemies. I will bless those who curse me and do good to those who hate me. I will pray for those who insult and persecute me." (Matt. 5:44)

3. Pray that the fruit of the Spirit will be more fully realised in your life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22)

V. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

A. Put on the whole armour of God.

1. Gird your loins with truth.

2. Put on the armour of justice.

3. Put on the boots of readiness to proclaim the gospel.

4. Take the shield of faith.

5. Receive the helmet of salvation.

6. Seize the sword of the spirit, which is the

Word (Rhema) of God. (see Ephesians 6:10-18)

7. Always pray in the spirit.

B. Build a protective wall.

1. Three conditions.

a. We make the Lord our refuge.

b. We love him.

c. We know his name.

2. Confess: "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God; in him I will trust".

VI. For yours is the kingdom and the power and glory for ever and ever.

A. The empire

1. Praise the Lord for bringing you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his love and light.

2. Confess in faith: "The Lord will deliver me from all evil and save me into his heavenly kingdom".

3. Praise God, for he has invited you to be a partaker of his kingdom.

B. The power.

1. Praise the Lord, for he has invited you to share in his power.

2. Reflect on the power of God your Father. Compare your problems with his mighty, marvellous works and his great love for you.

3. Confess in faith: "I am strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. I am endowed with power from on high. Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world. My Father gives me strength. He strengthens me through his power. He has given me authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm me."

C. The glory.

1. Contemplate the glory of God - the character and ways of God portrayed through Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to transform you into the same image in which Christ is being formed in you. Ask to be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

2. Ask the Lord to help you to live worthy of him and to serve him as he deserves.

3. Praise him and give him all glory and honour. Return to praise.

Literature:

- Larry Lea, "Who lacks wisdom",
- David Yonggi Cho, "How I pray"
- Hank Hanegraaff, "The Prayer of Jesus"

1.12 Prayer in case of illness and financial hardship

"Lord, teach us to pray!"

This was the disciples' request to Jesus.

Today we have the statements of the Old and New Testaments at our disposal. The aim is to find out how we should pray in certain emergency situations.

The basis for this is the word of God - because this is his main way of communicating his will to us.

It is about unearthing the treasures that he makes available to us.

The absolute basis for the supernatural intervention of God in times of need is:

1. his love for us - and
2. the substitutionary sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross of Golgotha.

In Isaiah 53 we read about Jesus:

"... he bore our sicknesses and took our pains upon himself; ... by his wounds we are healed."

The statement in 2 Corinthians 8:9 applies to financial hardship:

"... that he, being rich, became poor for your sakes, that you through his poverty might become rich."

With the coming of Jesus to this earth, with his suffering, death and resurrection, he has long since expressed himself: I want to help, I want to heal, I want to provide. And that's what it says in his word. That has been explained once and for all. We don't need any additional information. When we find ourselves in emergency situations, it is fundamentally important that we see the need with spiritual eyes - not just with our natural ones!

Reality is how God sees things. Reality is not just what we obviously have in front of our eyes.

Example: I am obviously ill. However, the reality is that God loves me, wants to see me well and that Jesus died on the cross for my illness! Therefore, we should not pray like this: "Please make me well, if it is your will." God's will is that I am healthy and cared for. Jesus the price for this on the cross. Rather, we can gratefully proclaim that God has also solved the problem of illness in my case!

We can pray: "Jesus, thank you for suffering for my illness on the cross. Thank you for your love. I claim the gift of healing on the basis of Your blood."

For it is written: "Therefore I say to you: Whatever you ask, believe only that you have received it (past) and it will become yours (future)." Mark 11:24

Healing or financial provision is already present in the spiritual reality - even if we do not yet see it with our natural eyes. This requires a little faith: the belief that God's statements and intentions are true.

We can proclaim healing and care,

i.e. speaking the truth out loud. The Bible also calls this "doing violence to the kingdom of heaven and usurping it" (see Matthew 11:12 and Luke 16). We are allowed to do this several times - also with perseverance (to be in God's ears) - until the answer is recognisable in the visible world.

Asking in faith is taking and receiving. People who live by faith can plead and cry out to the Lord, asserting their rights without slipping into anger, accusation and despair. If illnesses and other hardships do not disappear immediately, we should ask the following questions:

"God, I know that you love me and that Jesus died for this illness. Why hasn't the healing happened yet? What are You up to? Where are you in this situation? Do you want to make something clear through this?"

It is important to ask these questions. Nevertheless, we will not always receive a clear answer. Because God is God - we will never be able to understand everything.

However, it is important that we put into practice what we understand. This is how we can seize many blessings and miracles. When we are in trouble, God is often concerned with changing our character.

There is no way to experience faith and miracles without sanctification and change of character.

"And this is the confidence (boldness) that we have in him, that he hears us when we ask anything according to his will. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of him." 1 John 5, 14+15

Further key verses on the subject of "Ask and take":

Joh. 14,13; Joh. 15,7+16; Joh. 16,23+24; 1.Joh.3,19-22; Math.18,19+20; Mk.11,22-24.

Bible passages on the subject of healing:

Mark 16:17+18 "These signs will follow those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues, they will take up serpents; will lay hands on the weak, and they will be at ease."

1 Peter 2:24: "Who own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Psalm 103:2: "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his mercies. He forgives all your sins, he heals all your diseases."

Mat.8,16: "And evening came, they brought to him many who were possessed with devils; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and he healed all who were afflicted,

so that what is spoken through the prophet Isaiah may be fulfilled, saying: "He himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses."

References and sources

The most important book on the subject (after the Bible):

- Wolfhard Margies,

Understanding miracles - experiencing
miracles, ISBN 3-926395-38-9.

2.1 Who is God?

Who is the God of the Bible?

What statements and names describe him? What character traits of God are made clear by the accounts in the Bible?

► God is a person. He is not a nebulous force. He is jealous when other things are taken more seriously. (Deuteronomy 6:15). He is a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24). But above all he is kind and merciful: "Gracious and merciful is the LORD, patient and of great kindness! The LORD is gracious to all, and his mercy extends to all his works." (Psalm 145:6)

► God is the eternal one. This fact is beyond our imagination. He has no beginning and no end. But the LORD is God in truth; he is a living God and an everlasting King." (Jeremiah 10:10)

► At the beginning of the Bible, God is presented as the creator of the universe and the origin of all life. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1

► The Hebrew names of God:

The different names of God each reflect one of his main characteristics:

- Yahweh zidqenu= God, our righteousness
- Yahweh meqaddesh= God who sanctifies
- Yahweh shalom= God, our peace
- Yahweh shammah= God is here
- Yahweh roph= God who heals
- Yahweh roi= God, the King
- Yahweh nissi= God our banner
- Yahweh jireh= God's provision will become visible

God's provision can be traced from the first book of the Bible to the last book. He provided the first people with everything they needed. He provided for the people of Israel, e.g. for 40 years in the desert. He still provides materially for his people today. God's provision is evident in the past, present and future.

► He is the God of Israel. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has sovereignly chosen this people out of the multitude of nations so that through the people of Israel it can be recognised that there is a living God. "For the LORD has chosen Jacob, Israel as his special possession." (Psalm 135:4)
"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples who are on the earth to be his people. It was not because you were more numerous than all the nations that the LORD took pleasure in you and chose you;

For ye are the least of all nations: but because the LORD loved you, and because he had taken the oath

He swore to your fathers, so the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is the true God, the faithful God, who keeps covenant and favour with those who love him and keep his commandments for a thousand generations; but he also repays those who hate him to his face and kills them; he does not fail to repay those who hate him, but pays them to their faces. You shall therefore keep the commandments, the statutes and the judgments which I command you this day to do." (Deuteronomy 7:6ff)

► God is both God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (Trinity).
Just as water can be liquid, solid and gaseous. God, the Father, Jesus, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one.

► God is love.

"Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love for us has been revealed in this, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. (1 John 4:7)

► God is the perfect Father.

"If you endure chastisement, God treats you as sons, for where is a son whom the father does not chastise? But if you are without chastisement, of which they have all been made partakers, then you are false and not sons! Then we also had our physical fathers as disciplinarians and shunned them; should we not now rather be subject to the Father of spirits and live? (Hebrews 12:7ff)

► God is judge

"... but God is judge, who humbles the one and exalts the other. For the LORD has a cup in his hand filled with sparkling wine; he pours it out; even the yeasts of it must sip and drink all the wicked of the earth." (Psalm 75:7)

"The LORD will judge the nations; ... My shield is with God, who helps sincere hearts.

God is a righteous judge and a God who is angry every day. (Psalm 7:8)

► God is just

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8)

"But it will come about, if you truly obey the voice of the LORD your God and observe to do all his commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will exalt you above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings will come upon you and befall you if you obey the voice of the LORD your God." (Deuteronomy 28:1ff)

► God is our doctor

"If you will obey the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his sight, and listen to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not put on you the diseases that I put on Egypt, for I am your physician." (Exodus 15:26)

► God is omnipresent

This means that he is in all places at the same time - in heaven and everywhere on earth.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mat.18,19)

► God is almighty

"And the twenty-four elders, who sat on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying: We thank you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, that you have taken to yourself your great power and have begun to reign!" (Revelation 11:16)

"Great and marvellous are your works, O Lord God Almighty! Righteous and true are your ways, O King of the nations!

Who should not fear you, Lord, and praise your name? For you alone are holy. For all nations will come and worship before you; for your

righteous deeds have been revealed." (Revelation 15:3)

"And I heard from the altar: Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgements! (Rev. 16:7)

► God is the ultimate ruler

His adversary is not his equal: Satan is just a fallen angel who rebelled, wanted to be like God and was rejected by him:

"How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, how you have been crushed to the ground, you who struck down the nations! And yet you had resolved in your heart: I will ascend to heaven and raise my throne above the stars of God and sit on the mountain of the gods in the far north; I will ascend above the heights shrouded in clouds, I will be like the Most High! Yes, you will descend to the realm of the dead, to the deepest pit!" (Isaiah 14:12ff)

► God is a God of community

He lives in himself in eternal fellowship (with Jesus and the Holy Spirit).

He desires a deep, intimate relationship of love with every person. Especially with his chosen people Israel and with every Christian who is part of the kingdom of God.

► "A refuge is the God of old." (Deuteronomy 33:27)

► If you want to emphasise one of God's characteristics in particular, then it is surely this one: **God is faithful!** This is emphasised throughout the Old and New Testaments.

"Faithful is God, through whom you have been called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:9)

"Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not withheld his favour and faithfulness from my master ..." (Genesis 24:27)

"The LORD, the LORD, the mighty God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great favour and faithfulness ..." (Exodus 34:6)

"It is the goodness of the LORD that we are not forsaken; his mercies have not yet come to an end, but are renewed every morning, and your faithfulness is great." (Lamentations 3:22f)

2.2 The loving and the just God

The Bible describes God as a loving Father who can be experienced personally. He is not a distant God who does not care about what moves us on a daily basis.

God is the perfect father. In contrast to our physical father, he is perfect in his love for his children, perfectly wise and just.

Who is a child of God?

In John 1:12 we read the answer: "*But as many as received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will man, but of God."

God, the Father, loves his children:

1 John 3:1: "See what kind of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God! And we . That is why the world does not recognise us, because it has not recognised him.

Romans 5:8: "But God demonstrates his love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

John 3:16: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

By giving His only Son to the cross for the sins of His earthly children, His love becomes very practical. He loves us not only with words, but also with deeds. That is why we can also experience God's presence, help and care in everyday life and cry out: "Abba, dear Father!" Romans 8:15

Romans 8:31+32 also applies here:

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" He that spared not even his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also give us all things?"

God's love shown in His greatest gift - **Jesus** - and also in the fact that He is our provider, comforter, practical helper in times of need and the one with whom we find true rest and true inner peace.

He offers us wisdom and knowledge so that we can understand what is happening around us and so that our lives can succeed (James 1:7). He gives and gives and gives us gifts - for free - out of love and grace. Despite all the freedom in which we live as children of God (Gal. 5:1), He demands obedience - and that we hate and forsake sin.

God's main characteristics are love and justice.

1. John 4:16: "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."

Eph 2,4+5: "But God, who is rich in mercy, through his great love with which he loved us, made us also, who were dead in sins, alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

Joh. 16,27: "...for the Father himself loves you, because you love me and believe that I came forth from God."

2. Thess. 2,16: "But He Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and a good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and strengthen you in every good word and work."

Psalms 11:7: "For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face.

Psalms 33:5: "He loves justice and judgement; the earth is full of the grace of the LORD."

Psalms 111:3: "Brilliant and marvellous are his works, and his righteousness endures forever.

Jer.23,6: "...and this is the name that will be given to him: The Lord, our righteousness."

The justice and love of God are the strongest forces in the universe!

He is not only the loving Father, but is also called "**Lord of Hosts**" in the Bible in 196x. He is also the holy God before whom nothing unholy can stand.

God has equipped us with free will so that we can love.

Each of us has been given the power to say "yes" or "no".

However, this power also meant taking responsibility for our decisions. We have to bear the consequences.

Deuteronomy 30:15: "Behold, I have set before you this day **life** and good, **death** and evil." (see also Deuteronomy 28 - Blessing and curse).

Because God loves us and because He is interested in our well-being, He will also lovingly correct us - just as a good father brings up his children:

Rev 3:19: "Those whom I love, I chastise and discipline. So be diligent and repent!"

Heb. 12:6: "For whom the Lord loves he chastises, but he strikes every son whom he receives."

Heb. 12:11: "But every chastisement, when it comes, does not seem to us to be joy, but sorrow; afterward it brings peace and righteousness as fruit to those who are trained by it."

Jer. 10:24: "Chastise me, O LORD, with moderation and not in your wrath, lest you destroy me completely."

God has made us his children out of love:

Eph. 1:5: "...and in love he predestined us to adoption as sons to himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will..."

The love of God is in us:

Romans 5:5: "... for the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us." Because we are filled with God's love, we can love God and each other.

John 4:19: "Let us love, for he first loved us."

God has good and benevolent plans for each and every one of us:

1. Cor 2:9: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have into the mind of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him."

What practical effects does it have that I have realised that God loves me?

- I receive my love and confirmation from my heavenly Father (and do not have to earn love and confirmation through outward appearances etc.).
- My self-esteem is based on the fact that I am a loved, accepted and cared for child of God.
- I know that I have a loving, healing, strong and rich Father in heaven.

As in any loving relationship, we also face a certain tension in our relationship with God:

On the one hand, we receive and give love - on the other hand, love does not cancel out God's justice (justice also includes mutual respect). God respects our decisions, but clearly points out the consequences to us in the Bible.

Literature:

- "The Father Heart of God" by Floyd McClung.

2.3 The names of God in the Old Testament

How to get to know God better

The different Hebrew names of God say a lot about his character. Anyone who wants to get to know God better will receive important information from the different addresses of God in the Old Testament. The more mature a Christian's relationship with Him becomes, the more important the individual aspects of God that are expressed through His names become.

Knowing the differences between the individual names helps

- To understand him better and
- To worship him with the appropriate name.

When Moses asks God what he should call him, God answers with his all-encompassing name: "I am" and "I am who I am" (Genesis 3:14).

Abraham initially knew God as "Lord" (Jehovah, or Yahweh - "the One who is in Himself", Genesis 13:4). Later, his knowledge increased. God revealed himself to him as "Adonai" (Master or Lord - Genesis 15:2), among other things.

"Adonai" and the name "Elohim" are both plural forms that refer to the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.

► Elohim - the almighty creator.

The first mention of God in the Bible uses this name: "In the beginning God (Elohim) created..." (Genesis 1:1).

► Jehovah Roi - the Lord is my shepherd.

The caring and protective name of God; so e.g. in Ps. 23:1:

"The Lord is my shepherd (Jehovah Roi) ...".

► El Shaddai - the almighty god.

The one who is strong enough to help; for example with Abraham in Genesis 17:1: "I am the Almighty God (El Shaddai). Walk before me and be blameless."

► El Elyon - the highest god.

Owner of heaven and earth, e.g. Melchisedek in Genesis 14:19: "Blessed be Abraham from the Most High God (El Elyon)..."

► El Olam - the eternal God.

The secret name of God. God, the eternal and mysterious one. "And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of the Lord, the eternal God." Genesis 21:33.

► El Gibbor - the mighty god.

"...and he is called Wonderful Counsellor, Counsellor, Mighty God (El Gibbor), Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isa. 9:6.

► Jehovah Melek - the Lord our King. The throne name of God.

"... My eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isaiah 6:5.

► Jehovah Sabaoth - the Lord of Hosts. The militant name of God. The Lord of the angelic hosts.

"Lord of Hosts (Jehovah Sabaoth), he is the King of Glory." Ps. 24:10.

► Pater (Greek) - God, the Father.

The personal name of God. Jesus mostly used this name for God (e.g. 156 times in the Gospel of John).

The three main names of God

Elohim - God, the powerful Creator (Genesis 1:1).

Jehovah - the Lord who is in Himself (Genesis 2:4).

Adonai - Lord and Master (Genesis 15:2).

The compound names of Jehovah El and Jehovah Elohim:

Jehovah El Elhohim - the Lord God of gods (Jos. 22:22)

Jehovah Elohim - the Lord God (Genesis 2:4 + 3:9-13+21)

Jehovah Elohe Abotheke - the Lord God of our fathers (Joshua 18:3)

Jehovah El Emeth - the Lord, the Most High God (Genesis 14:22)

Jehovah El Gemuwal - the Lord, God of vengeance (Jer. 51:56)

Jehovah Elohim Tsebaoth - the Lord God of hosts (Ps. 59:5)

Jehovah Elohe Yeshuathi - the Lord God of my salvation (Ps. 88:1)

Jehovah Elohe Yisrael - the Lord God of Israel (Ps. 41:14)

The compound names of God (El, Elohim and Elohe):

Elohim - God (Genesis 1:1)

Elohim Bashamayim - God in heaven (Jos. 2:11) El

Bethel - God of the house of God (Gen. 35:7)

Elohe Chaseddi - the God of my grace (Ps. 59, 10)

El Elohe Yisrael - God, the God of Israel (Genesis 33:20)

El Elyon - the highest God (Genesis 14:18) El

Emunah - the faithful God (Deuteronomy 7:9) El

Gibbor - the mighty God (Isaiah 9:6)

El Hakabodh - the God of glory (Ps. 29:3) El Hay - the living God (Jos. 3:10)

El Hayyay - the God of my life (Ps. 42:8) Elohim
 Kedoshim - holy God (Jos. 24:19)
 El Kanna - the jealous God (Ex. 20:5) El Kanno - the
 jealous God (Jos. 24:19) Elohe Mauzi - God of my
 strength (Ps. 43:2) Elohim Machase Lanu - God our
 refuge (Ps. 62:8)
 Eli Malekhi - God, my King (Ps. 68:24) El
 Marom - God Most High (Micah 6:6)
 El Nekamoth - God who avenges (Ps. 18:47)
 El Nose - God who forgives (Ps. 99:8)
 Eloheni Olam - our eternal God (Ps. 48:14) Elohim
 Ozer Li - God, my helper (Ps. 54:4)
 El Rai - the God who sees me (Genesis 16:13) El Sali
 - God, my rock (Psalm 42:9)
 El Shaddai - Almighty God (Genesis 17:1+2) Elohim
 Shophtim Ba-arets - God who judges the world (Psalm
 58:11)
 El Simchath Gili - God, my exuberant joy (Ps. 43,4)
 Elohim Tsebaoth - God of Hosts (Ps. 80:7)
 Elohe Tishuathi - God, my salvation (Ps.
 18:46 + 51:14)
 Elohe Tsadeki - God, my righteousness (Ps. 4:1) Elohe
 Yakob - God of Israel (Ps. 20:1)
 Elohe Yisrael - God of Israel (Ps. 59,5)

The compound names of Jehovah: Jehovah - the Lord
 (Exodus 6:2f)

Adonai Jehovah - God, the Lord (Genesis 15:2) Jehovah
 Adon Kol Ha-arets - the Lord, the Lord of the whole world
 (Joshua 3:11).
 Jehovah Bore - the Lord the Creator (Isa. 40:28)
 Jehovah Chereb - the Lord ... the sword
 (Deuteronomy 33:29)
 Jehovah Eli - the Lord my God (Ps. 18:2)
 Jehovah Elyon - the highest Lord (Genesis
 14:18-20)
 Jehovah Gibbor Milchamah - the mighty Lord in battle
 (Ps. 24:8).
 Jehovah Maginnenu - the Lord our Defender
 (Ps. 89,18)
 Jehovah Goelek - the Lord my Saviour (Isa.
 49:26 + 60:16)
 Jehovah Hashopet - the Lord of Judges
 (Judges 11:27)
 Jehovah Hoshiah - O Lord save (Ps. 20:9)
 Jehovah Izuz Wegibbor - the Lord strong and mighty (Ps.
 24:8)
 Jehovah-jireh - the Lord will provide (Genesis
 22:14)

Jehovah Kabodhi - the Lord my glory (Ps. 3:3)
 Jehovah Kanna Shemo - the Lord whose name is
 is "jealous" (Exodus 34:14)
 Jehovah Keren-yishi - the Lord, the horn of my salvation
 (Ps. 18:2)
 Jehovah Machsi - the Lord my refuge (Ps.
 91:9)
 Jehovah Magen - the Lord, the shield
 (Deuteronomy 33:29)
 Jehovah Makkeh - the Lord who smites (Ezek. 7,9)
 Jehovah Mauzzam - the Lord, their strength
 (Ps. 37:39)
 Jehovah Mauzzi - the Lord, my fortress (Jer. 16:19)
 Ha-melech Jehovah - the Lord, the King (Ps.
 98:6)
 Jehovah Melech Olam - the Lord is King forever (Ps. 10:16)
 Jehovah Mephalti - the Lord my strong provider (Ps. 18:2)
 Jehovah Mekaddishkem - the Lord who sanctifies you
 (Exodus 31:13)
 Jehovah Metsudhathi - the Lord ... my fortress (Ps. 18:2)
 Jehovah Moshiekh - the Lord our Saviour (Isa.
 49:26 + 60:16)
 Jehovah-nissi - the Lord my banner (Exodus
 17:15)
 Jehovah Ori - the Lord my light (Ps. 27:1) Jehovah Uzzi
 - the Lord my strength (Ps. 28:7)
 Jehovah Rophe - the Lord our healer (Exodus
 15:26)
 Jehovah Roi - the Lord my shepherd (Ps. 23:1)
 Jehovah Sabaoth (Tsebaoth) - the Lord of hosts
 (1 Sam. 1:3)
 Jehovah Sali - the Lord my rock (Ps. 18:2)
 Jehovah Shalom - the Lord our peace (Judges
 6:24)
 Jehovah Shammah - the Lord is here (Ezek. 48:35)
 Jehovah Tsidkenu - the Lord our righteousness (Jer.
 23:6)
 Jehovah Tsur - the Lord my strength (Ps. 19:14).

Sources / Literature:

- Elmer L. Towns, *My Father's Names*, ISBN 0-8307-1447-2.
- Kerstin Hack, *Names of God - Impulses for the encounter with a multifaceted God*
- Larry Lea, *Can't you watch with me for an hour?*

2.4 Who is Jesus? The different names of Jesus

Jesus is the son of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - the God of the Bible.

When Jesus was on earth around 2000 years ago, he was God, but also fully human at the same time: conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary.

Jesus is a God of relationships

Jesus has lived in a close relationship with God the Father and the Holy Spirit since time immemorial. This relationship is strongly characterised by love and respect for one another (John 17:20ff).

Jesus wants to have a similar relationship, with a similar quality, with every single person. The Bible says that this relationship between people and Jesus - at some point in the future - will even culminate in a wedding (Rev 19:7). Jesus wants the relationship with individual people to be as close (like the relationship between bride and groom). This relationship is of course not sexual (eros-love), but what the Bible calls phileo-love and agape-love - friendly, like the love between brothers and like God's love for people.

Jesus loves people so much that He even gave His life for them. Jesus' torture and death were necessary because guilt stood between people and God.

God is holy. Nothing unholy can stand before God. That is why Jesus' substitutionary sacrificial death was necessary. He has thus become the source of a new life. As a result, people can now stand before God the Father and even have direct access to Him in prayer.

Through Jesus' wounds, healing (physical and psychological) is possible (see Isaiah 53:4).

Through his death, we have become children of God, co-heirs of the kingdom of God (Colossians 1:12). Through his death and the forgiveness of our sins, people can also forgive others who have hurt them. This leads them to a new freedom: they can be free from bitterness, hatred, rebellion, pride, etc. because they themselves have experienced forgiveness. Without his death on the cross, life would have no lasting meaning. According to the Bible, people would be like a flower that grows, blossoms and dies again tomorrow. But since Christians are now clean from all guilt, they can have fellowship and a loving relationship with Jesus now and even after their natural death - for all eternity. That is a worthwhile goal in life.

After His death, Jesus ascended into heaven; He now sits at the right hand of God, His Father. From there He will come to judge the

the living and the dead. He is therefore also the judge who will condemn people who want to live independently of God and are therefore disobedient and proud.

Jesus dwells in Christians in the form of the Holy Spirit even now - at this time.

The Holy Spirit works in them so that they can recognise Jesus. He reminds them of everything that Jesus taught his disciples.

In this way, Christians get to know Jesus better and the love between Him and them can deepen.

Jesus is more interested in them as a person than in what they do for Him. Jesus wants relationship before works. This also means that He prefers to spend quiet time with individuals rather than constantly doing good works for Him.

How do you get to know Jesus better?

When you're in love, you really want to get to know each other better. That means spending time together in peace and quiet.

We get to know Jesus best when we read the first four books of the New Testament. The entire Bible reveals his character, his love and his plans through the accounts. Living everyday life in the knowledge that Jesus is with you and goes through the day with you. As a Christian, you can always talk to Him directly (pray). He guides people and helps with decisions, even in small things. Why? Because He loves the individual and because He has promised to do so (Mt 28:20).

Because Jesus loves people, He will often lovingly correct them. He wants them to become more and more like Him. He will therefore gently draw their attention to things that are not yet okay in their behaviour or character.

Jesus is totally fascinating. Because He is not only the loving God, but also

- the prince of life (Apo.3,15).
- the Son of God (Heb.4,14)
- the Son of Man (Mark 14:21)
- the Lord of the Sabbath (Mk 2:28)
- the shining morning star (Rev 22,16)
- the bridegroom (Rev.19,7)
- the root and offspring of David - Jew (Rev 22,16)
- the Christ (Mk.8,29+ Heb.5,5)
- Wonderful counsellor (Isa.9,5)
- Strong God (Isaiah 9:5)
- Father of eternity (Isaiah 9:5)
- Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:5)
- The blessed and only powerful one (1.Tim.6,15)
- King of kings (1.Tim.6,15)
- Lord of all rulers (1.Tim.6,15)

- the great high priest (Heb.4,14+5,10)
- the true one (1 John 5:20)
- the true God (1 John 5:20)
- eternal life (1 John 5:20)
- of faithfulness (Rev.19,11)
- the Messiah (John 1:41)
- the teacher (Mt.23,10)
- the only mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5)
- a man of sorrows and acquainted with sickness (Isaiah 53:3)
- the image of the invisible God (Col.1,15)
- the prophet (Mt.21,11; Lk. 7,16+24,19)
- the atonement for sins (1 John 2:2)
- the head of the body (the church- Eph.4,15+1,22-23)
- the cornerstone of the kingdom of God (Mt 21:42+ 1 Peter 2:6-89)
- the king of the Jews (Zech.9,9+ Mt.27,29+37)
- Shiloh (ruler, bringer of peace) Gen 49:10
- Israel's ruler (1 Sam 15:29)
- the Saviour (Lk.2,11)
- the Lord (Lk.2,11+ Phil.2,11))
- the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2)
- the firstborn from the dead (Col.1,18+Acts.2,31+Off.1,5)
- our judge (Rom.2,16+Jes.33,22)
- Master (Isa.33,22)
- the good shepherd (Joh.10,11+ 14-15)
- the Lamb of God, the Passover Lamb (John 1:29+ 1 Peter 1:18-19)
- the lion (Rev.5,5)
- our friend (John 15:14)
- our brother (Mt.12,50)
- Immanuel (=God with us) Mt.1,24+Jes.7,14
- Advocate (1 John 2:1)
- Cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6)
- Stone of stumbling (Romans 9:32)
- Rock of offence (Romans 9:33)
- Shepherd and guardian of souls (1 Peter 3:25)
- Son of David (Mt.1,1)
- Son of the Highly Praised One (Mk.14,61)
- the righteous (1 Peter 1:18)
- the Lord of righteousness (Jer. 23:6)
- Head of the church (Eph.4,15)
- Head of every man (1 Corinthians 11:13)
- Head of all powers and authorities (Col. 2:10)

- the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:32)
- Bread of life, light of the world, good shepherd, resurrection and life, way, truth, life, true vine
- the Amen (Rev.3,14)
- the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2)
- the faithful and true witness (Rev.3,14)
- the origin of creation (Rev.3,14)
- the anointed one (Ps.2,2)
- the servant of the circumcision (Rom. 15:8)
- the mystery of God (Col.2,2)
- the saint (Acts 3:14)
- the righteous (Acts 3:14)
- the Son of God (Acts 3:13)
- the apostle (Heb.3,1)
- the apostle and high priest of our confession (Heb. 3:1)
- the blessed and only powerful one (1.Tim.6,15)
- the Lord of rulers (1.Tim.6,16)
- the friend of sinners and tax collectors (Mt.11,19)
- the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9)
- the servant of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle (Hebrews 8:2)
- the mediator of a better covenant (Heb. 8:6)
- the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4)
- the highest of the kings of the earth (Psalm 89:28)
- the only ruler (Jude 4)
- the faithful witness (Rev.1,5)
- the prince over the kings of the earth (Rev 1,5)
- the First and the Last and the Living One (Rev.1,17)
- the last Adam, the second man (1 Corinthians 15:45)
- the white horse (Rev.19,11)
- the light, the great light Math. 4,16
- the servant (of God) and beloved (of God) (Mt.12,18 + Is.42,1-4)

Sources/ literature:

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2.5 Jesus will be back soon!

In Jn 14,3 Jesus says:

"...I will come again and you unto myself, that ye also may be where I am."

1. Thess 4:14-18:

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. 15 "For this we say to you in the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep; 16 for he himself, the Lord, when the command is given and the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God sound, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 "After this we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 "So comfort one another with these words."

1. Thess 5:1-3:

"1 But there is no need to write to you brothers about the times and hours.

2. For you know full well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

3. When they shall say Peace and safety; then sudden destruction shall overtake them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

Jn 14,1-3:

"1 Let not your heart be troubled! Trust in God and trust in me! 2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if not, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you.

3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and you to myself, that you also may be where I am."

Mt 24:3-14

3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him in particular and said, "Tell us, when will all these things happen, and what will be the sign of your return and of the end of the age? 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 But you will hear of wars and rumours of wars; watch, do not be alarmed, for it must come to pass; but it is not yet the end.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes from time to time.

8 All this is the beginning of labour.

9 Then they will give you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all

peoples for my name's sake.

10 And then many will take offence and

betray each other and hate each other.

11 And many false prophets will arise and will deceive many.

12 And because lawlessness is rampant, love will grow cold in many;

13 But he who endures to the end will be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then the end will come."

2. I Peter 3:3-14:

"3 Knowing this first of all, that in the last days there shall come scoffers, walking after their own lusts in their scoffing, and saying:

4 "Where is the promise of his return? for since the fathers fell asleep, everything remains as it was at the beginning of creation!"

5 However, they deliberately forget that there were heavens long ago and that an earth was created out of water and through water by the word of God;

6 and that the world at that time perished as a result of a flood of water.

7 But the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire by the same word, and kept for the day of judgement and destruction of ungodly men.

8 But let not this one thing be hidden from you, beloved, that one day is as a thousand years before the Lord, and a thousand years as one day!

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us, *not willing that any should perish, but that all should have room to repent*. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief; the heavens will pass away with a crash, and the elements will be dissolved with heat, and the earth and the works on it will be burned up.

11 Therefore, since all these things are thus dissolved, how much more ought you to be characterised by holy conduct and godliness,

12 By expecting and hastening the coming of the day of God, when the heavens will be dissolved in fire and the elements will melt with heat!

13 But we expect new heavens and a new earth according to his promise, in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, because you expect these things, make effort to be found spotless and blameless before him in peace."

1 John 5:12:

"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (!)

Acts 1:11:

"Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you heaven, will come again in the same way as you have seen him go into heaven."

1 day is like 1000 years

(2 Peter 3:8)

God created the world in six days - rested on the seventh day. When it - to prophetic ages, one day is like a thousand years.

From Adam to Enoch was the 1st day (=1000 years), approx. to Abraham the 2nd day, approx. to David the 3rd day, approx. to Jesus the 4th day. So a total of 4 days (4000 years of human history before Christ) and two more days have already passed since then - so another 2000 years.

In Acts 2,16+17 Peter speaks of the last days:

"16 But this is (what happened on Pentecost 2000 years ago), which was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall visions, and your old men shall dream dreams..."

In the "last days" (Acts 2:17), the Holy Spirit will be poured out. This refers to the fifth and sixth days (the two-thousand-year period of grace), at the end of which we are living today - because around two thousand years have passed since Pentecost.

We are therefore at the end of the prophetic sixth day, "shortly" before the seventh day: the millennial kingdom of peace (the day of rest; Rev 20,6), which will begin after the great tribulation (7 years long).

Another indication (Mat. 17,1f): After six days, Jesus took his favourite disciples aside and was transfigured - In addition to these passages, we can see from the people of Israel that the prophetic fifth and sixth days are coming to an end and the seventh is "imminent": In the prophet Hosea, we read about the scattering of the people throughout the world and their subsequent gathering (Hosea 6:1-2): "...after just two days He will make us well (this has already happened), on the third day He will raise us up again to live in His sight (this is yet to happen)"

At the beginning of the fifth day, the people of Israel were scattered throughout the world (70 AD). After two days, at the end of the sixth day, they were reunited as a nation (1948: founding of the State of Israel). Since that year, Jews from 143 nations have returned to Israel. The seventh day is the coming

This will happen in the second millennium, when Israel as a nation will recognise Christ as the Messiah.

So here we have a threefold argument: firstly from the genealogies of the Old Testament, secondly from the historical facts of the people of Israel and thirdly: Jesus was dead for two days and rose from the dead on the third day. This can mean

2 days of death= 2000 years of dispersion of the people of Israel or for the church: 2000 years of state church, crusades, dark Middle Ages, inquisition, hardly any spiritual life. On the 3rd day, restoration takes place in all cases.

Rough chronological order of future events:

- Today: end times (time of grace and the church; repentance is still possible; suffering; our mission from Jesus: to make disciples)
- Rapture of born-again Christians (meeting with Jesus in the air = 1st Second Coming)
- Great tribulation
- 2nd Second Coming: Jesus as judge (Last Judgement and Marriage of the Lamb)
- The millennial kingdom of peace
- Creation of a new earth and a new heaven
- Eternity: either with God (in peace and harmony) or in hell (far from God; where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth - Mt 8,12; eternal death; the lake of fire - Rev 20,10+15+16; Rev 21,8)

That is the reality!

This has practical implications for each of us:

Concentration on important things, even in everyday life: personal purification and sanctification (love God - hate sin).

Practising love.

Make every effort to disciple others through me so that many more may be saved.

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2.6 Who is the Holy Spirit?

Who is the Holy Spirit? As with all important questions, the Bible gives us the decisive information:

Jesus: "But I tell you the truth, it is good for you that I am going, because if I do not go, the Counsellor will not come to you. But when I have gone, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgement; of sin, because they do not believe in me;

But of righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no more; of judgement, because the prince of this world has been judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but what he hears he will speak, and what is to come he will declare to you. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. (John 16, 7-14)

From these verses we recognise:

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is our counsellor because Jesus is in heaven,
- ▶ He will convince the world of sin, righteousness and judgement.
- ▶ He is the spirit of truth.
- ▶ He guides Christians into all truth.
- ▶ He does not talk about himself, but about what he hears from Jesus.
- ▶ He gives Christians information about things to come.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus

Jesus: "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Helper, that he may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not regard him and does not know him; but you know him, for he abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. A little while longer, and the world will no longer see me; but you will see me, for I live, and you too shall live! In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. (John 14, 16ff)

From this we recognise:

- ▶ The Holy Spirit always remains with us.
- ▶ He is in us.
- ▶ Jesus comes to us in the form of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, the Son, God, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are one. God is: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. (Just as water can be liquid, solid and gaseous).
- ▶ The non-Christians (the world) cannot receive him.

Jesus: But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom my Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14:25)

- ▶ The Holy Spirit teaches us and reminds us of everything Jesus said.

The following verses make this clear:

- ▶ The Holy Spirit can speak audibly and give instructions:

"While Peter was the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Behold, three men are seeking you! Therefore arise, come down and go with them without hesitation, for I have sent them.'"

"In the same way, the Spirit also comes to the aid of our weakness. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with unspoken sighs. But he who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, for he represents the saints in a way that is acceptable to God." Romans 8:26f)

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is a supporting spirit: He helps us.
- ▶ He represents our concerns before God the Father.

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery, that you should fear again; but you have received a spirit of adoption, in which we cry out: Abba, Father! This Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God." (Romans 8:13ff)

- ▶ The Holy Spirit works in us so that we can change. We will not be able to do this in our own strength - despite all our good intentions.
- ▶ Anyone who is guided by the Holy Spirit is a child of God - and the opposite is also true.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit does not suppress us - not even our personality.
- ▶ In the Holy Spirit we are children of Almighty God.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit testifies to us that we belong to God and are his children.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit testifies to us that we have eternal life. We can have "assurance of salvation" through him! (= the firm conviction that we will be with God in eternal glory after death).

The Holy Spirit wants to be our friend, companion, counsellor, comforter and helper in everyday life. It takes a certain amount of humility to recognise that we can ultimately do nothing without the Holy Spirit. As Christians, we cannot afford to go through everyday life without the help of the Holy Spirit. We

may specifically him for advice in everyday life. He loves it when we come to him and do not rely on ourselves, but seek his divine advice and support.

This the question: "Are we allowed to pray to the Holy Spirit?"

There is no direct mention of this in the Bible. However, since the Holy Spirit is just as much God as God the Father and God the Son, it is certainly not a sin to pray to him. On the contrary: he is our closest contact, as he dwells within us. We may have an intimate, heartfelt and loving relationship with the Holy Spirit.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!" (2Co 13:13)

The Holy Spirit is a person - not just a force.

For he has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11), he can prevent things (Acts 16:6), he can speak (Acts 8:29),

Acts 13:2), he is able to love (Rom. 15:30), he can be grieved (Eph. 4:30) and he can be resisted (Isa. 63:10).

Symbols for the Holy Spirit in the Bible:

- ▶ Dove (Joh. 1,32)
- ▶ Waters, rivers (Isa. 44:3)
- ▶ Oil, anointing (Luke 4:18)
- ▶ Wind (Joh. 3,8)
- ▶ Fire (Acts 2:3)

Literature:

- Derek Prince, "Biblical Foundations Part II"
- Kerstin Hack, Names of God - Impulses for the encounter with a multifaceted God
- Benny Hinn, "Good morning, Holy Spirit!"
- Wolfhard Margies, "The unique communion with the Holy Spirit"
- Eberhard Mühlen, "Spiritual gifts today"

3.1 The invisible kingdom of God

The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. Through him, God showed him what would happen in the future: All earthly empires will pass away - the kingdom of God will crush them and increase more and more (Daniel 2). Here we have an important Old Testament reference to the coming kingdom of God.

Jesus' main theme in his discourses was the kingdom of God. Even after the resurrection, he continued to speak to his disciples about this topic for 40 days (Acts 1:3).

The importance of the kingdom of God is expressed in the fact that Jesus made it the most frequent content of his parables (in 10 different parables).

The term "kingdom of God" 52 times in the NT. The parallel term "kingdom of heaven" 28 times.

Self-explanatory Bible passages on the keywords "Kingdom of God" and "Kingdom of Heaven":

Mt 4:23

And Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Mt 6,10

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Mt 6:31-33

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we clothe ourselves?

For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, but your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Mt 7,21

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

Mt 10:7-8

But go, preach and say: The kingdom of heaven is at hand!

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons! You have received it for free, give it for free!

Mt 13:44-46

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid. And for joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls.

When he found a precious pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought them.

Matthew 19:14

But Jesus said to them: Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Mt 19:16-26

And behold, one came and asked him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven!

Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.

Luke 9:62

But Jesus said to him, "Anyone who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God!

Luke 17:20-21

But when he was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God will not come in such a way that it be observed. It will not be said: Behold here! or: Behold there!

For behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Jn 3,3

~~Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!~~

Acts 1:3

...to whom he showed himself alive even after his passion, by many sure signs, appearing to them for forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Acts 28:30-31

But Paul remained two years in a lodging house of his own, receiving all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. Rom 14:17-19

For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; for whoever serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Let us therefore pursue the things that make for peace and edification among ourselves.

1. Cor 4:20

For the kingdom of God is not in words, but in power!

Gal 5:19-22

But the works of the flesh are manifest, which are: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, debauchery, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, ambition, dissension, divisions,

Envy, murder; drunkenness, carousing and the like,

of which I foretell you, as I before, **that those who do these things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, abstinence.
Col 1:13

...who has delivered us from the power of darkness and **translated us into the kingdom of** the Son of his love,...
Heb 12:28-29

Therefore, since we are receiving a **kingdom that cannot be shaken**, let us be thankful, so that we may serve God favourably with reverence and fear.

For even our God "is a consuming fire". Rev 12:10-12
And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, **Now is come** salvation, and strength, and **the kingdom of our God**, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of us is cast down.

brothers, who accused them day and night before our God.

The structures of the kingdom:

- **Jesus** is the head of the worldwide church.
- God has for the church: **apostles, prophets, shepherds, evangelists, teachers** (Ephesians 4:11)
- Then there are: **Elders**, who bear responsibility locally, and **deacons**, who support the elders in practical matters.
- Every Christian (follower of Jesus) is a priest (1 Peter 2:9 + Rev 1:5).

Literature:

- Keith Warrington, The Kingdom of God, ISBN: 978-3-940188-36-6
- David Pawson, Kingdoms in Conflict, English, ISBN: 9781909886049.

3.2 We are at war!

We have been living in an external peace in the Federal Republic of Germany for over 70 years. We are sincerely grateful to God for this. However, this external peace is only the visible part of the reality in which we live. In reality, our lives are just as much influenced by the invisible, spiritual world.

On 15 August 2000 I had a dream:

I was travelling with a tour group on a bus in Italy. We were driving through a holiday resort. It was summer, people were on the beach, laughing, having fun, children were playing in a river with inner tubes. There was a cheerful and exuberant holiday atmosphere. But there were also old military vehicles (jeeps and lorries) in the village. There were also armed soldiers there. But nobody seemed to notice them. The place belonged to a totalitarian, socialist or communist state. After several near misses, we took the bus up a winding road to the old town. From the bus window, I saw babies lying on the pavement, abandoned and left to die. A little further on, children were beheaded and sometimes scalped at the side of the road.

We travelled by bus to a luxury hotel in the old town. It was very grand and decorated with lots of marble. We were supposed to eat and celebrate here.

The dream a stark contrast: On the one hand, a good mood, holiday atmosphere, beach and luxury hotel; on the other, armed soldiers, military vehicles, child murders - all within a totalitarian regime, but in the same place.

Could it be that we often only perceive the obviously beautiful sides of reality and overlook the cruelties? Is it time to open up and put aside our holiday Christianity? Our aim is to recognise reality as it really is. And not to invent our own reality.

Which biblical passages support the statement that we are living in a spiritual war?

2. Cor 10:3:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty for God to the destruction of strongholds; so we destroy reasonings and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Eph 6:10:

For the rest, my brothers, rest in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may

to withstand the tricks of the devil, for our fight is not against the devil, but against the devil.

flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual [powers] of wickedness in the heavenly [regions].

1. Tim 6:12:

Fight the good fight of faith, take hold of eternal life, to which you have been called and about which you have made a good confession before many witnesses.

2. Cor 11:13:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, taking the form of apostles of Christ And no marvel, because Satan himself the form of an angel of light; lest we should be taken in by Satan, for his devices are not unknown to us.

1. I Peter 5:8:

Be sober and watch! Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; resist him, firm in the faith ...

Col 2:14:

...by blotting out the handwriting of iniquity that was against us, which was against us by statutes, and by putting it out from among us, pinning it to the cross. When he thus stripped the rulers and authorities, he publicly pilloried them and triumphed over them in the same place.

Jas 4:7:

Submit yourselves therefore to God! But resist the devil! And he will flee from you.

1. John 3:7:

Little children, let no one deceive you! He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who practices sin is of the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning.

For this purpose the Son of God appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Luke 12:49:

I have come to hurl fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already lit!

But I have a baptism to pass, and how urgent I am until it is accomplished!

Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather discord.

Where is the spiritual war visible in our country today?

- Abortions (approx. 150,000 per year in Germany)
- unconscious) worship of material things (holiday, car, house, motorhome...)
- Disputes between Christians and churches

- Attacks on our children in the media and in schools.
- Pornography
- Hatred, xenophobia, pride
- Crime

Inner spiritual struggles:

- Doubts about God
- Unfulfilled promises (for whatever reason)
- Discouragement, self-doubt, inferiority
- Feelings - they are Satan's main field of attack

What is the war about?

There are two spiritual powers in the world that are at war with each other:

The kingdom of God versus the kingdom of Satan. We know from the Bible that there are demons, satanic angels over certain countries (e.g. Daniel 10), powers, authorities, rulers, world rulers of darkness (Ephesians 6:10) and Satan as their leader.

He wanted to be like God. He became proud, rebelled and was thrown out of heaven with a third of all the angels (Ezekiel 28:12-19+Ezekiel 14:12ff).

Satan is not like God, but an angel, a created being. He is described in the Bible as the prince of the world. Because mankind's sin, he still has rights here, although he **has already been defeated by Jesus' death on the cross**. It is a kind of guerrilla war in a defeated country. The war is about power, influence and, above all, people's souls. God wants all people to come to the knowledge of the truth, to be saved and to spend eternity in his glorious presence. Satan tries to prevent this by all means. He knows that he himself will be in eternal remoteness from God (hell, Hades or the realm of death) and tries to take as many souls as possible with him. God has commissioned us to share the gospel with others and to make disciples (worldwide). That is our mission. Nothing is more important!

Questions about the spiritual struggle in a city:

1. What is God's strategy for reaching people in the city?
2. What roles do we play in this?
3. Who is the "strong one" in the city?

4. How should we pray? Should we pray against the Approach the "strong" in prayer - or ask God to send his angels to fight?

What is certain is the realisation that we should cast out demons from the individually burdened.

The situation is different with dark forces of higher categories: It is essential to ask God beforehand whether you have a mandate to fight these demons.

Our task is not to mock demons and powers (Jude 6: "The archangel Michael dared not pass blasphemous judgement...")

There are demons and powers that have territorial power (e.g. Daniel 10: the prince over Persia, the prince over Greece). There are also angels in the kingdom of God with specific tasks and spheres of influence (e.g. in Revelation 2+3: "To the angel of the church in ... write ..."). Satan's kingdom is probably a copy of God's kingdom - with clear structures.

What practical effects does this have on my life? What can I do?

- Be vigilant! Recognise reality!
- Spending time with Jesus.
- Be vigilant that my relationship with God is in order. Hate and forsake sin.
- Express forgiveness, become free from bitterness. Clarify relationships.
- Get to know and use the spiritual weapons: thanksgiving, praise, proclamations.
- Being a guardian for my family, my city (e.g. 24-hour prayer chains).
- Develop fasting and prayer into your own lifestyle.
- Coming to terms with your own past.
- Strive for unity with other Christians.
- Being humble, not judging others, not speaking ill of others, but practising love, putting aside pride, interceding, Let God in, forgive quickly.

Literature:

- Rick Joyner, The Last Uprising
- C. Peter Wagner, Territorial Powers
- M. Basilea Schlink, Realms of Angels and Demons
- Francis Frangipane, Spiritual battle on 3 levels

3.3 The general priesthood of the faithful

You are a priest of God! What is a priest?

In the Old Testament, he was a mediator between God and people. He was someone "who stands before God in service". The priests served at the tabernacle and later in the temple. Only Aaron and his male descendants were called by God to be priests. The Levites were subordinate to them and were to assist in the service of the sanctuary. The priests lived from the offerings that Israel had to present to the Lord (Numbers 18:8). In addition, the Levites gave the priests a tenth of the tithes they received from the people (Numbers 18:25ff). **What does the Bible say about priests in relation to the present and future times?**

Israel's destiny to be a nation of priests.

2. Deuteronomy 19:5-6:

"If ye will hearken unto my voice, and obey me, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be my peculiar possession above all people: for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Isa 61:6:

"But you will be called priests of the Lord, and you will be called servants of our God. You will enjoy the goods of the nations and enter into their position of power.

Paul describes his priestly ministry: Rom 15:16:

"...that I should be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, the gospel of God in a priestly manner, that the sacrifice of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified in the Holy Spirit."

Peter says to the Gentile Christians:

1. I Peter 2:4-5:

"Since you have come to him (Jesus) as to a living stone rejected indeed by men but chosen and precious by God, you too may now be built up as living stones for a spiritual house, for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

He goes on to say to the Christians:

1. I Peter 2:9-10:

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of property, that you may proclaim the virtues of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, who once were not a people but are now God's people, and once were not pardoned but are now pardoned."

Rev 1:6:

"To him (Jesus) who loves us and **has** washed us from our sins in his blood and **made** us a kingdom, **priests** to his God

and Father: to him be the glory and the power for ever and ever! Amen."

Rev 20:6:

"Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but **they will be priests of God and of Christ** and will reign with him for a thousand years."

The church is set apart to serve its Lord, and by handing themselves over to Him, each individual offers themselves as a sacrifice to God (Romans 12:1). In this sense, the church is spoken of as the "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

In other words, it is clear from the New Testament passages mentioned:

Every born-again, Spirit-filled Christian is a priest!

One characteristic of a priest is that he hears what God says:

Jn 18,37:

Jesus: "I was born for this purpose and came into the world to bear witness to the truth; everyone who is of the truth hears my voice."

How do you become a priest?

One does not become a priest in the biblical sense primarily through theological studies, ordination or appointment to a church office.

The following elements belong to a priest who is pleasing to God (since Golgotha):

- the new birth (John 3, Galatians 6:15, 1 Peter 1:23)
- Baptism (repentance, making Jesus Lord of one's life)
- the baptism of the Spirit (Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8 Acts 1:5+ 8:15-17 + 19,5-7)
- engaging in the sanctification process that the Holy Spirit brings about in us
(this includes, for example, loving God and hating sin)

What are the practical implications of a born-again, Spirit-filled Christian being a priest of God?

This has been true since Jesus' death on the cross and since the outpouring of the Holy Spirit:

- Men and women can be priests.
- They are priests and children of God.
- They have direct access to the father, they can turn to him directly.
(The curtain to the Holy of Holies has been torn since Golgotha)
- They can and should experience his will (John 18:37).
- You can also celebrate Holy Communion without a church official.
- They can and should baptise others (Mt 28:19).

- They are authorised to cast out demons (Mark 16:17).
- They are ambassadors in Christ's stead.
- They should not take over the tasks and work in the community from full-time and part-time employees. paid "professionals" - because they are priests themselves.
- They should fulfil their calling, their part in the kingdom of God.
- You only have one mediator between God and people: Jesus (not Mary, not a pastor, etc.).

What are the tasks of today's priests? (What is your task?)

According to 1 Peter 2:9: You are priests so that you may make Jesus known! (see also Mk.16,16 + Mt.28,19) Jesus with skin and hair, with possessions and goods at your disposal - Romans 12,1 (be a devoted follower). Be salt, be light in the world (Mt.5,13+14).

In the Old Testament, the priest was a mediator between God and people. Today, Jesus is the only mediator - 1 Timothy 2:5.

He represents us before the Father - 1 John 2:1.

In the past - in the Old Testament - animal sacrifices were made when priests were ordained and they were anointed with oil.

Today, Jesus is our sacrificial lamb. The oil has been poured out on Christians in the form of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost.

There used to be a high priest who was the only one allowed into the Holy of Holies once a year.

Today Jesus is our high priest (Heb. 6:22). He presides over us, a people of priests. We may enter the Holy of Holies (into the presence of God the Father) at any time. The way to our Father has been free since Jesus' death (the curtain was torn - Luke 23:45).

Literature:

- Dictionary of the Bible, keyword "priest"

3.4 Spiritual gifts - God's gift to me and to the church

God is a good God. He provides us with everything we need to live. And even far beyond that: He gives us meaning, significance and a living hope. His gifts also include the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian has one or more gifts - for the common good.

What spiritual gifts are there?

Depending on how you count them, the Bible mentions around 30 different gifts. We find most of the information in the

1 Corinthians (the spiritual gifts mentioned are printed **in bold**)

12, 1+ 4-11+ 27-33:

"But about spiritual gifts, my brothers, I will not leave you in ignorance.

4 However, there are differences in the gifts of grace, but it is the same spirit;

5 There are also different services, but it is the same gentleman;

6 and the effects of power are also different, but it is the same God who works in everything.

7 But the revelation of the spirit is given to each one for the general benefit.

8 For to one is given through the Spirit the **speech of wisdom**, but to another the **speech of knowledge** according to the same Spirit;

9 to another **faith** in the same spirit; to another **the gift of healing** in the same spirit;

10 To work **miracles** to another, to **prophecy** to another, to **discern spirits** to another, to **speak** different kinds of **languages to** another, to **interpret languages** to another.

11 But all this is done by one and the same Spirit, who assigns each one personally as he wills.

1. Cor. 14:26-33:

"How is it now, brothers? When you come together, **each one** of you has something: a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a speaking in tongues, an interpretation; let everything be for your edification!

27 If anyone wants to speak in tongues, let there be two, at most three, and let them speak turn, and let one of them say it.

28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the congregation; but let him speak for himself and to God.

29 But let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

30 But if a revelation to another who is sitting there, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one after another, so that all may learn and all may be comforted.

32 And the spirits of the prophets are to the prophets

subject.

33 For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace."

Romans 12:4-8:

"For just as in one body we have many members, but not all members have the same function, so also we, who are many, are one body in Christ, but individually members one of another.

And though we have different gifts according to the grace given to us, for example, **prophecy**, yet they are consistent with faith! If one **ministers**, let it be in ministry; if one **teaches**, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation. If one **gives**, give with simplicity; if one **leads**, do it with diligence; if one shows **mercy**, do it with joy."

What other spiritual gifts are there?

- The gift of singleness (1 Corinthians 7:32ff)
- Evangelism - as a gift and as a ministry (Acts. 8, 26ff+ Eph. 4, 11)
- Voluntary poverty (Acts 4:32ff)
- The gift of hospitality (e.g. Romans 12:13)
- The gift of intercession (Luke 11:1ff)
- The gift of faith (Romans 4:18-21)
- The gift of willingness to suffer (Acts 7, 54- 60)
- The gift of leadership (1 Tim. 3:1ff)
- The gift of wisdom (1 Kings 3:5ff)
- Some theologians also mention the following gifts: Apostle, craftsmanship, artistic creativity, shepherding, missionary, music, organisation, pastoral care, service.

Key messages:

- Every born-again Christian is endowed by God with one or more gifts.
 - have been equipped.
- The spiritual gifts are still needed today for the edification of the church.
- It is important and possible to find out which gift you have so that you can fulfil the place in the kingdom of God that God has intended for you.
 - This is a prerequisite for a blessed life in abundance (John 10:10).

What spiritual gifts has God given me?

This is not difficult to find out. The easiest way is to ask God. A realistic self-assessment and a conversation with a good friend will usually reveal the obvious gifts. We recommend the tried and tested gift test by Christian A. Schwarz. It also reliably reveals non-obvious gifts.

In the area of gifts, there is a difference between a general mission, a gift and a ministry.

For example, Jesus gave us the general commission to go into all the world and evangelise. Some have an outstanding gift of approaching people and communicating the gospel to them in a natural way (evangelisation as a gift). For some, this gift becomes a ministry.

In Eph. 4:11 the five offices are listed: Apostles, prophets, shepherds, evangelists and teachers.

Literature:

- Christian A. Schwarz: The gift test
- C. Peter Wagner, The Gifts of the Spirit for Church Building
- Kenneth E. Hagin, The Language Prayer

- Heribert Mühlen, Spiritual gifts today
- Dr Michael Landsman, Assistance - a supportive service
- Prof. Dr Johannes Reimer from Bergneustadt has a good theological and
The book "Gaben, warum nicht? -
Can the supernatural gifts of the spirit still exist today?"

In the two books by Christian A. Schwarz and C. Peter Wagner describes the individual gifts in detail.

3.5 Prayer in tongues / speaking in tongues - Greek: glossolalia

What does the Bible say about praying in tongues?

Speaking in tongues appeared for the first time at Pentecost: Acts 2:2: "And suddenly there came a sound heaven, as of one travelling along
The sound of the wind filled the whole house where they were sitting.
3 And there appeared tongues divided as by fire, and they sat upon every one of them.
4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, the Spirit gave them utterance."

Facts from these verses:

The disciples were first filled with the Holy Spirit, then they began to speak in tongues (verse 4).
Speaking in tongues is a language inspired by the Holy Spirit (verse 4).
Paul was also filled with the Holy Spirit before he spoke in tongues (Acts 9:17+ 1 Corinthians 14:18). The Holy Spirit also fell on the people in Cornelius' house first. The result was that they spoke in tongues:
Acts 10:44: "While Peter was still these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who were listening. 45 And the believers of the circumcision, as many as came with Peter, were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles also.
46 For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God."
We get most of the information about speaking in tongues from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians:
1. 1 Corinthians 14:1: "Strive to love; but strive also for the gifts of the Spirit, and above all to prophesy.
2 For he who speaks in tongues does not speak for men, but for God; for no one hears, but in the spirit he speaks mysteries.
3 But he who prophesies speaks to people for their edification, exhortation and comfort.
4 He who speaks in tongues edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.
5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but much more that ye could prophesy. For he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, he interprets it for the edification of the church.
6 But now, brothers, if I came to you in tongues, what good would I be to you if I did not speak to you, whether by revelation or by knowledge or by prophecy or by teaching?
7 It is the same with the inanimate instruments,

that make a sound, be it a flute or a harp; if they do not make certain sounds, such as

Can you recognise what is being played on the flute or on the harp?

8 Likewise, if the trumpet gives an indistinct sound, who will prepare for battle?

9 So you also, if you do not give intelligible speech through the tongue, how can anyone understand what is being said? For you will speak into the wind. 10 There are many kinds of languages in the world, and none is without sound.

11 If I do not know the meaning of the sound, I will be a stranger to the speaker and the speaker will be a stranger to me.

12 So you also, as you eagerly seek spiritual gifts, seek to have an abundance of them for the edification of the church!

13 Therefore, let him who speaks in tongues pray that he may also interpret it.

14 For when I pray in tongues, my spirit prays, but my mind is without fruit.

15 How shall it be now? I want to pray in the spirit, but I also want to pray with the mind; I want to sing praises in the spirit, but I also want to sing praises with the mind.

16 Otherwise, if you praise in the spirit, how can he who takes the place of the ignorant say Amen to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying?

17 You may well say thank you, but the other person will not be edified.

18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

19 But in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in tongues.

20 Brethren, do not become children in understanding, but in malice be children, but in understanding be perfected.

21 It is in the law: "I will speak to this people with strange tongues and with strange lips, but even so they will not hear me, says the Lord."

22 Therefore tongues are not for the believers but for the unbelievers; prophecy is not for the unbelievers but for the believers.

23 Now if the whole church were gathered together in one place, and all spoke in tongues, and ignorant or unbelieving people came in, would they not say that you were out of your minds?

24 But if all prophesied, and an unbeliever or ignorant person came in, he would be convicted by all, scrutinised by all;

25 the hiddenness of his heart would be revealed, and so he would fall on his face, and God

worship and confess that God is truly in you.

26 How is it now, brothers? When you come together, each of you has something: a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongues, an interpretation; all be for your edification!

27 If anyone wants to speak in tongues, let there be two, or at most three, and let them speak in turn.

28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; but let him speak to himself and to God." The facts from these verses:

- Speaking in tongues is the only spiritual gift, which is for your own edification (verse 4).
- He who speaks in tongues speaks to God (v.2)
- Prophecy has a higher status than speaking in tongues without interpretation (verse 5).
- Public speaking in tongues with interpretation in the divine service serves to edify the congregation (verse 5). Two or three should speak in succession (verse 27).
- Paul wishes the Corinthians would all speak in tongues (verse 5).
- The one who has the gift of tongues should pray that he can also interpret it (v. 13).
- When someone speaks in tongues, his spirit prays to God without being able to understand the sounds (verse 14).
- There is singing in tongues in praise of God (verses 15+16).
- Paul is extremely grateful for the gift of speaking in tongues and often practises it (verse 18).

During his lifetime, Jesus prepared the disciples future events:

Mark 16, 15 "And he said to them: 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. 16 He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall damned. 17 But these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons and speak with new tongues..."

Paul asks the Christians in Ephesus:

Acts 19,2: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when believed? But they said: We have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit! 3 And he said to them: 'What then you baptised into? And they said: To the baptism of John. 4 Then Paul said, "John baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in him who was to come after him, that is, in Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7 Now there were about twelve men in all.

Facts from these verses:

The Christians in Ephesus believed in Jesus. They were baptised by Paul. It then describes how one can receive the gift of speaking in tongues: They were filled with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. The result of being filled was that they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Love is more important than prophecies and speaking in tongues:

1. Cor.13,8:

"Love never ceases, even though the prophecies will come to an end, tongues will cease and knowledge will be abolished.

Only when Jesus returns and takes his bride, the church, home will these three spiritual gifts become superfluous: prophecy, tongues and knowledge.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul lists various spiritual gifts - including the gift of speaking in tongues: 10 "to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues." 1 Corinthians 14:1:

"Strive for love; but also strive for the spiritual gifts..."

Literature:

- Christian A. Schwarz, The gift test
- Kenneth E. Hagin, The Language Prayer

3.6 Angels - real beings

The question is not whether someone believes in angels, but rather whether angels actually exist.

If one assumes that God gives people an insight into the reality of the spiritual world through the statements in the Bible, then one can discover important and interesting information about angels.

Angels are messengers (Greek "angelos"). Angels occupy a much more important place in the Bible than Satan and his demons. Angels are mentioned in 34 books of the Bible (108 times in the Old Testament and 165 times in the New Testament).

Angels are beings created by God (Ps.148,2+5). Their number has never changed since their creation (Mt 22:30) - they cannot die (Lk 20:36). They were created before the creation of the earth (Job 38:1+4+7).

The purpose of their creation is to glorify Jesus (Rev 4,11). The angels never draw attention to themselves, but give all honour to God.

They are completely devoted to God and always ready to carry out his commands. They are an emanation of his nature, his will, his thoughts and his speech.

We are not to worship them (Romans 1:24+25). They are sexless beings (Matthew 22:20), do not have a physical body, can, for example, walk through closed doors (Acts 12:6), do not need to eat, but can also take on human form for special purposes. Angels obviously possess a beauty and ability to transform that is unimaginable for humans. The angels' connection with God, which came about through creation and their constant obedience, gives them authority. They are not corrupted by sin. They do not dwell in people (just as the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians). The Holy Spirit is not bound to one place, he is omnipresent. The angels can only be in one place at a time. They can appear and again. They think, feel, have a will and show emotions (Luke 15:10).

God uses angels to bring people and nations to his goal.

They have more comprehensive knowledge than humans, but are not omniscient (Mk 13:32). Angels have more power than humans but are not omnipotent. Angels live in a hierarchy:

The most powerful angels are the **archangels**.

The archangel Michael - his name means: "Who is like God" - is mentioned four times (Dan. 10,13+21; Dan. 12,1; Jude 9; Rev. 12,7).

The archangel Gabriel - his name means "The Mighty One of God" - is mentioned 17 times. He is first and foremost

God's messenger of grace and promise. He appears four times in the Bible and brings good news each time.

Then there are the **cherubim** (Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:18-20; Ezekiel 1:4-28; 10:1-22). Among other things, they have four faces, two pairs of wings and four human hands. Satan was a cherub before his fall (Ezekiel 28:14; Isaiah 14:12)! Satan is therefore not the opposite of God, but a created and fallen angel.

Then there are the **seraphim**. Their name means "the burning ones". They are only mentioned once in the Bible (Isaiah 6:1-7). They have six wings and proclaim in a great chorus: "Holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory".

There are also the **four living creatures**, which are covered with eyes inside and out. Each has four faces and six wings. They praise God day and night: "Holy, holy Lord God Almighty, who was, who is and who is to come!" (Rev 8:4)

Then there are the spiritual **principalities and powers**, which are probably embodied by angels (Ephesians 1:21; 3:16; Colossians 1:16; 1 Peter 3:22). On **guardian angels**: Math. 18:10 tells us that the angels of the children always behold the face of the Father. The Bible does not explicitly say that people have been assigned a specific guardian angel. However, the angels are ministering spirits to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation (Heb 1:14).

"For he has commanded his angels to guard you in all your ways." (Ps 91:11).

"The angel of the Lord encamps round about the godly and saves them." (Ps 34:8).

The Bible tells us that God created humans "only a little lower than the angels". God commands the angels to help people. After the resurrection, however, humans will be above the angels (Luke 20:36).

We know from Ezekiel 28:14 and Isaiah 14:12 that Satan was once a beautiful, glorious angel. However, his heart rose up against his Creator. He wanted to be like God. Pride drove him into rebellion. As a consequence, he was cast out of heaven along with a third of all the angels who sympathised with him. These many fallen angels are available to Satan as demons.

Angels who are under God's command also carry his judgements and judgments. For example, an angel strikes King Herod Agrippa because of his blasphemous behaviour (Acts 12:22). An angel strikes the firstborn in Egypt before the Israelites are allowed to leave (Exodus 12:18-30). A

A single angel destroys the Assyrian army (2 Kings 19:35 - 185,000 soldiers die in one night). And under the supreme command of God, the archangel Michael organises his hosts for the last great battle (Rev 12:7+8).

Other examples of how angels intervene:

An angel of God prevents Abraham from sacrificing Isaac at the last moment (Genesis 22:11).

Daniel receives a message from an angel, learns from him, among other things, that there are demonic princes over certain lands and is comforted by him (Daniel 10; also Daniel 8:16 + 9:21).

An angel appears to Zechariah and announces the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:16).

The angel Gabriel appears to Mary and announces the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:26).

An angel of the Lord announces the birth of Jesus to the shepherds in the field (Luke 2:10).

Joseph is instructed by an angel not to leave Mary and to flee to Egypt with his family (Mt 1:20 + 2:13).

Angels ministered to Jesus in the desert after the temptation (Mat.4,11).

On the day of Jesus' resurrection, an angel appeared at the empty tomb: "His appearance was like lightning and his robe white as snow. The guards were terrified

for fear of him and became as though they were dead." (Mt 28:2-4).

Two angels, who looked like men and were clothed in white robes, announce that Jesus will return in the same way as he ascended (Acts 1:11). An angel appears to the evangelist Philip and gives him specific instructions as to where he should go (Acts 8:26).

The Gentile Cornelius is instructed by an angel to make contact with Peter (Acts 10:3).

An angel appears to Paul in the night when he is shipwrecked and reassures him, saying that Paul will be brought before Caesar (Acts 27:24).

Further reading:

- Billy Graham:
"Sheltered by invisible powers"
- M. Basilea Schlink:
"Realms of angels and demons"
- Tim Sheets: "Arms of the Angels"
- Willmington's Guide to the Bible, pages 775ff: "The Doctrine of Angels"
- C.Fred Dickason "Angels - Elect & Evil"
- C.Fred Dickason "Names of Angles"

3.7 Israel

What does the Bible say about the relationship between Jews and Christians?

► The good news of Jesus applies to Jews and non-Jews:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek ..." (Romans 1:16)

► The God of the Bible is the God of Jews and non-Jews:

"So we come to the conclusion that man is justified by faith without works of the law. Or is God only the God of the Jews, not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of course, also of the Gentiles! For it is one and the same God who justifies the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we therefore abolish the law through faith? Far be it from us!

Rather, we establish the law." (Romans 3, 28ff)

► Jesus made Jews and non-Jews "one":

"Therefore remember that you, who once Gentiles in the flesh and were called uncircumcised by the so-called circumcision done in the flesh with the hand, were at that time outside of Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made the two into one and has broken down the dividing wall, having abolished in his flesh the enmity (the law of commandments in statutes), so as to create in himself one new man out of the two, and to make peace, and to reconcile the two in one body to God through the cross, having put to death the enmity through it. And he came and proclaimed peace to you who are far off and peace to those who are near, for through him we both access to the Father in one Spirit. So then you (the Gentiles) are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:11ff)

These verses also refute the view that God has rejected Israel and that the church has taken the place of the people of Israel (doctrine of rejection/disinheritance).

► Israel is under the special protection of God:
"For thus says the LORD of hosts, ... for

Whoever touches you touches the apple of my eye." (!)
(Zech. 2:12)

► God promises Abraham:

"And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing!
And I will bless those who bless you, and those who curse you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed!

These are clear statements: Whoever blesses Israel as an or as a nation will be blessed by God, whoever curses Israel will be cursed! (Genesis 12:2)

► John 4:22: "... for salvation comes from the Jews."

► Do Jews also have to be born again to be saved?

Romans 3:23 says: "For there is no distinction here: they are all sinners, and lack the glory that they should have with God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Paul says to the Christians in Rome:

Romans 11:25f:

"I will not hide this mystery from you, brethren, lest you think yourselves wise: A part of Israel has been hardened until the fullness of the Gentiles has come to salvation; and so all Israel will be saved, as it is written, 'Out of Zion will come the Deliverer, who will turn away all ungodliness from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them, when I will take away their sins.' With regard to the gospel, they are enemies for your sake, but with regard to election, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers."

► The Jews are the "elder brothers" of the Christians (the followers of Jesus were grafted into the old "olive tree" of Israel - see Romans 11:24).

► Jews and Christians together form the bride of Jesus. We know from Revelation 19 that the whole of human history is leading up to one event:
The wedding of the Lamb of Jesus with his bride.

► Jesus was Jewish! The greatest Jew of all time.

Current data on Israel:

► There are about 13 million Jews worldwide; about 6.6 million live in Israel. The city with the most Jewish inhabitants is Tel Aviv (2,575,000), followed by New York (2,051,000!); Jerusalem has 575,000.

Today there are around 100 Messianic congregations in Israel (congregations attended by Jews who believe in Yeshua -believe in Jesus).

► God chose the relatively small nation of Israel so that the nations would recognise in Israel that there is a God.

Israel's lasting election

(based on an article by Swen Schönheit in "Der Auftrag" No. 27)

Israel is chosen as God's special possession. It is to be the "light of the nations". Deuteronomy 7:6: "The Lord your God has chosen you as a people for his own possession from among all the peoples of the earth".

2. Exodus 19:5+6: "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be my possession above all peoples; for all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Part of the election of Israel is the promise of the land as an "inheritance". Genesis 17:8: "And I will give the land to you and your family after you... for an everlasting possession".

Because of his disobedience, God's judgement came upon Israel and he was expelled from the land.

Deuteronomy 28:64: "For the Lord will scatter you among all the nations of the earth ...".

The old covenant is not replaced by the new covenant, but reaffirmed and confirmed.

Ezek. 16,60: "But I will remember covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you."

The rejection of the Messiah Jesus in no way marks the end of Israel's history. However, the followers of Jesus from all nations are subsequently also called the "people of God". Romans 11:24:

"For if you ... have been grafted into the noble olive tree against nature, how much more will the natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree."

Almost all the prophets promise the gathering of Israel from the dispersion. Jer. 31:10: "Hear, all you nations, the word of the Lord...: He who scattered Israel will gather them again and will tend them like a shepherd tends his flock."

The return from the "land of the north" will be like a new exodus. Jer. " 16:14-15:

"...it will no longer be said, 'As the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt,' but, 'As the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites out of the land of the north and out of all the lands where he had driven them!'"

The reestablishment of the State of Israel in 1948 will be a "Revival" of the people through the Holy Spirit.

Jer. 31:33: "I will put my law in their hearts and write it in their minds, and they will be my people, and I will be their God."

Israel's return to the "land of the fathers" is one of the external prerequisites for the encounter with its returning Messiah. Zech. 14:4:

"And his feet shall stand in those days upon the Mount of Olives... And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst, from the east even unto the west...".

Isaiah 40:1f:

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak kindly to Jerusalem and preach to her that her slavery has ended, that her guilt is forgiven, for she has received double punishment from the hand of the LORD for all her sins."

Literature

- Christians on the side of Israel: www.israelaktuell.de

3.8 What information do we have about hell?

(The brutality of reality)

God's main motive is his love for every human being. But we are living in a real war: evil (Satan) is fighting to be worshipped and to destroy. Good (God) wants to redeem people from this and give them eternal, loving fellowship. We read about this in John 3:14ff:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not judged, but he who does not believe is judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Now in this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

What does it mean to be "lost"?

Is there really a hell? Is there this place of eternal damnation and pain?

To find out, you should not speculate, but read the "Handbook for a Successful Life" (the Bible). It is God's way of telling people what is important. Here he informs us about reality - what the world is actually like. This includes the visible and, above all, the invisible.

Mat.16,18: "And I also say to you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of **hell** shall not prevail against it."

→ Satan's power is limited.

Mat. 23,33: "You serpents! You generation of vipers! How will you escape the judgement of **hell**?" Mar 9:43ff: "And if your hand becomes an offence to sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life as a cripple than to have both hands and go into hell, into the unquenchable fire, where the worm does not die and the fire does not go out. And if your foot becomes an offence to sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life lame than to have both feet and be thrown **into hell**, into the unquenchable fire, where the worm does not die and the fire does not go out. And if your eye becomes an offence to sin, pluck it out! It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the infernal fire, where the worm does not die and the fire does not go out."

→ Worm (torture), fire (pain)

Luke 12, 4f: "But I say to you, my friends: Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and can do nothing else afterwards. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after he has killed, also has power to cast into **hell**! Yes, I tell you, fear him!"

→ Reverence for God

2 Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them into the bands of darkness of **hell**, to be reserved unto judgement..."

→ Angels can sin; there are angels who act in the sphere of influence of hell and are later judged.

Luke 16:22: "And it came about that the poor man died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. But the rich man also died and was buried.

23 And when he opened his eyes in **Hades** and was in torment, he saw Abraham from afar and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried out and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in the water and cool my tongue. For I suffer torment in this flame.

25 And Abraham said, "Child, remember that you received all your good in your life, and Lazarus likewise the evil; but now he is comforted here, and you suffer torment.

26 And for all these things there is a great gulf fixed between us and you, so that those who would cross over from here to you cannot, nor those who would cross over from there to us. 27 And he said, "I pray you now, Father, that you will send him to my Father's house,

28 For I have five brothers, that he may testify them urgently, lest they also come to this place of torment!

29 But Abraham says, "They have Moses and the prophets. May they hear them!"

30 But he said, "No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.

31 And he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.

→ strongest torments in Hades (realm of death), torment (pain) in the flame.

Rev 1, 17f: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.

And he laid his right hand on me and said, 'Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last and the Living One, and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore and have the keys of death and of **Hades**.'

→ Jesus has control over the power of the realm of the dead. Rev. 6, 7ff: "And when he had the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come; and I looked, and behold a pale horse, and he that sat on him, whose name *is* Death; and **Hades** followed him. And power was given to them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth. And when it opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they had. And they cried out with a loud voice, saying: Until when, holy and true ruler, do you not judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? And a white robe was given to each of them, and they were told to wait a little while, until their fellow servants and their brothers, who were to be killed like them, were also completed.

→ Death is personified here (Satan). The realm of death (Hades) follows him.

Rev 20, 10ff: "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where both the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose presence the earth fled away, and the heaven, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to what was written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and **Hades** gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged each according to his works. And Death and **Hades** were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

→ The devil deceives people. He deceives and lies. He will be tormented eternally for this.

→ A book is kept in heaven: The Book of Life.

The all-important question is:

Are you in the book of life? If you don't know for sure: turn to Jesus now, confess your guilt, thank Him that He died for your guilt on the cross, believe that He will save you and be baptised.

The only way to escape the torments of hell is to make Jesus Lord in your life and ask him to forgive you!
Romans 10:9ff: "For if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart one believes in order to be justified, and with the mouth one confesses in order to be saved; for the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.""

1 John 1:8ff: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Def. (Greek) **Hades**= (Hebrew) **Sheol**:

The whereabouts of the deceased.

Hades/Sheol does not mean the eternal abode of the damned, but the realm of the dead until the Last Judgement, the realm of the dead. Jesus has the key to Hades (Rev 1,18).

Def. "**Hell**" = (Greek) Gehenna: The place or state of the lost and damned. Place of eternal punishment.

Def. (Greek) **Tartarus**: place/place where fallen angels are held until judgement (2 Peter 2:4).

Further biblical passages: Psalm 9:17, Proverbs 7:27, Proverbs 9:18, Isaiah 5:14, Isaiah 14:12-15.

What happens when someone dies?

The body and the mind are separated. The body decays.

The spirit remains for eternity. After death, the spirit goes to the realm of death (Hades). Hades is not hell. In Hades, those who have not claimed forgiveness for their sins and are not written in the book of life already suffer torment (Luke 16:24). The followers of Jesus come close to God (paradise - example: the thief on the cross). However, paradise is not yet heaven/the new earth/the eternal New Jerusalem, but the place of residence until the judgement - a kind of garden of God (Genesis 2:8 + Isaiah 51:3 + Revelation 2:7).

Literature:

- Mary K. Baxter - A Divine Revelation of Hell. ISBN 3-9522446-0-0. A valuable prophetic, visionary revelation that can and must be tested against the relevant biblical passages.

3.9 Dying, mourning and consolation

What does the Bible say about dying?

Romans 8:14 For those whom the Spirit of God impels are the children of God. 15 For you have not received a servant spirit, that you should fear again; but you have received a childlike spirit, by which we cry out: Abba, dear Father! 16 The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God. 17 But if we are children, then we are also heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be raised to glory with him. 18 For I am convinced that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us. 19 For the anxious expectation of the creature waits for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation is subject to futility, without its will but through him who subjected it, yet with hope; *21 for the creation also will be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning and travailing with us until this moment.

23 But not only they, but we ourselves also, who have the Spirit as our firstfruits, groan within ourselves, longing for adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For though we are saved, yet we have hope.

2. 1 Corinthians 5:1: For we know that if our earthly house, this tabernacle, is torn down, we have a building built by God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For this reason we also groan and long be clothed with our dwelling which is from heaven, 3 because then we will be clothed and not found naked. 4 For while we are in this tabernacle we groan and are burdened, because we would rather not be unclothed but clothed, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. 5 But he who has prepared us for this is God, who has given us the Spirit as a pledge. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that as long as we live in the body we are far from the Lord, 7 for we walk by faith and not by sight. 8 But we are confident, and desire rather to leave the body and **to be at home** with the Lord. 9 Therefore we also put our honour in this, whether we are at home or abroad, that we may please him.

Followers of Jesus are not yet at home as long as they live on earth! Their home heaven (eternal fellowship with God). At the moment, death is the greatest enemy.

What does the Bible say about mourning?

2Co 4:6 Therefore we shall not grow weary, but though our outward man decay, shall

but the inner one is renewed day by day. 17 For our affliction, which is temporal and light, produces glory that is eternal and beyond measure, 18 for us who do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal.

The problem/the tensions/the tribulations we live have a beginning and an end. All pain, all grief is temporary. Originally, there was a creation without death and pain. But people were disobedient: they ate from the tree and thereby declared their independence. God had warned us: If you eat of it...

Genesis 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God said, Eat it not, neither touch it, lest ye die. Jesus, when he was in the fallen creation, experienced pain (crown of thorns, beatings, mockery), death and

Suffered separation: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Jesus solved the problem of death on the cross. He crushed the head of the serpent. Genesis 3:15

God acts sovereignly:

Romans 11,

33 O what depth of riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are **his** judgements and **his ways** unsearchable! 34 For "who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?" 35 Or "who has given him anything before, that God should repay him?"

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be honour for ever and ever! Amen.

Isaiah 55,

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD,

9 But as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

God is sovereign. He loves us and means well with us - but he still has his ways.

Why does God allow suffering? We can answer this in many cases, but not in some.

Of course, the death of a loved brings pain of separation. Nevertheless, physical life (life) is not the most important thing!

The most important thing is the clarified relationship between the creature and the Creator (the creature's response to the loving courtship of the Creator).

What does the Bible say about "comfort"?

Isaiah 57,

18 I have seen their ways, but I will heal them and guide them **and give them comfort again; and** I will give fruit of the lips to **those who mourn**. 19 **Peace, peace to those who are far off and to those who are near**, says the LORD. Peace, peace to those who are far off and to those who are near, says the LORD; I will heal them.

The motto for the followers of Jesus is:

"The best is yet to come!"

Hebrews 13:14 For here we have no **lasting city**, but we are looking for the one to come.

Until Jesus returns and establishes his kingdom in all its fullness, we will have to live with pain and death - the price of the desire for independence from our Creator.

Physical death today is a transitory phase. We are all heading directly towards the moment of our death. We should therefore plan our lives from the end!

Are you prepared? Is forgiveness, cleansing of relationships necessary, relationship with God clarified?

Do you have the certainty that you will spend eternity with God? His Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God. If we are children, then we are also heirs, co-heirs with Christ.

Can/should/must Christians suffer? What does the Bible say on this subject?

When Bible talks about suffering, it is almost always about persecution. Here are a few more passages:

Psalms 34,

The righteous must suffer much, but the LORD delivers him from it all.

- Here it becomes clear: suffering yes - hopelessness - no!

2 Corinthians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and **the God of all comfort** (comfort is a main characteristic of God).

who comforts us in all our affliction, that we may comfort those who are in any affliction, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are lavishly poured out on us, so also through Christ our consolation lavishly flows.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore we also: Since we have such a cloud of witnesses around us, let us lay aside everything that weighs us down and the sin that continually entangles us, and let us walk with patience in the battle that is set before us, looking up to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who, though he could have had joy, endured the cross, despising the shame, and was

sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Remember him who endured so much opposition from sinners, so that you may not grow fainthearted or lose heart.

Suffering in our lives becomes more bearable because we have a well-founded hope: Jesus will return, he will take up his reign and his kingdom will be revealed to all. Furthermore: God loves us, he has everything under his control, he means well with us, nothing is too difficult for him.

Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (see also Isaiah 25:8 + 60:20)

A glorious future awaits the born-again Christian - that comforts us in the face of many difficulties:

- They will have eternal fellowship with God (Rev 21:3),
- They will be the bride of Jesus at the wedding of the Lamb (Rev 19:7),
- They will be provided for materially (Jn 14:2; Rev 21:6),
- They will reign (Rev 20,6+ 1.Cor.6,1-3).

It is important for Christians to maintain their inner peace, which can only come from God, despite suffering. Then they can also get through turbulent situations and hardships.

He offers them the opportunity to cast their cares on him.

He wants to give them inner peace instead of worries:

Philippians 4:6 **"Do not worry about anything; but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."**

We live with a tension: the kingdom of God is already here - but not yet complete!

In order to maintain inner peace in the face of problems, we need to cultivate a very close relationship with God.

In practical terms, this means quality time with him and seeking him and his will.

It is not primarily about a carefree life - it is about maintaining an inner peace. This is achievable if you give your life to Jesus with "skin and hair" and are obedient to him. This is the secret to a real quality of life - even in difficult circumstances.

We are not yet living in paradise. But eternal fellowship with God in glory is already a reality!

Eternal peace, comfort and joy are the reality - for all who believe and are baptised!

For it says: "Whoever believes and is baptised will

be saved."

So if you believe in Jesus and are baptised, God gives you inner peace, comfort and serenity (supernatural, divine - not explainable).

2 Thess 2:15 Stand fast therefore, brethren, and hold fast the traditions which ye have been taught

whether by word or by letter from us. 16 But he himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, and God our Father who loved us and gave us eternal **comfort** and a good hope through grace, 17 comfort your hearts and strengthen you in every good word and work.

3.10 The threefold outcome of God's judgement

(By Jens Kaldewey ©)

Yes, you read that right. God's judgement probably has three outcomes, not just two, as is generally assumed and almost all of us believe. That is why I want to introduce you to this well-founded assumption in the following.

We are used to talking about two exits, namely to heaven or to hell, right down to our bones. "Heaven" is understood as eternal fellowship with God in the Father's house or eternal life with Jesus Christ as his church, his "wife", after the "heavenly wedding" has taken place at his return. "Hell" is eternal rejection by God, "life", better said, "existence", far from God, in a place for which the Bible uses various images: Utter darkness, lake of fire, eternal torment, weeping and gnashing of teeth, Gehenna (hell of fire), or simply fire. There is nothing else. Only this heaven and only this hell. If this is true, there is something wrong with the last two chapters of Revelation (21-22)! We first read there that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. (21,1). Then we are told how "the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, will come down from God out of heaven, beautiful as a bride adorned for her bridegroom" and that this New Jerusalem will be the "dwelling place of God with men. " "God will dwell in their midst; they will be his people - a people of many nations, and he himself their God will always be with them. " (New Testament - New Geneva Translation) That is breathtaking. That is unimaginably great. There will be a people who will live on a new earth (not in heaven!) in the closest fellowship with God, who has actually come down to this earth and dwells and remains there. They have not come to God, but God has come to them.

Who are these people? What is the new Jerusalem? It really comes down to identifying the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem beyond doubt! A clear indication is given to us later in the same chapter: "And one of the seven angels came... and said, 'Come here! I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her radiance of light was like a very precious jewel, like a crystal-clear jasper stone." (Revelation 21:9-11, REB) It is clear: the New Jerusalem is the "wife" of the Lamb, i.e. the woman legally betrothed to him. OK - the New Jerusalem is the Lamb's wife, but who is this wife? Two chapters earlier

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lord is come.

The Lamb has come, and his wife has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. " (Revelation 19:7-8, Elberfelder Übersetzung - REB) If the woman's wedding dress consists of the "righteous deeds of the saints", this clearly identifies her: The woman is a symbolic image for the totality of all the "saints". And who are the "saints" again? In the New Testament, "saints" clearly and unmistakably refers to born-again Christians. (For those who do not believe this: Acts 8,32+41 26,10 Rom 1,7 15,25 16,15

1. Cor 1:2 and many more) Paul's famous words marriage are also in line with this: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will one flesh. "This mystery is great, but I point it to Christ and the church. " (Ephesians 5:31-32, REB) And finally this: "For I am jealous for you with the zeal of God, because I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a chaste virgin before Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:2, REB) Hopefully it has become clear: The New Jerusalem is the totality of Christians who have been called by Jesus and have remained faithful. We can also call it "evangelical" formulation: These are those who have heard the message of Jesus Christ and believed it, have been gifted with the Holy Spirit and have not fallen away. Once this has been clarified, we are prepared for a surprise: "and it had a great and high wall, and twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel: To the east three gates, and to the north three gates, and to the south three gates, and to the west three gates. " (Revelation 21:12-13, REB)

That's strange. If "heaven" consists of the New Jerusalem, if there is only the New Jerusalem and nothing else, then why the gates? Why the wall as a border? Gates and walls only make sense if there is another area. The purpose of city gates is that you can enter through them from the outside and leave from the inside. This image of Jerusalem shows that this city has its own identity, its own space, its own border. It is not located in a vacuum, it does not represent the whole of reality in "heaven". It is a place in a space that is larger than itself. What is what kind of place is this? We already know that it the new earth. The new Jerusalem located on

a new earth. We go on to ask: Are we told anything about this new earth? Now listen.

The next surprise awaits us: "And the nations will walk in her light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory to her. And her gates will not be shut by day, for there will be no night there. And the glory and honour of the nations will be to her." (Revelation 21:24-26, REB) What a thing! There are actually nations and kings on earth! They are kings of the earth. They obviously live outside Jerusalem on the new earth. They do not live in the new Jerusalem, but they can visit it, they have access, they bring their treasures into the city, and walk in its light. The light and life and glory radiating from this city deeply influences and blesses them in all their behaviour. They walk in its light. They live their lives, they shape their lives and their culture and their politics in its light. That inspires me! All peoples! This fact is confirmed in another statement: "In the midst of their street and of the river, on this side and on that side, was the tree of life, bearing fruit twelve times, and yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:2, REB) Of course, this is highly symbolic language, but this much seems clear: healing is going out from the New Jerusalem to the people outside Jerusalem. The Greek word for therapy is "Therapeia". So the nations on earth will still "treated" in some way, "healed". I imagine that they will now really grow into their own full identity and personality as nations without sin. "Therapy" in the sense of good, wholesome development, because all the prerequisites for this are finally right.

The new Jerusalem, the church, the "wife" of Christ, still has the task of being a blessing to the nations, helping them and serving them in a priestly manner. This is clearly expressed: "There will also be no more night, so that there will be no more need for illumination. Not even the light of the sun will be needed, for the Lord God himself will be their light. And together with him they will reign forever and ever." (Revelation 22:5, NGÜ NT+PS)

Together with him, they will rule forever and ever. Over whom then? If the believers were alone in heaven, or more correctly, on the new earth, this statement would make no sense. But if they are not alone, this is a marvellous statement: they will rule over the nations that still live on earth. And they will do this in a marvellous way, full of love, full of wisdom, without sin, in the closest connection to the Father in heaven and to Jesus.

We are now hopefully reasonably convinced that

there are two groups of people on the new earth, even if this idea is very unfamiliar:

- The disciples of Jesus, you could also say the people with the full knowledge of Jesus Christ, born again through the Holy Spirit,

- the nations that do not live in the new Jerusalem, but find a new home on the new earth. The three outcomes of God's judgement Now we are ripe for further questions: Where do these nations come from? How is it possible that someone who is not a born-again Christian does not go to hell? How can it be possible to have eternal life (on the new earth) without being "Glinus", believers in our sense? We find an answer in the account of the last great one,

God's comprehensive judgement, which confronts us shortly before the description of the consummation of the world, in Rev 20:11-15 (NGÜ NT+PS): "11Now I saw a great white throne, and I saw him who sat on the throne. Heaven and earth fled from him because they could not bear his presence; they disappeared without leaving a trace. 12I saw the dead standing before the throne, from the least to the greatest. Books were opened, recording what each had done, and on the basis of these entries the dead were judged; each received the judgement that corresponded to his deeds. And another book was opened: the book of life. 13The sea gave up its dead, and death and the realm of the dead also gave up their dead. For each one the judgement corresponded to what he had done. 14Death and the realm of the dead were thrown into the lake of fire; the lake of fire is the second death. 15And if anyone was not registered in the book of life, he was also thrown into the lake of fire."

It is difficult to say whether we, as believing Christians, are present at this judgement or whether our judgement already taken place at this point. We should be very careful with any application of earthly concepts of time, because after our death we enter a completely different time that runs quite differently. I rather assume that this powerful description here summarises, as it were, the whole of God's judgement after our death. It is the one great judgement of God on all people, including Christians.

Let us think, for example, of 2 Cor 5:10 (NGÜ NT+PS), a statement that is clearly addressed to church members: For we must all one day appear before the judgement seat of Christ, where everything will be laid bare, and then everyone will receive the reward for what he has done during his life in this body, whether it was good or evil. The people on the new earth and in the new Jerusalem come from this judgement. Where else would they come from? There are no other people anywhere. All people come into this judgement and are divorced here. They enter, so to speak

through three exits with three different names out into new "rooms", if you can call them that.

The first exit leads directly to the new Jerusalem. The second exit leads to the new earth outside the new Jerusalem, but with access to the new Jerusalem. The third exit leads to the lake of fire.

And if anyone was not registered in the book of life, he was also thrown into the lake of fire. (20:15) Consider this word.

In all serenity. All people who are not in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire. The people live on the new earth among the nations, even if they are not citizens of the New Jerusalem, have obviously not been thrown into the lake of fire. So they are in the Book of Life! What is this book of life? We encounter it in several places in Revelation.

"Everyone who emerges victorious from the battle will be clothed in a white robe. And I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess him before my Father and his angels." (Revelation 3:5, NGÜ NT+PS) Obviously Jesus decides who is in the book or not. "All the inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast - all except those whose names have been written in the book of life since the creation of the world, in the book of the Lamb who was sacrificed."

(Revelation 13:8, NGÜ NT+PS) Literally it says here: In the book of life of the that was slain. The book of life is the book of the slain lamb! Whoever is in this book is in it because Jesus died for him, because Jesus "took his sin up on the tree".

We can also put it another way: because the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. What Jesus did on the cross is credited to him. I must now put it even more clearly. There are obviously people, namely those who will live among the nations on the new earth, who are not conscious disciples of Jesus, but to whom Christ's atoning sacrifice is imputed and who are redeemed and saved through him. It says: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation! Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved. But he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15-16, NGÜ NT+PS)

God is able to look deep into the heart and discover the faith required here, hidden faith. Faith that can never penetrate to the outside world as full faith in our sense and yet is there. It manifests itself in longing, devotion, generosity, an unconscious prayerful sighing towards God, the great unknown, in acts of love. "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." "For in

In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any power, but faith working through love." (Galatians 5:6, REB)

Real faith always manifests itself: through love. "My friends, let us love one another, for love has its origin in God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love has not known God, for God is love." (1 John 4:7-8, NGÜ NT+PS)

There is no love that does not have its origin in God. There are many people who really love, limited by their possibilities, but they do. Although they do not know God as the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", they do know him, they have something of him deep in their hearts and therefore serve him without realising it. And God recognises this as faith. He gives them eternal life because of Jesus' sacrificial death. However, they do not belong to his people, but to the peoples who are made happy and blessed by his people.

How many people have never heard of God, through no fault of their own? How many people have received such a "skewed" image of God and Jesus through false Christians and the devil's lies that they reject Jesus along with the image? However, they do not actually Jesus himself, but the image of him. They could not learn to differentiate here. They have been immunised against full faith in salvation. This is not the fault of many, even if others certainly see the misbehaviour of Christians as a welcome justification for their rebellion against God.

God can tell the difference! How many people died as minors, already in the womb, as infants, as toddlers, as mentally handicapped? There is no question in my mind that the sacrifice of Christ will be imputed to many of them and that they grow again on the new earth or be in full possession of their spiritual powers. Hallelujah! I look forward to the countless aborted children who will be born after all.... As you can see, I'm going into raptures. I stand by that. Ever since I

I have discovered the three exits in God's judgement, my anticipation of the new world of God has increased considerably. I simply love living on such an earth! I'm really looking forward to travelling among the nations then too. I suppose I will keep my job as a teacher, because I am being trained here primarily for the world to come.

At the end of this article, I will answer two critical questions. Firstly, if so many people are saved without hearing and believing the full gospel, why should we still evangelise? Answer:

- We evangelise because Jesus told us to.
- We evangelise because the Holy Spirit drives us to do so.
- We evangelise because it is ruthless to be a

to withhold such a message from people. The sooner, the better. Imagine if we withheld a valuable, effective cancer drug from a seriously ill cancer patient because he still has a future after death. I would find that really nasty.

- We evangelise because every person who hears and accepts the gospel today is already improving and changing this world here and now. Moreover, such people are already being transformed, "sanctified" and trained here and now.

- We evangelise because everyone saved today becomes a member of the body of Christ, through which Jesus will accomplish the most glorious tasks in countless universes for all eternity. Do we really want to deprive Jesus of precious members of his body by not evangelising? Impudence!

- We evangelise because it has been decreed from eternity in God's plan of salvation that his beloved Son will have a wonderful wife who is suitable for him. The more there is to the woman, the better. Jesus wants a woman who is as tall as possible and who matches his height. Are these reasons enough?

Secondly, are you really sure about this unusual view? Isn't it just speculation? Answer: At the beginning I wrote: "The judgement of God has probably

three outputs, not just two..." I deliberately wrote it that way. I consider my statements to be well-founded and I am convinced of them. But the central truths of Scripture, as expressed in the ancient creeds, are even better and more clearly attested.

It is therefore up to everyone to decide whether or not they believe what I have to say. But this much, I think, can be said: Even if we don't know whether it's all true, we can hope that it is.

More at: www.jenskaldewey.ch

Two further biblical passages: (Daniel 7:18+ 27)

"... but the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom, and they will keep the kingdom for ever and ever, yes, for ever and ever!"

"But the kingdom, dominion and power over the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all powers will serve and obey him!"

%0.1 Old Covenant - New Covenant

The impact on our lives What is a

covenant?

A covenant is a bond that binds two parties to each other through mutual obligations. The stronger party offers the covenant to the weaker party, and the weaker party can accept or reject the covenant. There is no negotiation because a covenant is not a contract.

In the Bible, the New Covenant is not a better continuation of the Old Covenant - but a radically different relationship that God enters into with people!

The Old (Sinai) Covenant:

Two months after the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt, God chooses them to a covenant with Him (Exodus 19:1-8).

The covenant is described in detail in the following chapters: In chapter 20, the people receive the 10 commandments, and in chapters 21-23 a whole series of regulations and rules, all of which are the content of the covenant (a total of 613 commandments and prohibitions). A book of the covenant is created in which all the details are laid down. At the end, before the covenant - or you could also say: the contract - between the people of Israel and God is finalised, Moses reads everything to the people once again. He wanted to make sure that the people knew what they were getting into (Exodus 24:1-8).

In short, the Old Covenant consists of God choosing the people of Israel as his special possession. They were called to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. On the other hand, the people's covenant obligation was to be obedient to God.

The New Covenant

Jesus describes the new covenant when he celebrates the Lord's Supper with his disciples for the first time.

Luke 22:20:

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you (also in 1 Corinthians 11:25).

Mt 26:28 and Mk 14:23+24 speak of the blood of the covenant:

Mt 26:28:

28 For this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 14:23-24:

23 And he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave them 'den'; and they all drank from it.

24 And he said to them: This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many.

Jesus is therefore the founder of the new covenant.

Who belongs to the people of the new covenant?

Jesus is breaking with a framework that has existed for centuries. It is no longer just about the people of Israel, but about all those who recognise Jesus as their Lord and who ask for forgiveness of their sins.

What does the New Covenant actually consist of?

God's part in the covenant:

- Love. The new covenant is based on God's love for every single person (John 3:16).
- Redemption and forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 1:7).
- Sanctification (Heb. 13:12).
- Eternal life (Joh. 3,36 +5,24).
- Frank access to the heavenly Father (Heb. 10:19).
- Freedom from the accusation of the enemy (Romans 8:33).
- Overcoming evil (Rom. 6,6+ Rev. 12,11).
- He justifies us (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Blessing instead of curse (Galatians 3:13+14).
- Instead of poverty: having more than enough - share in his material fullness (2 Cor. 8:9 +9,8).
- Healing (Isaiah 53:5).
- ...

But what is our part - our contribution - to the New Covenant?

This can be expressed in one sentence:

Love God and love neighbour as myself (Mt 22:37-40).

Loving God also means, for example, accepting his point of view more and more.

Concrete examples of this are

Worship God alone. Not my family, my work, my standard of living, etc. -Nor the blood of Jesus in itself or the cross in itself; but Him alone!

Total surrender. Paul writes about this:

"Jesus has made us effective servants of the new covenant" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul repeats the Old Testament statements from the

2. Book of Moses: Addressing the Christians he says in

1. Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession, that you may proclaim the virtues of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." short: we are redeemed to invest our lives in God's cause!

We are chosen to proclaim - in whatever way we can.

This shows that the promises made by God to the people of Israel in the Old Covenant (Exodus 19) apply to the worldwide church of born-again Christians.

have been extended in the new covenant (Romans 3:29+10:12).

This is why we can also speak of the New Covenant as the Renewed Covenant.

Important: We Christians today no longer live under the law of the old covenant, but in the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:20+21)! This means, for example: The sacrifices and dietary laws, tithing as a law and the legal observance of the Sabbath no longer apply. Nevertheless, these are divine principles that are still good for us - they are a blessing.

Tithing as a law has been replaced by the principle of generous sharing. Sabbath-keeping has been replaced by the principle of resting every seven days - away from the Sabbath and towards the "Day of the Lord".

The New Covenant cancels the Old Sinai Covenant (Heb. 7:18 + 8:13 + Gal. 4:24-26).

For Christians, only the commandments of the Old Testament formally apply, which are expressly confirmed in the New Testament.

Old Confederation (AB) - New Confederation (NB):

The comparison

The Old Covenant depends on people's behaviour. They must keep all 613 commandments.

The new covenant depends on faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

AB: Concentration on external things (doing). NB: Concentration on inner things (faith).

AB: Inevitably brings about bondage, condemnation. NB: Inevitably brings about freedom (e.g. from sin) - through righteousness in Christ.

Under the old covenant it was impossible to become perfect before God.

Below the New Covenant is perfection.

In the old covenant, everything depended on the person's ability.

In the new covenant, everything depends on God's ability.

The Old Covenant has no power to save. The New Covenant saves us to the utmost.

In the old covenant, there is fear of God's wrath. In the new covenant, Christ has taken the wrath for us carried by God.

AB: Justification is based on works.

NB: Justification takes place through faith in the substitutionary death of Jesus.

AB: Human endeavour.

NB: God makes us perfect for every good work.

Literature on the subject of "Bünde":

- Dr Volker Kessler, God's Great Offers - From the Noahic Covenant to the New Covenant
- Reinhard Hirtler, Living from the Fullness of the New Covenant
- Reinhard Hirtler, Life without Limits - Experience the New Covenant in Practice

0.2 The purge of life

What is a life cleanse?

Life cleansing is about freeing myself from personal burdens (e.g. from things in my life before I turned to Jesus). These can be wrong attitudes (e.g. loving money more than Jesus) or sins that need to be repaired (conversion includes not only confessing sins, but also works of repentance and faith). When we give our lives to Jesus, our sins are forgiven. However, some sins or wrong attitudes also have an impact on our new life as a Christian (for example, a newborn Christian who is heavily in debt must pay off his debts despite his conversion).

There are three levels of life cleansing: 1. for new converts, 2. for Christians who are already walking with God, and 3. for selective revelation through the Holy Spirit.

The church in Bogota, Colombia, (Pastor Caesar Castelanos) has experienced rapid growth (150,000-200,000). One reason for this is seen in the high integration rate of new converts into the church (80%!). Every new believer is mentored by a Christian within 48 hours.

New converts are also encouraged to attend a weekend where the basics are taught:

These consist of 1. a purification of life, 2. the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in new tongues, and 3. deliverance from the powers of darkness.

The most important thing is to ask the Holy Spirit if there is anything in my life that needs to be cleaned up.

Does the Holy Spirit prepare me for a (special)

Disregarding the 10 Commandments

(idolatry, rebellion against parents etc. see Exodus 20ff)?

Is He showing me something from the "catalogue of sins" in Galatians 5 (bitterness, fornication, debauchery, enmity, strife, anger, contention, division, drunkenness, etc.)?

The following list can also be helpful: Sins against God:

Living without God, without God's word, without worship, desecrating the seventh day, hypocrisy, dead works, Phariseism, hypocrisy, impenitence, self-righteousness and self-importance. Despising the sacrifice of Jesus, his blood and his wounds. Mockery of God and the Word of God. Bad spiritual jokes.

Distortion and falsification of the word of God. Blasphemy with words and works. Hatred of God, of the Son of God, of the Holy Spirit. Muffling of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the

Spirit or contempt for it. Hatred of the followers of Jesus, of the saints and beloved ones of the

Lord. Hatred or contempt towards the old covenant people, the Jews. Grumbling against God, secret or open reproaches against God. Not loving God above all else or having left one's first love.

Serving two masters. Putting one's own will above God's will. Acting against better judgement, denial for the sake of earthly advantages. Being ashamed of God. Lack of trust and little faith.

Sins against people:

Anger, irascibility, quarrelling, strife, resentment, unforgiveness, discord, hatred, murder.

Murder in the womb, attempted suicide or

-intention. Rebellion against parents, rebelliousness, disobedience. Negative attitude towards the authorities.

Lying, cheating and deception, theft, perjury, degrading others, denying others, malicious gossip, malicious criticism, judgement in any form. Arrogance - thinking you are better than others, that you can do better, that you know better.

Unkindness, constant reproaches against others, unkindness, jealousy, boastfulness, discord, bitterness, enmity against people and nations, arrogance, imperiousness, hardening against others, ruthlessness, striving for emancipation, brutality and cruelty, tyrant-like behaviour, clan pride. Sins of impurity:

Eye lust, poisoning of thoughts and imagination, especially through words and writings. Impure images and films.

Premarital and extramarital sex, group sex. Adultery, fornication, excessive masturbation, shamelessness, nude bathing with others. Dissolution of the order of marriage and family, incest, sexual perversities, dishonouring man with man and woman with woman.

Sexual atrocities against children and minors, child abuse and rape. Sadism - the pleasure of torturing others. Cruelty to animals, defilement of animals.

Idolatry, idolatry: glorification of human beings, children as idols, glorification of political systems: Nationalism, Fascism, militarism, anti-Semitism, political party spirit.

Glorification of war. Desire for high things, for prestige, fame, honour and power, striving for recognition. Desire for perishable goods, greed, greed for money and love of money. Clinging to earthly things. Greed, envy, resentment, worry, insulting God through unbelief. Work as idolatry.

Unfaithfulness at work, abuse of God's good gifts: addiction to stimulants, alcohol, drugs and other addictions. Lascivious living, addiction to pleasure, gambling addiction,

shameful words and deeds, prioritising hobbies.

Occultism:

Blood prescriptions to Satan, promises to Satan, occult games, summoning spirits, casting lead, cursing people, curses, self-curses, animal sacrifices. Occult writings, magic books, 6th and 7th book of Moses, recipes used according to such books, medicines used according to such books. Letters of protection that are worn, letters of fire, letters from heaven - kept in buildings, amulets consecrated to Satan. Misuse of the name of the triune God in connection with sorcery. Misuse of holy things, the Bible, the sign of the cross in connection with Satanism. Discussing people and animals, land and houses, items of clothing and other objects, fortune telling and clairvoyance, card reading, scrying, interpreting palm lines. Astrology: horoscopes, sun, moon and star worship. Spells taking into account the position of the moon, water spells, use of Easter water, fire spells, earth and field spells, love spells, salt spells, spells to gain possession of earthly goods or to deprive others of their goods. Hypnosis, telepathy, so-called healing magnetism, use of the divining rod, occult powers. Religions, pagan customs, pagan deities and idols. human

Philosophies, groups of error (sects). Anthroposophy, spiritualism, consulting mediums, quoting spirits of the dead, table-turning and glass-turning. Freemasonry, secret doctrines, secret societies, closed in darkness. Superstitious actions, superstitious attitudes, superstitious fear.

God has a simple equation: concretely confessed sin= concretely experienced forgiveness.

It is also important that we only have to confess our sin once.

"But if the Son makes you free, you are free indeed." John 8:36

"Blessed are the pure heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8

(It is helpful to go through this process together with a spiritually mature person. He or she can then grant forgiveness to the person seeking dialogue, command (absolve) in the name of Jesus and conclude with a request for the Holy Spirit to fill the spaces that have become empty).

from:

Eckhard Neumann,
Lebensbeichte und Lebensbereinigung, Biblische Kurzstudie Nr.14, Verlag Josua - Berlin.

%0.3 Liberation and healing through forgiveness

Everyone experiences injustice from outside in their lives. This cause can result in internal injuries, relationship problems, unresolved past issues, inner resistance, instinctual difficulties, etc.

It is a spiritual law (Mt.16,19+18,18) that a wrong committed remains a wrong until it is biblically resolved.

Injustice (guilt) can only be resolved through forgiveness. Without forgiveness, a state of unforgiveness remains, which can lead to resentment, bitterness, hatred, discord, judgement, addiction to criticism and psychosomatic illnesses. **Biblical foundations:**

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, be at peace with all men."

(Rom 12:18)

"Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it!"

(Ps 34:15)

Through the **parable of the scandalous servant** (Mt 18:21-35, please read), Jesus makes it clear how we should deal with injustice and what happens if we do not forgive:

- our own guilt is not forgiven by God! (Luke 6:37)
- whoever does not forgive will be "imprisoned" himself (i.e. the enemy has been given the right to torment a Christian with psychological and psychosomatic disorders - see Schalksknecht)
- If Christians do not forgive, God cannot protect them from the attacks of the enemy.

Genuine forgiveness means that we do not condemn or judge the other person - because God is the judge. But if we do, we ourselves fall under judgement (Mt 7:1).

Those who do not forgive will the most - even though the other person was primarily to blame.

Prayers for deliverance from trouble go unanswered because the enemy has legal rights.

As long as we do not forgive, we are negatively bound to the guilty party.

Both are tormented: the one because of his guilt, the other because of his unforgiveness. Those who forgive free themselves from this invisible bond and receive forgiveness themselves.

Roots that make forgiveness difficult

- **Internal injuries** -
e.g. rejection (in childhood, during pregnancy...)
- **Repressed, unprocessed past**, bad experiences (If someone is rejected, treated wrongly, overburdened,

was frightened or received too little love, care, security, sympathy...)

Consequences: Character defects, compulsions, fears, authority problems, white lies, sensitivities, pride, defiance, self-pity, hatred, outbursts of anger, aggression, panic anxiety, sometimes not being in control, hypocrisy...

We can ask the Holy Spirit to show us our rotten personality traits and their causes. Healing can sometimes be preceded by deep pain when repressed experiences are brought to mind.

The more painful the experiences were, greater the controlling power in our subconscious.

- **Inner resistance, constraints, lack of freedom**

Repression causes obduracy. Head knowledge instead of heart concerns.

Questions for orientation:

What immediately causes me anxiety and unpleasant feelings when I think of my childhood? Did I try to look good through good works (performance)?

What do I feel uncomfortable talking about? Where am I emotionally wounded, hurt and broken?

Where have I had experiences that deeply shook or disappointed me?

It is important to work through these experiences through forgiveness so that the negative consequences can stop and a healing process can begin.

- **Disturbed parental relationship - inability to relate**

The father and mother are responsible for most of the faults. Therefore, a lot has to be forgiven here - including the child's wrong reaction to the parents' guilt.

- **Roots of bitterness**

Where bitterness gains ground, love, health, peace and joy fall away. Causes:

- Lack of love, affection
- Abandonment, neglect or violent treatment in childhood
- Death of a family member (God is accused)
- Chastisement and humiliation in front of others
- Incorrect treatment
- Drive difficulties - addiction displacement When the inner centres of injury are biblically resolved, the addiction displacements also disappear.

The 10 steps to genuine, biblical forgiveness:

- Forgiveness is a decision of the will and not of the emotions!

- Prayer with the request that the Holy Spirit will point out where I have been hurt, afflicted, mistreated, oppressed, frightened and disadvantaged or where I wronged in any way.
- Make a list. Write down the names of people who been guilty of something against me (also pay attention to parental and sibling relationships, as well as shock states).
- Pray through each person listed individually: e.g. "I forgive XY for this guilt and decide not to hold any more grudges against XY. I confess that I have reacted wrongly (with hatred, resentment, bitterness, rebellion, thoughts of murder, etc.). I apologise for this and bless XY in the name of Jesus".
- It may be necessary to go to the guilty party (e.g. the father) and repent for our wrong behaviour (our reaction to the violation) - without accusing.
- A counsellor can now, according to Mt 16:18, redeem the claims of Satan and, if necessary, consciously cast out the tormentors (demons) in the name of Jesus.
- Make intercession. Ask God not to impute their guilt to the guilty, such as Jesus in Luke 23:34 or Stephen in Acts 7:59.
- Ask Jesus to heal your own inner wounds. The way is now clear for Jesus to heal every

individual injury can heal. This is often a process.

- Is there proof of true forgiveness?
When we no longer have negative feelings towards the guilty parties.
Peace with people is then restored, at least from our side.
- For the future:
Practise a lifestyle of forgiveness. Inwardly forgive immediately as soon as you are wronged again. This prevents new injuries from occurring.

Forgiving means giving grace.

(Only) those who have experienced mercy can be merciful.

It is important to differentiate between "**forgiveness**" and "**Reconciliation**".

I have to forgive in order to be free myself and because God says so (forgiveness as a decision).

Reconciliation can be a long process.

Reconciliation requires the will of both parties (see Romans 12:18).

Source and literature

- Bruno Schär, Forgiveness
(Order possible under: Tel. 0041-73512610)

0.4 Liberation from attachments and compulsive behaviour

Jesus has called us to freedom.

He the victory on the cross so that we no longer have to be under the bondage of demons and spirits.

What does the Bible say about this topic?

Mk 16,17: But these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons, ...

Mt 10,7-8: But go, preach and say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand!

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, **cast out demons!** You have received it for free, give it for free!

Mark 6:12-13: ... **They cast out many demons** and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Lk 10,17: But the seventy returned with joy, saying: Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!

Phil 4:13: I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

James 4:7: Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil and he will flee from you;**

1. I Peter 5:8-9: Be sober and watch. **Your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that your brothers in the world suffer the same things.**

Mt 18,18-19: Truly I tell you, **whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**

Mt 28,18: And Jesus said, **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**

Heb 2,14+15: ... **so that through death Jesus might put out of action him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were held in bondage all their lives.**

2. Cor 10,4: ...**for the weapons of our knighthood are not carnal, but mighty through God to the destruction of strongholds, ...**

Various spirits are mentioned by name in the Bible: Spirit of jealousy (Num 5:14), spirit of lies (2 Chr 18:20), spirit of fornication (Hos 4:12), unclean spirit (Mt 12:43), spirit of deep sleep (Isa 29:10), speechless and deaf spirit (Mk 9:25), spirit of sickness (Lk 13:11).

Further names and characteristics of evil spirits from counselling practice:

Spirit/demon of the...

Whining, lust, acupuncture, yoga, gossip, criticism, tiredness, doubt, confusion, forgetfulness, clumsiness, compromise, madness,

Exaggeration, slander, stiffness, illness, weakness, lies, fear, fornication, impurity,

Speechlessness, deafness, nicotine, hatred, fear, pride, jealousy, self-pity, infidelity, death, lying, flirting, petting, humanism, rejection, suicide, grief, depression, loneliness, rebellion, anger, Insomnia, tooth decay, lust, compulsive masturbation, epilepsy, infidelity, cancer, asthma, schizophrenia, crippling, stumbling, screaming, crying, lamentation, agony, headache, earache, laziness ...

(This does not mean that each of these characteristics is of demonic origin - it can also be carnal (human). But if it is a compulsive, uncontrollable behaviour, it is usually of demonic origin).

Practical tips on deliverance prayer: Basically, there is no fixed pattern of action - you are always dependent on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- Praise and worship are an effective part of deliverance ministry.
- You can ask the demon for its name on the instruction of the Holy Spirit (but they can lie)
- Address the evil spirit directly and command it to leave.
- Defy demons - therefore always listen to the HG and take the land step by step. Deliverance can take several hours. It is therefore wise to pray together with several mature Christians.
- Stand firm until the breakthrough is there.
- Pay attention to information from the demon.
- Possible prayer: "You evil spirit in this woman, I am addressing you and not this woman. What is your name? I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to answer me."
- Always say the opposite of what the demon is saying (set truth against lies).
- Because according to Luke 10:17 the demons are subject to us, we can say: "In the name of Jesus you are subject to me. What is your name?"
- Persistently quoting the Bible, proclaiming the victory of Jesus and calling on his name.
- Has the person I am praying for fulfilled the necessary conditions for deliverance?
- Liberation takes precedence over dignity.
- Jesus consistently cast out demons in public.
- The two main obstacles on the path to liberation are a) the unwillingness to repent and b) the inability to forgive others.
- Jesus asks us to simply believe in his name and his word.

- You can also cast out demons yourself (Mark 16:17).
- Liberation is sometimes a process - work with proclamations and self-discipline in the event of renewed attacks.
- Even mature Christians sometimes find themselves in a demonic conflict.
- The devil seeks out the weakest moments in a person's life in order to penetrate them.
- Any deliberate misbehaviour can invite demons (theft, lying, cheating, watching pornographic films, etc.).
- Demons sometimes go out with sighs and yawns.
- Demons often exit through the mouth - so exhale forcefully.
- Sometimes demons leave automatically, but as a rule they have to be thrown out.
- I don't need to shout, it doesn't give me any more authority. The demons also understand me when I speak normally.
- The only security in deliverance ministry is to consciously and permanently recognise that I must rely on the HG.
- Behind compulsive behaviour there are often demons (nicotine, alcohol problems, drugs, gambling addiction, compulsive masturbation...).
- In order to help those affected, we may have to look behind the actual addiction and find the "bigger branch" from which the addiction is growing.
- Demons leave the body partly without manifestations, partly with manifestations e.g. by coughing, yawning, vomiting, spitting..., partly also through one ear (D. Prince, p.217) ...
- People have taken drugs often need a liberation process because their personality is so destroyed that all kinds of demons can it unhindered and move freely. The defence walls must first be rebuilt.
- Anyone who has outbursts of anger or suddenly becomes afraid is not necessarily under the influence of a spirit of anger or fear. However, if such emotions become an obsession or habit, a demon is most likely at work.
- Demons like to work in teams. One of them is often the door opener who lets others in.
- A woman who has had an abortion almost certainly has a murderous spirit, even if she did not realise that she had killed a human life.
- Compulsive sexual abnormalities are due to demonic pressure: Masturbation, pornography, fornication, adultery, male and female homosexuality, perversion.
- For many people, pride is a major obstacle to liberation.
- Address the evil spirit in the person directly: The burdened person should listen carefully, but stay out of the conversation.
- When the demons come out with shouting and roaring and physical manifestations, I command them in the name of Jesus to be still and come out - this can also take several minutes.
- The burdened people must agree to the release - even if it leads to physical manifestations.
- Spirits of death can the body of a person who is then defenceless during a general anaesthetic. We can ask God how and when the spirit entered the person. (e.g. states of shock etc.....)
- Some burdened people only feel an uncertain pressure in their lives without realising that it is a demonic burden.
- Derek Prince's **nine points** (page 244ff) are important when preparing for a liberation dialogue.
- Demons often go out without any manifestations.
- Strong exhalation of the burdened person helps with the prayer of liberation (p.255).
- One help is a model prayer (Prince, p.257ff).
- Seven important steps to stay free - after prayer (Prince, p.262ff).
- Discipline is necessary to stay free.
- Put on the armour of God (Eph. 6:13)
- Topic: Prayer: You only reach an arm's length with a sword. But "prayer and fasting" is our intercontinental ballistic missile.
- Immunity from demonic pressure is only granted to us on one condition: obedience.
- Why some people are not liberated: Derek Prince, p.275ff.
- Sometimes it is important to fast before the prayer of deliverance (Mark 9:29).
- Some don't even want to be freed fear of not getting as much attention.
- Who should carry out the deliverance service? E.g. elders, house group leaders, apostles - all in a team.

Literature:

- Derek Prince, ".....and they become demons expel"
- Christoph Häselbarth, "Liberation"
- Randy Clark, "The Biblical Guide to Deliverance Ministry"

0.5 Physical healing

What does the Bible say about the healing of physical illnesses?

"If you will obey the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his sight and listen to his commandments and keep all his statutes, then I will not put on you the diseases I put on Egypt, **for I, the LORD, am your physician.**" Exodus 15:26
"He (Jesus) was despised and forsaken men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with sickness; as one from whom a man hides his face, so he was despised, and we esteemed him not. But truly, **our**

He bore sickness, and our pains he took upon him; but we thought he was punished, smitten of God, and afflicted; but he was pierced for our transgression, he was crushed for our iniquity; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and **with his wounds we are healed.**" Isaiah 53:3-5 + 1 Peter 2:24

Jesus gave his disciples a mission:

"Then he called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every sickness." Mat.10,1

"But go, preach and say: The kingdom of heaven is hand! Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons! You received it for free, give it for free!" Mt.10,7+8
"But these signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name and speak with new tongues, 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. And they went out and preached everywhere; and the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the accompanying signs." Mark 16:17-20

"If any of you is sick, let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. So confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much if it is earnest." James 5:14-16

Reasons that prevent healing:

Unbelief - an atmosphere of faith is necessary for someone to be healed. In Mt 13:58 we read that Jesus could not do much in Nazareth because of the people's unbelief. However, this does not mean that everyone who is not healed does not believe enough. There are many other reasons.

We must fulfil our part in the healing: We must

- decide in favour of health,
- Leave the benefits of illness behind us,
- repent of sins that we have become aware of,
- live in reconciliation,
- strengthen and expand our faith in healing,
- pray persistently for healing,
- resist the devil (James 4:7).

It is important to live in forgiveness and reconciliation with all people (including parents - Deuteronomy 30:19). Pride and rebellion can be a major resistance to healing.

It's best to ask God:

- "Where am I proud?"
- "Where do I live in rebellion?"

Why doesn't God heal everyone - immediately?

God is and remains a sovereign God who does not have to explain himself to anyone. He is not in our hands. Our realisation is also piecemeal when it comes to healing.

We can ask God:

- "Where are you in this time of need?"
- "Are you trying to tell me something something through the illness?"
- "Does God want to test me to see if I trust him despite the illness?"

Guiding principles on the subject of healing:

God basically wants to heal everyone (John 10:10, Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24).

Healing through prayer and healing through doctors and medication often complement each other.

We may ask God to make clear to us what is holding back healing (e.g. sin, a curse, a spirit of sickness, pride, rebellion, unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, idolatry, ancestral guilt).

Illnesses can have more than one cause. We should find out what God says in the Bible on the subject of "physical healing". It is also helpful to read good literature by authors who have years of experience in this area.

Obedience to God is a key to healing (example: Naaman - 2 Kings 5:9-11) Health is not the highest good! Even life itself is not the highest good! But having the certainty of being in the will of God and having peace with God.

Practical application:

Nowhere is it reported that Jesus asked his Father to heal someone. Paul did not ask God to heal either, but said, for example, in Acts 14:10: "Get up!" not: "Father, I ask you to heal him." Christians have the commission from Jesus: "Heal!" (e.g. Mat 10:7). This authority comes through an intimate

Relationship with God. Healing happens on the basis of what Jesus on the cross.

The book below by Christoph Häselbarth lists how healings can take place (pages 22-24). The book also contains a list of illnesses and their possible spiritual and physical causes (pages 84-171). There are also many personal examples of how people were healed and what initially stopped the healing.

The other books are also standard works on the subject of "healing", suitable for those who want to take a closer look at this area.

Literature:

- Christoph Häselbarth and Dr Peter Riechert, "How we can be healed".
- Wolfhard Margies, "Healing mental illnesses"
- Bruno Schär, "Heilung" - LCA-Verlag, Uzwil/Switzerland, Tel.0041-71 951 26 10.
- Joy Dawson, "I long for healing".
- Tom Jewett, "The Good News Nobody Wanted to Know - Holistic Healing According to the Word of God".
- Andreas Herrmann, "Experience God's healing power today!"
- Willem J. Ouweneel, "Heal the sick!"
- F.F. Bosworth, "Christ our Healer"
- Dr Henry W. Wright, "The Spiritual Causes of Disease"

0.6 Dealing better with fears

Everyone is afraid!

Fears have been part of our lives since the fall of man. They have become a basic element of our lives.

Fears can torment and tyrannise us. Fears are the key to all mental difficulties. Mental suffering, conflicts, marital and parenting problems, old age and work problems all have to do with fears. Jesus says in John 16:33: "In the world you have fear, but be of good cheer - I have overcome the world."

Jesus won the victory over fears, even over death, on the cross.

That is why Christians have in the death of Jesus the basis for an effective help and solution - especially in dealing with fears. He overcame fears and his followers can already share in this victory.

Fear has many faces

Behind many behavioural patterns are actually fears:

Mistrust is the fear of being betrayed. *Jealousy* is the fear of being abandoned. *Shyness* is the fear of not being enough.

Showing off is a fear of not getting enough attention.

Lying is the fear of offending with the truth.

Perfection is the fear of making mistakes.

Courage is fear of failure.

Fear of death is the fear of forfeiting life itself. *Legalism* is the fear of being considered superficial and inaccurate.

Ambition is the fear of being insignificant. *Weakness in decision-making* is the fear of doing something wrong.

The psychoanalyst Alfred Adler emphasised that we should not look for the *causes* of anxiety, but for its *goals*.

Fear must not be suppressed. Those who remain alone with their fear suffer and can panic. Those who express their fears (in dialogue with God or a person) find relief.

It helps some people to overcome their fear by doing what they are afraid of. If you want to experience freedom from fear, you have to do something about it. Freedom from fear is a gift from God and at the same time an appeal to us.

When problems arise, you should ask yourself: What fears are at play here? Recognising these backgrounds often leads to the decisive solution. People with exaggerated fears often need a long period of attention, prayer and support in order to heal completely. The prayers are more concrete and helpful if the objectives and the

See through the motives of fear. Here too, the spiritual gift of insight can be a great help. What sins are hidden behind my motives for fear? What unspiritual thoughts are linked to the goals of fear?

What do I do when I am overcome by fear?

Jesus was afraid. He was even afraid of death. Shortly before His crucifixion, He was overcome with fear in the Garden of Gethsemane. Yet He did not sin. His strategy: He turned to His Father - He prayed and asked His friends to pray with Him.

Turning to God, the loving heavenly Father, is still the best response in fearful situations today.

Prayer helps us to turn our gaze from our fear to Jesus.

When we look at Him, His power over all fears, His benevolence towards us, His love for us, our hearts become lighter. Fear arises when we - instead of looking at Jesus - look at ourselves - at our abilities, our heart and our mind.

Those who have the gift of speaking in tongues should also speak in other tongues when they feel anxious, for those who speak in tongues edify themselves (1 Corinthians 14:4).

Paul advises in Romans 12:2 that we should change our nature by the renewing of your mind. When I have anxiety attacks, it helps to counter the lies that have taken root in my mind with the powerful and true Word of God. We can speak the truth out loud (proclaim) and thereby renew our mind.

Experience shows that our feelings then adjust and we experience peace again (enter into the rest of God). Such biblical truths about myself are listed, for example, in the topic "Who am I in Jesus?". It also helps to proclaim Bible verses that the Holy Spirit reminds you of in a moment of fear - e.g. "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6) "Cast your requests on the Lord, who will provide for you and will not let the righteous be troubled forever." (Ps 55:23)

Thanks, praise and proclamations are the most important weapons against fear.

Recognise and confess that you are completely dependent on God!

We can confess to God that we are totally dependent on Him. We can tell Him that we expect all help from Him and that we are consciously use of His grace in this situation. We can and should receive from Him the decisive

expect a solution to the problem. The best precaution against anxiety:

- Build an intimate love relationship with Jesus and enjoy quality time with Him
- Hate and forsake sin
- Adopt a lifestyle of grace (see discipleship theme no. 3)
- Clarify relationships
- Shedding more and more pride

Psalms 56:3: When I **afraid**, I trust in you! Romans 8:35: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation or **fear** or persecution or hunger or nakedness or danger or sword?

Psalms 107, 6+13+19: Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their **fears** and led them in the right way, so that they came to an inhabited city; let them thank the LORD for his favour and for his wonders to the children of men, that he has watered the thirsty soul and filled the hungry soul with good things!

Isaiah 41:9: You are my servant, I have chosen you and will not reject you; do not be afraid, for I am with you; do not be **dismayed**, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.

2 Timothy 1:7: ...for God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Sources:

- Reinhold Ruthe, "Courage - coping better with fears"
- Michiaki and Hildegard Horie, "When thoughts become powers"
- Derek and Ruth Prince: "Prayers and Proclamations"
- DE'IGNIS magazine, July 2003, Coping with anxiety

0.7 Dealing with worries

Of course, Christians also have worries. They also have problems, sleepless nights and fears. But they have the privilege of being able to deal with their worries differently.

They are children of the heavenly Father. God, who made heaven and earth, knows them by name and is aware of their need. Romans 8:14: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God."

For you have not received a spirit of slavery, that you should fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption, in which we cry out: Abba, Father!"

He offers them the opportunity to cast their cares on him. He wants to give them inner peace instead of worries: Philippians 4:6

"Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

When we have worries and problems, we can ask God for wisdom:

James 1:5

"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask it of God, who gives to all gladly and without reproach, and it will be given to him." Romans 8:31

"What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who spared not even his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also give us all things?"

Matthew 6:33

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.** Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

Look at the birds of the air! They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? But which of you by his labour can add a single cubit to his length?

And why are you worried about the clothes? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They labour not, neither do they spin: but I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. Therefore, if God were to take the grass of the field, which today is standing and tomorrow will go into the oven

is thrown, that is, clothed, will he not do so much more to you, O ye of little faith?

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we clothe ourselves? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, but your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (!)

Therefore do not worry about the morrow, for tomorrow will take care of its own. To each day its own plague is enough!"

At no point in the Bible did God promise that we would live in luxury - but: Jesus died to ensure that our basic needs for food, clothing, housing etc. would be met. He is our provider:

"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." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

More on this aspect in the topic "God provides materially".

If we are worried, we should ask ourselves these seven questions:

- **Am I at peace with God?**
- **Is my marriage intact?**
- **Are my children looked after?**
- **Am I hungry?**
- **Am I freezing?**
- **Am I currently in the right place and am I doing the right thing?**
- **Will others be made disciples through my life?**

If I can answer these questions positively, I am in the "green zone".

God uses difficulties in our lives to draw our attention to grievances. In his love, he uses problems to speak to us. That is why we can ask God in times of difficulty: "Lord, where are you in these problems?" What do you want me to learn?"

God moulds our character through our problems. He is more interested in us maturing than the problem being solved quickly.

Worries become oversized when we look at our options or rely on people.

If, on the other hand, we look at God and his love for us and his omnipotence, elephants become gnats.

That's why it's important to change your perspective and look to God when you're worried.

The main battlefield is in our heads.

The situation does not get better by worrying. On the contrary: worry paralyses and tires. At night, worries are often twice as great. James 4:8 says: "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you!"

In order to maintain inner peace in the face of problems, we need to cultivate a very close relationship with God.

In practical terms, this means quality time with him and seeking him and his will.

It's not about a carefree life - it's about maintaining an inner peace. This is achievable when you share your life with Jesus.

"skin and hair" and is obedient to him.

Here is the secret of real quality of life - even in difficult circumstances.

Tip:

Internalise statements from the Bible on the subject of "worry". Example:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5

%0.8 What does the Bible say on the subject "Suffering"

Can/should/must Christians suffer? What does the Bible say on this subject?

Psalm 34:20: The righteous must suffer much, but the LORD delivers him from it all.

Here it becomes clear: suffering yes - hopelessness no!

Jesus pours out pure wine to his disciples about their future:

Matthew 10,

17 But beware of men! For they will hand you over to the courts, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; you will also be brought before princes and kings for my sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you are to say, for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say; for it is not you who speak, but it your Father's Spirit who speaks through you. But brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against their parents and put them to death. And you will be hated by everyone for my name's sake.

But he who perseveres to the end will be saved. ...

So do not be afraid! You are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone therefore who confesses me before men, him will I also confess before my heavenly Father; but whoever denies me before men, him will I also deny before my heavenly Father. Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but the sword. For I have come to divide a man from his father, and a daughter from her mother, and a daughter-in-law from her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.

2.Cor.1,

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, that we comfort those who are in any affliction, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are lavishly poured out on us, so also through Christ our consolation lavishly flows.

Philippians 1,

29 For you have been given grace concerning Christ, not only to believe in him but also to

to suffer for his sake, having the same struggle that you see in me and now hear from me.

1 Peter 2,

For this is grace, when a man out of conscience toward God endures offence, suffering wrong. For what glory is it if you suffer offence because you have done wrong? But if you suffer and endure for doing good, this is favour with God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

1 Peter 3,

14 But even if you suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. But do not be afraid dismayed, but sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts.

1. I Peter 4,

12 Beloved, do not let the fiery trial that has come among you alienate you, as though it were something strange to you; but the more you share in Christ's sufferings, rejoice, so that you may also rejoice at the revelation of his glory.

Blessed are you when you are reproached for the name of Christ! For the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you; with them he is blasphemed, but with you he is praised. But let no one among you suffer as a murderer or thief or evildoer, or because he meddles with other people's affairs; but if he suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God with this name. ... Let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to the faithful Creator and do what is right.

Most attacks will come from the "pious" - from the spiritual establishment! That was already the case in Jesus' day. The Pharisees and scribes were the source of most opposition and suffering - from slander, false accusations and incitement of the people to his murder.

Paul, who was completely in God's will, suffered: 2

Corinthians 11,

24 I have received from the Jews five times forty strokes less one; three times I have been beaten with rods, once stoned; three times I have shipwrecked; I have spent a day and a night in the deep. I have often been on journeys, in dangers on rivers, in dangers from murderers, in dangers from my own people, in dangers from pagans, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the desert, in dangers on the sea, in dangers among false brothers; in labour and toil, often in night watches, in hunger and thirst; often in fasting, in cold and nakedness; in addition to all this, the daily influx to me, the care for all the churches.

Colossians 1,

24 Now I rejoice in sufferings for you, enduring in my flesh as a substitute what is still lacking in Christ's afflictions for his body, which is the church,

2. Tim.2,

8 Keep in remembrance Jesus Christ, who is risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel, in whose service I suffer adversity, even chains as a malefactor; but the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Faithful is the word: If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him; if we deny, he will also deny us; if we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

Romans 8,

17 But if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer together, that we may also be glorified together. **For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory to come, which is to be revealed in us.** For the eager waiting of creation awaits the revelation of the sons of God.

Hebrews 12,

1 Therefore we also: Since we have such a cloud of witnesses around us, let us lay aside everything that weighs us down and the sin that continually entangles us, and let us walk with patience in the battle that is set before us, looking up to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who, though he might have had joy, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Remember him who endured so much opposition from sinners, so that you may not grow fainthearted or lose heart.

James 5,

13 If any of you suffer wrong, let him pray... Suffering in our lives becomes more bearable because we have a well-founded hope: Jesus will come again, he will take up his reign and his kingdom will be revealed to all. Besides: God loves us, he has everything under his control, he means well with us, nothing is too difficult for him.

Revelation 21,

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.
(see also Isaiah 25:8+ 60:20)

A glorious future awaits the born-again Christian:

- They will have eternal fellowship with God (Rev 21:3),
- They will be the bride of Jesus at the wedding of the Lamb (Rev 19:7),
- They will be provided for materially (Jn 14:2; Rev 21:6),
- They will reign (Rev 20,6+ 1.Cor.6,1-3).

It is important for Christians to maintain their inner peace, which can only come from God, despite suffering. Then they can also get through turbulent situations and hardships.

Literature

- Haavald Slaatten, The Citizen of Heaven, ISBN 3-87482-231-1 (Passion and insights of a Christian from China).

%0.9 The gift and the process of sanctification

"Holy" (Hebrew khadosh, Greek hagios) means "to be set apart"/"to be separate from the ordinary. God says in Genesis 19:2:

"You shall be holy, for I am holy!" This is the motto of the entire history of salvation.

Because our sanctification is God's desire, He has shown us a way in which we can come to this state: On the one hand, sanctification is offered to us as a gift and on the other hand, it requires our full commitment.

1. The gift of sanctification:

1. Corinthians 1:30: "But through him you are in **Christ Jesus, who was made to us by God for** wisdom, for righteousness, **for sanctification** and for redemption..."

Sanctification is entirely God's work. "sanctified himself for us" through his life and death, through obedience to the point of death on the cross; now we too can be sanctified in truth" - John 17:19: "And I sanctify myself for them, that they also may be sanctified in truth."

Jesus gives us the gift of sanctification through his self-sacrifice, his renunciation of his life. The motive for this is his love for people.

2. Our commitment to sanctification

Gratefully accepting sanctification as a gift is one side of the coin; the other side is our response, our reaction, to the gift. Because if we do not react properly, the gift of sanctification is of little use to us.

For example, if we were given a credit card with which we could make unlimited purchases but did not use it, this valuable gift would be useless.

This gift of sanctification requires our full commitment:

We must want sanctification.

We must consciously accept the gift, take it from the hands of Jesus. That means responding to Jesus' love and saying:

"Yes, Lord, I want to live a sanctified life. Thank you for making it possible for me through your commitment."

We must recognise our powerlessness to lead a holy life in our own strength.

Paul writes: "...and because I am convinced that the one who began a good work in you will also complete it..." Phil 1:6.

God is for us; He wants to promote sanctification in our lives.

3) We must make the right decisions. If we do not do this, we delay the process of sanctification in our lives - to our own detriment.

For example, we have to make a conscious decision to forgive others quickly (so that no bitter root grows in us), to put aside pride and defiance more and more, to not

idols (things that are more important to me than Jesus and the kingdom of God) our devotion, time and energy

sacrifice, allow no other sin in our lives and live in forgiveness, etc.

What do I gain from striving for a life of holiness?

I then live in my destiny according to creation.

I am then obedient to God. This has a direct impact on my life:

Blessing instead of curse, life instead of death, love instead of hate, peace instead of sleepless nights, material provision instead of lack, joy instead of frustration, etc ... in short, all the blessings that God promised Abraham in Genesis 28 (see also the New Testament confirmation in Galatians 3:13+14).

Those who have understood what is at stake will be strongly motivated to confess and forsake everything that delays sanctification.

2 Corinthians 7:1 "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit unto perfection of holiness in the fear of God." 1 Thessalonians 4:3: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

4 That each of you may know that he has his own vessel in sanctification and honour,

7 For God has not called us to uncleanness, but to sanctification."

2 Thessalonians 2:13: "But we always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth,

14 to which he has also called you through our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Col.3,2 "Put on therefore as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, tenderhearted, kind, humble, gentle, patient, ...

13 Bear with one another and forgive one another, if one has a grievance against another; just as Christ forgave you, so also do you. 14 But above all this, *have* love, which is the bond of perfection.

15 And may the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which you have also been called in one body. Be thankful too!"

Hebrews 12:14: "Pursue peace with everyone and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord."

1 Peter 1:3: "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope fully for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

14 As children of obedience, do not conform yourselves to the desires that formerly prevailed in your ignorance, 15 but as he called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

16 For it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

17 And if you call on him as Father, who judges every man's work without respect of persons, walk in fear during the time of your alienation. 18 For you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain conversation handed down from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 Though he is

foreknown before the foundation of the world, but revealed at the end of time for your sake, 21 who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope may in God. 22 Since you have purified your souls through obedience to the truth into unfeigned brotherly love, love one another steadfastly out of a pure heart. 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God."

%0.10 Evangelisation - a lifestyle

What does "evangelisation" mean?

Evangelisation means making the good news (= the gospel) known.

The good news is this,

- that God loves people,
- that Jesus came to earth to save sinners (1.Tim.1,15 + Joh.3,16+17),

- that we can get to know Jesus, the most fascinating and lovable person. Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah (in Luke 4:18)

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me preach good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Then Jesus says: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing!" (verse 21)

It is important that we correctly assess the situation in which we live. It is about the reality that surrounds us. The reality is that in addition to the visible world, there is an invisible world. As born-again Christians, we live in an invisible kingdom. Jesus is the King. Jesus sacrificed his earthly life so that we can experience forgiveness of sins through death on the cross and thus eternal life (= eternal fellowship and security with God).

Before Jesus went back to his Father, he gave the Christians precise instructions:

Matthew 28:18ff: "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore 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 observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Mark 16:15ff: "And he said to them: 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and baptised will be saved, but he does not believe will be condemned. But these signs will follow those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues, they will take up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the weak, and they will be well."

Jesus' instructions still apply today - just as they did then!

The kingdom has been growing ever since (in China, for example, around 25,000 new people are being added every day at the moment).

Because: "God wants all people to be saved and to have the knowledge of the truth."

For one is God, and one is the mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, as a testimony in due time" (1 Tim. 2:4, 5).

They records in heaven!

Who is in the kingdom and who is not is precisely recorded. We read about the book of life in several places in the Bible: Rev 20,12 "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged according to what was written in the books, according to their deeds."

Luke 10:20 "But do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. At that very hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said: I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Yes, Father, for so it has been pleasing in your sight."

(For "book of life" see also: Daniel 12:1; Malachi 3:16; Ps. 69:29; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3,5+21,27)

So what matters is that my name and the name of the people who live around me are in the book of life. If the name is in the book, it means eternal life and eternal glory with God; if the name is not in the book, it means eternal damnation and a life far from God, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. That is the reality!

Mat.13,49: "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all this? They answered: Yes."

What does an evangelistic lifestyle look like in practice?

Living an evangelistic lifestyle is not about constantly witnessing someone. Rather, it is about that:

To accept Jesus as Lord in my life without compromise. This also means that it is no longer about my time, my energy, my finances, my desires, my plans.

Setting the right priorities in my life. Jesus told his disciples:

Mat.6,33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

Therefore do not be anxious about the morrow, for he

tomorrow will take care of its own. Every day has its own plague!"

Jesus: "Do not labour (Greek "ergazomai", from "ergon" = labour) for the food that perishes..." (John 6:27).

Be ready to share the gospel and watch out for opportunities that have been organised by God. It is usually not enough to just live "decently" in the hope that someone will ask me why I am so different (if I am at all).

What distinguishes my lifestyle from that of a "good" worldly person?

Pass on evangelistic books, tracts, Jesus film, etc. when the opportunity arises.

Inform others about the Alpha course, for example.

Rediscover the importance of prayer for the lost.

Germany is a missionary country! There are only about 2% born-again Christians here (England 7%, USA 23%, Guatemala 43%). Over 90% of the population vote with their feet every Sunday that they do not want to attend a church service as they know it. The situation is dramatic.

Relational evangelism is by far the most effective way to evangelise. In addition, this friendly way is the most natural, not embarrassing and, unlike other ways, very inexpensive. Have you come to know Jesus through relationships with other Christians?

More hot biblical passages

Proverbs 24:11ff: "Save those who are dragged to death and those who stagger to the slaughter, hold back! If you would say, 'Behold, we did not know,' will not he who tests hearts know, and he who watches your soul perceive, and repay a man according to his deeds?"

Ezekiel 33:7ff: "Now I have appointed you, O son of man, a watchman to the house of Israel, that you may hear the word from my mouth and hear them from me.

warn him. If I say to the wicked, "You, wicked one, shall surely die," and you do not say it to him to warn him against his wicked ways, the wicked one will die because of his wickedness, but I will require his blood at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he will not turn from his way, he will die because of his sin, but you have saved your soul."

1. Corinthians 9:16ff - Paul writes: "For if I preach the gospel, it is no honour for me; for I am under obligation to do so, and woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"

We don't have to be mature Christians to share the gospel with others.

Experience has shown that it is precisely those who have not been Christians for long who lead the most people to Christ. The explanation is simple: on the one hand, they still have more contact with non-Christians and on the other hand, they still know very freshly what they have been redeemed from through Jesus.

God has chosen to build the kingdom through Christians - through their hands, their mouths. Our task is to be witnesses and to make the gospel known in a variety of ways.

His task is to bring about the miracle of salvation.

His motive is love for people. Jesus told his disciples:

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and

you will be my witnesses. (Acts 1:8) "You are the salt of the earth." (Mt 5:13) "You are the light of the world." (Mt 5:14)

Literature:

- Dieter Beständig, "...and you will be my witnesses!", ISBN 3-85614-026-3

%0.11 Invest in the best

Invest in the best - your most important investment

The really good investments have a long lead time. This is also the case here: Even before the creation of matter, space and time, there was God - alive, omnipotent, eternal and perfect. He lacked nothing. Nevertheless, God created the universe, the earth, you and me.

"Everything created bears the marks of the Creator." St Augustine Aurelius (354-430)

1. Step:

God loves you.

He created you so that you can get to know him and experience his love.

God gives love

"For God loved mankind so much that he gave his only Son for them. Everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3, 16)

God gives life

"But I bring life to all who belong to me - and this in abundance." (John 10:10)

"The greatest concern of man is to know how to fulfil his place in creation properly." Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

"The purpose of our earthly existence not to be successful, even if we usually think so, but to develop our souls."

Alexander Solzhenitsyn (born 1918)

But is that your perception? Then why don't you experience this personal relationship with God?

2. Step:

Fellowship with God is destroyed by man's sin. That is why you too cannot get to know God personally and experience his love.

People are sinful:

"For in this all men are alike: all are sinners and have nothing to show for themselves that is pleasing to God." (Romans 3:23)

We are created to live in communion with God. But we think we can manage our lives without him. And our relationship with God breaks down. Bible calls this stubbornness, coupled with indifference and rebellion against God, sin.

People live in separation from God

"For the penalty for sin death (separation from God)." (Romans 6:23)

The tragedy of modern man is not that he knows less and less about the meaning of his own life, but that this bothers him less and less. (Unknown)

God is holy. This means that he is absolutely free from evil and completely pure in his thoughts and actions. Man, on the other hand, does not live up to God's standards. This creates a deep gulf between the two. The people in the drawing illustrate how man constantly tries to bridge this gap through philosophy, religiosity or by endeavouring to lead a morally impeccable life. In vain. This is not the way to reach God.

3. Step

Jesus Christ is God's way out of man's sin. Only through him can man find a personal relationship with God again.

Jesus became man for us.

Because we could not come to him, he set out himself. He came "from above" but not from above, because he became human, just like us.

"There is only one God and only one person who mediates between God and man and creates peace. This is the man Jesus Christ." (1 Timothy 2:5)

Jesus died for us.

He died to remove the separation between God and man.

"He, who was free from all guilt, died for us guilty people, once and for all. This is how he brought us to God, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross." (1 Peter 3:18)

Jesus has risen from the dead and is alive.

Even the first disciples testified in amazement that this was not the end: "God raised this Jesus from the dead. We can all testify to that." (Acts 2:32)

Jesus is the only way to God.

Jesus replied: "I am the way, I am the truth and I am the life! Without me, no one can come to the Father." (John 14:6)

"The greatest truth is that there is only one truth." Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-1782)

Through his actions, God bridged the gap that separates us from him. He sent his Son Jesus Christ, who died on the cross in our place. In doing so, he paid our debt.

Many people have this before. However, knowing these three steps is not enough to bring about change...

4. Step

We can find fellowship with God if we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. This requires trust.

"But to those who received him and believed in him (trusted in him), he gave the right to be children of God." (John 1, 12)
This includes

- that we admit our guilt to God.
- that we accept his forgiveness.
- that we entrust him with the guidance of our lives.

"It's good to admit guilt, experience forgiveness and start again." Rainer Haak (born 1947)

This a decision.

We have to invite Jesus personally in order to receive him.

"Don't you realise? I am still standing at your door and knocking. Whoever listens to my voice now and opens the door for me, I will come in. Together we will eat the banquet." (Revelation 3:20)

"We must therefore decide: Either this man was the Son of God or he was a fool or worse. You can lock him up as a lunatic, you can despise him or kill him as a demon. Or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But you cannot call him a great teacher of mankind with patronising condescension. That was never his intention; he didn't leave the option open to us." Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) What happens then?

Anyone who consciously says "yes" to Jesus and entrusts him with the guidance of their entire life finds their way back to God's purpose and becomes a "new man" (see John 3:1-8).

How do you start a life with Jesus?

You can now invite Jesus Christ in prayer. God knows your heart. He is not interested in well-formulated words, but in your honest attitude. The following prayer is one way of expressing your trust in God:

"Jesus Christ, I thank you that you love me and that you became man as God. I have realised that I have determined my own life. Forgive me my guilt. Thank you for forgiving me everything because you died for me on the cross. I open my heart to you as my Lord and Saviour. Please come into my life! Heal all the wounds in my life and change me through your Holy Spirit into the person you want me to be. Thank you for answering this prayer. Amen" Does this prayer correspond to your desire? If so, then you can it your own prayer and Jesus will come into your life as he has promised. And you will experience a meaningful life as only he can give it.

How do you know that Christ has accepted your invitation? Because he himself has promised that he will build a personal relationship with you as soon as you allow him into your life. And he will never lead you astray. You can trust God and his word, the Bible. He will answer your prayer.

"But God has clearly declared that he gives us eternal life, and that only through his Son Jesus Christ. So whoever believes in the Son has life, but whoever does not believe in Jesus Christ does not have life either. I know that you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. My letter was to assure you once again that you have eternal life." (John 5, 11-13)

Can you imagine that there anything greater than a life with Jesus Christ?

Would you like to thank God now in prayer for the good things he has done for you? He is happy about it.

Invest in your relationship with God

Every relationship needs to be nurtured, including the one with God. But it is worth the time and effort. Your relationship with God will deepen and you will grow in faith.

They grow, ...

- by getting to know God's word better.
Read it regularly.
- by talking to God in prayer. Expect God to speak to you, help you and guide you:
- by implementing what you have understood.
- by having fellowship with other Christians.
Look a Christian congregation as your spiritual home.
- by telling others about your faith.
- by using your gifts and abilities for God.

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%0.12 The process of rebirth

What is a rebirth in the biblical sense?

When are you born again? When you "decide for Jesus", say a "sinner's prayer" or are "converted"?

In his book "Rebirth", the internationally recognised English Bible teacher David Pawson challenges established positions of the classical evangelical movement as well as the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. His main message is that being born again is a process rather than a short-term event. By studying "conversion" accounts and analysing these events in the New Testament, he arrives at the following definition:

The **rebirth** out of genuine repentance and genuine faith happens when it finds its expression in water baptism and is connected with a conscious reception of the person of the Holy Spirit with power.

In the New Testament we find four phases that people go through when they are born again:

- Repentance towards God (2 Corinthians 7:9+ 1 Thessalonians 1:9).
- believe in the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:11; Ephesians 1:13).
- be baptised in water (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 5:26).
- receive the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Gal. 3:2).

These points are clearly different from each other and cannot replace each other. The speed of this process is irrelevant, what is important is its completion.

The four phases:

- **Repentance** is the most neglected phase. Repentance does not simply mean apologising. Genuine repentance begins when we realise the consequences for God (and his Son); this is the "divine sadness", the can lead to repentance. Genuine repentance begins when we realise that we have sinned "against heaven" as well as against others. Only then are we able to realise that we have defied God's authority, transgressed his laws, provoked his wrath and deserved his judgement. Our brokenness then becomes more of a "being filled with fear". Biblical repentance touches three dimensions: Thoughts, words and deeds.

Thoughts: "To repent" actually means "to change one's mind".

Words: the confession of past sins.

Deeds: Correction of past sins.

- **Faith** in the Lord Jesus: Of all four phases, this is the most decisive. Acts 16:30: "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." We are not saved by saying that we have faith, but only by actually having it. Specifically, this means: I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, died for my sins and rose again - He is my Saviour and Lord.
- **Water baptism**: The word for "baptise" in the original text (baptizein) means "to be immersed". It is important for this phase to recognise that baptism in the Bible was always preceded by repentance and faith. (Phases 1 + 2 before phase 3!) For the problem of infant baptism, see in detail: Topic No. 38: "Baptism" or Appendix A in David Pawson's book "Rebirth") Biblical baptism is necessary for salvation: "He who believes and is baptised shall be saved" Mk.16,16 (+ Joh.3,5). On the necessity of baptism, see also topic "Baptism."
- **Receiving the Holy Spirit**
It is of utmost importance to note that in the New Testament the reception of the Spirit never equated with or substituted for repentance, faith or water baptism. All four are distinct from each other, and all four are necessary.
"Believing in Jesus" and "receiving the Spirit" are often mistakenly understood to be one and the same (as a simultaneous event) (see: Acts 8:14-19). There is no record in the Bible of those who received the Spirit during baptism. Even when Jesus himself was baptised, he "received" the Holy Spirit shortly afterwards. But what does "being baptised in the Spirit" actually mean? (See also: topic "Baptism in the Holy Spirit")
What is certain is that an experience of baptism in the Spirit does not go unnoticed by the person themselves or by others! When people were baptised with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, there were always outward manifestations that confirmed that they had been filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Mostly, but not necessarily in every case, it is speaking in other languages (speaking in tongues). But praise (Acts 10:46) and prophesying (Acts 19:6) are also biblical manifestations that occurred at Spirit baptisms. How do you receive the Holy Spirit? By asking God for it. Usually with prayer and the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17; 9:17; 19:6).

Two examples of the four phases (repent, believe, baptise, receive) in the New Testament:

- the disciples of Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6)
- the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48; all four phases are also reported here. However, the order is different - this that it is more a question of completeness).

Explanations for many other accounts, including those where the four phases were present but not always explicitly mentioned, can be found in detail in David Pawson's book.

When is someone saved?

Whether all four phases are necessary for salvation (justification) or not (David Pawson argues that at least the first three are necessary), they are all important for sanctification.

The widespread view that a

"Prayer of surrender" alone is seen as a "free ticket to heaven" a one-sided view of salvation. Justification and rebirth are seen as the end goal rather than the means for that "sanctification without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

That is evangelistic calls should rather be about people responding to God's call and setting out on their journey - God's plan with people is only partially achieved.

Question:

Which phases might I need to catch up on?

Literature:

- David Pawson, *Rebirth -Start into a healthy life as a Christian, Projection-J, 1991.*
- Derek Prince, *Biblical Foundations.*

%0.13 The exchange at the cross!

What happened when Jesus died on the cross of Golgotha out of love for us?

Jesus was punished so that we could be forgiven. Jesus was beaten so that we would be healed.

Isa 53:4-5:

"But verily he bare our sickness, and our pains he took upon him; but we thought him punished, smitten of God, and afflicted: but he was pierced through for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquity; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and with his wounds we are healed."

Jesus became our sin through our sinfulness so that we might become righteous through His righteousness.

2. Cor 5:21: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Jesus died our death so that we might have His life.

Heb 2:9:

"...But we see Jesus, who made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." **Jesus became a curse so that we could be blessed.**

Gal 3:13-14:

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree," so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the Spirit who was promised through faith."

Jesus' death on the cross makes us partakers of the New Covenant. The New Covenant cancels the Old Sinai Covenant with its 613 laws (see Heb. 7:18 + 8,13+ Gal.4, 24-26).

Jesus bore our poverty so that we could share in his fullness.

2 Cor 8:9:

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might rich."

2 Corinthians 9:8:

"But God is powerful to give you every grace in abundance, so that in everything you may always have all sufficiency and abound in every good work ..."

Jesus bore our shame so we could share in His glory.

Mt 27:35-36:

"So after they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves and cast lots, so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled:

"They have divided my clothes among themselves, and they have lots for my robe." And they sat there and watched over him."

Heb 12:2:

"...looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb 2:9:

"...but Jesus, who made a little lower than the angels, we see crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."

Jesus bore our rejection so that we could have His acceptance with the Father.

Mt 27:46-51:

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'"

Some of those present, when they heard it, said, "He is calling Elijah!"

And immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, put it on a pipe and gave it to him to drink.

But the rest said: Stop, let us see if Elijah will come to save him!"

But Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.

And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook and the rocks were split."

Eph 1:5-6:

"...and in love he predestined us to adoption as his own children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, with which he pardoned us in the Beloved..."

Jesus was separated from the Father through death so that we could have eternal fellowship with God.

Isa 53,8:

"In consequence of tribulation and judgement he was taken away; but who considered in his time that he was taken away from the land of the living?"

was smitten for the transgression of my people?"

1 Corinthians 6:17:

"But whoever clings to the Lord is one spirit with him."

Our old man was put to death in Him so that the new man could come to life in us.

Rom 6:6:

"...knowing this, that our old man was crucified with us, that the body of sin might be put out of operation, that we should no longer serve sin; ..."

Col 3:9-10:

"Do not lust after one another, since you have put off the old man and his deeds and have put on the new man, who is being renewed for knowledge in the image of him who created him..."

What are important elements for this exchange to be realised in our lives?

- Rebirth / becoming a new person (John 3)

- Baptism (repentance, water baptism as a believer, baptism in the Spirit)
- Cultivate a relationship with God on a daily basis (build a loving relationship with Him - spend time together, exchange ideas, talk to each other e.g. through prayer, listening to God, reading the Bible)
- Love God, hate sin (W.W.J.T.)
- Forsake sin out of reverence for God and repent (do penance)
- Freedom from negative attachments and compulsive behaviour
- Clarified interpersonal relationships
- ...

Literature:

- Dr Volker Kessler, *God's Great Offers - From the Noahic Covenant to the New Covenant*
- Derek Prince, *Prayers and Proclamations*
- Derek Prince, *The exchange at the cross*

%0.14 The religious spirit - fear and pride are a threat to the community

What is the religious spirit?

When Jesus was working on earth, He had no problems with demons - they recognised Him and fled from Him. It was different with the "pious" people of the time: the Pharisees and scribes resisted Him, incited the people against Him and took Him to the cross.

The religious spirit is an anti-Christian spirit in a Christian guise. It is just as destructive in the churches today as it was in the days of Jesus (Rev 2:20). We Christians are all infected by the virus of the religious spirit to a certain degree.

What are the characteristics of the religious spirit?

A religious spirit tries to replace the power and work of the Holy Spirit with actions and programmes.

The enemy draws our attention to the negative/immaturity in the churches - the result is dejection and paralysis of the body of Jesus. Our eyes are then turned away from Jesus and His possibilities. The church stares at the problems instead of drawing near to God, seeking His glory and in this (Holy) Spirit, the Spirit of love, tackling immaturity, sin and receiving forgiveness.

There is a false zeal for God: e.g. in the young Saul of Tarsus or the Pharisees and scribes (Romans 10:2). The religious spirit confuses us by settling in our zeal for God.

Twenty-five warning symptoms of a religious spirit:

A person with a religious spirit...

- will often see it as a primary task to tear down what it believes is wrong.
- will not be able to accept a rebuke, especially from those she considers less spiritual than herself.
- the philosophy that you should not listen to people, but "only to God".
- tends to see what is wrong with other people, communities, etc. rather than what is good about them.
- has strong feelings of guilt because he can never fulfil the Lord's requirements.
- measures their spiritual life.
- believes that it is there to fix everyone else (self-appointed guardians and policemen in the kingdom of God, who rarely build but rather destroy).
- has a leadership style that is bossy, arrogant and intolerant of the weaknesses of others.

is.

- has the feeling that she is closer to God than other people, or that her life or service is more pleasing to God.
- is proud of her spiritual maturity and discipline, especially when she compares herself with others.
- believes that she is at the centre of God's work.
- she has a mechanical prayer life.
- does things to be noticed by other people.
- is repelled by emotionalism.
- uses emotionalism as a substitute for the work of the Holy Spirit.
- is encouraged when her service looks better than that of others.
- praises what God has done in the past more than what he is doing today.
- has a tendency to be suspicious of new movements, communities, etc. and to fight against them.
- has a tendency to reject spiritual manifestations that it does not understand.
- reacts excessively to "carnality" in the congregation.
- overreacts to immaturity in the community.
- is strongly inclined to see manifestations as proof of God's recognition.
- will be incapable of participating in something that she does not consider perfect or close to perfect.
- will be very suspicious of the religious spirit and quickly discover it in others, but not in himself.
- to boast about anything, but not about the cross of Jesus, but about what he did and who he is.

Three manifestations of the religious spirit:

- The false gift of discernment

This false gift flourishes by looking at what is wrong with others rather than what God is doing to help those very people.

Suspicion born of rejection, fear of losing one's possessions or general insecurity fosters this false gift. The true gift of discernment only bears fruit in love.

- The spirit of Jezebel

Jezebel was the ambitious and manipulative wife of Israel's King Ahab. This weak leader allowed Jezebel to determine policy in his kingdom.

Basically, the spirit of Jezebel is a combination of the religious spirit with the spirit of witchcraft, which a spirit of manipulation and control. The spirit of Jezebel is often, but not always, found in deeply wounded women. This spirit vigorously fights prophetic ministry, sows pride and promotes idolatry (= things that are more important than Jesus). The spirit of Jezebel calls for sacrifice, even though Jesus became a sacrifice for us.

- Self-righteousness

We put our trust in discipline and personal sacrifice rather than in the Lord Jesus and his sacrifice on the cross. Of course, discipline and dedication are important values. It just depends on what drives us to do so: A religious spirit or the Holy Spirit? A religious spirit drives us through fear, guilt, pride and ambition. The Holy Spirit draws us through love for the Son of God. Those who take pleasure in humbling themselves can be sure that there is a religious spirit behind it. A genuine revelation of God's grace is the best medicine against the religious spirit.

Ten things we can do to become unreceptive to the religious spirit:

Develop a hidden relationship with the Lord.

Ask that the same love with which the Father loved the Son may be in you.

"to prove yourself before God (not before men)"

Spend "quality time" with the Lord every day.

Seek to hear the word of God every day (John 10:27).

Ask the Lord to give us the love for our neighbours that he himself has for them.

Try to turn your criticism into intercession.

the Lord constantly to see his glory.

Make it one of your highest goals to the sweet aroma of the knowledge of God everywhere.

If you have failed to do any of these things right, then ask for forgiveness and: "I forget what is behind ... and press on toward the goal, toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13f)

Rick Joyner emphasises that the enemy primarily wants us to focus on the negative by partaking of the tree of knowledge, because that way he can keep us away from the glory of the Lord and His cross. This tactic manifests itself in the form of a religious spirit.

Sources:

- Jack Deere, "Exposing the Religious Spirit",
- Cassette series, MorningStar Publications
- Rick Joyner,
"A prophetic vision for the 21st century"
- Rick Joyner, "Overcoming the religious spirit"

%0.15 How to better understand the Bible

God chose a book to reveal himself to people. He inspired people to write down his thoughts. Therefore, the Bible - like Christ - is both divine and human. The Bible is God's way of revealing himself - his character and his plans - to mankind. The Bible was written by 40 different authors over the course of 1600 years.

There are two keys to understanding the texts of the Bible correctly:

1. Asking the Holy Spirit to bring the words to life and reveal their true meaning.

2. Asking the right questions of the text:

- ▶ Who is the writer, who is the recipient?
- ▶ What the historical situation?
- ▶ Why was the text written?
- ▶ In what cultural and regional context was the text written?
- ▶ What does God want to tell us with this text today?

In all endeavours to interpret the text correctly, you need above all a large portion of common sense.

In order to understand a text correctly, it is first necessary to understand what the text originally intended to say. This task is called **exegesis**. The transfer of the original statements of the text into our current situation is called **hermeneutics** in the narrower sense.

The key to good exegesis - and therefore to a more intelligent way of reading the Bible - is to learn to read the text thoroughly and ask the right questions. There are two types of basic questions to ask of the text: Questions that pertain to the context (setting) and questions that pertain to the content.

Context questions deal with the time, the culture, the situation in which the text was written and the reason for writing the text. Ultimately, the simple questions count:

- ▶ What is this actually about?
- ▶ What is the author trying to say?

The above questions are sufficient for the correct exegesis of most texts. There are good aids to provide more certainty in cases of doubt. Here you can find additional information about the authors of the 66 books of the Bible, about the time, the culture and the circumstances under which a book was written:

- ▶ In a bible lexicon,
- ▶ a handbook on the Bible,

- ▶ by reading one or more good translations,

- ▶ in good Bible commentaries.

The first step in interpreting a text is therefore a proper exegesis. But then it is also about what the text means for us today.

Basically, a text today cannot mean anything other than what it originally meant. In other words: the text means what God originally intended it to mean.

Anything else would be a dangerous misinterpretation. This is and was the breeding ground for false teachings and sects.

Here is another principle for a correct interpretation of the text:

Whenever we have a (life) situation comparable to ours) situation with New Testament texts: God's word to the original addressees is the same word of God to us.

The individual books of the Bible were originally written in three languages: Most of the books of the Old Testament in Hebrew, half of the books of Daniel and Ezra in Aramaic, and the New Testament in Greek.

This means that as soon we read the Bible in German or another modern language, we are no longer dealing with the original, but with interpretations. In order to grasp the meaning of a verse as well as possible, it is therefore advisable to read several translations. It is worth noting that there are no longer any originals of the original text - there are, however, thousands of copies (some from very early times) that were produced by hand over a period of around 1400 years.

In order to grasp the message of a section of text as as possible, it makes sense to read the whole book or individual chapters several times before and after the text section. It is often only then that you realise what the author was actually trying to say. Reading in context prevents you from drawing the wrong conclusions if you pick out individual verses.

Even if some text details are incomprehensible to us (e.g. because we do not have all the information that the sender and the recipient at the time had), we can usually recognise the actual (main) message of the text clearly. However, even experts in interpretation do not have a conclusive answer to all detailed questions.

It is important for us to recognise what is really clear in the text. We need to distinguish clearly between facts and

Distinguish between interpretations/assumptions/speculations.

Through the Bible, God tells us everything we need to know - but not necessarily everything we want to know.

The accounts in the Old Testament are not initially intended for imitation, but they show in an impressive way how God intervenes in world events. In addition to the historical facts, the value of the Old Testament stories lies in the fact that we get to know God's character, principles and views through them.

Some guidelines for the Old Testament law: It is a covenant (= testament) between God and the

people of Israel (not Christians). The more than 600 commandments in the first five books of Moses are not binding for us today - unless they have been explicitly repeated in the New Testament (in the new covenant, the "law of Christ")! Nevertheless, the Old Testament law is still the word of God for us, but not God's instructions to us.

Literature:

- Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to read the bible for all it's worth*, (Very good! A bestseller - unfortunately only available in English) ISBN 0-310-38491-5
- Bible encyclopaedias, handbooks on the Bible and Bible commentaries are available on the Internet or in any Christian bookshop.

0.16 Facts about the Bible and ideas for daily Bible reading

The Bible consists of 66 individual books (39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament). The Old Testament is the history of God with the people of Israel (God's covenant with Israel). The New Testament is God's story with the church (the covenant of grace).

The Bible was written by 40 different authors over a period of 1600 years. Over this long period of time, the teaching on God, man, sin, Satan, the world, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit was completely standardised.

The Bible is God's way of revealing himself - his character and his plans - to people.

The Bible is the instruction manual for a successful life.

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew. The New Testament was written in Aramaic and Greek. The original manuscripts no longer exist today.

In 2 Timothy 3:16, we are told that all Scripture was inspired (breathed into) by God. This means that God used people to pass on his thoughts from generation to generation and finally to write them down.

2 Peter 1:20f: "And know this first of all, that no prophecy in the Scriptures is a matter of personal interpretation. For no prophecy has ever been produced by human will, but men have spoken in the name of God, driven by the Holy Spirit."

Paul writes to the church in Galatia: "For I declare to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not of man. For I did not receive it or learn it from man, but by a revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal 1:11f

Additional books are included in some editions of the Old Testament (Apocrypha). However, they do not belong to the original Hebrew canon. They are not quoted in the New Testament. Josephus, the Jewish historian, explicitly excludes them.

None of these books claim to be inspired. They contain historical, geographical and chronological errors. They teach and support things that contradict the teachings of the Bible (for example, lying is condoned, sorcery is practised, etc.). They were written much later than the Old Testament. In literary terms, the Apocrypha can be categorised as myths and legends.

The Bible - the book of records:

According to the Guinness Book of Records, around 2.5 billion Bibles have been sold worldwide since 1815. At the moment, the 141

Bible Societies approx. 0.5 billion Bibles or Bible parts.

The entire Bible has been translated into 422 languages, the New Testament into 1079 languages and individual parts into 2377 languages (as of 12/2004; there are approx. 6500 languages in total).

Literature:

- Hartmut Jaeger, Joachim Pletsch (eds.), "The ever-popular Bible - fiction or truth? Which Bible is the best?", ISBN 3-89436-351-7

4.16 Ideas for daily Bible reading

Goals:

1. to know God better.
2. To find out his intentions, his character and his view of things.
3. Encouragement in everyday life
 - to read the Bible more regularly,
 - to spend more quality time with God.

Observation (assumption):

- Christians watch more television every day than spend quality time with God.
- Christians spend more time reading newspapers and magazines every day than they do reading the Bible.
- Christians could make better use of waiting and idle times and their free time.

Christians will - if they read the Bible daily ...

- Get to know God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit better,
- be reminded of biblical values,
- be encouraged as they receive the divine promises and the divine view of things anew or for the first time.

One tried and tested option is to read one chapter each day from the Old Testament, the wisdom literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs) and the New Testament.

Since on average only about 5 minutes of reading time are required per chapter and the text passages can be read throughout the day, this approach is also practicable in a hectic working day. (For example: Using waiting time before appointments, at the doctor, at the hairdresser, at the train station, airport - generally when travelling, ...)

Advantages:

- Over time, you absorb the Bible completely.
- You have a railing on which you can stand in the "quiet time" and throughout the day.
- You remain flexible - you have the freedom to read more or less in one day.
- You good habits.

"Blessed is he...who delights in the law of the Lord and searches in his law day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and whose leaf does not wither, and everything it does turns out well." Psalm 1:2f.

The bookmarks overleaf are a way to read the Bible more regularly.

The real kick (that time with God is refreshing, comforting and satisfying) - must be given as a gift.

become. It is grace when the Holy Spirit works this in you. We can only influence this positively by responding correctly to the longing and urging of the Holy Spirit within us (i.e. spending more time with God).

"Draw near to God and he will draw near to you!"

(James 4:8)

Copy templates Texts for bookmarks:

Bookmark Old Testament

Time with God - in everyday life!

► One chapter per day

read from the Old Testament, the wisdom literature and the New Testament (time spent/chapter ø 5 min.). **Not by law - but because it encourages me.**

► Read throughout the day. Use waiting times/breaks.

Read more Bible than magazines and books. Listen to the Bible on cassettes/CDs - e.g. in the car/train/plane.

► This helps to stay "online"/in dialogue with God.

► Spending more relaxing time with God than watching TV -

because you benefit more and it's more refreshing!

Bookmarks Wisdom literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs) **Why read the Bible every day?**

► for edification, exhortation, encouragement and relaxation.

► because we are reminded of the many promises.

► because this is how we recognise reality as it is.

► because through it we get to know God's character.

► because it reminds us of God's intentions for our lives.

► Ask God to give us the desire to spend time with Him.

Bookmark New Testament

Read the Bible profitably!

► Why? Because God, the Creator of the universe, wants to talk to us.

► How? Ask God to guide my thoughts.

► Ask the Holy Spirit to the words come alive for me (because Word and Spirit must come together).

► Be aware that the enemy will start disruptive manoeuvres (distractions). This often happens through thoughts, e.g. of unfinished business. Tip: Simply write it down and do it later!

4.17 The Bible - a chronological overview

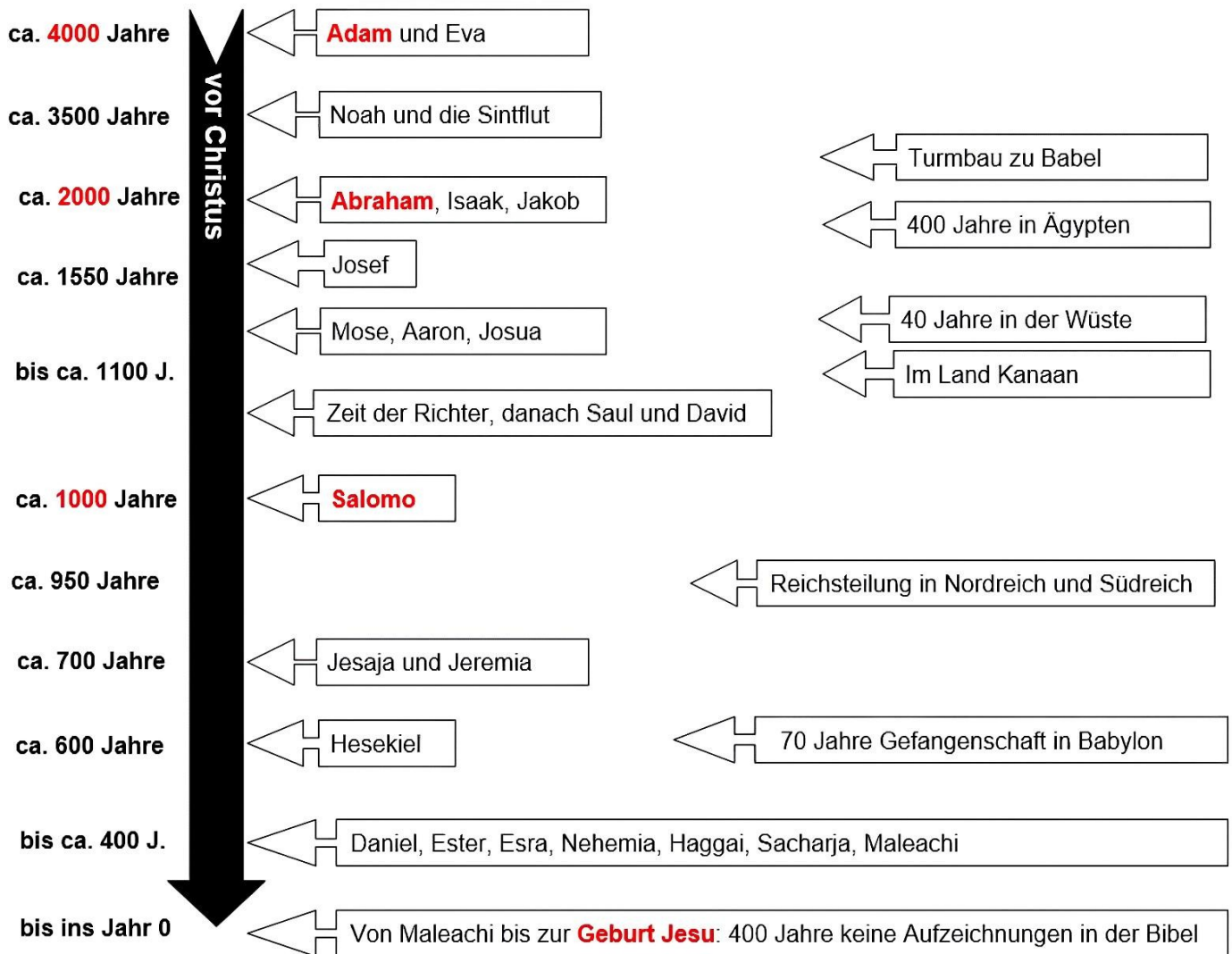
The chronological sequence of people and events

Front side:

The Old Testament= God's history with the people of Israel (the old covenant).

According to the biblical genealogy, mankind is only about 6000 years old! Back cover:

The New Testament= God's history with the church (the new covenant).



Excursus:

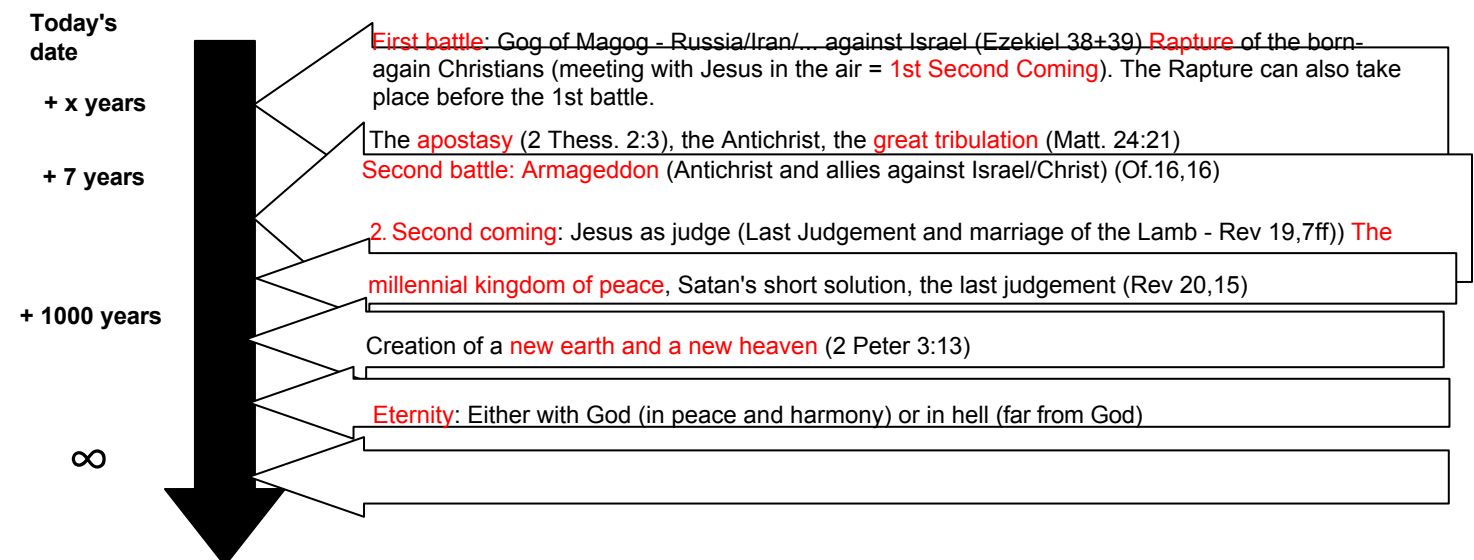
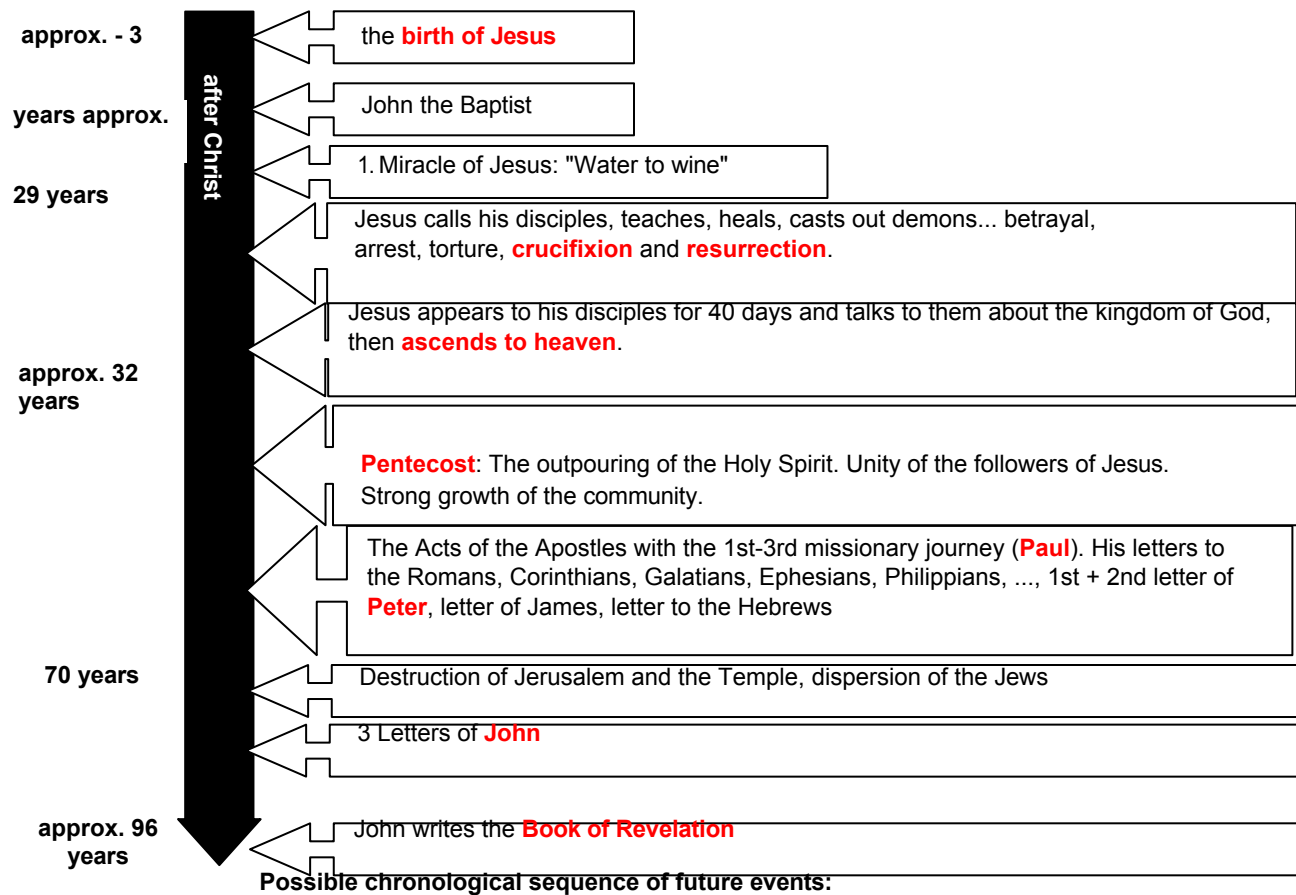
Is there a parallel between the seven days of creation and the 6,000 years of human history? The Bible says in Psalm 90 and 2 Peter 3:8 that before God one day is like a thousand years.

We know: From Adam to Abraham it was about 2000 years= 2 days, from Abraham to Jesus it was about 2000 years= 2 days, from Jesus to today it was about 2000 years= 2 days.

= approx. 6000 years= 6 days ?

The seventh day of creation was the day of rest. Could this a reference to the 1000-year kingdom of peace? Are we living at the end of the 6th day? If so, Jesus would return soon!

The New Testament - an overview



Literature:

Detailed diagrams on various aspects of the chronology of biblical human history are available, for example:

- Bible Panorama, Alfred Thompson Eade, ISBN 3-921292-00-x
- Joachim Langhammer, "What will become of this world?" Explanations of God's plan of salvation, ISBN 3-87857-286-7.
- Wilhelm and Jolanda Biester-Walser, "God's plan of salvation from eternity to eternity", ISBN 3-385810-264-4.
- Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, Handbuch der biblischen Prophetie, ISBN 3-89437-266-4.

4.18 What is in store for us?

A biblical look into the future

End times - a summary of important events:

► Principle: **Jesus can come back at any time!**

There are two returns of Jesus:

The **1st Second Coming** takes place before the great tribulation. Jesus appears in the air. Those who have died in Christ rise first, then they are caught up into the air together with the living born-again (Rapture - 1 Thess. 4:13-15).

The **2nd coming of Jesus** will take place at the end of the great tribulation.

Now Jesus appears as Lord of Hosts, as Judge of the nations, as Saviour of Israel.

Jesus will not return on the Mount of Olives, but in the same way as He was taken up from the Mount of Olives into heaven (Acts 1:11). He will return in Bozrah (in the land of Edom/now southern Jordan) (Isaiah 34:1-7; Isaiah 63:1-6; Habakkuk 3:3; Micah 2:12-13). There he will fight alone against the nations, destroy the Antichrist and save Israel. The battle begins in Bozrah and continues to Jerusalem (Zech. 14:12-15). The battle ends in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 4:12-13). The Mount of Olives will split in two. One half of the mountain moves northwards, the other southwards. This creates the valley of Jezreel - a refuge for the Israelis under attack (Zech.

14:4b-5). Only after the battle will Jesus - as the victor - stand again on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:3-4a).

► In addition to other wars, there will be **two major battles/wars**:

Firstly, the attack by Gog of Magog (Russia), Persia (Iran) and a few other allies against Israel. It takes place before the great tribulation (Ezekiel 38/39).

God himself will fight for Israel and supernaturally inflict a heavy defeat on the enemies.

Through this, Israel is to recognise that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ezekiel 39:22). This war is probably the next great event in human history. Unless, of course, the Rapture takes place beforehand.

The second great battle takes place at the end of the great tribulation: All nations unite against Israel (gathering of the nations at Armageddon / Meggido- Rev. 16:16). With God's help, the Israeli army will inflict heavy losses on the nations. Nevertheless, Jerusalem will first be conquered, the houses plundered and the women raped. Two-thirds of the Jews will be destroyed (!) - because they will not follow the shepherd of God.

(Jesus) (Zechariah 13:7). A third is refined by God as silver is refined (Zechariah 12,

4-9 + 13,7-9 +14,1-2). This remnant of Jews will ask God to forgive their sins and save his people (Isaiah 64:1-11). Jesus then appears as a warlord in the battle that begins in Bozrah/Jordan and continues to the gates of Jerusalem. Jesus helps his people by reappearing on the Mount of Olives and preparing a place of refuge for the remnant of the people (the valley created by the splitting of the Mount of Olives). The armies of the nations are crushed by his supernatural intervention.

► The present-day city of Baghdad in Iraq (Babylon) will become a world trading centre with great wealth before the battle of Armageddon and will suddenly be destroyed at the end of the tribulation.

► The **temple** will be rebuilt. The Antichrist will sit in it after he has conquered Jerusalem. The 1st Temple was built by Solomon, the 2nd Temple after the return from the Babylonian captivity. The 3rd temple will be built soon (before the great tribulation, or in the first half of the tribulation).



The future timeline of world history (based on biblical prophecies):

<p>p- The Rapture can begin take place at any time! (The born again and dead in Christ meet Jesus in the air (1 Thess 4:13-15). rapture takes place before the place before the trumpet judgements above).</p> <p>p- The next big event, the attack Gog of Magogs temple as (Russia) and Persia (Iran) on Israel - see also . This will happen before or after the follow.</p>	<p>p- The tribulation begins with the breaking of peace treaty the of the Antichrist with Israel.</p> <p>p- The sealing - and The Rapture takes of the tribulation (see above)</p> <p>✠ After the first 3,5 years, the Antichrist the contract and lets himself inside the Worship God (Daniel 9:27). The wrathful rapture bowl judgements.</p>	<p>R The tribulation ends with the battle of i-larmagedon.</p> <p>✠ Jesus helps the remnant of Israel and it then reigns 1 000 years of peace.</p> <p>✠ At the beginning of the 1000 years: The 1st resurrection: the martyrs and the other saints of the 7-year tribulation separation (Rev 20:4-6).</p> <p>• The marriage of the Lamb (Rev 19): God/Hades) Jesus, the bridegroom, marries his spotless bride, the church.</p>	<p>✠ At the end of the 1000 year of peace- reíchs must Satan for a short time Being set free.</p> <p>p- This is followed by the world judgement (of the nations) - with the 2nd resurrection (the dead), Rev 20:12-13.</p>	<p>P New heaven, to new earth, new Jerusalem.</p> <p>p- Eternal Communion with God.</p> <p>✠ Eternal from God. (remoteness from</p>
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E-questions on the topic:

> Do I live my life in such a way that Jesus can return at any time?

✠ Do I live my life with the consideration that many people will have to exist eternity far from God - where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth"?

4 Our main tasks here on earth are to praise God, to love Him and our fellow human beings and to make disciples of others - Am I living into this calling? What needs to change for me to more into this calling?

Literature:

Detailed diagrams on various aspects of the chronology of biblical human history can be found here, for example:

✠ The classic: Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, Handbuch der **biblischen Prophetie**, ISBN 3-89437-266-4.

• Bible Panorama, Alfred Thompson Eade, ISBN 3-921292-00 x

✠ Joachim Langhammer, "What will become of this world?" Erläuterungen zum Heilsplan Gottes, ISBN 3-87857-286-7. ø- Wilhelm und Jolanda Biester-Walser, 'Heilsplan Gottes von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit', ISBN 3-385810-264-4.

✠ Derek Prince, The Future of Israel and the Church, ISBN 3-925968-51-2.

ø- Topics: "Jesus is coming back soon", "Chronological sequence of world history" and "How to understand the Bible better" at: www.Juengerschaft.net

4.19 Prayer during illness - The two sides of reality

The two sides of reality

General remarks:

We constantly live with two sides of reality (with the reality that surrounds us). Both areas constantly influence us.

1. The visible reality is the side of reality that we perceive with our five senses (sight, taste, smell, touch, hearing).

2. The invisible reality is the invisible, spiritual world, which can often only be perceived with our inner self.

Aspects of this invisible side of reality: love, fear, peace, anxiety, faith, ... , angels/demons, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and Satan.

The invisible reality also includes the kingdom of God with Jesus as King and the kingdom of this world. The Bible gives us reliable information about the invisible world.

Many people have the desire to recognise the world in its entirety, as it really is. This includes both sides of reality. They do not want to live with a limited view.

Many people have a desire for genuineness, for authenticity. For them, a fulfilled life also includes a comprehensive/holistic realisation of reality.

Principle 1:

Reality is independent of the opinion I have about it. (God is sovereign.) Principle 2:

Having peace with God is more important than complete physical healing or complete material provision.

Principle 3:

Am I primarily experience-orientated or promise-orientated?

I.e.: Do I look at what I see/experience or do I trust in the promises of God? Excursus:

Matth. 11,12: "But from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and those who use violence seize it."

This verse can be interpreted to mean that Christians take the promises of God seriously and "pull down"/"usurp" their legal right to healing and provision - which is based on Jesus' victory on the cross - from the invisible into the visible with thanksgiving and proclamations.

The tension for Christians between the two sides of reality becomes particularly clear in three areas:

1. in case of illness, 2. in case of financial hardship, 3. in dealing with worries/difficult circumstances.

The two sides of reality in **diseases**

The visible side of reality	The invisible side of reality
Pain, wounds, physical impairments ("I am ill")	The Bible's statements on the subject of illness (God: "I am the Lord, your physician!"; Jesus' command to his disciples: "Heal the sick." ...) In particular: Isaiah 53:5ff; Mt 8:17; 1 Peter 2:24; Mt 10:1; Lk 9:1,6; Jas 5:13ff; Mk 16:15; Mk 6:13; 1Co 12:9.
Prayer for healing of the sick	Act in faith: "In the name of Jesus, be healed"; "On the basis of the shed blood of Jesus, I speak healing into your body"; "We gratefully claim the legal right to be healed."
Healing occurs immediately or partially or not yet or not at all.	"Immediate healing= Miracles" - or gradual healing/recovery or no noticeable change in the long term.

Procedure in case of illness:

- Thank Jesus that he went to the cross (among other things) for the illness,
- that his stripes basically give him a legal right to health,
- that he may point out what may be hindering the healing (wrong attitudes, pride, unforgiveness, curses, an unhealthy lifestyle, guilt of the ancestors, etc.). ...)

Gratefully accept the healing as a gift now (in the invisible world) and be curious to see when the healing (in the visible world) becomes real.

Example:

Parcel service: I sign for a delivery to confirm that I have received the parcel (the healing) (= grateful faith) - even if I am not yet holding the parcel in my hands.

Pray: "Jesus, you have the price for our sickness through your death on the cross!" (e.g. "Through

his stripes we are healed" Isa. 53,5ff / Mat. 8,17).

Proclaim = speak God's truths into the situation (promises/biblical statements about healing) - again and again until healing occurs. Even if nothing is visible at first (= acting in a promise-orientated way instead of experience-orientated). "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword ..." (Hebrews 11:12)

Giving thanks: That God has everything in his hands. He is the Creator who created our bodies perfectly. He has the power and the will to restore.

Practising listening prayer: Does the Holy give the pray-er guidance regarding what to do next?

Literature:

- "The spiritual cause of diseases",
Dr Henry W. Wright, ISBN 978-3-95578-610-6

4.20 Impartation - transfer of anointing

The Bible teaches us in the Old and New Testaments how people receive an anointing.

Anointing in the Old Testament

In the time of Moses and the prophets, people or objects on which anointing oil was poured were set apart for God's purposes. God instructed Moses to mix holy anointing oil when he spoke to him on Mount Sinai (Ex 30:23-24). This oil was used to anoint the tabernacle and its furnishings (including the ark of the covenant). Aaron and his sons, prophets and kings such as Saul and David were anointed by pouring the anointing oil over their heads. Oil is the symbol for a consecration.

Anointing in the New Testament

In the new covenant, the Holy Spirit is our oil (John 20:19-23).

Our anointing comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. In John 16:7 Jesus said that it is good that He goes away - so that the Comforter / Holy Spirit can come. Being filled with the Spirit of God is not an option, but a necessity. It is intended for all, is needed by all and is available to all. That is why the Word of God calls on us in Eph 5:18: "Be filled with the Spirit of God."

Jesus told His disciples (Acts 1:5) that they would be baptised in the Holy Spirit. The word in Greek is baptizo and means 'to dip something', like dipping a piece of cloth. We cannot crucify our flesh ourselves, it is a work of the Holy Spirit.

We need him to make everything unholy disappear: wrong desires, bad habits and behaviour. He can create the life of Jesus Christ in us.

The purpose of the anointing is to set us apart for a relationship with the Father and to empower us to do what God has called us to do.

Jesus said in Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses, ...to the ends of the earth."

When we allow the Holy Spirit to us completely, we become anointed and able to serve and live a life of influence.

The Holy Spirit is in us for our sake and on us for the sake of others.

A transfer / anointing can be a

- Be baptised in the Holy Spirit,

a filling with the Holy Spirit for empowerment,

- one or more gifts of the spirit,

- a cure and

- Blessing or

- the appointment to an office.

The Bible shows us two ways transmitting anointing:

1. By **laying on your hands**

(Num. 11:16-17: gathering of the seventy elders; Deut. 34:9: Joshua was filled with the spirit of wisdom through the laying on of Moses' hands; 2 Kings 2:9-15: Elijah and Elisha)

2. By **waiting on God in prayer**

(In Luke 24:49: "...remain in the city until you are equipped with power from on high"; John 15:1-17: resting and abiding in the vine; being in intimate proximity with Jesus; in the hidden place in everyday life in order be prepared and equipped, connected to the resources of heaven; possibly connected with the urgent desire: "Show us your glory".

Anointing can be transferred from one person to another.

It is important to note that a person can never do something like this of their own accord. It is grace and a sovereign act of God. God decides to anoint someone with grace and when to lay hands on them.

Biblical examples:

The **appointment to offices**:

1. Tim 4:14 , 1 Tim 5:22, Acts 6:6

Healing and blessing: Mk.10,16, Mt.19,13-15; **blessing of the children**, Mk.5,23; Jairus' daughter, Lk.4,40: ... they brought to him all their sick with various ailments and he laid his hands on each one and made them well; Mk.16,18 (mission command to us to lay hands on the sick);

Transfers:

Acts 2:1-4: The miracle of Pentecost; Acts 4:29-31: The place shook as they prayed; all were filled with the Holy Spirit and equipped to preach the word with boldness; Acts 10:44-47: Peter preaches and the Holy Spirit falls on all who listen to the word; Acts 8:14-17: Peter and John lay their hands on each other.

Conditions for a transfer: We become aware of our personal shortcomings and hardships in our lives as Christians.

Our lives are often more about education - than faith, hope and love - as well as authority and power. We need a living relationship and total dependence on the Father. It is about getting to know Him better, His nature, His anointing, His grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that hard hearts can break open, people can be convicted and come to Jesus.

We need a deep longing and a hunger and thirst for change so that we feel the spiritual condition deep within us - as well as a serious longing and wake-up call for a victorious life.

Our lives should become emptier and emptier of ourselves so that Jesus can fill everything in us and we can overflow and live, love and serve for his honour.

Caution: Do not aim for spiritual highs to feel good about yourself or strive for experiences that build up your ego and spiritual pride.

Dr Billy Graham wrote:

Christians waste their time looking for authority they have no intention of using:

- Power in prayer when we are not praying.
- Strength in bearing witness without bearing witness.
- Power for sanctification if we do not try to lead a holy life.
- Grace to suffer if we are not prepared to take up the cross.
- Authority in service when we are not serving.

Someone once said: God only gives the grace to die to those who die.

Revival has a high price and spiritual transmissions people to want to pay this price.

It is not just about the strength that fills us, but also about the fact that He baptises us with His love, which prevents us from giving up when the going gets tough.

The baptism of power enables us to serve and the baptism of love motivates us to persevere in our service when we have to endure suffering.

We live in the destiny promised by God for our lives - not just because we once received a transmission or a prophecy, but because we have decided to accept in faith what God has promised - whatever the cost.

We give ourselves/our lives to Jesus, we dive deeper and deeper into his love, in complete submission and under his guidance and protection.

Our key is: Life in Jesus! In intimate closeness, humility, faith and hunger - this leads us into his authority, his love and into radical obedience to him, so that Jesus' days on earth may continue.

Literature:

- Iverna Tompkins, In God's Timetable, ISBN 978-3-9807415-6-9
- Randy Clark, There is more! ISBN 978-3-940538-68-0

4.21 Our destiny: Reigning with Jesus

This is about our destiny. What are we running ?
What are we being prepared for?
What does the Bible say about the ultimate destiny of the followers of Jesus?

Worship leader Mike Chance (founder of the Bad Gandersheim Bible School) said in a sermon: "The (primary) purpose of Christians is not to worship God!" This comes as a shock to many Christians at first. He mentioned that we naturally want to worship God because He is simply worthy of worship - and He dwells in the praise of His people.

But the Bible says something different about our actual destiny:

God's master plan envisages, among other things, that his children, his people, the bride of Jesus, **will reign with Jesus** in the world to come.

This is from several biblical passages:

1. Genesis 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea..."

The idea here is that people should rule nature.

Daniel 7:18: "... but the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom, and they will for ever and ever, yes, for ever and ever!"

Note: The saints will receive and keep the kingdom!

Romans 5:17: "For if by one man's offence death reigned through him, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through one man, Jesus Christ."

2. Timothy 2:12: "... if we endure steadfastly, we shall reign; if we deny, he also will deny us."

Those who persevere will reign with Jesus.

Rev 2,26: "And he who overcomes and keeps my works to the end, to him I will give authority over the nations ..."

Revelation 5:10: "...and have made us kings and priests unto our God, and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 22:5: "And there will be no more night there, and they will have no need of a candlestick,

nor of the light of the sun, for the Lord God enlightens them; and they will reign for ever and ever.

Jesus is the ultimate ruler.

He has received the royal dignity from God the Father. He sits at His right hand. He reigns for eternity. He is the head of the church. He is the bridegroom who will have eternal fellowship with His bride (the church).

Through His substitutionary death on the cross, He has "ennobled" us - because He loves us! Access to heaven, to our Father, is possible through the forgiveness of our guilt.

We will have the task of reigning with Jesus.

The purpose of the time we spend on earth is to prepare our character for the actual task, our actual destiny: to have fellowship with Jesus and to reign with Him.

It is therefore important to make the most of the time.

In practical terms, this means

- ▶ Spend time with Him,
- ▶ prioritise correctly,
- ▶ study his word,
- ▶ Getting to know him better and better,
- ▶ clarify our relationships with our fellow human beings,
- ▶ let the Holy Spirit work in us,
- ▶ grow/mature in the gifts of the spirit, ... The knowledge of our future, of our true destiny, helps us with the many challenges of everyday life earth: "So comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18). Christians know that The best is yet to come!

Literature:

- Paul E. Billheimer: "Destined for the throne"
- Who will the Christians rule over?
See also: Topic 3.10 "The three outcomes God's judgement"

4.22 More anointing! But how?

Summary of the book by Andreas Herrmann: "Die Salbung nach der du dich sehnst", ISBN 978-3-938677-05-6:

Every Christian needs the anointing of the Holy Spirit on their life.

Without the anointing, we will only be able to fulfil the ministry to which God has called us in a very limited and ineffective way.

The anointing is a gift that makes people happy, heals and liberates them and leads them to faith. It is God's blissful presence in our lives and moves us into a higher dimension of personal authority in God.

What is anointing?

Anointing is nothing other than the power of God that manifests itself in our midst. It is the holy presence of God in and on us humans, which enables us to do extraordinary things (see e.g. 2 Kings 13:20-21: A dead man is thrown into Elijah's tomb and comes to life).

The aim of the anointing

1. Anointing for the ministry

Each of us receives the necessary anointing for the ministry for which he or she has been called by God. With the anointing, you are able to successfully master the challenges God places you in.

2. The anointing is God's "over" on our "Of course"

With his anointing, the Holy Spirit empowers people with his supernatural gifts and abilities (see 1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

3. The anointing is given to us to live a life in the victory of God (Ephesians 6:10+ Galatians 5:16).

4. The anointing is also a synonym for the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the anointing in us will produce the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22f).

The ultimate goal of the anointing:

The glorification of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

Those who serve in the anointing therefore serve God and his kingdom exclusively.

The character foundation for a strong anointing:

becoming like a child (Math. 18:3f). It is humility that characterises anointed leaders (Moses, the humblest man on earth).

James 4:10: "Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you."

1 Peter 5:5b-6: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that he may

raise in due time."

Zechariah 4:6 "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit."

Every step of our lives into communion with God is a step into the higher anointing.

The responsibility for the measure of his presence lies solely in your hands.

Anointing and the presence of God form an inseparable unity.

Acts 1:8: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you."

In order to come under the anointing of God, we must learn to live in his presence, to practise it.

There is no way to be anointed except through an intimate relationship with God.

The manifestation of the anointing is not only diverse in its expression (e.g. like an electric current, warmth, heat or a tingling sensation), but it is also felt in varying degrees of intensity. Each person experiences anointing individually. As the glory of God in your life, so does your anointing.

The glory of God that we experience at times is the manifest presence of God, whereas the anointing expresses His power.

Unity in church life is highly attractive to the glory and presence of the Holy Spirit, whereas disunity and criticism attract highly demonic activity.

Every person who seeks the glory of God in their own life must acquire the character traits of God.

The price of anointing:

Humility, dependence on God, seeking God, spending time with him, temporarily abstaining from food (fasting).

"This kind does not go out except through prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21).

God looks less at our natural abilities and more at our availability, devotion and submission to his rule.

"I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

"... and my speech and my preaching did not consist in superior words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. So that your faith may not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God." 1 Cor 2:4-5

We need to be aware that he lives in us and that his gifts are alive in us.

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you will ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you." John 15:7

We are temples of God on two legs, presenting God in this world.

"... for I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" Galatians 2:20

Important for your own encouragement: Remember the people who have been healed - don't just remember those who have not been healed.

Our spiritual authority is a multiple empowerment by God, which manifests itself in this world through the power duo of faith and anointing.

Growth foundations for spiritual authority

are among others:

- identity formation through the Word of God
- an identification and active relationship with Jesus
- a growing friendship and connection to the Holy Spirit
- A sanctification process as a lifestyle
- the constant further development of the personal

measure of faith.

"Be holy, for I am holy." 1 Peter 1:16 Anointing requires humility - but leads to a firmness and maturity of faith:

"And the anointing which you received from him abides in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you; but just as the anointing itself teaches you about everything, it is true and not a lie, and just it taught you, so abide in it!" 1 John 2:27

Principles that reinforce the anointing:

- The more we serve in our ministry anointing, the stronger it becomes. Serve people, apply the anointing and your anointing will grow.
- The more we give away, the more we receive.
- Anointing develops through obedience and faithfulness. God tests us to see whether we are faithful in small things before he entrusts us with great things (Luke 16:10).
- Anointing only exists in the presence of God.
- Develop an awareness of the new creation "Christ in you". Remember, God has a new address, his headquarters are in you and you introduce him to the world.

5.1 Be successful

Is God's standard the same as my standard?

I want to be successful!

We all want to lead a successful life. But what does that mean? When is a life successful? What criteria are suitable for evaluating this?

Christians want to see the world as God sees it - and therefore as it actually is. Because God is the only one who really knows reality. He is independent of the judgements of others, their opinions and subjective arguments.

It defines what is good and what is not good - it sets the standard by which every person must be measured, whether they like it or not.

When was my day successful?

What clues do we recognise from the Bible? (It makes sense to research this in the Bible because this is God's main way of communicating his will to people).

Here is a checklist:

► **Did I honour the highest bid? :**

"You shall love God with all your heart and with all your being, and your neighbour as yourself." (Luke 10:27) So I should love three people every day: God, my neighbour and myself.

► **Have I lived today in such a way that God, my Father, was pleased with it?**

("To please my father.")

► **What have I received today, what have I given?**

(Receive and give.)

► **Have I lived by grace today?**

► **Was I hard-working, honest, honest, I get enough exercise, did I eat healthily?**

► **Have I forgiven everyone who may have hurt me today?**

Have I worshipped God sufficiently today?

(Through words/ my actions/ my attitudes. Best: ask Him.)

► **Have I contributed to the advancement of his kingdom today** - or have I rather prevented it, e.g. by doing nothing?

► **Have others been made disciples through my life today?**

► **Have I spent enough time in the presence of God?**

► **Have I read enough in the Bible?** (For encouragement and to let God speak to me).

► **With God's help, have I cast my cares on him?**

As a reminder: Mt 6:25-34

"Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor

about your body, what you should wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air! They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? But which of you by his labour can add a single cubit to his length? And why do you worry about clothing? Look at the lilies of the field as they grow. They labour not, neither do they spin: but I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today stands and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we clothe ourselves? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, but your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Therefore do not worry about the morrow, for the morrow will take care of its own. Each day has its own plague!

► **Did I consciously live in the presence of God today - was I "online"?**

► **Have I had enough to eat today, am I warm, do I have useful clothes, do I have a roof over my head, do I have money in my bank account, am I healthy, can I wash myself, am I provided for today, do I have someone I love and who loves me?**

There are no divine indications for a successful day:

► The absence of stress and tangible conflicts.

► A balanced bank account.

► The acceptance, the respect, the admiration of my person by others.

The absence of threats to life and limb, persecution, accusations, insults, false suspicions, injustice.

► The damage/destruction of my reputation (defamation).

Definition of "**success**": (by Peter Wenz)

"Do the right thing in the right place at the right time and know that God is with you."

► **At the end of the day, ask God if everything was ok today? Ask for forgiveness for the imperfect events and for help changing. Experience forgiveness and enjoy his love/acceptance.**

Make the divine standard your own. Recognise the human standard, learn to differentiate, see through it - so that you don't come under false pressure.

Aspects of the human scale:

Looking good, being slim, wanting to have more money than average, an expensive car, expensive (brand-name) clothes, expensive holidays, a nice home, a well-tended garden, financial security.

The indicator of the extent to which I have already adopted God's view of success:

Do I have inner peace? Inner peace with God? Inner peace about the situation I am in? Inner peace about my relationships?

Hebrews 4:9ff:

" So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For who has entered into his rest has also entered into rest from his works, as God from his own.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience!"

Even in the most stressful situations (accidents, war, disasters), it is possible to remain calm inside and know that you are safe with God.

The standard for daily success is the same one that God will one day apply to my entire life.

Will he then be able to say: "Well done, son?" (Well done, my son/my daughter)

God has called us to fellowship with him. The difficulties of our lives help us to understand this.

1. Cor. 6:11: "You have been sanctified, you have been justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God!"

1. I Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of property, **that** you **may** proclaim the virtues of him called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Romans 12:1: "I beseech therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Micah 6:8: "Have you been told, O man, what is good and what the LORD requires of you, to keep the word of God and to love God and to be humble before your God?"

► Salvation is free - discipleship life. (Eternal life is given to us out of grace/love - in order to fully experience Jesus.

To follow the Son of God requires surrender: I am no longer the master of my life, but the Son of God.

Math. 10:39: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

The wise person is the one who adopts God's view of success early on in their life/thinking system - it prevents a lot of unrest, painful injuries and wasted resources.

5.2 God has a plan for my life

Those who have made Jesus Lord of their lives are beloved children of the heavenly Father.

(Jn 1,12: ...but as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in his name).

1 John 3:1-3

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God! And we are. That is why the world does not recognise us, because it has not recognised him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; we know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself as he is pure.

God loves each of his children more than an father could ever love. He cares about the well-being of each individual. For example, we read in Psalm 139:16 that God has a plan for David's life: "Your eyes saw me when I was yet undeveloped, and all the days that were to come were written in your book, when as yet there were none." We also recognise from the bibliographies of other men and women that God in his love had good plans for their lives (this becomes clear, for example, with: Moses, Abraham, Joseph, Esther, Ruth, Mary, Paul, Peter, Barnabas...)

The New Testament also makes it clear that we should not live haphazardly:

Gal. 2, 20: And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.

Heb. 13,20+21: But the God of peace... equip you with everything good for doing his will, by creating in you what is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory for ever and ever! Amen.

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10) This verse brings a lot of relaxation into our lives: The works are already prepared, we do not need to struggle to fulfil God's plan. There are two missions for our lives:

1.) The basic order:

"You shall **love** the Lord your **God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and

first commandment. But the second is like it: You shall **love your neighbour** as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Mat 22:37-40)

2.) The specific order:

Mark 16:15-16

"And he said to them: **Go into all the world and preach** the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Mt 28:18-20:

"And Jesus came to 'them' and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Go therefore 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 observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

God's plan for my life is therefore: Become active (go), make Jesus known (share the good news) and, among other things

Help friends and acquaintances to follow Jesus.

So God's plan for my life is first of all that I get to know and love Him. This is the basis for the mission that is to characterise my life: to **make disciples of others**.

So my life is about making disciples of others.

Apart from love for God, nothing is more important than realising this mission!

So when I make plans for my future, when I choose a job, when I fall in love, when I plan trips, when I pursue hobbies, when I make purchases, when I make commitments (loans etc.) - then it is good for me to consider to what extent this helps or hinders my mission (to make disciples of others).

Since a church consists of the sum of individual Christians, it is not about having a good time together, it is not about warm feelings and nice entertainment programmes, but the church is about making disciples of others.

In the 24th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, we read about the second coming of Jesus. The last verses of Revelation

Alongside many passages from the Old Testament, the Bible clearly refers to the imminent return of Jesus:

"He who testifies to these things (Jesus) says, 'Yes, I am coming soon.

Amen, come, Lord Jesus!" Rev (22:20)

We do ourselves the greatest favour when we recognise reality and align our lives with his orders. Since we Christians have this realisation, we do not need to waste our time, energy and gifts on secondary things.

Ps 90:12:

"So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a wise heart!"

Eph 5:14-17:

"Therefore saith he, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.

Take heed therefore how ye walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise: and **buy up the time**, because the days are evil.

Therefore do not be ignorant, but seek to understand what the will of the Lord is!"

The goal - to realise God's plans every day - is so attractive and inspiring that we don't want to waste time as soon as we realise what it's all about.

The lives and deaths of many people are affected.

This realisation should drive us into prayer. From our intimate fellowship with Jesus, we can then tackle his mission - to make disciples of others - in a concrete way - regardless of whether we are a housewife, student, grandparent, employee or self-employed person.

In Jn 6,27 Jesus says: Labour not for the meat which perishes, but for the meat which endures unto eternal life, which the Son of will give you.

For born-again Christians, the purpose of life not to strive for the most peaceful, comfortable (family) life possible - this is what those who do not yet know and love Jesus are striving for.

A certain radicalism is required here:

On the one hand, we are allowed to live by grace and enjoy a loving relationship with Jesus. As God's children, we are allowed to advantage of God's help, protection, promises and provision.

At the same time, complete surrender to Jesus and following him also means giving up all personal rights (to my time, my assets, my plans, etc...).

It will no longer be about me, but about Jesus. He will then take care of everything I need. These are the two sides of the same coin.

Jer 29:11:

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

In-depth questions:

- 1.) Have others been made disciples of Jesus through my life recently? - How? If no - why not?
- 2.) What hinders the realisation of the mission - to make disciples of others - in my life?
- 3.) Which specific points do I want to implement? What should change?

Prayer: Thank you Father for opening our eyes so that we can recognise what you want from us.

Literature on the topic:

- To to know your gifts better, there is an excellent test by Christian A. Schwarz: "The Gift Test"
- Andreas Herrmann: "There's more to you than you think"
- Derek Prince: "Your calling is sacred - how to find your place"

Examples of people in the Bible where it becomes clear that God has a plan for individual lives:

Moses, Joseph, Esther (Esther 4:14), Gideon (Judges 13:5), David (2 Samuel 7:8-13), Solomon (2 Samuel 7:12-16), John (Luke 1:15-17), Jesus (Luke 1:32), Paul (Acts 9:15) ...

5.3 Mercy

The revolutionary lifestyle of grace

What is it about?

Jesus promises his disciples a fulfilled life (John 10:10). How do we get to live a happy, relaxed and fulfilled life - despite major problems?

The key is to practise the lifestyle of grace. In other words, it is about applying everything that Jesus acquired for us on the cross to our lives (Romans 8:32; Isaiah 26:12).

Biblical basis:

1. I Peter 1:13: Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope fully for the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
Rom 11:6: But if by grace, then no longer by works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. Rom 5:17: For if by the offence of the one death reigned by the one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ.
Ps 90:14: Satisfy us in the morning with your grace, and we will rejoice and glad all our days.
Heb 12:15: ...taking heed lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness spring up, and 'become a burden to you' and through them many will be defiled....

Acts 4:32-33: Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul... And with great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection.

the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.

Ps 103:4: He who redeems your life from the pit, crowns you with grace and mercy.

Psalms 145:8: Gracious and merciful is the Lord, patient and of great kindness.

2. Peter 3:18a: But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Joh. 1,16: From his fullness we have all received grace for grace.

1. I Peter 5:10: Now may God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, himself, after you suffered a little while, fully prepare you, strengthen you, establish you!

Psalms 89:18: ... by your grace you will lift up our heads.

Titus 2:12: The saving grace of God educates us, ... (through undeserved kindness)

Zechariah 12:10: ...I will pour out the Spirit of grace and prayer.

Apo. 6,8: But Stephen, full of grace and power, performed miracles and great signs among the people.

What does the lifestyle of grace look like in practice?

Grace means receiving good things undeservedly.

Grace is a gift from God. Grace expresses the character of God.

The lifestyle means:

- ▶ Living in the knowledge that all my sins are forgiven, that God loves me and thinks I am good.
- ▶ accept grace every day because I have realised that I can't do it in my own strength. God wants to be the source of help.
- ▶ to count on God's miracles in everyday life, to expect them - not to be satisfied with less - because without God's intervention it is very difficult.
- ▶ be gracious with yourself (including your own past).
- ▶ enjoy the love of God every day, have fellowship with Him, live by grace and forgiveness every day.
- ▶ be a channel for God's grace and love. In other words, God blesses other people through me. He fills me with more than I need - so I can give freely.
- ▶ To have a desire for the Lord, for fellowship with Him.
- ▶ Jesus is at the centre of my life (in my thinking, behaviour, planning...)
- ▶ Freedom from the pressure of expectations that others exert on me.
- ▶ Being able to give in, e.g. in discussions.
- ▶ intercede instead of criticising.
- ▶ even through extremely stressful situations.
- ▶ Mistakes can be made.

The opposite of the life of grace is a lifestyle of the law (John 1:17).

Christ has called us to freedom (Gal 5:1). On the cross, He paved the way so that we no longer have to live according to the law.

Characteristics of the lifestyle of the law are:

- ▶ Legalism (even pious ones!), ungraciousness, harshness, bitterness, dogmatism, insisting on one's rights, cynical speech, accusation, envy.
- ▶ negative criticism of superiors, leaders, family members, friends, other Christians (Mt. 18,15-17), self-centredness (aggressively defending my opinion, my right - Lk. 18,7), excitement, indignation, negative comments, wanting to help oneself, condemnation, being offended,

► Independence from God (=sin). The Bible calls this pride.
God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).

Prerequisites for living the lifestyle of grace:

Surrendering my life to Jesus: He is not only my Saviour, but also my Lord - i.e. He is No.1 in my life!

Willingness to be constantly given gifts without having earned them.

- The admission of one's own helplessness and powerlessness. (That is humility.)
- To become totally dependent on God out of conviction.

People who live the lifestyle of grace radiate peace, joy, serenity and generosity.

Important aspects of the topic:

► I expect the solution to my problems to come from God alone (not from my own strength, cleverness...- not even from other people!) But that doesn't mean that I should sit back and be lazy (2 Thessalonians 3:10; Proverbs 6:6).

► It is easy to live under grace!

► If we have been hurt or criticised and do not forgive - then a bitter root will take us captive

(Unfavour, bitterness, being offended, hardness, envy - Mth.18,21-35).

► Fear is the admission that the destructive powers of the devil are greater than the care that God wants to give us through his grace.

Mottos to proclaim:

► **"I claim God's grace for this situation"** Taking means believing.

(Jesus the price! Romans 8:32),

► **"I'll let the Lord have his way",**

► **"The Lord must do the decisive things." How do I achieve a lifestyle of grace?**

- Ask God for forgiveness because I have often tried to live independently of Him - in my own strength.
- e.g.: come to God with open hands and say: "Here I am, give me a gift by grace, I am completely dependent on you."
- Saying "yes": **"I want to** adopt the lifestyle of grace. **I want to** grow into it with God's help".

The quality of life increases enormously when we embrace the lifestyle of grace - despite many problems. Jesus offers it to us.

Literature:

- Christoph Häselbarth, *Living by grace*, Verlag Gottfried Bernhard, 2013
- Wolfhard Margies, *Lust am Herrn*, Aufbruch-Publisher, Berlin 1991;

- Wolfhard Margies, *Gnade - Geschenk des Lebens*, Aufbruch-Verlag, Berlin 2013, some quotes from here:

"Life under the conditions of grace is intoxicatingly beautiful."

"People of grace cannot become mentally ill."

"The main problem in our lives is our stubborn refusal to constantly allow ourselves to be given gifts."

"All of God's gifts are an expression of his grace."

"Grace becomes effective through believing acceptance."

"The grace of God is focussed on continuously turning around everything that is negative, guilt, problems and hardship."

"Praise and thanks are the appropriate responses to his gifts of grace."

"If we constantly move in grace, our nervous system has no chance of reacting with symptoms of illness or responding to stress with manifestations of overload."

"Those who live by grace are friendly, relaxed and natural. What is special about them is their graceful lightness and cheerfulness, which they are able to combine with tolerance and truthfulness on the one hand and mercy on the other."

"Only those who allow themselves to be given gifts without interruption and know that they do not have to pursue, realise and secure all things can allow themselves to be gentle. If it happens to him that a plan or current action is thwarted by any circumstances, he does not become bitter, hard or loud. He knows that own performance not responsible for the project. As a person of grace, the awareness is deeply rooted in his heart that the ultimate responsibility lies with God and that a constant flow and supply of thoughts, plans, energy and success comes from him."

"The gentle by grace knows: God does well in every case."

"We should no longer labour in the battle against sin, but make sure that the grace of our Lord abounds in us through the word of God. Grace will then do it, not we ourselves, so that sin loses its power over us and we step into freedom."

"If grace is even able to make us unresponsive to sin, to free us from the curse of independence from God, of living by our own strength and of setting ever new performance maxims, if it releases so much peace and relaxation, lightness and joy, blessing and love, is there any reason to follow another ideal or another path? The question arises as to whether God wants us to live by grace alone. The answer

can only be: Yes, that's right. Only grace is reserved for us as food:
1 Peter 1:13.

Romans 8:32:

"He who did not spare even his own Son, but spared him for us all

how should he not also give us everything with him (!)."

God gives us gifts - with everything we need.

5.4 Supply

What is it about?

By dying on the cross, Jesus paid the price so that we no longer have to live by our own efforts.

Love and grace - instead of performance and fear. This theological realisation is tested in both the Old and New Testaments using the sevenfold test.

The most important biblical passages:

The sevenfold test states that fundamental theological truths are present in at least seven places in the Bible: in the

1. It is found in the Book of Moses, the Law, the Prophets, the Wisdom Literature, the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles (letters):

1. Genesis 2:8-9

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

And the LORD God caused to grow out of the ground all kinds of trees, desirable to the sight and good for food, and the tree of life in the centre of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

⇒ So God prepared everything from the beginning and made it available to people.

5. Genesis 8:18

But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you strength to acquire such wealth; that he may uphold his covenant which he swore to your fathers, as it is done today.

Ps 23:1-3+5

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He will make me lie down in green pastures, He leads me to still waters. He refreshes my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for the sake of his name.

...You prepare a table before me in the face of my enemies;

You have anointed my head with oil, my cup runs over.

Likewise: Psalm 37:3-7, Psalm 40:18, Psalm 44:4, Prov. 10:22:

The blessing of the Lord alone makes you rich and nothing adds to your own labour.

Isa 40:29-31

He gives strength to the weary and strength to the faint.

Young men grow weary and faint, and young men stumble 'and' fall.

But those who hope in the LORD gain new strength: they lift up their wings like eagles,

they run and do not tire, they walk and do not tire.

Isa 41:9-10

You are my servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you - do not fear, for I am with you!

Do not be afraid, for I am your God! I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.

God's provision does not end with the Old Testament:
Mt 6:25-33

Therefore I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, what you shall eat and what you shall drink, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

Look at the birds of the air, they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feeds them.

Are you not much more valuable than they?

But who among you can add a cubit to his length of life with worry?

And why are you concerned about clothing? Look at the lilies of the field as they grow: they do not labour, nor do they spin.

But I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today stands and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, 'will he not' much more 'do so' to you, O you of little faith?

So do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat? Or: What shall we drink? Or: What shall we wear?'

For the nations seek all these things, for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

And all these things will be added to you.

Romans 8:32 describes the absolute basis for our provision today and at the same time the greatest proof of the Father's love:

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not with him also give us all things?"

Material provision is like illness: Jesus died for both on the cross, he paid the price so that we are provided for and healthy (Isaiah 53:4). That is the legitimate basis! We must hold on to it and proclaim it! Nevertheless, Christians also experience times of material deprivation and illness - because we still live in this world, but are not of this world.

world. But as children of God and heirs to the heavenly promises, we rely on the promises of God that are fulfilled in Jesus!

2. Cor 9:8

But God is able to make every grace abound you, so that in everything you may always have all sufficiency and abound to every good work;

2. Cor 9:11

...and **ye shall be made rich in all things** unto all liberality, which worketh thanksgiving to God by us.

⇒ Nevertheless, God is God! Isa 55:8-9

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

For 'as much' as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Jas 4:2-3

You covet and have nothing; you kill and envy and can gain nothing; you quarrel and wage war. You have nothing because you do not ask;

you ask and receive nothing, because you ask badly in order to waste it in your lusts.

(Read Isaiah 55:1-3 and Revelation 21:3)

Other important aspects of the topic:

Throughout human history, God has always provided for his people. It began with the creation (a kind of all-round provision, which was given without any return, then e.g. gifts from the Egyptians when the people of Israel left; the manna during the wilderness wanderings; the fertile land of Canaan (the land where milk and honey flowed); gifts and even tax money when leaving Babylon, then later Jesus with the feeding of the crowds (5000 and 4000 men, Mt. 14, 15ff + 15, 32ff); the promises in the New Testament with regard to the material provision for Christians; right up to the end, when God will create a new earth and a new heaven (here again: "full provision" for his people).

A lack of essentials is an unnatural state for Christians.

Ask God if He wants to draw our attention to something through a situation of lack -

e.g. is sin in our lives, have we been disobedient, have we forgiven everyone, are we still living in a phase that is no longer our turn, are we too lazy (Prov 6:6; 2 Thess 3:10), do we serve mammon (money, nice things) instead of God, are we still bound by greed, fear etc.?

Are we at peace that we are still in the right place, at the right time and doing the right thing?

If so, then we can confidently trust it:

God pays for what he orders!

God uses difficulties in our lives so that we can grow. In this sense, we can be grateful to God for tangible crises and stressful situations. They serve to bring us closer to Jesus and prepare us for eternity, in which God will wipe away all tears and there will be no more suffering!

Rev 22, 11b: "...the Holy One continues to sanctify himself."

1 John 3:1: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God!" One of the eight Hebrew names of God in the Bible is: "Yahweh-Jireh".

This name means: "God's provision will become visible".

Further literature on the topic:

- Derek Prince, *God's Plan for Your Finances*, IBL Trostberg, 1999.
- Wolfhard Margies, *Lust am Herrn*, AV Berlin, 1991.
- Christian A. Schwarz, *Anleitung für christliche Lebenskünstler*, C&P, Emmelsbüll, 1996.
- Joy Dawson, *Intimate Friendship with God*, JmeM publishing house, 1994

5.5 Christians are not liable to pay the tax

The tithe - and New Testament giving

1. Principle:

Christians are not liable to pay the tax.

Tithing is no longer a valid law today (just like keeping the Sabbath, for example - although both make sense).

However, it is one of several ways to practise regular and generous giving. Tithing is a basic attitude in the Old Testament that is pleasing to God.

Today, however, listening to God personally and acting obediently takes priority (because we live under the new covenant).

We must make a clear distinction between the old and new covenants on this subject. The people under the old covenant were under the law. The new covenant is that Jesus has redeemed us from the law through his shed blood and we are allowed to live by grace (Romans 7:6; Romans 8:2; Galatians 3:13). He did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfil it (Matthew 5:17). The law is therefore fulfilled in Jesus.

In the New Testament, only the Jews who lived under the old covenant are asked to tithe - the believers of the new covenant are free. All passages about tithing in the New Testament refer to people who were still living under the old covenant and to Old Testament events (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42 + 18:12; Hebrews 7).

2. Principle:

The principle of giving in the new covenant is based on the Old Testament principle of tithing and has these three aspects:

1. God ask
2. Listen to impressions
3. obedient act

On the basis of the universal priesthood, every born-again Christian can hear God's voice. (1 Peter 2:5+9 ;

Revelation 1:6 + 5:10;

John 10:27+ 18:37).

God wants every Christian to grow into a spiritually mature man (woman) of God.

The New Testament church financed its staff and needs through voluntary donations.

- "Let him who is taught in the word give to him who teaches him" (Galatians 6:6);
- "Let the elders be counted worthy of double honour, ... the labourer is worthy of his hire" (1 Timothy 5:17, 18);
- "In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:14)
- "... God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

As a rule, New Testament giving goes far beyond tithing.

3. Principle:

Today, new covenant is not about tithing (10%), but about voluntary, generous sharing (up to 100%!).

Complete devotion to Jesus includes personal possessions. "So no one among you who does not renounce everything he has (*money, possessions*) can be my disciple." (Luke 4:33; Mark 10:21; Haggai 2:8)

For a born-again Christian, there should be no distinction between the areas in which Jesus is allowed to speak and those in which we do not allow Him to speak (e.g. in the area of our finances, our assets).

- Another blessing of tithing is often the liberation from the power of greed, the power of mammon. The power of the love of money, the power of mammon. is often necessary to first repent to God for the love of money and the worship of mammon. After we have confessed this guilt to God, we can be freed from these false bonds through the blood of Jesus.

4. Principle:

In the new covenant, tithing is replaced by worship-oriented, grateful, reverent and generous giving.

- Giving is a part of worship.
- Giving is an expression of our gratitude to God for his provision. (Deuteronomy 14:23)
- By giving, we confess and show our dependence on Him, our provider.
- Giving is an expression of my reverence for God (Deuteronomy 14:23).
- Giving is an expression of my faith that God is my provider. (2 Corinthians 8:2 + 9:1- 15)

Important passages in the New Testament on giving: Mt 6:3-4; Lk 3:11; Lk 6:38; Acts 20:35; 1 Peter 3:9; Ephesians 2:10; Lk 12:31; Lk 12:33-34; Mt 6:19-21; Prov 3:9-10; Luke 6:38; Hebrews 13:16; Galatians 6:7-10; Mark 10:28-30:

Then Peter said to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you! Jesus answered him and said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who has not left a hundredfold.

receive now in this time houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, under persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

It is necessary to have the right heart attitude when giving:

1. Cor 13:3: "And if I distribute all my possessions and give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing!"

The principle of sowing and reaping:

2. Cor 9:6-8

But remember this: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows in blessing will also reap in blessing. Every man according as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

But God is mighty to give you every grace in abundance, so that in everything you may always have all sufficiency and abound in every good work.

5. Principle

The giving of the tithe in the Old Testament is much more complex than the widespread understanding today that the tithe should be given primarily to finance pastors and to build or maintain church buildings / community centres.

The Old Testament tells of various uses of the tithe that are rarely taught today - for example, the tithe of "all things" was used to ensure that the giver's family would buy enough food and wine - even strong drink - from their tithe to celebrate during their pilgrimage to Jerusalem:

"... but before the Lord your God you shall eat these things ... and be joyful ..." (Deut 12:7+18; Deut 14:23+28)

The Israelites were to use the tithe for the following purposes:

1. Supply of the Levites,
2. to provide for themselves (money to celebrate and go on holiday in Jerusalem!),
3. to care for maidservants, servants, orphans and strangers - both in Jerusalem in the first and second year, as well as in private homes in the third year (Deuteronomy 26:12).

It is sometimes taught that the tithe according to Malachi 3 should be given entirely to the church where you are at home and where you receive your spiritual nourishment. It is a good, possible guideline - but not a law. Unless God wants otherwise, it is advisable to invest your finances in the church for the building of the kingdom of God, where you are spiritually nourished. Loren Cunningham says about this:

"You don't order from Wienerwald and pay at MacDonald."

6. Principle

God's standard is that we, his children, have more than enough through Jesus Christ to be provided for ourselves with everything we need to live and to be able to give generously beyond that.

2 Corinthians 9:10-12

"But he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and multiply the seed for you and cause the fruits of your righteousness to grow, **so that you may abound in all things to all giving** thanks to God through us. For the ministry of this relief not only fills up the lack of the saints, but also overflows with the thanksgiving of many to God."

More Bible passages on "having more than enough":

John 10:10; 3 John 2; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 2 Corinthians 9:8; 2 Corinthians 11:7-9; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Philippians 4:19; Romans 8:32.

God wants abundance to be normal for his children - so that they can give generously. What does

"abundance" mean? Abundance is everything that we do not existentially need to live.

Why should we accumulate money and assets? Let each of us examine for ourselves whether it is God's will to invest these resources in the kingdom of God now. Clive Pick: "Our calling is not to collect money, but to release money." "God provides money for Christians to have enough for themselves and to finance the end-time spiritual harvest." Yet another argument against tithing is: The non-mention of tithing - in the Gospels, in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles - for believers of the new covenant.

How obvious it would have for Paul or even Peter to call on the Gentile Christians tithe,

- e.g. in Galatians 6:6: "Let him who is taught in the word give to him who teaches him."

- e.g. in 1 Timothy 5:17+18: "...the labourer is worthy of his hire."

- e.g. in the outcome of the first Apostles' Council, when it comes to which laws the Gentiles who had become believers should keep. Tithing was not mentioned here! (It was only defilement by idols, fornication, suffocation, abstinence from blood - Acts 15:20) The outcome of the Apostles' Council was sealed with the words: "It has pleased the Holy Spirit and us not to place any further burden on you" (verse 28) - including the burden of tithing.

Bible passages on tithing:

Old Testament: Genesis 14:18-20; Genesis 28:20-22; Exodus 23:16-19; Exodus 34:22,26; Exodus 27:30-34; Numbers 18:6-32; Deuteronomy 12:6-32, Deuteronomy 14:22-

29, Deuteronomy 16:13-17; Deuteronomy 26:10-14; 2 Chronicles 3-

12; Nehemiah 10:34-39; Nehemiah 12:44-45; Nehemiah 13:5; 1 Samuel 8:15, 17; Amos 4:4; Malachi 3:7-12.

New Testament: Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42;
Luke 18:12; Hebrews 7:1-28

Conclusion:

Tithing to your church is a good guideline. But above all, everyone should ask God and be open about what they should give generously when, where and to whom. It is about making yourself completely available to him (with your person and all your possessions).

Giving a monthly tithe to the church is right from the point of view of sharing with one another, but it cannot be theologically justified as tithing! In other words:

Sharing with one another is more important today than tithing!

Quotes from Peter Wenz:

"He who has more than he needs shares with him who lacks."

"The traditional one-pastor church is and was financed by tithes and offerings. The New Testament house church is financed by sharing what we have with one another." (Praxis newspaper, issue 3/1999, page 13). Bill Bright, founder of Campus for Christ

"Giving a tithe or more is not a requirement of the law, but an act of love and obedience. Everything belongs to God since we live under grace."

In his book: "Help - we are stressed!" he says: **"Tithing"** - giving at least a tenth of your income or resources to God - **serves as a practical guideline** for giving and guarantees consistent stewardship."

Since Christians live under the new covenant, tithing no longer applies to them, but rather the **principle of equality**: "...according to the principle of equality, in the present time your abundance shall supply the lack of others, that their abundance also may supply your lack, that there may be a balance, as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have abundance, and he who gathered little did not have lack."" (2 Corinthians 8:13bff)

Book tip:

- Prof Dr Rudolf H. Edenharder:
"The tithe in the Bible and in free churches" (At last a fundamental work on the subject by a German author).

5.6 The illusion of independence

By Derek Prince:

".....and you will be like God and know what good and evil." (Genesis 3:5) That is certainly a high and praiseworthy ideal - to be like God.

What could be wrong with that? However, in the mouth of Satan - who appeared in the form of a serpent - it tempted Adam and Eve to act in a way that ended in a fiasco and whose dire consequences have affected all their descendants.

What was the invisible trap that Adam and Eve fell victim to? It lay in the unspoken but implied motive - i.e. the promise of independence: if you recognise good and evil, you are free to your own decisions. You are no longer dependent on God.

This self-affirming desire for independence has been passed on by heredity to all humanity descended from Adam and Eve. It is the characteristic trait of the "old Adam" - the fallen, sinful nature that is inherent in all of us. Different paths to independence

Historically, mankind has taken many different paths in its search for independence from God. The first of these is the path of knowledge. In paradise, there were two particular trees - the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. It was a critical moment in history when Adam and Eve turned away from the tree of life and towards the tree of knowledge. Since that time, the endeavour to attain knowledge has been one of the main goals of mankind. Over the last two or three centuries, this has been expressed through an ever-increasing focus on science. (The English word "science" is a direct derivation of the Latin word "scientia", which means "knowledge" or "realisation").

However, this explosion in the field of science has not solved the fundamental problems of humanity - injustice, cruelty, war, poverty, disease. On the contrary, in some ways it has even exacerbated them.

Science has given mankind weapons of mass destruction that could wipe out the entire human race and turn the whole earth into a desolate wasteland.

Not only that: Some of these weapons are in the possession of cruel and vicious people who would not be deterred from using them by any considerations of mercy or morality.

The second path that mankind took in order to be independent of God is surprising at first. It is the path of religion. On

In different ways, people have developed religious rules and worship systems that are so complete and all-encompassing that they no longer need God himself. They only need to keep their rules.

This is true of some forms practised in several of the world's major religions - Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and even various versions of Christianity. Within all of these religions, people can be so content with their rules and procedures that they are considered by God Himself to be the only way to live.

are completely independent. This is why serious, religious people often find it most difficult when it comes to accepting the grace of the gospel - which cannot be earned.

Another way in which people try to make themselves independent of God is by accumulating enormous financial and material wealth. Jesus told a parable about a rich landowner who had such a rich harvest that there was not enough room in his barn. He decided to create even greater storage facilities so that he could then say to his soul: "Dear soul, you have a store for many years; just rest, eat, drink and be of good courage!" But God said to him: "You fool! This night your soul will be required of you, and who will own what you have accumulated?" (Luke 12:16-20) Countless people throughout history have been tempted by this desire for independence to make the same tragic mistake. Countless people still make this mistake today.

This desire to be independent of God is the characteristic feature of all those who belong to the kingdom of Satan - angels in rebellion, demons, fallen humanity. It is also characteristic of the "world" that Jesus distinguished from his disciples as follows:

"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." (John 17:16)

In this sense, the "world" consists of all those people who have never submitted to the authority of the King appointed by God - the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of them are moral, religious people, but when they are confronted with God's demand to submit fully to the Lordship of Jesus, the rebellious, independent "old man" emerges and they reject God's offer of "salvation by grace alone".

Lonely, alienated humanity

The desire to be independent of God sets people apart from the rest

God's creatures who live together in unconditional dependence on their Creator. There is no sign among the celestial bodies that they yearn for independence.

"You have made the moon to divide the year after it; the sun knows its going down." (Psalm 104:19) "He numbers the stars and calls them all by name." (Psalm 147:4) No matter how turbulent the elements may seem at times, they always obey their Creator - "fire, hail, snow and mist, stormy winds that fulfil his word" (Psalm 148:8) The same applies to the animals. "The young lions that roar for prey and seek their food from God." (Psalm 104:21) "There is the sea, great and wide, teeming without number, beasts great and small ... They are all waiting for you give them food in due season." (Psalm 104:25 and 27) As for the birds, Jesus tells us: "Your heavenly Father feeds them." (Matthew 6:26)

No wonder that the rebellious human being sometimes feels lonely and alienated from the universe - in which the other creatures all live together in unconditional dependence on their Creator.

The path back to dependency

On the cross, Jesus provided a twofold way out for our fallen state. First, he paid the entire penalty for all our sin in our place, allowing God to forgive our sins without violating his own justice. Second, Jesus also identified with the independent, selfish "I" that dominates our fallen nature. In Jesus, this rebel was put to death. "For we know that our old man (the rebel) was crucified with him." (Romans 6:6) To become a disciple of Jesus, each and every one of us must apply this twofold remedy: Firstly, we must ensure - through repentance and faith - that all our sins have been forgiven.

Secondly, we must accept the death sentence that has been pronounced on our rebellious independent "ego". This is why Jesus set conditions for his disciples: "So everyone among you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:33)

The word translated here as "renounce" could also be rendered as "say goodbye to". Becoming a disciple of Jesus means that you have to say goodbye to everything you normally on - family, friends, money, career, honour or fame of this world.

After we have truly renounced all these things, perhaps God will then restore to us those that fit into his plan for our lives. But we are not now

We are no longer owners, but only stewards and must be accountable for how we use what has been entrusted to us. However, we are exclusively dependent on God.

Sometimes it may take a crisis - or even a supposed catastrophe - before we are ready to fully recognise our dependence on God. In this context, Paul's journey to Rome, which is described in Acts 27, comes to mind. God had a very specific plan for Paul go to Rome. In his capacity as an "apostle to the gentiles", he had a unique contribution to make to the church there.

But Paul was travelling as a prisoner in chains. The ship he was on was caught in such a storm that neither the sun by day nor the stars by night could be seen for a fortnight. Finally, they were shipwrecked on the rough coast of Malta, where Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake to top it all off (see Acts.

27,13-28,20). If it was God's will that Paul should travel to Rome why was he exposed to such extraordinary difficulties on the way?

When I thought about this, I remembered a passage in Acts 27:20: "... all our hope of salvation was gone." That was the reason for the difficulties that Paul had to overcome: he came to the point **"where all hope of salvation was gone"**. Now Paul could only put his hope in God. Now God was able to demonstrate in a practical way that He alone is sufficient: He brings us to the point where we are completely dependent on him to show us that he really can be relied on.

When Paul had reached this point of complete dependence on God, he was equipped for his ministry to the Christians in Rome. His journey there had prepared him. Freed from any form of self-sufficiency, he was a surrendered vessel through which the blessing of God could overflow to the Roman Christians. We sometimes forget that although Paul was an apostle, he was also a disciple and as such was subject to the discipline of the Lord.

Over the years, I have gradually learnt this lesson of total dependence on God. I must confess that I have been a slow learner. God has used different circumstances at different times to teach me this lesson, but I have realised one thing: The more I depended on God alone, the more He me by the effects that followed - effects that would never have existed as long as I relied on my own efforts.

The surrender of Jacob

Jacob is one of those people in the Bible who had to fight a proverbial physical battle before they could give up their independence. As a young man, he was cunning, ambitious and focused on his own advantage. He took advantage of his brother's momentary physical weakness to sell him his birthright for a bowl of soup. He then played a deceptive manoeuvre on his blind father Isaac by pretending to be Esau in order to receive his father's blessing - which normally came with the birthright.

But neither the birthright nor the paternal blessing worked in Jacob's favour. To escape Esau's wrath, he fled to Mesopotamia and found refuge with his uncle Laban, where he once again proved his cunning. He married Laban's two daughters and acquired most of his wealth. Then the Lord gave him to understand that it was time to return to the land of his inheritance. On his return, however, he encountered a mysterious stranger with whom he fought all night long.

Finally, the stranger twisted his hip muscle (the strongest muscle in his entire body) so that Jacob clung to him in helpless dependence.

Only after this encounter was Jacob able to actually return to his inheritance.

But for the rest of his life he had to walk with a limp - as an outward sign that he had given up his independence.

Who was the stranger who fought with Jacob? At first he is described as a man, but the next morning Jacob said: "I have seen God face to face." (Genesis 32:24-30) Later, the prophet Hosea made the following statement with regard to this encounter: "He (Jacob) fought with the angel" (Hosea 12:5)

This person was therefore a human being, but nevertheless God and also an angel. There is only one person in the entire universe who fits this description: a human being and yet at the same time a messenger of God. It is the person who appeared in the history of mankind as Jesus of Nazareth - a man, but still God and a messenger of God to mankind.

Jacob's fate was finally sealed by this encounter.

Afterwards, his inheritance was restored to him and he was also reconciled with his brother Esau.

Perhaps you have recognised a part of yourself in this experience of Jacob. You have also struggled with your own strength to take up a spiritual inheritance that you believe God has provided for you and yet is somehow still closed to you. If this is the case, then you must do exactly what Jacob did: You must entrust yourself unconditionally to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is a prayer that you can pray in this situation:

Lord Jesus, I believe that you are truly my Saviour and that you provided an inheritance for me. But I now realise that I have relied on my own strength to take up this inheritance.

I want repent for that now! I lay down my independence and place myself completely under your rule. From now on, I want to depend only on your all-encompassing grace.

But don't forget one thing: you might be limping from now on!

Further excellent literature by Derek Prince is available from:

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5.7 Motivation for everyday life - what drives me?

"If life has no vision that you strive for, that you long for, that you want to realise, then there is no motive to make an effort." (Erich Fromm)

What motivates me?

What gives me the strength to persevere? What drives me?

It is important to know what motivates you in the long term.

The motivations to achieve something are very different!

What motivates one leaves another cold.

Psychology recognises 16 different motives in life - 16 motivations that drive us:

- Power (striving for influence, success, performance, leadership)
- Independence (striving for freedom. Secret: True freedom can only be achieved in conscious dependence on God)
- Curiosity (striving for knowledge and truth. The scientist Agassi once said: "My time is too valuable to waste on earning money.")
- Recognition (striving for social acceptance - danger: I live for others in order to please others. I am lived).
- Order (striving for clarity, good organisation, structure, stability).
- Saving (striving to accumulate material goods and property, collecting).
- Honour (e.g. family honour, company honour, if not fulfilled: feelings of shame)
- Idealism (striving for social justice and fairness)
- Relationships (striving for friendship, closeness to others, humour)
- Family (striving for family life bringing up own children)
- Status (striving for public attention, titles, wealth)
- Revenge (striving for competition, fighting, aggression, retaliation - often out of injury)
- Eros (striving for sex, an erotic life)
- Eating (striving for food, pleasure in eating)
- Physical activity (fitness, body cult)
- Calmness (striving for relaxation, emotional security)

A secret: the most important and most beautiful things in life are free!

Happiness in life depends on factors that cannot be paid for with money: Getting to know God's love, friendships, loving relationships, sex.

What do you actually want?

Do you have a dream? Do you want to realise it? Are you living your dream? If not, why not? Could it be that you yourself are the biggest obstacle to realising your dream? What fears are stopping me from taking action?

The level/strength of motivation depends on the attractiveness of the goals.

Make yourself aware: Which goals do I find attractive? And why?

Motivation has a lot to do with the question of meaning!

To clarify this point, it is important to recognise **reality**.

What is reality? It is about better understanding reality - the reality that surrounds us. In order to describe reality, we can assume various premises/cornerstones:

1. In addition to the visible, material world, there is also a non-visible, immaterial world.
2. If the Bible is right, there is a sovereign, independent, loving and righteous God (whom you can get to know as a person - including his character - in the Bible).
This is God's way of revealing himself and his plans to people.
If there is a God, what consequences does that have for me?
3. Part of reality is that there is a subjective truth in the universe. The formula: "Everything is relative and only a matter of perspective" does not apply.
Jesus says: "I am the truth!"
The writer C.S. Lewis says: Either Jesus is crazy or he is lying or he really is the Son of God!
4. One secret is: **"Reality is independent of the opinion I have about it!"** i.e. my opinion is not that important. My opinion does not change reality. Whether I believe in God or not is irrelevant to the existence of God.
However, my opinion and the resulting behaviour will have - sometimes devastating - effects on me. That makes me humble/humble.

Lasting motivation is meaning-oriented - not materially orientated.

What is really important must also be able to cope with death.

What does that mean for my life?

Just working to earn a living is not enough to keep motivated in the long term.

- God is my provider!

- Everyone strives for meaning, for a fulfilled life. Where does the meaning come from? Meaning has its origin in our Creator. What am I created for?

First and foremost, to have fellowship with God - to be a beloved child of the perfect heavenly Father.

Secondly, it is about the kingdom of God! Jesus had this as his central theme for 40 days after the resurrection until his ascension (Acts 1:3).

The kingdom of God is the most exciting topic of our day. God wants to and will build his kingdom here on earth. And we can and should be part of it. What does this have to do with my motivation? Quite a lot: **I will be highly motivated if I know what my calling is.** Does my life help or hinder the building of God's kingdom? Our task is not primarily to earn money and have the highest possible standard of living. Our task is

To be "salt and light", to verbally and non-verbally promote the kingdom of God through our being and actions.

I am motivated when I am in the right place at the right time, do the right thing and know that God is with me.

This is also the secret living successfully.

- If I am suffering at the moment, am I suffering for the right thing?
- Am I chasing after the wrong targets?

Fruits of my life

When was my life successful? Don't wait until old age to judge your life retrospectively. Is my life successful from God's point of view?

What are its criteria?

Have I responded correctly to his call and desire (to have a relationship and fellowship with me)? Our part is to make the right decisions in life.

What are his orders?

- Love the Lord God with all your heart and your neighbour as yourself.
- "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Mt 28:18-20)

I am always highly motivated when I have recognised reality and when I have made the right decisions in my life based on this recognition of reality.

Literature on the topic:

- "Creative life planning", Paul Donders
- "More than just a job", Dieter Keil
- "The gift test", Christian Schwarz

5.8.1 Devotion: My contract with God

Bible verses on the subject of "Devotion":

Math. 10,

37 He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

38 And whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.

Phil. 1,

22 But if life in the flesh gives me opportunity for fruitful activity, I do not know what to choose.

23 For I am oppressed by both: desire to depart and be with Christ, which would be much better;

24 But it is more necessary to remain in the flesh for your sake.

Joh. 15,

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 You are my friends if you do everything I command you.

15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you all that I have heard from my Father.

2 Cor. 1,

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercy and God of all comfort,

4 who comforts us in all our affliction, that we may comfort those who are in any affliction, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are poured out on us abundantly, so also through Christ our consolation flows abundantly.

6 If we have tribulation, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your consolation, which is made strong in steadfast endurance of the same sufferings that we also suffer, and our hope for you is firm;

7 For we know that as you are partakers of suffering, so also of consolation.

8 For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, of the afflictions which befell us in Asia, that we had exceeding great burdens, exceeding riches, so that we despaired even of life;

9 Indeed, we had already passed the judgement of death on ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in the God who raises the dead.

10 He has also saved us from such death and still saves us, and we hope in him that he will

will continue to save us,

11 provided that also help us through your intercession, so that the gift of grace prayed for us by many persons may also be thanked by many for us.

12 For our glory is this: the testimony of our conscience, that we have walked in simplicity and godly integrity, not in carnal wisdom but in godly grace, in the world, but mostly with you.

Col. 3,

1 If then you have risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

2 Seek what is above, not what is on earth;

3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, your life, revealed, then you too will be revealed with him in glory.

5 Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: Fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry;

6 for which things the wrath of God comes upon the children of unbelief;

7 in which you also once walked when you lived in it;

8 But now put away all this, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, hateful speech from your mouth.

9 Do not lie to one another: since you have stripped the old man of his behaviour

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed unto knowledge after the image of him that created him;

11 where there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcision and foreskin, alien, scythe, bond, free, but all and in all Christ. 12 Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, tenderhearted, kind, humble, gentle, patient,

13 Bear with one another and forgive one another, if one has a grievance against another; just as Christ forgave you, so also do you.

14 But above all this, *have* love, which is the bond of perfection.

15 And may the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which you were also called in one body.

Be grateful too!

16 Let the word of Christ dwell among you richly; teach and admonish yourselves with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; sing sweetly to God in your hearts.

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through him.

Gal. 2,

19 But now through the law I have died to the law in order to live to God; I have been crucified with Christ.

20 And I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and what I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.

2 Cor. 5,

14 For the love of Christ binds us together who hold that if one died for all, then they all died;

15 and for this reason he died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and rose again for them.

My contract with Got:

Thank you, Jesus, for your life for me out of love!

I therefore hand over the reigns of my life to you. You are my
God and my King and my Lord.

I belong to you.

I deliver myself to you:

My life, my finances, my time, my energy, my spouse, my children, my family, my
friends, my hobbies, my possessions, my home, my church, my health are in
Your hands.

All this no longer belongs to me, but to you! You
can do whatever you want with it!

I let go of everything!

Thy kingdom come! Your will be done!

Signature

5.8.2 Life in abundance: Breakthrough to rupture

The broken man

In this context, "brokenness" is to be understood in a thoroughly positive sense, as the following remarks make clear.

God has a personal history with every person. God courts us and longs for us to mature and enter into the abundant life he promised us in John 10:10. The speed of inner growth depends heavily on our responses to God's wooing.

What are the central biblical passages on the subject of "inner brokenness"?

Psalms 51:15-19: "Sacrifices pleasing to God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you will not despise, O God."

Psalms 34:18: "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and helps those whose spirits are crushed."

Matthew 10:39: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Luke 20, 17+18: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone? Whoever falls on this stone (*Jesus*) will be crushed, but whoever it falls on will be crushed.

John 3:30: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Jesus is the great example of a broken man: In his behaviour and even physically:

1. Cor. 11, 24: "Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, do this in remembrance of me."

Inner brokenness is a decision. And it is a work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian and therefore not of their own doing.

Brokenness is a process: it begins with the realisation that I cannot stand before God with my guilt. It continues with the conscious experience of what grace, love and devotion mean. As the process continues, one longs more for God's will to be done instead of one's own. The process of brokenness leads to a voluntary surrender to God. This can be material things (money, house, other assets), relationships or even one's own life (martyrdom).

Mark 10, 29 "Jesus answered him and said, 'Truly I tell you, it is

No one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold, now in this time houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, under persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."

Rev. 12, 11 "And they overcame him (*Satan*) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and did not love their lives to the death!"

In your dealings with people, you can sense whether God in his love has already led someone to an inner rupture.

Here are some possible characteristics of unbroken people:

Quick-tempered, egotistical, insisting on his rights, proud, attaching importance to status symbols, bossy, impatient, envious, "constantly under power", loving discussions, it depends on his arguments and positions, tactical behaviour, mistrustful, concerned about his image to others, dishonourable, wanting to sell himself well, putting himself in a good light, emphasising the faults of others, criticising, talking badly about others, power games, psychosomatic complaints, legalistic behaviour, separating himself from those who think/believe differently, inwardly rather unfree, wants to impress God and people with good deeds, often ambitious (greedy for honour).

The effects of an internal rupture can also be observed:

Humble, serving attitude, respecting others more than oneself, patient, gentle, clearly discerning, bold, courageous, passionate, endeavours to seek and implement God's will in a matter, this is more important to him/her than his/her own opinion, seeking the closeness/intimacy of God, has an inner conviction that it depends on God's intervention, that the decisive solution to problems is to be expected from God, does not live by his own strength, lives daily by grace, expects daily miracles, knows that he is dependent on God's guidance and his background work, allows himself to be sanctified by Jesus and does not sanctify himself (Heb. 10, 10+14, Joh.

17, 19), a broken person recognises that his own changes of character and behaviour are a work of the Holy Spirit in his life and can only be brought about by the consciously sought closeness to God can be encouraged,

Broken people are often team players and not individual heroes, they pay attention to unity when making important decisions ("It has pleased the Holy Spirit and us..." Acts 15:28), they see the need for all the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the various ministries (five-fold ministry according to Eph. 4:11), they make use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they rejoice when others are blessed more than themselves, they place their possessions and their lives at God's disposal, they do not necessarily fight for their rights - they leave room for God to intervene ("Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath of God, for it is written: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19), the broken person does not work for the sake of recognition, but for the sake of the mission and the task, he does not have to argue, he does not have to constantly justify himself, counter, defend his position and explain himself, broken people are inwardly firm, mature in faith, convinced, They are able to place themselves and submit, are humble, live more relaxed lives - with less stomach ache, stress and restlessness because they try to live in accordance with God's will, they hate and forsake sin (more and more), closeness to God shapes and changes all areas of their life and character.

It is much easier to live as a broken person (by grace), you don't have to constantly justify yourself, assert your opinion and act on your own strength. It

liberated. Living and working with broken people is easier and more pleasant. They live more and more "online", which means that they pay attention to the urging of the Holy Spirit to stay in (constant) contact with God, even in their often hectic everyday lives.

Breaking up does not mean giving up your personality. You are still responsible for your life and actions - towards God and people.

Rather, disruption is an attitude, a lifestyle that is shaped by the spirit.

People in the immediate social environment will notice the progressive process of disintegration through changes in behaviour.

How can I promote the breakthrough to disruption in my life?

1. By asking the Holy Spirit to make the love and grace of God come alive in me.
2. By praying, "Lord, change me into the image You have of me."

It is easier for a broken person to give their worries to God: "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Phil 4:6

5.9 Who am I? And the positive profession of faith

I AM...

- sanctified (1 Corinthians 6:11)
- justified (Romans 5:1)
- a son of God (Romans 8:14)
- a child of God (Romans 8:16)
- a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- a co-worker with God (1 Corinthians 3:9)
- the light of the world (Matthew 5:14)
- a priest and a saint (Rev.2)
- an imitator of Christ (Ephesians 5:1)
- more than an overcomer (Romans 8:37)
- guided by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14)
- not moved by the visible (2 Corinthians 4:18)
- healed by his wounds (1 Peter 2:24)
- an inheritance of eternal life (1.Joh.5,11+12)
- an ambassador in Christ's stead (2 Cor. 5:20)
- Heir to the blessing of Abraham (Galatians 3:13,14)
- keep me in all my ways (Psalm 9:11)
- saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8)
- partakers of his divine nature (2 Peter 1:4)
- a daily conqueror of the devil (1 John 4:4)
- blessed with every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3)
- redeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13)
- delivered from the hand of the oppressor (Psalm 107:2)
- a representative of Jesus here on earth (1 Cor. 4:1)
- one who exercises power over the enemy (Luke 10:19)
- saved from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13)
- an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ (Romans 8:17)
- transformed by a renewed mind (Romans 12:1,2)
- walking by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7)
- one who casts down all reason (2 Corinthians 10:4,5)
- strong in the Lord and in the power of his might (Ephesians 6:12)
- constantly ascending and not descending (Deuteronomy 28:13)
- fully supplied in all my needs by Jesus (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- blessed at my entrance and at my exit (Deuteronomy 28:6)
- one who is able to do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13)
- one who brings every thought under the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 15)
- one who obeys the words of God and acts accordingly (Deuteronomy 28)
- an overcomer by the blood of Jesus and by the word of my testimony (Rev.1)
- endowed with the Spirit of powerlove and prudence (2 Timothy 1:7)

The positive profession of faith a daily proclamation

(by Markus Rapp)

"He who believes with his heart and confesses with mouth,
will attain righteousness and salvation." (Romans 10:10)

1. God is my refuge and my strength, a proven helper in all troubles. (Ps. 46:1)

2. I ask and receive; I seek and find;
I knock and it will be opened to me! (Matt.7,7)

3. All things are possible to him who believes! (Mark 9:23)

4. Please and receive!
Everything you pray and ask for, just believe that you have already received it and it will be granted to you.
(Mark 11:24)

5. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. (Ps.23:1)

6. I cast all my requests upon the Lord
- He will provide for me! (Ps.55,23)

7. I forget what lies behind me,
and stretch out to what lies ahead. (Phil. 3:13)

8. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:13)

9. I do not doubt the promise of God in unbelief,
but I become strong in faith and honour God.
I am firmly convinced that God has the power to do,
what He has promised. (Romans 4, 20+21)

10. I no longer flinch in unbelief.
I'm not afraid of anything,
because God is with me in everything I do.

11. All things must for the good of those who love God,
and whom He has called. (Romans 8:28)

5.10 Patience - the beneficial character trait

Proverbs 25:15:

Through **patience** a judge is persuaded, and the soft tongue breaks bones.

Luke 8:15:

But those in the good soil are those who keep the word they have heard in a tender and good heart and bear fruit with **patience**.

Luke 21:17-19:

...and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. And not a hair of your head will be lost. Through your **patience** win your souls!

Romans 2:4

Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, **patience** and longsuffering without realising that God's goodness leads you to repentance?

Romans 9:22

But if God, when he was about to show his wrath and make his power known bore with great **patience** the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction ...

Romans 15:4,5

But the things that were written before were written for our instruction, that we through **patience** and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. summarise.

But may the God of **patience** and consolation grant you to be of one mind among yourselves according to Christ Jesus ...

2. Corinthians 6:3

We give no offence to any man, lest the ministry should be blasphemed; but in all things we show ourselves servants of God: in great **patience**, in tribulations, in distresses, in anguish, ...

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, abstinence.

Ephesians 4:1

I exhort you therefore, I who am bound in the Lord, that you walk worthy of the calling to which you have been called, so that with all humility and gentleness and **patience** you may bear with one another in love.

Colossians 1:10

...that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, with

strengthened with all might, according to the power of his glory, unto all steadfastness and **patience**, with joy, ...

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's elect, holy and beloved, tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, **patience**, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if one has a complaint against another, just as Christ forgave you, so also you. 2

Thessalonians 3:5

But may the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the **patience** of Christ!

1. Timothy 1:16

But for this cause I have been shown mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all **patience**, for example to those who would believe in him to eternal life.

1. Timothy 6:11

But you, man of God, flee such things, but pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, **patience**, gentleness! Fight the good fight of faith, ...

2. Timothy 3:10

But you have followed me in teaching, in conduct, in purpose, in faith, in longsuffering, in love, in **patience**, in persecutions, in sufferings, ...

2 Timothy 4:2

Preach the word, stand for it, be it convenient or inconvenient; reprove, rebuke, admonish with all **patience** and instruction!

Titus 2:1 But speak the things which are according to sound doctrine: that old men be sober, honourable, discreet, sound in faith, in love, in **patience**...

Hebrews 6:11

But we hope that each of you will show the same diligence to the end, according to the full assurance of hope, that you will not become sluggish, but followers of those who through faith and **patience** inherit the promises.

James 1:2-4

My brothers, consider it pure joy when you are faced with various trials, since you know that the proving of your faith works **patience**. But **patience** should have a perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete and lack nothing.

James 5:7-9+10

Take, brothers, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering injustice and **patience**.

Behold, we call blessed those who have endured. You have heard of Job's **patience**, and you have seen the end of the Lord, for the Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

2 Peter 3:15

And consider the **patience** of our Lord for your salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him ...

Revelation 1:9

I, John, your fellow-traveller in tribulation and kingdom and **patience** of Jesus Christ, was on the island called Patmos for the sake of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 2:2

I know your works and your labour and your **patience**, and that you cannot bear the wicked....

Revelation 2:19

19 I know your works and your love and your faith and your service and your **patience**, and that your last works are more than the first.

Revelation 3:10

Because you have kept the word of my **patience**, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which will come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.

Romans 2:6

God, who will reward each one according to his works to those who **persevere** in doing good and bring glory,
To strive for honour and
immortality, eternal life; ...

Hebrews 10:36

For **perseverance** is necessary for you, so that after the fulfilment of God's will you may receive the promise.

Hebrews 12:1

...let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us and run with **perseverance** the race that lies before us ...

2. 1 Peter 1:5

...therefore add to this all your diligence, and in your faith add virtue, and in virtue knowledge, ... but in knowledge abstinence, in knowledge abstinence.

Abstinence but the **endurance** in which **Perseverance** but godliness, ...

Revelation 2:3: ...and you have **endurance**, and for my name's sake you have borne, and have not grown weary.

Principles on the subject of "patience":

- "Patience is a tree whose roots are bitter but whose fruit is very sweet." (Persian proverb)
- Patience is a character trait of God. (2 Peter 3:15)

• "He who sees himself rightly sees a picture of God's patience." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

• How do you learn patience?

You learn patience by being patient.

• Patience is an advantage, because the right time is crucial in life (Greek *kairos*). In order to recognise the right time, a close, practised, intimate fellowship with the Holy Spirit is necessary.

• There is a tension between "patience" and "worry". As long as we are still worrying, we have not really handed over the matters at hand to the Lord.

• Actionism out of impatience leads to (sometimes expensive) wrong decisions.

• Times of waiting in the Bible: Jesus lived on earth for around 33 years - but he was only active in ministry for the last three years.

○ The people of Israel wandered through the desert for 40 years until they reached the Promised Land.

○ Joseph was in prison for another two years before Pharaoh's cupbearer remembered him.

○ David tended the sheep until his time had come and he became king.

○ Paul spent many months in prison (e.g. Ephesians 4:1).

• How do I strengthen myself in times of waiting?

○ Consciously spend time with God. ("Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you" James 4:8)

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

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

○ Our goal is to feel the peace of God within us.
1. Corinthians 15:48 - Paul writes:
"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be firm,
immovable,
Always increase in the work of the Lord, because
you know that your labour is not in vain
in the Lord!"

- What to do if you are impatient?
- Ask for and receive forgiveness. Ask God about the cause of the impatience (which fears/deficits/inferiorities play a role?).

5.11 What does the Bible say about wisdom

Wisdom comes from God.

He gives the spirit of wisdom
... whom I have filled with the spirit of **wisdom**,
.....Exodus 28:3
...and I have put **wisdom** into the hearts of all
the wise,Exodus 31:6

Receiving the spirit of wisdom through the laying on
of hands:

Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit
of **wisdom**, for Moses had laid his hands on him;
.....Exodus 34:9

And God gave Solomon **wisdom** and
understanding and breadth of heart, like the sand
that lies on the seashore. And the **wisdom** of
Solomon was greater than the **wisdom** of all the
sons of the East and than all the **wisdom** of the
Egyptians. 1 Kings 4:29

Now therefore give me **wisdom** and knowledge,
that I may know how to go out and come in before
this people; for who can judge this great nation of
yours? Then God said to Solomon: "Because you
have this in mind and have not asked for treasures,
riches, honour, nor for the death of your enemies,
nor for long life, but for **wisdom** and knowledge to
judge my people, over whom I have made you king,
wisdom and knowledge be given to you!
And I will give you riches and treasures and
honour, such as no king before you has had or
have after you. 2 Chronicles 1:10ff

Coral and crystal are nothing to them, and the
possession of **wisdom** is above pearls. Job 28:18

Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is **wisdom**, and
to depart from evil, that is understanding!
Job 28:28

...behold, thou desirest truth in thine inmost parts:
so make **wisdom** known unto me in secret. Psalm
51:6

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of **wisdom**; it
makes wise all who practise it. His glory endures
forever. Psalm 111:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge;
only fools despise **wisdom** and discipline! Proverbs
1:7

My son, if you accept my words and keep my
commandments with you, so that you lend your ear
to **wisdom** and incline your heart to prudence; if
you ask for understanding

pray and beg for insight, when you seek it like silver
and search for it like

for treasures, then you will understand the fear of
the LORD and
gain the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives
wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and
understanding. He secures success for the upright
and protects those who walk in innocence ...
Proverbs 2:1ff

Acquire **wisdom**, acquire understanding; do not
forget the words of my mouth and do not from
them! If you do not forsake her, she will keep you; if
you love her, she will keep you! The beginning of
wisdom is: Acquire **wisdom**, and for all your gain
acquire understanding. Hold her high, and she will
exalt you; she will
honour you if you love her. She will give your head a
lovely crown; she will give you a splendid crown.
Proverbs 4:5ff

Yes, **wisdom** is better than pearls, and no jewels
can compare to it. I, **wisdom**, dwell with ingenuity
and gain knowledge of well-thought-out plans.
The fear of the LORD is a hatred of evil; I hate pride
and arrogance, evil behaviour and a crooked mouth.
From me comes counselling and knowledge; I am
wise; mine is strength. Proverbs 8:11ff

The beginning of **wisdom** is the fear of the LORD,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is
understanding. Proverbs 9:10

Pride is followed by shame, but **wisdom** is with
the humble. Proverbs 11:2

Arrogance only leads to quarrelling, but **wisdom**
dwells where you take counsel. Proverbs 13:10

Wisdom lets the prudent know which way to go,
but the folly of fools deceives them. Proverbs 14:8

The fear of the LORD is the school of **wisdom**, and
honour is preceded by humility. Proverbs 15:33

How much better is it to acquire **wisdom** than gold,
and to acquire understanding is more desirable than
silver! Proverbs 16:16

Buy truth and do not sell it, **wisdom** and discipline
and prudence! Proverbs 23:23

For to the man who pleases Him, He gives **wisdom** and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner He gives plague, that he may gather and gather, to give to him who pleases God. Lamentations 2:26

For **wisdom** gives protection, and money also gives protection; but the advantage knowledge is that **wisdom** preserves the life of its possessor. Lamentations 7:12

Wisdom makes the wise man stronger than ten mighty men who are in the city. Lamentations 7:19

Who is like the wise, and who understands the interpretation of words? The **wisdom** of a man enlightens his face, and the power of his eyes is doubled. Lamentations 8:1

Then I said: **Wisdom** is better than strength! Lamentations 9:16

Wisdom is better than weapons of war; Lamentations 9:18

...but through **wisdom** one comes to success. Lamentations 10:10

...upon him shall rest the Spirit of the LORD, the Spirit of **wisdom** and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. Isaiah 11:2
Daniel lifted up his voice and said: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever! For his is both **wisdom** and power. He brings other times and other hours; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives **wisdom** to the wise and understanding to the prudent. Daniel 2:20

...for I will give you a mouth and **wisdom**, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. Luke 21:15

Has not God made the **wisdom** of this world foolishness? For because the world through its **wisdom** did not recognise God in his **wisdom**, it pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe. 1. Cor. 1:20

But we speak the **wisdom** of God in mystery, the hidden **wisdom** which God predestined before the ages for our glory, 1 Corinthians 2:7

For the **wisdom** of this world is foolishness in the sight of God ... 1 Corinthians 3:19

For to one is given the gift of **wisdom** by the Spirit, and to another the gift of knowledge by the same Spirit ... 1 Corinthians 12:8

...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of **wisdom** and revelation in the knowledge of him ... Eph. 1:17

... that now the manifold **wisdom** of God might be made known through the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places* ... Eph 3:10

...that ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual **wisdom** and understanding, that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing: being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, ...Col. 1:9

This we preach, exhorting every man, and teaching every man in all **wisdom**, that we may present every man perfect in Christ... Col.1,28

Christ, in whom are all the treasures of **wisdom** and knowledge are hidden. Colossians 2:13

Walk in **wisdom** toward those who are outside *the church*, and buy out the time. Col 4:5

But if any of you lacks **wisdom**, let him ask it of God, who gives to all gladly and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting; for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven to and fro by the wind. James 1:5ff

But the **wisdom** from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, obedient, full of mercy and good fruits, not wavering, unfeigned. James 3:17

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and **wisdom** and strength and honour and glory and praise! Rev 5:12

... and said: Amen! Praise and glory and **wisdom** and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen. Rev 7,12
The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is **wise**. Proverbs 11:30

Dealing with the wise makes you
wise; ... Proverbs 13:20

Do not be overly just and do not show yourself to
be overly **wise**! Why do you want to destroy
yourself? Lamentations 7:16

Let no one deceive himself! If any of you thinks he
is **wise** in this age, let him become a fool so that he
may **become wise**. 1 Corinthians 3:18

... because from childhood you have known the
holy Scriptures, which are able to make you **wise**
for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 2
Timothy 3:15

Who is **wise** and understanding among you? Let
him show his works in meekness of wisdom by a
good walk. James 3:13

Dealing with the **wise** makes you wise; ... Proverbs
13:20

5.12 What does the Bible say about "pride"?

The destructive power

Behind most problems lies an attitude of pride and rebellion. So often people weaken or destroy themselves or their ministry with such an attitude.

What does God tell us about pride in the Bible?

One becomes proud before collapse, and pride comes before a fall. Proverbs 16:18

For a day is coming from the LORD of hosts upon all that is proud and high and lofty, that it may be brought low;
... Isaiah 2:12

For you save all the wretched people, but you humble the eyes of all the proud. 2 Sam 22:28

All proud hearts are an abomination to the Lord; put your hand on them and they will not go unpunished. Proverbs 16:5

Love the Lord, all his pious ones! The Lord preserves the faithful and richly repays the arrogant.
Psalm 31:23

A man's pride humbles him, but a humble man receives honour. Proverbs 29:23

For people will be selfish, greedy for money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, godless ...
2. Tim. 3,2

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He who loves his soul will lose it, but he who hates his soul in this world will keep it for eternal life. If any man will serve me, let him follow me: and where I am, there shall my servant be also; and him that serveth me, him shall my Father honour." John 12:24ff

Surrendering your life to Jesus also means giving up your rights! Your right to self-determination, to plan your own life, your right to time for yourself. Ultimately, it's not about your opinion - what counts is how God sees things.
"He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:20

Salvation is free - discipleship costs my life.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls ... Mat. 11,29

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:10

For "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble".

1. I Peter 5.5

A man's heart rises before a collapse, but humility precedes honour. Proverbs 18:12

The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord is riches, honour and life. (Proverbs 22:4)

How do you recognise hidden pride in your own life?

- derogatory remarks and thoughts about other people and organisations
- possibly the way I dress, my car, my language, my use of status symbols, my lifestyle...
- Perfectionism can be a hidden form of pride.
- In order to be more interesting, people tend to exaggerate in their stories. Every exaggeration is ultimately a lie.

My value system can be based on pride: I want to be respected by others. I want to be somebody. I want to represent something. I want to be shown respect. I am (unconsciously) more concerned with looking good in front of people than being obedient to God.

To be proud is to be proud:

- To be independent of God and to want to be better and greater than others (instead of esteeming others higher than oneself).
- To be great, important and honoured by our own efforts, living in the false assumption that we can master and shape our lives as we imagine. Jesus says: "...without me you can do nothing."
- Pride is idolatry, because we have placed ourselves and our abilities on the throne.
- Living from our own strength. Believing that I can master life without being dependent on God. Rather, it is about living by grace and obeying God's plans for my life.

Satan always encourages our pride. First, he incites us: "Try harder, you can be much more, you're something special." Then, when we are overwhelmed and burnt out, he says: "You're a failure, you'll never amount to anything." We then fall into withdrawal and self-pity, which is also a form of pride.

Other variants of pride:

- Ambition, envy, greed and jealousy.
- Living in relation to people instead of in submission and obedience to God. This also includes: fear of man, dependence on man and pleasing man instead of fearing God.
- Hard-heartedness, sensitivity, schadenfreude
- Unteachability, stubbornness, insisting on my opinion. My opinion is not what matters! My opinion is not the most important thing! ("Our understanding is piecemeal"). It's about how God sees the matter - how He thinks about it.
- Irreconcilability
- Not being able to accept and give love
- Going into retreat, withdrawing, no longer speaking (e.g. in marriage), inwardly resigning

- Criticism of other faiths ("Judge not, lest ye be judged").
- Not allowing your own point of view, your own realisation to be questioned.
- Legal and religious way of life that expresses itself through performance, judgement, demarcation from others, domination, control, manipulation, dominance, power.

The way out:

- Recognise how wrong and destructive pride is in my life. Asking God for forgiveness because of my pride. Asking Him for wisdom and help to practice a lifestyle of grace and humility from now on.

Derek Prince once said: "The way up is down."

Take Jesus as your role model. (Phil. 2:3-9+ 14-15)

Some of the thoughts listed are taken from the small book by

- Dr Christoph Häselbarth, From pride and rebellion to humility and meekness.

5.13 Area of tension: Christians and idolatry

With all the things in our lives that are more important to us than Jesus, there is a danger that they will become modern idols for us.

We know from the Old and New Testaments what dramatic consequences idolatry has in the lives of individuals and nations:

2. Exodus 20:1-5:

Then God spoke all these words and said: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me!

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth.

Worship them not, neither serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto many thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. When Moses spoke to God on Mount Sinai, Aaron poured the golden calf for the people of Israel.

Exodus 32:9:

And the LORD said to Moses, "I have observed this people, and behold, they are a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let my anger be kindled against them, and I will consume them...

Exodus 19:4:

You shall not turn to idols or make for yourselves moulded gods, for I, the LORD, am your God.

Ezekiel 6, 5ff:

And I will cast the dead bodies of the children of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. In all your dwellings the cities will be desolate and the high places will be laid waste, your altars will be abandoned and destroyed, your idols will be broken down and discarded, your pillars of the sun will be overthrown and your works of art will be destroyed. And the slain shall fall in your midst, and you shall know that I am the LORD!

Ezekiel 14:6: Therefore say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God, 'Return and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations.

Isaiah 46:9: Remember the beginnings from eternity, that I am God and no one else, a God to whom no one can be compared.

Ecclesiastes 23:26: Give me, my son, your heart, and let your eyes delight in my ways.

Idolatry in the New Testament:

Ephesians 5:3:

For this you should know, that no immoral or impure or covetous person (who is an idolater) has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (!)

Galatians 5:20:

But the works of the flesh are manifest, which are: Adultery, ... idolatry, ... divisions and such like, of which I foretell you, as I before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (!)

1 Corinthians 6:9:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? no mistake: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexually immoral, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor blasphemers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. (!)

1 Cor. 10:14ff:

Therefore, my beloved, flee idolatry! ...

What am I saying now? That the idol sacrifice is something, or that an idol is something? No, but that what they sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God! But I do not want you to fall into the company of demons.

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons!

Or do we want to the Lord to jealousy?

1 Peter 4:3:

For it is enough that you spent the past time of life according to the will of pagans, yourselves go in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, feasting, carousing and illicit idolatry.

Hebrews 9:14:

...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself as a blameless sacrifice to God, make our conscience

cleanse from dead works, to serve the living God!

Revelation 22:15:

But outside are dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters and all who love and practise falsehood.

1 John 5:21:

Children, beware of idols!

Colossians 3:2:

Seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth; ...

Matthew 6:21:

Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be too.

1 Timothy 6:9-11:

For those who want to get rich fall into temptation and snares and many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

For greed is the root of all evil; some who have given themselves over to it have strayed from the faith and caused themselves much pain.

Romans 12, 1-2:

I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And do not conform to this course of the world, but change your nature by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Examples of modern idols

How do I recognise any idols in my life? Things that are my favourite things to do; things that I dream; things that determine my plans; things that I am prepared to spend my money on.

Does any of this apply to me?

- Am I myself my idol?

Test:

- Can I go the "lower" way?
- Do I respect others more than myself?
- Am I my own image of God, my own ideal of God - instead of worshipping him myself?
- Have I made an idol of one or more doctrines (e.g. baptism, legalism...)?
- Is my work an idol for me? my company? my career?
- Spouse, family, children, grandchildren
- Television, cinema, videos
- Sex, eroticism
- Leisure, holiday
- Car, motorbike, PC, house, garden
- Books, hobby, sport
- Boyfriend/girlfriend, my body, wellness
- False securities: Relying on money, salary, insurance, private pension insurance.
- Idols (e.g. Buddhas, statues of the Virgin Mary and saints) made of metal, gold, silver, wood, etc.
- My standard of living
- My external image (How I would like to be seen by others.)
- Fear of man (placing excessive value on the opinions of others).

Once we have realised that we are - perhaps unknowingly - serving modern idols, we should take two steps:

- Ask God for forgiveness.
- Ask God to help us find a new balance.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Math 6:33

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Math 28:19f

5.14 Dreams - God's forgotten language

In the Old and New Testaments, God speaks to Christians and non-Christians through dreams. What principles can we derive for ourselves today from the accounts in the Bible?

Examples of dreams in the Bible:

"But Joseph had a dream and told it to his brothers, and they hated him even more. For he said to them: 'Listen to the dream I had: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf rose up and stood still; but your sheaves surrounded them and fell down before my sheaf! Then his brothers said to him, "Do you want to be our king? Do you want to rule over us? So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words. But he had another dream, which he also told his brothers, saying, 'Look, I have dreamed again, and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars down to me! But when he told this to his father and his brothers, his father scolded him and said to him, 'What kind of dream is this that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers come and bow down to the ground before you? And his brothers envied him, but his father remembered the word.'" (Genesis 37:5ff)

Jacob had a divine dream:

"And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth, its top touching the sky. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it." (Genesis 28:12)

The chief baker and the chief cupbearer of Pharaoh had prophetic dreams:

"And it came to them both in one night, each one a dream of special significance, to the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were imprisoned in the dungeon. ... They answered him, 'We have dreamed, and now there is no interpreter. Joseph said to them: Do not the interpretations come from God?

Tell me it!" (Genesis 40:5+8)

"And it came to pass after two years, that Pharaoh had a dream, and, behold, he stood by the Nile. And behold, seven beautiful and well-fed cows came up out of the Nile, grazing in the Nile grass. And after them seven other cows came up out of the Nile, ugly in appearance and lean in body; and they stood beside the cows on the banks of the Nile. And the seven ugly, lean cows ate the seven beautiful ones,

well-fed cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. But he fell asleep again and dreamed a second time, and behold, seven ears of grain grew on a single stalk, full and good; but after them, behold, seven thin ears of grain sprouted, scorched by the east wind. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven heavy and full ears. Then Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream! ... And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; now I have heard from you that when you hear a dream, you also interpret it. Joseph answered Pharaoh and said, "This is not for me to say. May God answer what brings salvation to Pharaoh!" (Genesis 41:1ff)

"At Gibeon, the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. And God said, 'Ask what you want me to give you. (1 Kings 3:5)

"But God speaks once and a second time, but it is not heeded. In a dream, in the night vision, when deep sleep comes upon men and they sleep in their beds, he opens the ear of men and seals his warning to them, so that man may refrain from his behaviour and he may protect the man from pride, so that he may keep his soul from the pit and his life from running into the pit." (Job 33:14ff)

"And in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams, so that his spirit was troubled and sleep fled from him. Then the king ordered that the scribes, the soothsayers, the magicians and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. Then the king said to them: I have had a dream, and my spirit is troubled until I understand the dream. ... Verse 19: Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision by night. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. Daniel lifted up his voice and said, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever! For his is both wisdom and power. He brings about other times and other hours; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and to the prudent. He reveals what is deep and hidden; he knows what is in the darkness, and with him dwells the light! To you, the God of my fathers, I give praise and thanks that you have given me wisdom and strength and have now made known to me what we have asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's cause!" (Daniel 2:1ff)

The prophet Joel prophesied about the future work of God:

"And it shall come to pass after these things, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your elders shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the menservants and upon the maidservants I will pour out my Spirit in those days; ... (Joel 3:1ff)

This prophecy came to pass many hundreds of years after Joel's words - at the Pentecost event. Peter: "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; for it is but the third hour of the day: but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea, even upon my servants and upon my handmaids will I pour out of my Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. (Acts 2:15ff)

The three wise men from the Orient:

"And when they were instructed in a dream not to return to Herod, they escaped by another way to their own country." (Matthew 2:12)

"And when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life. So he got up, took the baby and his mother and went into the land of Israel." (Matthew 2:19)

Joseph: "While he was thinking these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife, for what has been produced in her is from the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'" (Matthew 1:19)

Pilate's wife has a dream at the time of Jesus' condemnation:

"And as he sat on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him saying, 'Have nothing to do with this righteous man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him'" (Matthew 27:19)

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: "A Macedonian man stood before him and begged him, saying, 'Come over to

Macedonia and help us! And when he saw this vision, we immediately endeavoured to go into Macedonia, supposing that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them." (Acts 16:9)

What principles can be derived from these reports?

- God speaks through dreams. Dreams are one way in which God communicates with people.
- God warns through dreams.
- God may ask us through a dream to pray against future events in our lives ("Resist the enemy and he will flee from you" James 4:7).
- God us for crises through dreams. (The more severe the crisis, the clearer the dream - as a consolation for the time of crisis).
- All dream interpretation comes from God.

Tips for dealing with dreams:

- Expect God to speak to me through dreams.
- Write down dreams that you feel are meaningful - even if you don't yet know the interpretation.
- Ask God what the dream means. Ask Him to make the meaning clear to you.
- The Bible explains itself: What symbols appeared in the dream? How are these symbols (e.g. numbers) used in the Bible?
- How often have I dreamt the contents? (Genesis 41:32!)
- What did I feel in the dream (fear, joy, astonishment...)?
- Do the conclusions from the dream match the statements in the Bible?
- Do the conclusions drawn from the dream help or hinder the kingdom of God?

Literature:

- Dr Helmut Hark, The dream as God's forgotten language, ISBN 3-530-32400-0.
- Kevin J. Conner, Interpreting the symbols and types, ISBN 0-914936-51-4.
- Ira Milligan, Interpreting Dreams - Understanding Dreams, with dictionary of meanings, ISBN978-3-926395-39-9.

5.15 Sex

First of all, it should be noted that God invented sexuality.

It is a gift from Him. Sexuality is not only for procreation, but also created by God for our joy and relaxation: *"Rejoice in the woman of your youth! ... May her bosom always delight you, may you always be intoxicated by her love."* Proverbs 5:19.

In the Old and New Testaments, we recognise a consistent picture that a man should have one wife. In the Old Testament, polygamy led to great tensions and problems (e.g. with Abraham with Sarah and Hagar; but also with King Solomon whose 700 wives and 300 concubines ultimately brought him down through idolatry - although the Bible says of him that he was the wisest man who ever lived).

Sex with different partners is not intended by God for various reasons:

God's instructions for the people of Israel may sound crass to our ears.

But through this we experience God's view and way of thinking:

"If a daughter's virginity cannot be proven, she shall be brought to the door of her father's house, and the people of the city shall stone her to death, because she has committed an offence in Israel by committing fornication in her father's house. So you shall cut off evil from among you."
Deuteronomy 22, 20+21

Extramarital intercourse is therefore fornication in God's eyes.

- "... so let each one have his own wife and each one her own husband" 1 Corinthians 7:2

Sex with a partner has its place in the protected framework of marriage.

- "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

1. Genesis 2:24-25+ also Malachi 2:14f

- Jesus repeats this statement in the New Testament and at the spiritual unity that is emerging: For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" - so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mat 19:5,6)

- "But do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her?"
"For," he says, "the two will be one flesh." But he who clings to the Lord is one spirit with him. Flee fornication! Every sin that a man commits [otherwise] is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you, whom you have received from God, and that you do not belong to yourselves? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God with your body." 1 Corinthians 6:16-20

In addition to the physical union, sexual intercourse also a spiritual union. Whether intentional or not, a spiritual unity and bond is created between the two participants.

Spending the night together before marriage: What is the norm in our society does not necessarily correspond to God's will.

We can all imagine how nice for lovers to spend the night together - even if it doesn't lead to sex.

Spending the night together before marriage poses various risks:

There may be hasty physical advances that hinder rather than promote the development of the relationship. After all, strong feelings are involved.

Also, sleeping together is not a good witness to other unmarried people. It can be misunderstood that sex before marriage is in the will of God.

Basically, the following should be said on this point: It is not good to live as if you are married without actually being married!

The right way to deal with my sexuality God is in favour of sex! He is not hostile to the body. It is only important to know that everything in this area should be done according to God's order.

Sexuality is one of the most beautiful things that God has given us. Like all good things, it is often perverted by the enemy.

God's word is very clear when it comes to dealing with sexuality:

Galatians 5:19+21 says: "The works of the flesh are evident, which are: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, debauchery.....who we shall not inherit the kingdom of God." That is a clear statement.

The word "fornication" in Greek means "porneia" (=> porn! It is often equated in the media today with the more harmless-sounding word "eroticism").
Porneia translates as "fornication, fornication, extramarital sex, idolatry."

Sex belongs in marriage - not before marriage and not parallel to marriage (infidelity). The marriage covenant involves the personal decision of the lovers towards each other, and the making of the covenant before God and the public.

Why does sex belong in marriage?

- Because it is God's order and as a Christian you want to love Him and please Him. Because He knows what is good for you.
- Because during sexual intercourse, man and woman "become one". The Bible shows us that this "becoming one" does not only refer to the physical act, but also has a spiritual dimension. Christians who have come to know Jesus personally and love him want to think and act more and more like Jesus did. This is the greatest possible freedom that can be experienced here on earth - also in the sexual sphere. And love for Jesus is the motivation to please Him with our sexuality.

Masturbation

Statistics say that most men and around one in two women have experience of masturbation. This is probably no different for Christians. Our sexuality is given to us by God so that we can make our spouse happy. It is not primarily for our own satisfaction. God's basic idea in the creation of sexuality is therefore that a fulfilled sexuality requires two spouses.

In 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 it says:

"As for what you have written to me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman, but to avoid fornication, let each man have his own wife and each man his own husband.

The man should fulfil his duty to the woman, but also the woman to the man.

The woman does not dispose of her body herself, but the man does; in the same way the man does not dispose of his body himself, but the woman does.

Do not withdraw yourselves from one another, except by agreement for a time, that you may have leisure for prayer, and come together again, lest Satan tempt you of your abstinence."

A single person has had the physical to be sexually active since puberty.

However, since sexuality cannot usually be lived out and enjoyed at this age, there must be a way to deal with one's urges in a way that pleases God and is liveable for the single person.

God does not want to withhold pleasures from Christians. He wants to teach them what is good and beneficial for their development. If they live according to his divine ordinances, they will enter into the full freedom that God has promised them. In the sexual sphere in particular, however, there are great constraints, compulsions and addictions that no longer have anything to do with the freedom we are striving for.

Ps.119,105: "How will a boy live his way blamelessly? If he keeps the word of God."

We can find some help on how to better deal with our hormones and urges in the Word of God:

Job made a covenant with his eyes:

"I made a contract (covenant) with my eyes never to look at a girl lustfully. What else could I expect from God? What would be his response to my actions?" Job 31:1+2

Jesus says in Matthew 5:28: "Whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Desire comes from looking!

An important principle becomes clear in the Old Testament:

Eve looked at the fruit and wanted to eat it (Genesis 3:6).

David saw a naked woman (Bathsheba) bathing and wanted to sleep with her (2 Sam. 11:2).

Lust comes from looking - lust gives birth to sin.

This is a mechanism that we need to be aware of.

This knowledge is a help for us. Singles/teens can deal better with their sexuality if they consciously look away! Looking away requires discipline and practice - but it works. In practical terms, this means Looking away from sex scenes in films and nude photos in magazines, for example. We decide what we allow to get to us and what should influence us.

Tip: Don't watch erotic films

(TV/video/cinema/internet), don't look at erotic magazines, don't visit a mixed sauna and for some it helps not to swim at a lake where toplessness or nudism is normal.

You can (should) make a conscious decision not to look at erotic and sex sites on the Internet. This applies to singles and married people. So the strategy is:

- Avoid stimuli
- Look away
- Accept forgiveness where we have failed (this is what Jesus died for).

There is no one who has never had problems with their sexuality. Apart from Jesus, there is probably no one who has not been tempted in this area and has not sinned.

One good thing is that God speaks through our conscience and we therefore often know what we should or should not do. The following question can help in cases of doubt:

"Would Jesus look at this film, this website or buy this magazine? How would Jesus look at this woman?"

Homosexuality

There is also a lot of uncertainty in this problem area. Yet God gives clear and unambiguous instructions on how to deal with it. Here, too, the Bible does not mince its words: we read, for example, in Romans 1, verses 26-32:

"Therefore God also gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their women have exchanged the natural use for that which is against nature; and likewise also the men have forsaken the natural use of the woman, and have burned against one another in their lust, and have committed adultery one with another, and have dishonoured the man.

receive the well-deserved reward of their own aberration.

And just as they were not worthy of God's approval, God also gave them over to an unworthy mind, to do that which is unseemly, as those who are full of all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, deceitfulness, eared ones, slanderers, despisers of God, insolent, arrogant, boasters, inventive in evil, disobedient to parents; unwise, unstable, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do them themselves, but have pleasure in them that do them."

3. Deuteronomy 18:22

"You shall not lie with any man as with a woman, for that is an abomination."

Exodus 20:13

"If a man sleeps with a male person as if he were a woman, they have both committed an abomination, and they shall surely die; their blood be on them!"

1. Tim 2:4

God wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

These quotes from the Bible give us a clear direction: God hates homosexuality - but He loves homosexuals!

5.16 Healthy lifestyle

Healthy lifestyle - What recommendations does the Bible give?

"Everything is allowed to me, but not everything is good!" Everything is allowed to me, but I don't want to be ruled by anything.

The food is for the belly, and the belly for the food; but God will put away this and that. But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. But God raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make fornicators of them? Far be it from you! But do you not know that whoever is joined to a harlot one body with her? "For," he says, "the two will be one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. Flee fornication! Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the fornicator sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, whom you have received from God, and that you do not belong to yourselves? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God with your body." 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

"Everything is lawful for me..." (verse 12) - eating chocolate, drinking alcohol, sweets, cakes with cream - as long as they are enjoyed in moderation.

God has made us marvellous. David in Psalm 139, 13+14:

"For you created my kidneys, you wove me in my mother's womb. I thank you that you have made me wonderful; wonderful are your works, and my soul recognises this well!"

Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And do not conform yourselves to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

=> If our body is a living, holy and pleasing sacrifice to God, this also means that our body no longer belongs to ourselves.

Romans 1:10: "Eat ye therefore, or drink ye, or

whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God!"

Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 9:27: "... Rather, I discipline and subdue my body so that I will not preach to others and be rejected myself."

Some facts:

► German citizens suffering from high blood pressure: 16 million (cardiovascular diseases are the number one cause of death).

► Cause of death no. 2: cancer. Both main causes of death in Germany are directly linked to the right or wrong diet.

► In addition, there are 8 million diabetics (type 1 + Type 2).

The food pyramid:

A balanced diet should be structured as follows:

5%= Desserts and fast food 5-10%

= meat and fish

10-15%= Milk and dairy products 15%

= fruit

20%= Vegetables

40%= Bread and cereal products

Sufficient exercise is essential: Swimming and Nordic walking are particularly suitable (melts fat deposits; is 40 to 50 % more effective than walking without poles).

The following applies to all types of sport: don't overdo it, but exercise regularly (2-3 a week).

Drink a lot:

Consume at least 1.5 litres throughout the day (important for the kidneys; preferably water, unsweetened drinks, fruit teas, diluted fruit juices).

Enjoy coffee in moderation.

Caution with sugared drinks: A 0.33 litre can of Coca-Cola contains approx. 9 teaspoons of sugar.

Getting enough sleep keeps you fit:

Questions: What robs me of my sleep? Watch TV selectively, avoid leisure time stress, learn to hand over worries to God, ...

Further guiding principles:

We are responsible for our bodies. We must not blame God for physical ailments caused by poor diet and too little exercise.

Responsibility for the body yes, but body worship - which is ultimately a form of idolatry - no!

Paul writes in Philippians 3:18: "For many, as I have often told you, and now tell you even weeping, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, who boast of their shame and are eager for earthly things."

Diets that involve eating an unbalanced (abnormal) diet for a period of time sometimes lead to weight loss in the short term. However, long-term success can only be achieved through a change in eating habits (see food pyramid) and more exercise.

The following applies to alcohol consumption:

Not every day and not in excess.

"And do not intoxicate yourselves with wine, which is a deceitful thing, but be filled with the Spirit." Ephesians 5:8.

"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and because of your frequent illnesses." 1 Timothy 5:23

For liberation from addictions and compulsive behaviour, see the topic "Liberation".

Fasting: Is of the normal life of a follower of Jesus. Cleanses the body of toxins "by the way" (see topic no. 35)

With regard to the risk of becoming diabetic, a simple rule of thumb applies: if the abdominal circumference exceeds 95 centimetres in men and 88 centimetres in women, their risk of developing diabetes is significantly (12 times) higher.

A healthy lifestyle also includes spending time alone with God every day (fellowshipping Him, praying and being encouraged by the promises of the Bible).

A healthy lifestyle living with healthy relationships.

Leave recognised sin and hate it.

(Asking God and people for forgiveness: repentance liberates!)

Forgiving others who are guilty of something.

Internal injuries and disharmonies often have health consequences.

Steps towards repentance:

- Ask God for forgiveness for wrong nutrition and the associated disregard for the true needs of the body (the temple of the Holy Spirit - see 1 Corinthians 6).
- Pray daily: "Lord, help me to eat and drink wisely!"
- Acquire good habits: healthy eating and sufficient exercise.

Sources:

- www.online-predigt.de - Derek Prince, free MP3 lectures on the topic "How do you see your body" parts 1+2.
- List of additives in foods (e.g. E-numbers) www.zusatzstoffe-online.de
- Book: "Gewicht im Griff", Verbraucherzentrale NRW e.V., ISBN 3-923214-66-9
- Book: "Durstlöscher Wasser", consumer advice centre, ISBN 3-933705-45-2.

5.17 Blessing and curse

At various points in the Old Testament, God presents the people of Israel with a clear choice: either they make God the source of their lives and accept him and his commandments, or they leave God out and do not follow his commandments at all or only half-heartedly.

Their attitude, their decision, has direct consequences for their lives: They either live under the blessing of God or under the curse.

This "black and white" clarification can be found - like all important statements - several times in the Bible: e.g. in Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 11 and Deuteronomy 28.

We also recognise these places today:

- ▶ how God thinks (he does not change)
- ▶ what reality is (e.g. blessings and curses)
- ▶ what serves us best
- ▶ that God's promises are conditional
- ▶ that God sets the standards by he will judge - not people the standards.

First the passage from Deuteronomy 28:1:

"But it shall come to pass, if you will truly obey the voice of the LORD your God and observe to do all his commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will exalt you above all the nations of the earth.

2 And all these blessings will come upon you and befall you if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.

3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

4 Blessed will be the fruit of your body and the fruit of your land, the fruit of your cattle, the herds of your cattle and the flocks of your sheep.

5 Blessed will be your basket and your baking trough.

6 You will be blessed when you go in and blessed when you go out.

7 The LORD will cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you in one way and flee before you in seven ways.

8 The LORD will command the blessing to be with you in your barns and in all the work of your hand, and he will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. 9 The LORD will uphold you as his holy people, as he has sworn to you, if you observe the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in his ways;

10 Then all the nations of the earth will see that the name of the LORD is called upon you, and they will be afraid of you.

11 And the LORD will give you an abundance of goods, of the fruit of your womb, of the fruit of your body

your livestock and the fruit of your ground, in the land LORD swore to your fathers that he would give you.

12 The LORD will open to you the heavens, his good treasure, to give rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hands. And you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow.

13 And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; and you will be at the top and not at the bottom, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today to observe and do,

14 and if you will not depart from all the words which I command you, neither to the right hand nor to the left, so that you will not go after other gods to serve them. 15 But it will come about if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, so that you do not observe and do all his commandments and statutes that I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and strike you.

16 You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country.

17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy kneading trough. 18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy womb, the fruit of thy land, the litter of thine oxen, and the tending of thy flocks. 19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. 20 The LORD will send against you cursing, confusion and evil in all the work of your hand that you do, until you are destroyed and soon perish because of your evil deeds, because you have forsaken me.

21 The LORD will inflict the plague on you until he has destroyed you from the land where you are going to conquer it. 22 The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with fire, with inflammation, with drought, with the burning of grain and with yellowing; they will pursue you until you perish.

23 Your heavens above your head will be brass, and the earth beneath you will be iron.

24 The LORD will turn the rain for your land into sand and dust; it will fall on you from heaven until you are destroyed. 25 The LORD will cause you to be smitten before your enemies; in one way you will go out against them, and in seven ways you will flee from them, and you will be mistreated by all the kingdoms of the earth.

26 Your corpses will serve as food for all the birds of the air and all the wild animals, and no one will scare them away. 27 The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with sores, scabs and scabies, so that you will not be healed.

28 The LORD will strike you with madness and with blindness and with confusion of mind. 29 And you will grope at noonday as a blind man gropes in the dark, and you will not prosper in your ways, but will be oppressed and bereft all your days, and no one will help you."

In Deuteronomy 11 it says:

"13 Therefore if you will diligently obey my commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 14 then I will give your land rain in its season, early rain and latter rain, so that you may gather in your grain, your must and your oil. ...

26 "Behold, I set before you today the blessing and the curse:

27 the blessing if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today:

28 But the curse, if you will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God and turn aside from the way which I command you today, and walk after other gods which you do not know."

Freedom is possible

How do you recognise whether you are living under the influence of a curse?

► Read through the Bible passages given and consider whether anything applies to your own life - e.g. rebellion against God (even if not obvious) or hidden idolatry (What is as important to me as God? What is possibly even more important to me? "I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me."

2. Exodus 20:1).

► Ask God if you live under a curse

- and wait in silence before him (in prayer) for an answer (see topic no. 3 "Hearing God's voice").

► Asking God to remind you of events in the past that may have triggered a curse.

Once you have recognised that there is a curse, you can take these steps to remove the negative consequences:

- Confess your faith in Christ and in the sacrifice he made in your place.
- Repent of all your rebellion and sins.

- Take advantage of the forgiveness of all sins.
- Forgive all other people who have ever harmed you or treated you unfairly.
- Renounce all contact with occult or satanic things.
- Now you are ready to say the prayer for deliverance from any curse:

"Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that You are the Son of God and the only way to God and that You died on the cross for my sins and rose again from the dead. I give up all my rebellion and all my sins and submit to You as my Lord.

I confess all my sins to You and ask for Your forgiveness - especially for the sins that brought me under the influence of a curse. Deliver me also from the consequences of the sins of my ancestors. In a decision of will, I forgive all those who have harmed me and treated me unjustly, just as I also want God to forgive me. In particular, I forgive ... I renounce all contact with occult or satanic things; if I have any "contact objects", I hereby undertake to destroy them.

I reject every claim Satan has on my life. Lord Jesus, I believe that on the cross you took upon yourself every curse that could ever come upon me. So I ask You now to free me from every curse on my life - in Your name, Lord Jesus Christ! I now accept my liberation in faith and thank you for it."

Literature:

- From the book: Derek Prince, *Segen und Fluch - Sie haben die Wahl*, ISBN 3-925968-35-0 (The classic on this subject!).
- Book: Derek Prince, *You will cast out demons*, ISBN 3-9804453-8-0.
- Book: Derek Prince, *Biblical Foundation for Deliverance Ministry*, ISBN 3-925968-64-4.
- Theme "Liberation",
- Topic "Life cleansing".

Lectures by Derek Prince free of charge at www.online-predigt.de : e.g. "Liberation from the Curse" (parts 1-4); "From Curse to Blessing" (parts 1-3) .

5.18 God's dream for you: Living in community!

Living in community (Greek *koinonia*), sharing your life together, serving and receiving, living in redeemed and committed relationships with one another: all of this is God's dream for you and me. Today we are very strongly characterised by an individualism that has its origins in Greek thinking.

In practice, this means that it is often all about my time, my advantage, my rights, my entitlements, the satisfaction of my needs, my money, my self-realisation, etc. God's plan for us humans - to live in abundance (John 10:10) - is thereby torpedoed.

He himself lives permanently in communion: the Father with the Son and with the Holy Spirit. This is the original community from which all human community stems. In this community, love has room to unfold. God, who is a God of communion, has incorporated this principle into creation. "It is not good that man should be alone!" (Genesis 2:18). That is why God created a human counterpart for Adam. This allowed Adam to have fellowship not only with God, but also with his own kind. But sin soon intervened: sin that we allow in our lives destroys - then as now - not only our fellowship with God, but also our fellowship with one another.

According to God's plan of creation, there are different levels of fellowship: firstly, the fellowship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, secondly, the fellowship between the triune God and human beings (which will culminate in the wedding of Jesus to his bride - Rev 19:1-10), thirdly, the fellowship of God with the individual believer and fourthly, the fellowship of human beings with one another.

Since the creation of the world, God has been primarily concerned with the community, which is directly related to the church, rather than the individual salvation of individuals.

We rejoice over every single person who is saved. God and the angelic community also rejoice over every single sinner who repents. But God's plan of salvation is about the great community of believers, the sum of those who have been born again - the bride of Jesus, who will be prepared from all the nations and languages of the world (Rev 7:9).

Living in community, i.e. living in committed relationships, is a

A gift from God. He knows what is good for us. He knows that we need exchange and complementation. That is why community is also existentially important for those who are not yet married or for the few who consciously renounce marriage and family in order to better serve God, but also for those who are perhaps alone again after many years of marriage. According to God's loving plan, they should be part of a community. In few cases will this be a classic flat-sharing community - it is much more about binding friendships and relationships.

This can be a permanent circle of friends, a house group in which warmth, love and commitment can be found or a house church in which discipleship processes are also possible. Because God is concerned with the church and discipleship within it.

Unfortunately, there is also an isolation, a lack of relationship, loneliness and a great lack of commitment among German Christians, which has been influenced in particular by the anti-relational structures of the churches (such as the one-man form of worship in which one person speaks and everyone else is passive and watches).

God has created us to live in community:

Vertically, fellowship with Him and horizontally, fellowship with one another.

He has set us up for completion. We can't do it alone.

In His wisdom, He has made us so that we need each other.

He has distributed His gifts in such a way that no one can do without others. There is simply no such thing as the "egg-laying wool-milk sow".

We have often elevated our pastors to this pedestal - but to their and our detriment. All-rounders usually work from the "flesh".

It is the Holy Spirit who distributes the gifts as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:11).

The Bible uses the image of the human body for the community of the church: everyone in their place, everyone with the gift with which they can fulfil their place with relative ease and joy - for the good of the community. Then the individual is not overtaxed. Contentment and serenity are the result when you realise: I need the others and the others need me and we all live by the grace of God. Individualists and solo Christians miss God's goal. Him

is about the community in the church. That's why God is also in the process of completely reinventing the church - redefining what church originally means (see the books by Wolfgang Simson, among others).

Living in a community means investing yourself, contributing your gifts, sharing yourself, giving yourself away a little, striving to multiply yourself spiritually, but also receiving, finding, learning, benefiting from the gifts of others, enjoying, eating together, having fun - ultimately loving and being loved. All this, even though we know each other, with all our strengths and weaknesses, with all that is endearing and all that is strange. But this quality of community is only possible when we learn to see others through God's eyes.

see him. We can decide to try to love him as God loves him.

Literature on the topic:

- Gilbert Bilezikian, Community, God's Vision for the Church, PJ-Verlag.
- Bruno Schär, The Spirit and the Bride speak: Come - The secret of the church
- Jesu Christi, LCA-Verlag, Switzerland, Tel./Fax 0041-71 9512610.
- Wolfgang Simson, Häuser, die die die Welt verändern, C&P Verlag.
- Wolfgang Simson, The 1x1 of house churches, C&P Verlag

5.19 Lose weight - achieve a feel-good weight without dieting!

The well-known body mass index, BMI, indicates a person's weight in relation to their height (kg:m^2). According to the WHO definition, people with a BMI between 25-30 are considered overweight and people with a BMI over 30 are considered obese. (Calculation of BMI e.g. at www.dak.de)

A second problem indicator:

The waist circumference

Waist circumference is clearly associated with an increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease. The more centimetres the waist circumference, the more likely it is that you will die from a heart attack and other vascular diseases. Several studies have shown that a waist circumference of over 98 cm in women and over 103 cm in men is a clear indication of risk. Waist circumferences of more than 88 cm are considered risk patients for diabetes. (Source: DAK)

Abdominal circumference

The Americans say: at 102 cm, that's where the risk begins. In Germany, we have different limits. They are 88 cm for

Men. The belly fat is the dangerous part, not the fat around the hips.

Encouraging: How quickly does a big belly become a normal belly?

Dr Klaus Gerlach: "If I start at 102 cm, I lose weight relatively quickly by reducing calories and increasing exercise at the same time. I can lose a reasonable 2 kilos within four weeks.

It would be unreasonable to lose 4-5 kilos now - i.e. 3-4 cm in circumference - because I'll that back relatively quickly. But this also means targeted abdominal muscle training: every morning in bed, do the bug - i.e. lie on your back and alternately bring your left knee to your right elbow and your right knee to your left elbow. Increase to 80-100 repetitions to activate the abdominal muscles as well. You need to work on both points: Calories down, movement up."

Unlike flab on your thighs and bum, fat on your stomach can be harmful to your health. You can use the "Waist-to-Height Ratio" to work out whether you in the at-risk abdominal area. *Belly fat is not just an inactive flabby mass. Among other things, it releases hormones and substances that can lead to inflammation. These substances have a negative effect on the metabolism and promote the development of*

Vascular constrictions. "This increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes",

says Dr Harald Schneider from Munich University Hospital.

"Waist-to-height ratio"

Your own abdominal fat percentage can be calculated using the "waist-to-height".

The result should not exceed a value 0.5. For example, a person who has a waist circumference of 80 centimetres and is 190 centimetres tall must divide 80 by 190. With a ratio of 0.4, they are in the healthy range. People with a ratio above 0.5 are considered at risk.

Eating habits and disposition

The more you eat, the more belly fat you accumulate. However, belly fat also has something to do with predisposition. So everyone has to look in the mirror to see whether the fat tends to accumulate on the stomach or on the buttocks, for example. The "waist-to-height ratio" provides a more precise measure and enables a more accurate assessment of abdominal fat.

Movement

The main things that help to reduce belly fat are more exercise and less food. The good news is that if you change your habits, the belly fat will decrease first.

Information about our food Food provides us with the energy we need to live:

- ▶ Carbohydrates (in bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, flour, wholemeal products, sugar) and
- ▶ Fats (the "good" unsaturated ones in olive oil, fish, nuts - and the "bad" saturated ones in cheese, sausage; meat)
- ▶ Insulin brings the sugar (which comes from the carbohydrates) into the cells.

Wholemeal products also make you fat if the energy they contain not needed. The body then turns the carbohydrates into sugar, which is converted into fat if not consumed.

Fat cells can grow up to 200 times their original size.

- ▶ Fibre is found in fruit, salad, vegetables and wholemeal products. They form a kind of grid in the intestine, which ensures that carbohydrates and fat are not absorbed so quickly.

cells. Dietary fibre ensures good digestion and protects against bowel cancer.

► Fructose is good because it burns more slowly.

► Drink plenty of water! Or spritzer. It fills the stomach and fills you up. Grapes and other water-containing foods are preferable because of their volume.

What tips are there if you want to lose weight?

1. It's not about losing weight, it's about changing our eating habits.
2. Our problem is quite simple: we take in too much energy from food that our body doesn't need. The result is that the excess energy is converted into body fat.
3. Only eat when you are actually hungry (not out of habit).
4. Eat slowly so that you have time feel full.
5. Stop eating when you are no longer hungry.
6. Drink a large glass of water before eating (fills the stomach with zero calories).
7. We only spend a fraction of our income on food. Therefore: buy and enjoy high-quality food - instead of stuffing your face with cheap food. Prefer untreated food instead of food with e-substances (many of which have not been adequately researched for health risks) and artificial flavourings. High-quality, flavoured and sweet fruit is a culinary delight!
8. The following principle applies: Eat your fill of fruit and vegetables!
9. Don't give up cakes, chocolate and other sweets - just reduce the amount.
10. Don't go on a diet! (yo-yo effect) Instead: change your eating habits!
11. There is a simple formula for losing weight: Consume more calories per day than you eat! (E.g. by eating more fruit and vegetables and taking more exercise). This is possible without going hungry!
12. It is also not primarily about avoiding fat and sugar - but the sum of daily calories should be less than the amount consumed.
13. Principle: Your diet is optimal if it consists of $\frac{3}{4}$ fruit, vegetables and wholemeal products.
14. Fasting and diets are only suitable for reducing weight quickly. However, the long-term solution is always to change your eating habits in conjunction with more exercise.

15. Being ten kilos overweight puts as much strain on my body as carrying a full 10 litre bucket of water around with me all the time.

16. Stop weighing yourself all the time. Most people know their feel-good weight. It is important to achieve and maintain this.

17. Instead of snacking on crisps in front of the television: eat dried fruit, other fruit or salted pretzels (low-fat) and a large glass of spritzer.

18. More exercise: Which sport suits me? What kind of sport can I do (integrate into my everyday life)?

Rule of thumb: Exercise every 48 hours or go to the gym every 72 hours.

19. Climbing stairs instead of using the lift.

20. Eat your fill. Don't gorge yourself.

21. If you eat when stressed or frustrated: invent other reward mechanisms (shopping, sport, ...)

22. Collect small successes on the way to your feel-good weight. Celebrate small changes in behaviour. Reward yourself. Treat yourself well.

23. Immediate changes would be, for example, drinking water instead of cola, eating a large salad before pizza, stopping eating when you're no longer hungry; only one 0.33 litre beer instead of several large ones; tasty fruit instead of crisps when watching TV.

Notes for Christians:

Losing weight is about changing our eating and exercise behaviour. We can ask God to help us lose weight.

For the following also to the everyday areas of our lives: "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do..." (Phil.2,13).

► He made us wonderful. We should therefore treat our bodies responsibly.

► How to deal with alcohol:

Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into good wine.

Paul recommends to Timothy: "Don't just drink water any more, but take a little wine with it for the sake of your stomach and because you are often ill." 1 Timothy 5:23)

► We have a reference to meat and fish in Genesis 9:3: "I have given into your hands the beasts of the earth and the fish... Everything that moves and lives shall your food; like the green herb I have given you everything."

Romans 14:1: "Accept the weak in faith and do not dispute about opinions. One man thinks he may eat all things; but he who is weak eats no meat. He that eateth, let him not despise him that eateth not; and he that eateth not

If anyone eats, do not judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him."

Losing weight is about gaining pleasure:

It's better to be slim and healthy than fat and ill (with a high health risk)!

Or: I'd rather live happily at my feel-good weight than unhappily stuffing myself with unhealthy things. This pleasure gain can be a good motivation. It helps me to eat other delicious foods that are good for me. This insight helps me to change my eating behaviour and my exercise habits.

You don't have to stay the way you are - you should behave the right way!

So consciously enjoy your food and exercise more!

Literature:

- Dr Anne Fleck, ***Ran an das Fett - Das Praxisbuch***, ISBN 978-3-499-63427- 7.
- Dr Anne Fleck, ***Slim and healthy with the Doc Fleck Method***, ISBN 978-3-442-17817-9.
- ***"Weight under control"***, Consumer advice centre, ISBN 3-923214-66-9
- ***"How we can be healed"***, Dr. Christoph Häselbarth, ISBN 978-3-934771-02-4, in the appendix: The tried and tested diet from "Toronto General Hospital" - highly recommended!

5.20 Singles - Friendships, Love, Sex

Principles and guidelines to please God

Being single can be a lifestyle in the sense of a vocation - or a fulfilling stage of life before or after marriage.

The growth that the personality undergoes in this phase of life can be an important preparation for a fulfilled and happy life as a couple.

The fact that they don't have to constantly take family members into consideration means that singles have a great deal of freedom when it comes to travelling, time management, further education or dealing with finances, for example. You

can serve God in a special way - without having to take a partner or family into consideration.

This independence is a privilege that is often only appreciated when it is realised. phase is over.

Being single certainly does not mean that you are worth less than someone who is married or has a partner! Because a person's value is not derived from their marital status. The value of a person is defined by God's love for his Son and for his daughter - his creature.

It is simply a different status - with all the advantages and disadvantages.

"It is not good that man should be alone" we read at the very beginning of the Bible. It is usually God's desire and plan for our lives to have a partner. It is about

Although this is also about possibly becoming happier yourself, the focus should be on The focus is on serving each other and making your partner happy.

The better a single person prepares for marriage, the more fulfilment they will have later on. The preparations concern one's own personality and the friendship that precedes the marriage bond.

The following explanations do not claim to be exhaustive. The following principles serve as orientation and protection against mistakes in the sensitive areas of dating and sexuality - because: we live in

in a society in which we are flooded with sexual stimuli. On the other hand, we can rejoice from the bottom of our hearts that God has given every teen

and single people the desire to be complemented by a partner and to see them as has created sexual creatures.

God has good, benevolent principles for our lives. If we live according to his guidelines, his blessing can flow into our lives - unhindered by sin.

The following topics are addressed on the following pages:

1. Prayer for my future partner
2. Why should my future partner necessarily be a follower of Jesus?
3. How do you get to know your future spouse?
4. Let's talk about sex
5. The right way to deal with my sexuality
6. Masturbation
- 6.1 Desire comes from looking!
- 6.2 Compulsive masturbation
7. Homosexuality
8. Teens in Love

1. Prayer for my future partner

"You do not have because you do not ask" is a central statement in the New Testament.

Most believing singles have certainly asked God for a partner at some point. But how specific can you get? Do you actually know who you want? What qualities, preferences and particularly distinctive character traits should your partner have?

Because if you know what you want, you also know what you don't want.

This can help when considering whether this or that person is the right one for you. could.

We can ask God very specifically. At the same time, however, we should also be open to correction. We can also allow God to surprise us, because the Lord

knows us better than we know ourselves and he knows how we will develop in the future. Some Christians write down the desired characteristics of their future partner. For them, the motto is: "Know what you want, but remain correctable". Some may like to make such a list and go through it with a best friend to get feedback and to be better protected against unrealistic demands on a future partner. Misconceptions can be an obstacle to finding the right partner.

Important book tip on this topic: Derek Prince, "A woman of understanding is from the Lord" and "How to find the right partner"

This is a small, excellent and well-balanced book (ISBN 3-932341-02-03).

2. Why should my future partner necessarily be a Christian?

Reason No.1: Because the most important things in life should be shared with the one you love. If the partner is not a Christian, this inevitably leads to strong conflicts, e.g. in common interests, in organising leisure time and in dealing with money. In addition, life goals are different. The unbelieving partner cannot judge things the way you see them - because spiritual things must be judged spiritually. Even if the partner means well and promises to be tolerant, he cannot understand the other person and his heart's desires, because his spirit is not awakened - he is spiritually dead. This is not a question of good will, but a question of being born again.

Reason no. 2: Because you prevented from developing in the way God has planned in his love. The demands that an unbelieving partner places on you will make a often prevent Christians from following the path that God has planned for them in his love. For example, an unbeliever will find it difficult to understand that you invest free time and money in building the kingdom of God. With an unbelieving spouse, it will be difficult to enter into one's calling grow. This means that it is much harder to reach your goal in life and does not enter into the fullness of life that Jesus promised. This is why choosing the right spouse is so important. Choosing a partner is also referred to as the second most important decision in life (the most important is the decision to make Jesus Lord of his life).

Tip: Ask someone in your personal environment who has an unbelieving spouse for advice on this topic!

Reason #3: Because you love God and want to be obedient to His recommendations.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18:

Do not pull on the same yoke with unbelievers! For what do righteousness and lawlessness have to do with each other? What fellowship has light with darkness?

How does Christ with Belial? Or what does the believer have in common with the unbeliever?

How does the temple of God rhyme idols? But you are a temple of the living God, as God says: "I will dwell in them, and I will dwell among them."

I will walk with them and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Therefore "come out from among them and separate yourselves, says the Lord, and do not touch any

I will receive you," and "I will be your Father, and you shall be my sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty.

For these reasons too, it is not good to start a relationship, a partnership, with a non-Christian! Because a partnership friendship should always have the marriage covenant as its goal.

We often hear the argument from lovers that their partner can still convert. Conversion of an unbelieving boyfriend or girlfriend are much rarer than the fact that the Christian is usually

Jesus drifts away. Therefore, never start a friendship in the hope that your partner will convert at some point.

There is also the danger that the unbeliever pretends to be a Christian in order to win the partner (favour conversion). We must not forget that great feelings and desires are involved here.

How do you get to know your future spouse?

This is the question that moves many singles!

Firstly, it has to be said once again that the time of being single is a very important one and can also be very enjoyable. In this phase, you generally have a lot of freedom that you no longer have as a married couple or family.

This applies, for example, to the free organisation of your time, you don't have to come to terms with anyone, you can do what you want and when you want... But - at some point there comes a time when you long for completion, for exchange, tenderness and for living together in a committed way. This is how God created us.

In all likelihood, God has not only planned a very specific partner for us. We are free to choose (otherwise we would probably complain to Him afterwards about what He was thinking when He gave us this particular spouse).

In principle, of course, we should ask God as soon as we suspect that a partnership is in the offing:

Fasting,

Pray and spend a lot of time with Him). But talking to your own parents is also important (especially if they are born again and have a wide heart).

They usually have much more knowledge of human nature and life experience and want the best for their child. Furthermore, a discussion with friends who know you well and possibly with your home group leader can help you make the right decision.

Now to the topic: "How do I find her/him?"

a) Prayer - as No.1

God loves us and wants to fulfil all our needs - including our need for a partner. The Bible tells us: "What God brings together, man should bring together.

do not separate." So God is the one who brings people together. That is the absolutely most important point in this topic!

b) Prepare yourself

A good exercise is to imagine yourself for a moment in the situation of your future partner and ask yourself the following questions: Would you like to be married to yourself? Why actually? Why not? What rough edges are there in your own character and behaviour that does not even give a potential partner the idea that he/she might find one nice.

This includes: Manners, appearance in public/with friends, external appearance (well-groomed/unkempt appearance, clothing...), lifestyle (home, cleanliness...).

How do you actually affect the people around you?

A psychologist would say: Does your self-image match the image have of you?

Tip: Ask a good friend what they think you should pay a little attention to. should.

c) Keep an eye out

Those who only ever stay in their (social) village need not be surprised, if he doesn't meet his dream woman/man, e.g. from the parish next door.

Possibilities are, for example, camps with people with whom you are not always together (also Christian singles camps), inter-church events (seminars, concerts, etc.), using Christian dating apps, inviting nice people,

Simply choose the things that you have the courage to do and that are acceptable to you.

Wishing for a partner and admitting it is not embarrassing - in the

On the contrary: talking about it getting active eases the whole thing!

It all depends on the attitude (the problem is often the head/how we see things).

see). In any case, it is not a sin to actively look around.

d) Being a creator - instead of being a victim There are now good and reputable

Ways in which Christians who want to get married can find their spouse. In Birkenfeld near Pforzheim, for example, there is a ministry that only helps born-again Christians find a suitable partner.

to find - the Christian Partnership Service (CPD). This service is organised through donations and contributions - it is a non-profit organisation. In the meantime Over 800 weddings have taken place between participants met through this service. An average of 18 couples get married every month. Information is available on the Internet (www.cpdienst.de). Despite all the helpful "techniques" and tools - God is the one who brings us together.

The above-mentioned tip to read Derek Prince's book also applies to this topic.

4. Let's talk about sex

First of all, it should be noted that God invented sexuality. It is a gift from Him. Sexuality is not only for procreation, but was also created by God for our joy and relaxation. "Rejoice in the woman of your youth! ... May her bosom always delight you, may you always be intoxicated by her love." Proverbs 5:19.

In the Old and New Testaments we recognise a consistent image of a man should have a wife.

In the Old Testament, polygamy led to great tensions and problems (e.g.

with Abraham with Sarah and Hagar; but also with King Solomon, whose 700 wives and 300 concubines ultimately brought him down through idolatry - although the Bible says of him that he was the wisest man who ever lived).

Sex with different partners is not intended by God for various reasons:

God's instructions for the people of Israel may sound crass to our ears.

But through this we experience God's view and way of thinking:

"If the virginity of a daughter cannot be proven, then she shall

She shall be brought to the door of her father's house, and the people of the city shall stone her to death, because she has committed an offence in Israel by committing fornication in her father's house. So you shall cut off evil from among you." Deuteronomy 22, 20+21

It's good that God makes it possible to repent and heal broken relationships.

Extramarital intercourse is therefore fornication in God's eyes.

"And you ask, 'Why?' Because the LORD was a witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have now been unfaithful, even though she is your mate and the wife of your covenant! And has he not made her one and spiritually related to him? And what shall the one seek?

After divine seed! So take heed to yourselves in your spirit, and let no one be unfaithful to the wife of his youth. For I hate divorce, says the LORD, the God of Israel, and the covering of one's garment with iniquity, says the LORD of hosts; therefore take heed to your spirit and do not be unfaithful." Malachi 2:14ff

"... let every man have his own wife and every woman her own Man" 1 Corinthians 7:2

Sex with a partner has its place in the protected framework of marriage.

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and follow his To cling to a woman so that they become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were ashamed not." Genesis 2:24-25

Jesus repeats this statement in the New Testament and interprets the spiritual unity: ""For this reason a man becomes father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" - so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mat. 19,5+6)

"But do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her?"
"For," he says, "the two will become one flesh." But he who clings to the Lord is one spirit with him. Flee fornication! Every sin that a man commits [otherwise] is outside of the body; but the fornicator sins against his own body.
Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the one who dwells within you? Holy Spirit, whom you have received from God, and that you do not belong to yourselves?
For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God with your body."
1 Corinthians 6:16-20

In addition to the physical union, sexual intercourse also a spiritual union. Whether intentional or not, a spiritual union is created.

Unity and commitment between the two parties. Here, too, a conscious separation from a former partner with whom you were intimate should be carried out (in prayer, before God, possibly with pastoral counselling).

Spending the night together before marriage: What is the norm in our society does not have to be in line with God's will.

We can all imagine how nice it for lovers to spend the night together - even if it doesn't lead to sex. Spending the night together before marriage poses various dangers:

There may be hasty physical advances that hinder rather than promote the development of the relationship. After all, strong feelings are involved. Also, sleeping together is not a good witness to other unmarried people. It can be misunderstood that sex before marriage is in the will of God. Basically, the following should be said on this point: It is not good to live as if you are married without actually being married!

5. The right way to deal with my sexuality So, God is pro-sex! He is not hostile to the body. The only important thing to know is that everything in this area should be done according to God's order.

Sexuality is one of the most beautiful things that God has given us. Like all good things, it is often perverted by the enemy.

God's word is very clear when it comes to dealing with sexuality:

Galatians 5:19+21 says: "The works of the flesh are evident, which are: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, debauchery. Whoever does these things we

Do not inherit the kingdom of God." That is a clear statement.

The word "fornication" in Greek means "porneia" (=> porn! It is often equated in the media today with the more harmless-sounding word "eroticism").

Porneia translates as ", fornication, extramarital sex, idolatry."

Sex belongs in marriage - not before marriage and not parallel to marriage (infidelity)!

The marriage covenant involves the personal decision of the lovers towards each other, and the making of the covenant before God and the public.

Why does sex belong in marriage?

1. Because it is God's order and as a Christian you want to love Him and please Him. Because He knows what is good for you.
2. Because man and woman "become one" during sexual intercourse. The Bible shows us, that this "becoming one" does not only refer to the physical act, but also has a spiritual dimension. Christians who have come to know Jesus personally and love him want to think and act more and more like Jesus did. This is the greatest possible freedom that can be experienced here on earth - also in the sexual sphere. And love for Jesus is the motivation to please Him with our sexuality.

6. Masturbation

Statistics say that most men and about one in two women experience with masturbation. It's probably no different for Christians.

Our sexuality is given to us by God so that we can make our spouse happy. It is not primarily for our own satisfaction. God's basic idea in creating sexuality is therefore that a fulfilled sexuality requires two spouses.

In 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 it says:

"As for what you have written to me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman, but to avoid fornication, let each man have his own wife and each man his own husband.

The man should fulfil his to the woman, but also the woman to the man.

The woman does not dispose of her body herself, but the man does; in the same way, the man does not dispose of his body himself, but the woman does.

Do not deprive one another except by agreement for a time, that you may and come together again, lest Satan tempt you because of your abstinence." A single person has had the physical to be sexually active since puberty.

However, since sexuality cannot usually be lived out and enjoyed at this age, there must be a way to deal with one's urges in a way that pleases God and is liveable for the single person.

God does not want to withhold pleasures from Christians. He wants to teach them what

their development is good and beneficial. If they follow his divine orders live, they will enter into the full freedom that God has promised them.

Especially in the sexual sphere, however, there are great constraints, compulsions and addictions that no longer have anything to do with the freedom we are striving for.

Ps. 119, 105: "How will a boy go his way blamelessly? If he keeps himself to God's word."

We can find some help on how to better deal with our hormones and urges in the Word of God:

Job made a covenant with his eyes:

"I made a contract (covenant) with my eyes never to look at a girl lustfully. What else could I expect from God? What would be his response to my actions?" Job 31:1+2

Jesus says in Matthew 5:28: "Whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

6.1 Desire comes from looking!

An important principle becomes clear in the Old Testament:

Eve looked at the fruit and wanted to eat it (Genesis 3:6).

David saw a naked woman (Bathsheba) bathing and felt like sleeping with her (2 Sam. 11:2). He then murdered her husband.

Lust comes from looking - lust gives birth to sin.

This is a mechanism that we need to be aware of. This knowledge is a help to us.

Singles/teens can deal better with their sexuality if they consciously look away! Looking away requires discipline and practice - but it works. In practical terms, this means Looking away, e.g. during sex

Scenes in films and nude shots

in magazines. We decide what we allow to get to us and what should influence us.

Tip: Don't watch erotic films (TV/Internet), don't visit mixed saunas and it helps some people not to watch erotic films.

to go to a lake (quarry pond) where topless bathing or nudism are normal.

You can (should) make a conscious decision not to look at erotic and sex sites on the Internet.

Of course, this also applies to married couples. So the strategy is:

1. Avoid stimuli
2. Look away

3. Accept forgiveness where we have failed (this is what Jesus died for).
There is no one who has never had problems with their sexuality. Except Jesus
there is probably no person who has not yet been tried in this field and
has not sinned.
One good thing is that God speaks through our conscience and therefore we often know what we should or should not do.

The following question may help in cases of doubt:
"Would Jesus watch this film, this website?
How would Jesus look at this woman?" As mentioned above, sexuality is first and foremost about pleasing your spouse. The primary question is: "How can I satisfy my spouse?"
and not: "How can I achieve satisfaction?"
Self-satisfaction is not a problem for individuals, but is widespread among teenagers and adults (even married ones).
Masturbation is not only a personal matter, it can also have a negative impact on my relationship with God and possibly also with the person who was part of my fantasies. Dreams of sexual practices with people with whom I am not allowed to have a sexual relationship often play a major role in masturbation. It is obvious that this is a permanent sin.
Sin consists of false desire.
"You shall not covet your neighbour's wife..." (Exodus 2:17)
Regular masturbation is certainly not God's original plan for my sexuality. On the other hand, there is no direct statement in the Bible that masturbation is a sin in any case.
Christians also want to please God in this area. Many wish to submit this area of their lives to God. It is not a lack of good will, but often a lack of ability, strength and discipline to stop satisfying themselves.
What is important here: We will not be able to do it on our own, only with an iron will.
discipline to solve our problems in the sexual sphere. The only chance we have is to come closer to Jesus and allow ourselves to be changed by the Holy Spirit.
Daydreaming and sexual fantasies can also build up a lot of tension.
Sexual stimuli through visual perceptions cannot always be avoided.
There is a saying that illustrates what you should do in such a case.

can:
"I can't prevent a swallow from flying over my head, but I can prevent it from building a nest there!" So we can't prevent sexual thoughts or images from
influence, sometimes downright attack - it is much more a question of how we
deal with it. One way is to God to help us to organise our thoughts.
purify. When we start to praise God (e.g. how good He is or thank Him for our sexuality) the impure thoughts often disappear.
It is simply important that we do not sin through impure thoughts and thus hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It costs us too much in terms of blessing and peace if we give in to unpleasant sexual attractions.
God has given us sexuality so that we can make our spouse happy.
make and satisfy.
Indulging in sexual fantasies masturbating and imagining having sex with a person we are not allowed to have sex with is
not okay before God. To avoid sinning in this area, we need to improve our
Discipline our thoughts. We are also dependent on God's help here.
Nevertheless, it takes a conscious, rational decision on our part to proclaim: "I don't want to!!!"

6.2 Compulsive masturbation Sometimes masturbation takes on addictive forms. This is due to the fact that by repeatedly looking at pornographic material, one unconsciously invites one or more unclean spirits into oneself (on this: Book, Derek Prince, "You will cast out demons", from page 125, see www.ibl-dpm.net).
As soon as you realise that you can no longer control your own behaviour, when you feel "magically" attracted to something and can't resist it, a demonic burden may be present. It is important to know that Christians can also be demonically burdened. God helps us with this through the gift of discernment of spirits and the gift of knowledge. God wants to lead his children into all the freedom that is ours through the death of Jesus.
This approach is not always known even among born-again Christians.
The first step in the right direction has already been explained: the avoidance of sexual harassment.

stimuli from outside. However, the second step is often necessary: the release of unclean spirits (demons).

Liberation takes place - briefly outlined - according to the steps used in pastoral care:

Ask God for forgiveness (call sin by name); wash oneself clean through the blood of Jesus (accept/be forgiven e.g. through a counsellor), command the unclean spirits in the name of Jesus to leave the person alone and go out, asking the Holy Spirit to fill the vacuum that has been created.

7. Homosexuality

There is also a lot of uncertainty in this problem area. Yet God gives clear

and clear guidance on how to deal with it. Here, too, the Bible does not mince its : we read, for example, in Romans 1, verses 26-32:

"Therefore God also gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their women have exchanged the natural use for the unnatural; likewise also the men have exchanged the natural use for the unnatural.

left and have burnt against each other in their lust, and have left man with man disgraced and received the deserved reward of their error in themselves.

And just as they did not recognise God, God also did not recognise them

given over to an unworthy purpose, to do what is not proper, as such,

Who are full of all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, deceitfulness, deceivers, revilers, despisers of God, insolent, boastful, inventive in evil, disobedient to parents; unwise, unstable, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, do not only do it themselves, but also favour to those who do it."

Genesis 18:22

"You shall not lie with any man as with a woman, for that is an abomination."

Exodus 20:13

"If a man sleeps with a male person as if it were a woman, they have both done an abomination, and they shall surely die; their blood be upon them!"

1. Tim 2:4

God wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth come.

These quotes from the Bible give us a clear direction:

God hates homosexuality - but He loves homosexuals!

God wants to help those who are inclined towards homosexuality. He wants them to be free from the false attachments and thoughts that sometimes plague them. He has a solution to this problem:

Jesus also died for this guilt on the cross. One may ask him for forgiveness, receive forgiveness from him and ask him for help

ask. In addition, disciples of Jesus have the power, in the name of Jesus, to

Forcing yourself to leave a person. A burden is usually present when you are no longer in control of yourself (another power exercises dominance over you), when you compulsively do things that you don't actually want to do.

The good thing is that Jesus showed the solution out of love. Repentance and liberation are possible.

8. Teens in Love

Teenagers in particular often experience a deep love and passion for Jesus. They want

make their lives available to Him and live according to His orders. Therefore

the following lines are intended to provide orientation and food for thought. They are intended to help enjoy your teenage years. Because only if we are in harmony with

God's will for our lives, we will be able to live fulfilled - without false

Attachments (e.g. to people or one's own sexuality).

Teenagers are very strongly influenced by their environment. They seek orientation. Their circle of friends, school and the media have a major influence on the way they form their opinions. This also applies to the area of sexuality.

For young Christians who love Jesus with all their heart, the question arises as to what God on the subject of friendship and sexuality.

Some basic issues such as masturbation, dating or homosexuality have already been addressed on the previous pages.

Especially with teenagers, there are a few additional issues:

The peer pressure having to have a boyfriend to be "in"

How far can I go? (kissing, petting, sex)

Teenagers who love Jesus how He sees things - that should be our standard. They want to please God first and foremost - not people.

In principle, the friendship between a man and a woman who have become

partnerships, the goal of establishing a marriage and family.

That is God's plan. He is not a spoilsport, but He knows what is good for you.

The fact that teenagers today have several short friendships in a row causes many tears, pain and bonds - and is not planned by God. Therefore, this behaviour is not okay for Christians!

There are a few basic things you can say about the question of how far you can go in a friendship:

The boyfriend or girlfriend should know Jesus and give their life to Him

otherwise there may be a lot of tears later on because your partner can't understand, what dear and important to you.

He/she lives according to other values that the environment conveys and which are often in stark contradiction to God's good advice for our lives.

1. A friendship is first and foremost about getting to know your partner

(his character, plans, opinions, wishes, strengths, weaknesses, dreams, etc.)

2. The principle applies that sex (sleeping together) belongs by God exclusively in marriage. Justification:

A) Because it is God's good order

is. B) Because the man and the woman "become one" during sexual intercourse - and this goes beyond the purely physical! (see above - points 4 + 5)

3. The motto is: "True love waits!"

4. The two friends should soon talk about where they want to draw the line when it comes to touching. Openness also protects against false expectations here.

5. It's not good for teenagers in love to spend too much time alone. Getting to know each other is best done with friends. This also protects them from making physical contact too quickly.

Another tip on clothing:

Boys and men are easily aroused by body-hugging clothing - this includes

bust-accentuating T-shirts, bodies and other skin-tight clothing.

They sometimes have difficulties with this. It stimulates them to masturbate and impure thoughts. It helps them to deal with their sexuality if they do not are exposed to these charms. This is why girls and women can love men in a very practical way by dressing smartly when they are with them without embarrassing them.

It is good if we bring the above-mentioned thoughts before God in prayer and Him for wisdom. Talking to each other can also help us to become more sensitive and to please God in this often taboo area.

God wants us to be well in the long term. He, as our Creator, has the best standards on the subject of friendship and sex. We would do well to and thus protect us from a lot of grief.

same applies to this topic: we want to love God and hate sin. Sin

we should also name sin before God and ask him for forgiveness. A total

A new beginning is possible at any time through Jesus. This is the way to be given a fulfilled life, including a sexually fulfilled life. get.

Recommended reading:

- Booklet: "Sexuality - stimulating and exciting" about Ignis Academy for Christianity
- Psychology, info@ignis.de, Tel. 09321--133031.
- Book: Derek Prince, "A Woman of Understanding is from the Lord and How to Find the Right Partner" (ISBN 3-932341-02-03).
- Book: Derek Prince, "You will cast out demons", both books e.g. about:
- www.ibl-dpm.net
- Book: Christoph Häselbarth, "Liberation" (ISBN - 3-925968-84-9)

5.21 God, my provider!

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Introduction

Reading the following Bible verses is about to know God's view on the subject of finances better.

Many Christians long for

God's reality and truth also in the area of finance and in the area of

recognising the need for care. This paper focusses on

to show what accounts there are of God's material provision in the Bible.

This reveals God's character as a good, caring Father. The following Bible verses also describe the prerequisites for entering into the full blessing his material provision.

The biblical accounts allow us to draw direct conclusions about our personal situation today. You will gain the most from reading the following verses if you now ask the Holy Spirit in a short prayer to bring these verses to life for you.

Because: Word and spirit must come together.

Otherwise there is a danger that the verses listed are only a

remain a string of dead letters. The Bible also contains treasures to be discovered in the area of finance.

Part 1: God provides

1.1 God's provision in the Old Testament

Some introductory remarks:

One of the Hebrew names of God in the Old Testament is Yahweh Jireeh.

It means: "God's provision will be visible".

God is the creator, the giver of life, the provider ("All my springs are in you!" Psalm 87:8).

God provides so that life can be sustained. He provides water, light, the right temperature (by keeping the earth at exactly the right distance from the sun), natural resources, heat, minerals and energy. It is the source of life. It is the source of life for humans, animals and plants. He is the one who produces growth. He created the laws of physics on earth and in the universe.

Our task to treat this order with care, to remove artificial barriers to growth so that growth can happen.

There are numerous biblical passages that testify that God was the provider of his children in the past, the provider of his children today and will be the provider of his children in the future.

becomes:

In the beginning, before the fall into sin, God created everything so that people could be abundantly supplied. It was a state of full provision for people and animals:

Genesis 2,

8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden eastward, and there he put the man whom he had made.

9 And the LORD God caused all kinds of trees to sprout forth from the earth, lovely and good for food, and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

But with the decision to sin, man made the decision to

Independence from God. This brought the curse into people's lives.

Nevertheless, God provides:

When Abraham left Egypt he was richly blessed materially by God

been:

Genesis 13:1:

And Abram went up from Egypt to southern Canaan his wife and all that he had, including Lot.

2 And Abram was very rich in livestock, silver and gold.

God provides Abraham with a sacrificial animal to sacrifice in place of Isaac:

Genesis 22:10ff

10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.
 11 Then the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham! Abraham! And he answered, "Behold, here I am!
 12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy and do him no harm, for now I know that you fear God and have not spared your only son for my sake!
 13 Then Abraham raised his eyes and saw behind him a ram with the Horns tangled in the hedges. So Abraham went and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son.
 14 And Abraham named the place: "The LORD will provide! So that you can still today says: On the mountain the LORD will provide!

God blesses Isaac materially:

1. Genesis 26:
 12 And Isaac sowed in the land and reaped a hundredfold that year; for The Lord blessed him.
 13 And the man became richer and richer until he was very rich;
 14 and he had flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and a large number of servants. Therefore the Philistines envied him.

2. Genesis 1,
 20 But God blessed the midwives, and the people multiplied and increased greatly.
 21 And because the midwives feared God, he built them houses.
 God gives the departing people of Israel a gift:

Genesis 3,
 21 And I will give this people favour with the Egyptians, so that when you not go out empty; 22 but every woman shall receive from her neighbour and her household silver and demand golden harnesses and garments; you shall put them on your sons and daughters and rob Egypt.

God provides for the people in the desert.
 Sometimes He only provides from one day to the next - so that we learn to trust in Him.
 Exodus 16,
 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you
 Then let the people go out and gather daily what they need, so that I learn whether it will walk in my law or not.

24 And they left it until morning, as Moses had commanded, and it did not stink, nor was there any worm in it.

Principle: Material blessing comes from God when His children are obedient:

2. Genesis 23:
 25 And you shall serve the LORD your God, and he will be your bread and your Bless the water, and I will remove the disease from your midst.

God provides the people of Israel with land:

3. Genesis 25:
 2 Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: When you come into the land, that I give you, the land shall keep a sabbath to the LORD.
 God provides the necessary rain if they are obedient: Genesis 26,
 3 Walk ye therefore in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them,
 4 Then I will give you rain in its season, and the land shall yield its produce and the trees in the field bear their fruit.

Principle: God provides so that there will be no lack if they obey His commandments:
 Exodus 25,
 4
 20 And if you should say: What shall we eat in the seventh year? For we do not sow or gather fruit!
 21 In the sixth year I will command my blessing, and it will bear fruit for you.
 three years;

God's people are blessed and had no lack for 40 years in the desert:
 Deuteronomy 5.2,
 7 For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the works of your hands. He has watched over your journeys through this great wilderness; and the LORD, your God has been with you these forty years, so that you have lacked nothing.
 Deuteronomy 8,
 4 Your clothes are not ragged on you, and your feet are not swollen them forty years.

Principle: God is the one who gives power to acquire wealth:
 Deuteronomy 8,
 18 But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you

strength to acquire such wealth; that he may fulfil his covenant

he swore to your fathers, as is today.

19 But if you forget the LORD your God and go to other gods

follow them and serve them and worship them, I testify about you today that you will surely perish.

Deuteronomy 11,

13 Therefore will you obey my commandments diligently, which I command you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

14 Then I will give your land rain in its season, early rain and latter rain, that you can gather your grain, your must and your oil.

15 And I will give your cattle grass in your field, and you shall eat and be satisfied.

will.
16 But be careful that your hearts are not persuaded to turn aside and serve other gods and worship them,

Principle: God blesses and keeps his promises:

Deuteronomy 12,

20 But if the LORD your God will enlarge your landmarks, as he has promised you, ...

The inheritance of the unbelievers falls to the people of God:

Deuteronomy 12,

29 When the LORD your God cuts off the nations from before you, where you come to inherit her, and when you have inherited her and are in her land live, ...

God provides living space:

Deuteronomy 13,

2 When thou hearest of any of thy cities, which the LORD thy God shall give thee to dwell therein, ...

Principle: God gives us abundant gifts and we should share generously with those in need:

Deuteronomy 15,

4 There shall not be a poor man among you: for the LORD shall bless you abundantly in the land which the LORD your God shall give you for an inheritance, to inherit it in to take possession;

5 provided that you obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe all these commandments which I command you today, and do them.

6 For the LORD your God will bless you, as he has promised you. So you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; you will rule over many peoples.

rule, but they will not rule over you.

7 But if there a poor man with you, any of your brothers in any city in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not set thine heart upon it.

nor close your hand to your poor brother;

8 but you shall open your hand to him and lend him generously, according as he has a defect.

Deuteronomy 8,

18 But you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you strength to acquire such wealth ...

Principle: God provides for us because He loves us:

Deuteronomy 23,

5 But the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam; but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you.

Deuteronomy 26,

11 And you shall rejoice in all the good things that the LORD your God has done for you and for your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who is with you.

Principle: God provides - with quality:

Deuteronomy 5.27,

3 And as soon as you have crossed over, you shall write on it all the words of this law, so that you may enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, like the LORD God of your fathers, has promised you.

Principle: God provides:

Deuteronomy 28,

4 Blessed will be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, the fruit of your cattle, the litter of your oxen and the breeding of your sheep.

5 Blessed will be your basket and your baking trough.

Principle: The blessing comes from God:

Deuteronomy 28,

8 The LORD will command the blessing to be with you in your barns and in all the work of your hand, and he will bless you in the land that the LORD has given you.

LORD your God gives.

Principle: God provides abundantly:

Deuteronomy 28,

11 And the LORD will give you an abundance of goods, of the fruit of your body, in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land, of to whom LORD swore to your fathers that he would give it to you.

12 The LORD will open to you the heavens, his good treasure, that it may be yours.
 Give the land rain in its season and bless all the works of your hands. And
 You will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow.
 13 And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; and you will be only at the top and not at the bottom, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today, to observe and do them, 14 and if you do not depart from all the words which I command you, neither to the right nor to the left, that is, that you do not give other gods to serve them.

Principle: God's character is to provide with abundance:

Deuteronomy 5.30,

9 And the LORD your God will give you abundance in all your works.
 Hands, by the fruit of your body, by the fruit of your cattle, by the fruit
 your land for your good; for the LORD will rejoice over you again for your good, as he rejoiced over your fathers,
 10 if you obey the voice of the LORD your God and his commandments
 and observe its statutes which are written in this code, if
 you will return to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
 Soul.

11 For this commandment which I command you today is not too marvellous too distant for you.

Joshua 5,

12 And the manna ceased the next day, when they ate of the fruit of the land; and there was no more manna for the children of Israel, but in that year they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan.

God provides the Levites with 48 cities. Nothing good was lacking.

Joshua 21,

41 So the total number of the cities of the Levites among the inheritance of the children was Israel forty-eight, with their pastures.

42 Now it was so with these cities that each had its pastures around it, one like the other.

43 So the LORD gave children of Israel all the land of which he had sworn to give it to their fathers, and they took it and lived in it.

44 And the LORD gave them rest all around, just as he had given their fathers rest.

and none of their enemies stood before them, but the LORD

gave all her enemies into her hand.

45 There was no lack of any of the good things that the LORD had given to the house of Israel. had promised. It all came true.

1 Samuel 2,

7 The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he humbles, but he also exalts.

8 He raises the lowly from the dust and lifts the poor from the dunghill, so that
 He will place them among princes and make them inherit the throne of honour, for the foundations of the earth are the LORD's, and he has set the world upon them.

9 He will keep the feet of his righteous: but the wicked shall perish in darkness; for it is not by strength that a man rises.

God supplies the army of Israel with water when they are thirsty and ask Him for help.

ask:

"And Elisha said, 'Thus says the LORD: Make pit after pit in the valley!

For thus saith the LORD; Ye shall see no wind, neither shall ye see rain: nevertheless this valley shall be full of water, so that you may drink,

your livestock, both small and large. And this is a small thing in the sight of the Lord;

He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand

,..." 2 Kings 3:16-18

1. Kings 17,

2 And the word of the Lord came to him thus:

Go away from here and turn towards the morning and hide yourself by the stream Krit,

which flows towards the Jordan! And you shall drink from the brook, and I have given the

He commanded the ravens to feed you there. So

he went and did according to the word of the LORD; he went and sat down by the brook Krit, which is towards the Jordan

flows. And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening, and

He drank from the brook. But after a while the brook dried up, for there was no rain in the land.

Then the word of the LORD came to him: "Arise and go to Zarephath, which is near Zidon, and stay there.

there; behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you with food.

care!

2. Kings 3,

16 And he said, "Thus says the LORD, 'Make pit after pit in the valley.

17 For thus says the LORD: You will see neither wind nor rain; yet this valley will be filled with water, so that you will have drink,

18 Also your small and great cattle. And that is a little before the LORD; he will also deliver Moab into your hand ...

2 Kings 4:1

SCH 2 Kings 4:1 And a woman among the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha said, "Your servant, my husband, has died, but you know that he, Your servant feared the LORD. Now the believer comes and wants to take my two sons as his servants!

2 Elisha said to her, "What do you want me to do for you?

Tell me, what do you have in the house? She said, "Your maid has nothing in the house but a jar of oil!

3 He said, "Go and ask for vessels from all your neighbours outside.

Neighbours, empty vessels, and quite a few of them;

4 and go in and shut the door behind you and your sons and pour in all these vessels, and carry away what is full. 5 She left him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought

her the vessels and she poured.

6 And when the vessels were full, she said to her son, "Give me one more Bring a vessel! He said to her: "There is no more jar here! Then the oil stopped.

7 And she went and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt; but thou and thy sons mayest of the rest live!

2 Kings 4:38

38 And Elisha returned to Gilgal. And was a famine in the land. And

The sons of the prophets were sitting in front of him, and he said to his son, "Put on the big pot and cook some vegetables for the sons of the prophets.

39 Then a man went out into the field to look for herbs, and he found wild cucumbers and read of it his garment full of wild cucumbers; and when he came home, he cut them into the pot of vegetables, for they did not know them. 40 But when it was poured out for the men to eat, and they had eaten of the vegetables, they shouted and said: Death is in the pot, man of God! And they couldn't eat it.

41 And he said, Give flour. And he threw it into the pot and said, "Pour it out for the people to eat! There was nothing evil *left* in the pot.

42 But a man from Baal-shalishah came and brought the man of God firstfruits, twenty barley loaves and crushed grain in his sack. And he said, "Give it to the people to eat.

43 His servant said, "How can I set this before a hundred men? And he said, "Give it to the people so that they may eat. For thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and there shall be leftovers.

44 And he set it before them, and they ate, and there was left over, according to the word of the LORD.

2 Kings 6,

4 He said: I will go with you! And he went with them. So when they came to the Jordan they cut wood.

5 And as one was felling a log, the iron fell into the water. Then he cried out and said, "Oh my lord! This is what it was borrowed for!

6 But the man of God said, "Where has it fallen? And when he told him the place he cut off a piece of wood and threw it in. The iron floated up.

7 And he said, 'Pick it up! Then he stretched out his hand and took it.

God provides the starving Israelites in Samaria, their capital at the time, with food by giving the besieging Syrian soldiers the impression that they are in danger.

that a large army is attacking them:

2 Kings 7:

6 For the LORD had given the army of the Syrians a noise of chariots, even a The tumult of horses and the clamour of a large army can be heard,

And they said one to another, Behold, the king of Israel hath hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians against us, that they may overtake us.

should!

16 Then the people went out and plundered the camp of the Syrians, so that a measure of fine flour was worth a silver coin, and two measures of barley were worth a silver coin, according to the word of the Lord.

2 Kings 8:1 "And Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had brought to life.

And said, Arise, and go thy way with thy household, and keep thyself in the foreign land where you can! For the LORD has a famine

summoned. And she also comes to the country, for seven years.

2 The woman arose and did as the man of God had said, and went with and stayed in the land of the Philistines for seven years.

3 But when the seven years were over, the woman came back from the land of the Philistines, and she went to appeal to the king for her house and for her land.

4 Now the king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, and said, "Tell me all the great deeds that Elisha has done.

5 But while he was telling the king how he had brought a dead man back to life When he had finished, behold, the woman whose son he had made alive came to him and appealed to the king for her house and for her land. Then said

Gehazi: My lord and king, here is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha has made alive!

6 Then the king asked the woman, and she told him. Then the king gave her a chamberlain and said, "Restore to her all that belongs to her and all the produce of the land from the time she left the country until now."

1. chronicle 17,

9 And I have prepared a place for my people Israel, and planted them there, and they shall dwell there, and shall be troubled no more; shall the children of wickedness destroy them any more, as they have done since the time that I was judge over my people.

people decreed,

10 but I have humbled all your enemies, and I declare to you that the LORD will build you a house.

1. Chronicles 29:14

What am I? What is my people, that we have been able to give so much of our own free will? All things have come from you, and from your hand we have given them to you.

2. Chronicle 16,

9 For the eyes of the LORD roam the whole earth, to show himself mighty on those who are devoted to him with all their heart.

2 Chronicles 31:10+11

Since began to bring the heave offering into the house of the LORD, They have eaten and been filled, and much has been left over; for the LORD has blessed his people, and so much has been left over. Then Hezekiah commanded that storehouses be prepared in the house of the LORD; God provides bread:

2 Chronicles 32,

26 Then Hezekiah humbled himself because of the arrogance of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and the anger of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. 27 And Hezekiah had great wealth and honour. And he made himself

Treasuries for silver and gold and precious stones and for balsam oils and for shields and for all kinds of precious equipment 28 and storehouses for the yield of grain and must and oil and stables for all kinds of livestock and stables for the herds. 29 And he laid up cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for *God gave him a very large fortune.*

Ruth 6,

1 So she and her two daughters-in-law set out and returned from the land of Moab, for they had heard there that the LORD had visited his people and given them bread.

The exodus of the people of Israel from Persia: As with the exodus from Egypt, they did not leave empty-handed. God touched the heart of Cyrus:

Ezra 1,

4 And whosoever is left in any place where he sojourneth as a stranger, to him shall the people of his town help with silver and gold and chattels and cattle along with voluntary gifts for the house of God in Jerusalem.

6 And all their neighbours strengthened hands with silver and gold

equipment, with their possessions, livestock and jewellery, apart from what they gave voluntarily.

7 And Cyrus the king delivered up the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put into the house of his god. had.

8 Cyrus king of Persia handed them over through Mitredath, the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbazzar, prince of Judah.

9 And this is their number: thirty golden basins, a thousand silver basins, twenty-nine bowls.

10 Thirty golden cups and silver cups of the second kind

four hundred and ten, and a thousand other vessels. 11 Of all the articles of gold and silver there were 5,400.

Seshbazzar with those who went up from captivity to Jerusalem.

Building the temple in Jerusalem with tax money from a pagan nation! God moves the heart of King Darius: Ezra 6,

8 It has also been commanded by me how you are to help these elders of Judah build this house of God.

the taxes beyond the current reimburse these people exactly the costs and

not put any obstacles in their way.

9 And if they need young bulls or rams or lambs for burnt offerings for the God of heaven, or wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the priests of Jerusalem, shall be given to them daily without delay; ...

10 that they may offer sacrifices of sweet odour to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his children.

God provides building materials for the temple and the city walls - through a pagan king:

Nehemiah 2,

8 ...also a letter to Asaph, the king's forester, asking him to give me wood for the beams of the gates of the castle that belongs to the house of God, and for the wall of the city and for the house into which I am to go. And the king gave them to me, thanks to the good hand of my God upon me.

Nehemiah 9,

21 For forty years you provided for them in the desert so that they lacked nothing; Their clothes did not get old and their feet did not swell.
25 And they conquered strong cities and a fat land and took possession of houses, wells filled with all kinds of goods, Vineyards, olive trees and fruit trees And they ate, and were filled, and grew fat, and were satisfied in thy great goodness.

God provides for the people when they keep the sabbatical year: In the 6th year, the harvest is so good that the grain lasts until the harvest in the 8th year.

Nehemiah 10,

31 And that when the peoples of the land bring goods and all kinds of food on the Sabbath day We will not take them from them on the Sabbath or on holy days, and in the seventh year we will refrain from *tilling the fields* and from wanted to waive any debt claim.

Principle: God owns everything:

Job 41:3:

Who has gone before me that I should repay him? Under the whole heaven is all mine! Job

41:12:

And the LORD blessed Job's later life more than his earlier life; he received 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen and 1,000 she-asses. He also had seven sons and three daughters.

17 And Job died old and full of life.

Ps 23:5:

You prepare a table before me in the face of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil and pour it all over me!

Principle: God provides for his children even in times of inflation:

Ps 33:19b:

...and them alive in the face of inflation.

Ps 34,

3 Praise the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!

4 When I sought the LORD, he answered me and delivered me from all my troubles.

Fear.

5 Those who look upon him will be radiant, and their faces will not blush.

6 When this wretch cried out, the LORD heard and helped him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.

8 Taste and see how kind the LORD is; blessed is he who trusts in him!

9 Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no need. 10 Young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the LORD do not lack any good thing.

11 , you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD!

12 Who has a zest for life and would like to see good days?

Psalm 36,

8 How precious is your goodness, God, that the children of men have refuge under the shadow of your wings!

9 They will be filled with the riches of your house, and you will water them with delight as with a river.

10 For with you is the source of life, and in your light we see the light.

Ps 37,

3 Trust in the LORD and do good, dwell in the land and be faithful;

4 And delight thyself in the LORD, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. 5 Commit your way to the LORD and trust in him, and he will act

6 and will bring your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

7 Hold still the LORD and wait for him; do not be angry with the one to whom his way succeeds, over the man who practises intrigues!

16 The little that the righteous have is better than the abundance of the wicked. 17 For the arms of the wicked will be broken; but the LORD upholds the righteous.

18 The LORD knows the days of the upright, and their inheritance will endure forever.
19 They shall not be put to shame in the evil time, but shall also have enough in the days of famine;
22 For those blessed *by the LORD* will inherit the land ...
25 I have been young and have grown old, and have never forsaken the righteous seen, or his seed (his children) begging for bread.

Psalms 40,

18 Even if I am wretched and poor, the Lord will for me. You are my help and my saviour; my God, do not forgive!

Psalms 44,

4 For not with their sword have they won the land; and their arm has
You did not help them, but your right hand and your arm and the light of your countenance, for you were well pleased with them.

Principle: God owns everything:

Ps 50:12b:

...for mine is the world and all that fills it.

Principle: God provides:

Ps 55:23:

Cast your request on the LORD, and he will provide for you and will fulfil your desire.

Do not leave the righteous in unrest forever!

Ps 65,

9 You visit the land and water it and make it very rich; God's
Fountains have abundance of water. You prepare their grain, for so you prepare *the country*;

10 You water its furrows, moisten its clods; with showers of rain you make
You soften it and bless its growth. 11 You crown the year with your good, and your footprints drip with fat.

12 The oases of the desert dripped, and the hills girded themselves with rejoicing.

13 As the pastures clothe themselves with sheep, so the valleys cover themselves with grain,
that one rejoices and sings.

Psalms 78,

19 And they spoke against God, saying:
"Can God prepare a table in the desert?"

20 Behold, he smote the rock, that waters flowed and rivers ran
poured out. But can he also give bread? Will he provide meat for his people?"

21 Therefore, when the LORD heard this, he was indignant, and fire was kindled against Jacob, and wrath arose against Israel,
22 because they did not believe God and did not trust in his help.

23 And he commanded the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven;

24 and he rained down manna on them to eat and gave them the grain of heaven.

25 Man ate angel bread; he sent them food enough.

26 He aroused the east wind in the sky and brought the south wind with his power,

27 made flesh rain down on them like dust and lively birds like sand on the sea,

28 And let them fall in the midst of their camp, round about their dwelling.

29 So they ate and were filled to overflowing; he granted them what they had asked for.

30 They had not yet given up their desire, and their food was still

in their mouths,

31 when the wrath of God arose against them and strangled the fat ones among them, and the young men of Israel were overthrown. 32

Despite all this, they continued to sin and did not believe in his miracles.

And he shepherded them with all the faithfulness of his heart and guided them with a skilful hand.

Principle: God provides for his people when they are obedient:

Ps 81,

11 I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Do

Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it! 12 But my people have not obeyed my voice, and Israel

would not hear of

mir.

14+17:

If my people would obey me and Israel walk in my ways, ...

And he would feed them with the best wheat and satisfy them with honey from the rock!"

Principle: God is generous:

That is our God:

Ps.84,12+13

For the LORD God is sun and shield; the LORD gives grace and glory;

who walks in innocence is denied nothing good.

13 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in you!

Principle: Provision comes from our God:

Psalms 87:7: All my resources are in you!

Psalms 104,

27 They are all waiting for you to give them their food in its season;
28 If you give to them, they will gather; if you open your hand, they will saturated with good;

Psalm 105,

37 But he let them go out with silver and gold, and there was no one to stumble among their tribes.
38 Egypt was glad to see them go, for the terror of them had fallen on them.
39 He spread a cloud before them to the ceiling and fire to light up the night.
40 They asked, so he sent for quails and fed them with bread from heaven.
41 He opened the rock and water flowed out; a stream flowed in the desert.
42 For he remembered his holy word Abraham, his servant.
43 He let his people go out with joy, with rejoicing his chosen ones.
44 And he gave them the lands of the nations; and what the nations
They took of it, 45 that they might keep its statutes and uphold its teachings.
Hallelujah!

Psalm 107

6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their distress, and he rescued them from their fears
7 and led them on the right path so that they reached an inhabited city,
8 They shall give thanks to the LORD for his favour and for his wonders to the children of men,
9 that he will water the thirsty soul and satisfy the hungry soul with good things
has!
38 ...and he blessed them so that they multiplied greatly, and also made their livestock
he not a little, ...

Psalm 111,

5 He has given food to those who fear him; he will remember his covenant forever.
6 He has made known to his people his powerful deeds in giving them the inheritance of the Gentiles.
7 The works of his hands are faithful and righteous, all his decrees unchanging,
8 confirmed for ever and ever, carried out in faithfulness and honesty.

Psalm 112

1 Hallelujah! Blessed is he who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in his commandments!

2 The seed will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be be blessed.

3 Riches and abundance are in his house, and his righteousness is eternal.

Principle: It on God's blessing: Psalm 127,

1 Where the LORD does not build the house, those who build it labour in vain; where the LORD does not keep the city, the watchman keeps watch in vain.

2 It is in vain that you rise up early and lie down late and eat your hard-earned bread; surely he does not allow his beloved to sleep!

3 Behold, children are an inheritance from the LORD; the fruit of the womb is a reward:

Psalm 128

1 Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD and walks in his ways!

2 You will be nourished by the labour of your hands; good for you, you are well off!

3 Your wife is like a fruitful vine within your house, your

Children like young olive trees around your table.

4 Behold, the man who fears the LORD will be blessed!

5 The LORD bless you from Zion, that you may see the happiness of Jerusalem all your days of your life

6 and see the children of your children! Peace upon Israel!

Principle: The possessions of the Gentiles are saved for the people of God:

Psalm 135,

10 He defeated great nations and killed mighty kings;

11 Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kings
Canaans

12 and gave their land as an inheritance, as an inheritance to his people Israel.

Psalm 136,

24 and snatched us from our enemies, for his mercy endures forever!

25 who gives food to all flesh, for his mercy endures forever!

26 Give thanks to the God of heaven, for his mercy endures forever!

Psalm 138,

8 The LORD will perform it for me! O LORD, your mercy endures forever; you will not abandon the work of your hands!

Psalm 144,
9 O God, a new song I will sing to you, on the ten-stringed harp I will sing to you
play,
10 who gives victory to kings and delivers your servant David from the
dangerous sword!

Psalm 145,
14 The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.
15 All eyes are on you, and you give them their food in due season;
16 You open your hand and satisfy everything that lives with pleasure.
17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and gracious in all his works. 18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth;
19 He does what the godly desire and hears their cry and helps them.
20 The LORD keeps all who love him and will destroy all the wicked.
21 Let my mouth declare the glory of the LORD; and let all flesh praise his holy name for ever and ever.

Psalm 147,
12 Praise, O Jerusalem, the LORD; praise, O Zion, your God!
13 For he has strengthened the bars of your gates, he has blessed your children in your midst;
14 He gives peace to your borders and fills you with the best wheat.

Ecclesiastes 2,
26 For to the man who Him He gives wisdom and knowledge and
Joy; but to the sinner he gives plague, that he may gather and scrape together,
to give it to the one who pleases God.
That, too, is vain and a scurrying after wind.

Principle: Wealth comes from God:
Ecclesiastes 5,
18 Even if God gives any man riches and treasures and gives him
allowed to enjoy it and take his part, that he may rejoice in his
effort is a gift from God.

Ecclesiastes 6,
2 When God gives wealth to a person, gives him treasures and honour, that lacks nothing that his soul desires, but if God does not allow him to do so,
to enjoy it, but a stranger gets to enjoy it, that is vain and a grievous sorrow!

Proverbs 2,
6 For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and
Mind.
7 He secures success for the upright and protects the innocent.
change,

Proverbs 3,
9 Honour the LORD with your possessions and with the firstfruits of all your income,
10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your presses will overflow with must.

Proverbs 10,
22 The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and *His own* labour adds nothing to him.

Proverbs 13,
22 What a good person leaves behind is passed on to their children's children;
but the sinner's wealth is saved for the righteous.

Proverbs 15,
6 In the house of the righteous is much wealth; but in the income of the wicked is ruin.

Proverbs 30
7 I ask two things of you; do not deny me these things before I
die:
8 Remove from me falsehood and lying words; do not give me poverty and riches,
nourish me with the bread set before me, 9 so that I will not deny you out of surfeiting and say, "Who is the LORD?" but also so that I will not steal out of sheer poverty and take the name of my God in vain.

Isaiah 1,
19 If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;
20 But if you refuse and are unruly, you shall be devoured by the sword.
will be! Yes, the mouth of the LORD has spoken it.

Isaiah 10,
My hand has reached for the wealth of the nations as for a bird's nest, and as one takes away abandoned eggs, so I have taken away all the lands,
and there was no one to stir its wings, open its beak and chirp!

Isaiah 23,
17 So it will be at the end of seventy years; the LORD will give Tyre
and she will come to her merit again and will court with

all the kingdoms of the world across the face of the earth.

18 But their earnings and their merit will be consecrated to the LORD; they will not accumulated or stored up, but their earnings will be consecrated to those who are before the LORD.

dwell in the presence of the LORD for food and for satisfaction and for clothing.

Isaiah 40,

28 Do you not know, have you heard? The eternal God, the LORD, who

He who created the ends of the earth is not weary nor faint; his understanding is inexhaustible!

29 He gives power the weary and strength to the weak.

30 Boys grow weary and faint, and young men fall;

31 But those who wait for the LORD will receive new strength, so that they will ascend with

Wings like eagles, that they may run and not faint, that they may walk and not grow weary.

Isaiah 51,

14 He who is bound in chains is quickly released, lest he perish in the pit or lack bread.

15 For I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar: the LORD of hosts is his name.

Isaiah 58,

14 Then you will delight yourself in the LORD, and I will set you over the

lead you to the heights of the land and feed you with the inheritance of your father Jacob! Yes, the mouth of the LORD has promised.

Isaiah 60,

5 When you see these things, you will be radiant with joy, and your heart will beat faster and become broad; for the riches of the sea will be turned to you, the goods of the nations will come to you.

6 The multitude of camels will cover you, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; They will all come from Sheba, bringing gold and frankincense and rejoicing proclaim the praises of the Lord.

7 All the sheep of Kedar will gather to you, the rams of Nebajoth

will serve you; they will come as a pleasing sacrifice on my altar; and I will make the house of my glory even more glorious.

11 Let your gates always be open and not shut day or night

so that the wealth of the Gentiles may be brought in and their kings may be brought in.

16 You will suck the milk of the Gentiles and feed on royal breasts;

So you will know that I, the LORD, am your Saviour and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

17 Instead of brass I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood I will bring brass, and instead of stone I will bring iron. I will bring peace to your

Make rulers and righteousness your rulers.

Isaiah 61 ,

6 ...but you will be called priests of the LORD, and you will be called servants of our God.

You will enjoy the goods of the nations and enter into their position of power.

8 For I, the LORD, love justice and hate wicked robbery.

faithfully give them their wages and make an everlasting covenant with them.

10 I rejoice greatly in the LORD, and my soul exults in my God;

For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has clothed me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns himself with a priestly headdress and as a bride puts on her jewellery.

Jeremiah 2,

7 And I brought you into the fertile land, so that you might enjoy its fruits and its goods.

You gone and defiled my land and made my inheritance an abomination.

Jeremiah 5,

24 But let us fear the LORD our God, who gives rain, both

Early rain as well as late rain, in its season; which the certain weeks of the harvest for us!

Jeremiah 7,

23 But these things I have commanded them:

Obey my voice, and I will

be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you.

Jeremiah 17,

5 Thus says the Lord: Cursed is the man who trusts in man and flesh

for his arm and whose heart departs from the LORD!

6 He will be like a bush in the desert; he will see nothing good coming, but must dwell in arid stretches of desert, in a salty land where no one lives.

7 Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose confidence is in the Lord.
become LORD!
8 For he will be like a tree planted by the water that stretches out its roots to the streams. He will not fear the heat when it comes, but his leaves remain green; even in a dry year he need not worry, and he does not cease to fruit.

Jeremiah 27,
4 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Thus shall ye do unto your Gentlemen say:
5 By my great power and my outstretched arm I have made the earth, man and beast on the face of the earth, and I give them to whom I will;
...

Ezekiel 11:17:
Thus says the LORD God: "I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the lands where you have been scattered and give you back the land of Israel.

Ezekiel 34,
29 I will also raise up for them a famous plant, so that they will no longer be disturbed by hunger in the land will be taken away and the reviling of the heathen no longer have to carry.
30 So they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people, says the LORD God.
31 And you are my flock; you men are the sheep of my pasture! I am your God, says the LORD God.

Ezekiel 36,
11 I will make men and cattle numerous among you, and they will multiply and be fruitful; I will populate you as in the past and do you more good than ever before, and you will know that I am the LORD.
Ezekiel 36,
29 And I will you from all your uncleanness, and I will call the grain and make it plentiful, and I will send you no more famine.
30 I will also increase the fruit of the trees and the produce of the field, so that you will no longer have to bear the shame of hunger among the Gentiles.
31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds, which were not good, and will feel loathing for yourselves because of your sins and because of your abominations.

32 I will not do this for your sake, says the LORD God, so be it to you
proclaim! Be ashamed and blush at your behaviour, O house of Israel!

Principle: God gives wisdom and understanding:
Daniel 1,
17 And God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding of all things Scriptures and wisdom; but above all he made Daniel wise in all Stories and dreams.

Principle: God brings down the proud and exalts the humble.

God takes kingdom from the proud
Nebuchadnezzar and gives it back to him when he humbles himself:

Daniel 4,
27 ... then the king spoke up and said, "Is this not the great Babylon that I have built for myself as a royal residence, by virtue of my wealth and in honour of my majesty?"
28 While this word was still in the king's mouth, a voice came down from heaven: "It is said to you, King Nebuchadnezzar: The kingdom has been taken from you!
29 And you shall be cast out from among men, and you shall be with the beasts. You will dwell in the field; they will feed you with grass like oxen, and seven Ages shall pass over you until you realise that the Most High has power over the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will!"
30 At the same moment, the word to Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled: he was taken away from the
He ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until his hair was as long as eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.
31 But after the passage of time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me. Then I praised the Most High and glorified him who lives forever, whose dominion is eternal and whose kingdom endures from generation to generation...

Hosea 2,
10 She did not realise that it was I who gave her the grain, the must and the oil and all the silver and gold they used Baal.
9 Therefore I will take back my grain in its season and my must in its time.
I will take my wool and my flax from her, with which she covers her nakedness.

Joel 2,

19 And the LORD answered and said to his people, "Behold, I am sending you Grain, wine and oil, that you may be satisfied with them, and I will no longer give you up to reproach among the nations; 23 and you children of Zion, rejoice and be glad in the LORD your God; for he has given you the early rain in due measure and showers of rain, Early rain and late rain, on the first day sent to you.
24 And the threshing floors shall be full of grain, and the winepresses of must and oil overflow.
25 So I will restore to you the years whose produce the gnawers, the locust, the devourer and the ravager have consumed my great
The army of war that I have sent against you;
26 And you shall have enough to eat and be satisfied, and the name of the LORD, praise your God, who has done marvellously for you, and my people shall not be put to shame for ever!
27 And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the LORD, am your I am God and none else; and my people shall never be put to shame!

Micah 4,

13 Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion!
For I will make you horns of iron
and hoofs of brass, to crush great nations and to consecrate their spoil to the LORD and their wealth to the ruler of all the earth.
Zechariah 10:1 Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD makes lightning and will give you showers for every plant in the field!
Principle: God gives victory and provides the wealth of the Gentiles:

Zechariah 14,

14 But Judah will also fight near Jerusalem and the wealth of all the nations round about will be gathered together, gold and silver and clothing in great abundance.

Malachi 3,

8 Shall a man rob God as you rob me? But you ask: "Whose Have we robbed you?" Of tithes and offerings!
9 You have been cursed, because you have betrayed me, you, the whole People!
10 But bring the tithe in full to the granary, so that there may be food in my storehouse.

But test me by this, says the LORD of hosts, whether I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down blessings on you in abundance!

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for you, that he shall not destroy the fruit of the earth, neither shall the vine fail you in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

1.2 God's provision in the New Testament: The feeding of the four thousand

Matthew 15,

35 And he commanded the people to lie down on the ground,
36 And he took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to the disciples, but the disciples gave them to the people.
37 And they all ate and were filled, and they picked up seven baskets full of crumbs that were left over.
38 And those who had eaten were four thousand men, without women or children.

Principle: God provides - also in worldly matters - the tax coin in the fish's mouth:

Matthew 17,

27 But lest we offend them, go to the sea and cast your line
and take the first fish you pull out; and when you open its mouth, you will find a stater; take it and give it to me and you.

Luke 1,

52 He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly.
53 He has filled the hungry with goods and sent the rich away empty.

Luke 12,

20 But God said to him, "You fool! This night your soul will be taken from you and to whom will belong what you have prepared?
21 This is what happens to those who gather treasures for themselves and are not rich for God.
22 And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, and for your body, what you will wear.
23 Life is more than food and the body is more than clothing.

24 Consider the ravens! They neither sow nor reap, they have no storehouse nor barns, and yet God feeds them. How much more are you worth than the birds!

25 But who among you can add a cubit to his length with his worries?

26 If you are not able to do the least, why do you worry about the rest? 27 Look at the lilies as they grow. They do not spin or weave; I

But I tell you that even Solomon, in all his glory, not clothed like one of them!
 28 But if God has made the grass of the field, which stands today and will grow in the O ye of little faith, how much more clothe yourselves!
 29 Do not ask what you should eat or what you should drink, and do not be upset!
 30 For the Gentiles of the world seek after all these things, but your Father knows, that you are in need of it.
 31 But seek ye his kingdom, it shall be added unto you
 become.
 32 Fear not, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom!
 33 Sell your possessions and give alms! Make yourselves bags that will not grow old, a treasure that will not run out, in heaven, where no thief can come and no moth can hide is its work of destruction.
 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 Luke 18,
 28 Then Peter said, "Behold, we have left what is ours and followed you!
 29 And he said to them: Verily I say unto you, There is none that hath house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God,
 30 who did not receive it again in many ways in this time and in the time to come
 Eternal life in this world! Luke 22,
 35 And he said to them: When I sent you out without bag and pouch and shoes, did you lack anything? They said: Nothing!
 36 Then he said to them: But now, whoever has a bag, let him take it, and likewise the purse; and whoever does not it, let him sell his garment and buy a sword.

John 1,
 16 And from his fullness we have all received grace for grace.
 Jesus' first miracle was a miracle of provision (the wedding at Cana):

John 2,
 Everyone serves the good wine first, and when they have become drunk, then the lesser wine; you have kept the good wine until now!
 11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, revealing his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

John 3,
 27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

The feeding of the five thousand John 6,
 8 Then one of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, speaks to him:
 9 There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish; but what is this? among so many?
 10 Jesus says: "Make the people sit down! But there was much grass by the Place. There the men sat down, about five thousand in number.
 11 But Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks and distributed them to the disciples, who But the disciples to those who had sat down; also of the fish as much as they wanted.
 12 And when they were filled, he said to his disciples, "Gather the fragments that remain, so that nothing may perish. 13 So they gathered and filled twelve baskets with fragments of the five Barley loaves left for those who had eaten.

John 21,
 6 But he said to them: Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you will find it! Then they threw it out and were no longer able to pull it out before the amount of fish.

Jesus makes breakfast for his disciples: 9 So when they had gone ashore, they see a charcoal fire on the ground and a fish lying on it, and bread.

Acts 14,
 16 It is true that in times past he let all the Gentiles go their own way.
 leave;
 17 and yet he did not leave himself without witness, he did much good and has given you rain and fruitful times from heaven, has nourished you and filled your hearts with joy.

Acts 17,
 24 The God who made the world and all that is in it, he, the Lord of Heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made by hands;
 25 Nor is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, since he himself gives life and breath and everything to all.

Romans 8,

32 He who did not spare even his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how could he not also give us all things with him?

Romans 9,

16 So then it is not up to anyone's will or behaviour, but to God's mercy.

18 So now he has mercy on whom he wills, and he hardens whom he wills.

Principle: God provides through other Christians:

Romans 15,

26 For it pleased Macedonia and Achaia to organise a collection for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem;

27 It has pleased them, and they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have received a share in their spiritual goods, they are also obliged to serve those in the physical.

1 Corinthians 3,

21 Let no man therefore boast of men, for all things are yours:

22 Whether Paul or Apollos, Cephas or the world, life or death, the present or the future, all things are yours;

23 But you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

1. Corinthians 4,

7 For who favours you? But what do you possess that you do not receive have you? But if you have received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

2. Corinthians 8:9:

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich became poor for your sake, that you through his poverty might become rich!

2 Corinthians 9,

8 But God is mighty to give you every grace in abundance, so that in always have all sufficiency for everything and abound in every good work,

9 As it is written: "He has scattered, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

10 But he who gives seed to the sower and bread for food will also

Give you the seed and multiply it, and the fruits of your righteousness will grow leave,

11 so that you may be rich in all things to all joyfulness in giving thanks to God through us.

12 For the ministry of this help not only fills up the lack of the saints, but also overflows with the thanks of many towards God, ...

Principle: We should not worry about material things, but instead turn to God:

Philliper 4,

6 Do not worry about anything; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let Make your requests known to God with thanksgiving.

7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will fill your hearts and minds.

Keep your senses in Christ Jesus!

10 But I have been very pleased in the Lord that you have recovered so far to be able to provide for me; whatever else you were anxious to do, but you were not in a position to do so.

11 It is not for lack of trying that I say this, for I have learnt to be content with the situation. to be in the situation I myself in.

12 I am as good at being poor as I am at being rich;

13 I am trained in everything and for everything, both to be full and to go hungry, both to have plenty and to suffer want. I can do all things through him who makes me strong.

14 But you have done well to take care of my distressed situation.

15 But you also know, Philipians, that at the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the account of income and expenditure except you alone;

16 Yes, you also sent me to Thessalonica once, and even twice, to meet my needs.

17 Not that I desire the gift, but I desire that the fruit may be abundant on your account. 18 I have all I *need* and have plenty; I am fully provided for, since I received your gift from Epaphroditus, a sweet savour, a pleasing sacrifice, acceptable to God.

19 But my God, satisfy all your needs according to his riches in glory, in Christ Jesus.

20 But to our God and Father be the honour for ever and ever! Amen.

Colossians 1,

19 For it pleased God that all fullness should dwell in him

1. Timothy 6,

17 Command the rich in this age that they be not proud, neither
We should not place our hope in the fickleness of wealth, but in the living God, who gives us everything in abundance for our enjoyment,
18 That they may do good, be rich in good works, be generous, be generous,
19 and thus collect for themselves a nice capital for the future so that they can attain true life.

2. Peter 1

3 His divine power having given us all things pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who gave us the power of God.
of his glory and virtue,
4 By whom are given unto us the most precious and greatest promises, that
you become partakers of the divine nature through them, after you have given way in the world to the you have escaped the corruption of lust

James 1,

16 Do not be mistaken, my dear brothers:
17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Principle: God wants to give his children gifts, but we have to ask him for them,
so that later we remember that all good gifts come from Him:

James 4,

3 You do not get it because you do not ask; you ask and do not get it because you
evil, to consume it with your lust.

Heb.13,

5 Let change be without avarice! content with what you have! For he himself
has said: "I will not leave you nor forsake you!"
6 So that we may confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I am afraid
not! What can people do to me?"

James 1,

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights.

Principle: The most important things in life are free. God provides them: Revelation 21,

7 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end! I will give to the thirsty

from the source of the water of life for free!

Revelation 22,

17 "And if anyone thirsts, let him come; if anyone wishes, him take the water of life for nothing."

Part 2: Dealing with finances in the Bible

2.1 Finances in the Old Testament:

Principle: The whole earth - and therefore everything material - belongs to God:

Exodus 19:5b:

...for the whole earth is mine; ...

Deuteronomy 10,

14 Behold, the heavens and all the heavens and the earth and all that is in them belong to the LORD your God;

Deuteronomy 16:16f

But no one should appear before the Lord empty-handed,

17 But every man with a gift of his hand, according to the blessing which the LORD your God has given you.

Job 41:3

Under the whole sky, everything is mine!

Psalms 34:11ff

Taste and see how kind the LORD is; blessed is he who trusts in him!

Fear the LORD, ye his saints: for they that fear him have none

Deficiency.

Young lions suffer want and hunger, but those who seek the LORD have nothing to do.

Do without good things.

, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD!

Who has a zest for life and would like to see good days?

Psalms 45,

15 And the daughter of Tyre will come with gifts; the richest of the people will seek your favour.

Psalms 62:11

Do not rely on extorted goods and do not be proud of stolen goods; take
the fortune, do not put your trust in it!

Psalms 112,

1 Hallelujah! Blessed is he who fears the LORD, who delights greatly in his commandments!

2 The seed will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be
be blessed.

3 Riches and abundance are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.

Psalms 135

10 He defeated great nations and killed mighty kings;

11 Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kings Canaanites

12 and gave their land as an inheritance, as an inheritance to his people Israel.

Proverbs 3,

13 Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who finds understanding gets!

14 For their acquisition is better than the acquisition of money, and their profit exceeds fine gold.

15 It is more precious than pearls, and all your treasures cannot be compared to it.

16 In her right hand is long life, in her left hand wealth and honour.

17 Her ways are sweet ways and all her paths are peace.

18 It is a tree of life to those who grasp it; and he who holds it is to praise happily.

Proverbs 4,

4 Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and you will live.

5 Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding; do not forget the words of my mouth and do not deviate from it!

6 If you do not leave her, she will keep you; if you love her, she will keep you!

7 The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom and for all your acquisition acquire Mind!

8 Hold her high and she will exalt you; she will honour you if you love her.

Proverbs 8,

11 Yes, wisdom is better than pearls, and no jewels can compare with it. 18 Riches and honour come with me, great wealth and righteousness. 19 My fruit is better than gold, even than fine gold, and what I bring in surpasses choice silver.

20 I walk in the path of righteousness, in the midst of the path of justice, 21 so that I may give my lovers a real inheritance and fill their treasuries.

Proverbs 10,

22 The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and *His own* labour adds nothing to him.

Proverbs 11,

24 One shares out and yet becomes richer, another saves more than is right, and will only get poorer.

28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will

green like the foliage.

Proverbs 13,

7 One man imagines himself rich and yet has nothing; another imagines himself poor and yet has much.

8 With his riches a man can save own life, but a poor man gets no threats to be heard.

22 What a good man leaves behind passes on to his children's children, but the wealth of the sinner is saved for the righteous.

Proverbs 14,

23 Where every effort is made, there is abundance; but where words are made, there is scarcity.

24 Wealth is the crown of the wise, but fools have nothing but foolishness.

Proverbs 15,

6 In the house of the righteous is much wealth; but in the income of the wicked is ruin.

16 Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great riches and a troubled conscience.

Proverbs 16,

8 Better a little with justice than a large income with injustice.

16 How much better is it to acquire wisdom than gold, and to acquire understanding is more desirable than silver!

Proverbs 20,

15 There is gold and many pearls; but a precious jewel are lips of understanding.

Proverbs 22,

4 The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD is wealth, honour and life.

Proverbs 23,

4 Do not endeavour to rich; by your own understanding refrain from doing so.

Proverbs 28,

6 A poor man who walks in his innocence is better than a rich man who crookedly.

8 He who increases his wealth by usurious interest collects it for one who has mercy on the poor.

11 A rich man thinks himself wise, but a poor man of understanding sees through him.

16 A ruler without understanding allows himself many extortions, but he who hates unjust gain will reign long.

19 He who tills his field has plenty of bread, but he who runs after useless things, he has plenty of need.

20 An honest man has many blessings; but he who wants to get rich quickly does not remain innocent.
22 He who pursues wealth becomes jealous, not knowing that want will come upon him.
25 Pomposity causes strife, but whoever trusts in the LORD will
amply saturated.
27 He who gives to the poor has no lack, but he who covers his eyes will be cursed much.

Proverbs 29,
3 He who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, but he who goes with harlots brings his wealth through.

Proverbs 30,
8 Remove from me falsehood and lying words; do not give me poverty and riches,
nourish me with the bread set before me, 9 so that I will not deny you out of surfeiting and say, "Who is the LORD?" but also so that I will not steal out of sheer poverty and take the name of my God in vain.

Ecclesiastes 2,
24 There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and his
Let the soul enjoy good things in its toil!
But I have seen that this also comes from the hand of God.
25 For who can eat and who can enjoy without Him?
26 For to the man who Him He gives wisdom and knowledge and
joy; but to the sinner he gives plague, that he may gather and scrape together to
to give it to the one who pleases God. That too is vain and a chasing after
Wind.

Ecclesiastes 3,
9 What then is the profit of him that doeth these things, wherewith he laboureth?
10 I have seen the plague that God has given to the children of men,
to bother with it.
12 I have recognised that there is nothing better among them than to rejoice and
To do good in his life;
13 and if any man eats and drinks and enjoys good things with all his labour,
this is also a gift from God. Ecclesiastes 5,
9 He who loves money will never be satisfied with money, and he who loves riches will never be satisfied with riches.
enough. That is also vain!
10 Where there are many goods, there are also many who feed on them, and what has their

owners more of it than a feast for the eyes? 11
The labourer's sleep is sweet, he little or much; but the rich man's surfeiting will not let him sleep.
12 There is an that I have seen under the sun: wealth that
is kept by its owner to his detriment.
13 If such wealth is lost through misfortune and the person concerned has a son, he is left with nothing.
14 Naked as he came from his mother's womb, he goes away again, and can take nothing for his labour, which he carries away in his hand.
could.
18 Even if God gives any man riches and treasures and gives him
allowed to enjoy it and take his part, that he may rejoice in his
effort is a gift from God.
19 For he shall not think much of the days of his life: for God consents to the joy of his heart.

Jeremiah 2,
13 For my people have committed a twofold sin: Me, the source of
of living water they have left dig cisterns, cisterns full of holes that hold no water!

Habakkuk 2,
13 Behold, is it not from the LORD of hosts that peoples labour for fire and nations toil for nothing?

Haggai 2,
7 and I will also shake all nations, and the treasures of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord.
LORD of hosts.
8 Mine is the silver, and mine is the gold, says the LORD of hosts.
2.2 Finances in the New Testament:

Matthew 6,
8...For your Father knows what you need before you ask him.
19 Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and rust consume them, and where thieves dig and steal.
20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.
and where thieves do not dig and steal.
21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will cling to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. 25 Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your lives, what you will eat or what you will drink. you shall drink, nor for your body what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air! They neither sow nor reap, they gather nor into the barns; and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 But who among you can a single cubit to his length through his worry? 28 And why are you worried about the clothes? Look at the lilies of the field, like they grow. They don't work and they don't spin; 29 But I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of them. 30 If therefore God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is standing and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more do so to you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we clothe ourselves? 32 For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; but your heavenly Father knows that you need all this. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things will be added to you. 34 Therefore do not be anxious about the morrow, for the morrow will not come. Day will take care of its own. Every day has its own plague!

Matthew 13,
22 But it is sown among thorns with him who hears the word; but the Concern for the temporal and the deceitfulness of riches suffocate the word, and it remains without fruit.

Luke 3,
1 And he answered and said to them: He that hath two coats, let him that hath none And whoever has food, do likewise! Jesus and his disciples are fed by wealthy women:

Luke 8:
1 And it came to pass after this, that he travelled through cities and villages, and

preached and proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with him 2 and some women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven devils had come out, 3 and Joanna the wife of Chuza, one of Herod's stewards, and Susanna and many others who served them with their possessions.

Luke 14,
33 So none of you who does not renounce all that he has will be able to keep my Be a disciple.

Luke 16,
9 I also say to you: Make friends with the unrighteous mammon, on that when he goes out *to you*, they will receive you into the eternal tabernacles. 10 He who is faithful in small things is faithful also in great things; and he who is unjust in small things is unjust also in great things. 11 Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will Trust the real thing?

Luke 16:19
19 Now there was a rich man who dressed himself in purple and fine linen and lived all his days in splendour and joy. 20 But a poor man named Lazarus lay at his door, full of sores, 21 and desired to be satisfied with what fell from the rich man's table; and even dogs came and licked his sores. 22 But it came to pass that the poor man died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. But the rich man also died and was buried. 23 And when he lifted up his eyes in the realm of the dead, torment, he saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luke 18,
24 But when Jesus saw him like this, he said, "How difficult it will be for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man the kingdom of God. 26 Then those who heard it said: Who then can be saved? 27 But he said: "What is impossible with man is possible with God.

Luke 21,
1 But when he looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.

laid.

2 But he also saw a widow who was dependent on her earnings and put in two mites;

3 And he said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them!

4 For all these have contributed of their abundance to the gifts; but they out of her poverty, she put in everything she had to earn a living.

Luke 21,

34 But take heed to yourselves, that your hearts be not weighed down by Intoxication and drunkenness and food worries and that day will come upon you unawares!

Luke 22,

35 And he said to them: When I sent you out without bag and pouch and shoes, did you lack anything? They said: Nothing!
36 Then he said to them: But now, whoever has a purse, let him take it, and likewise the bag; and whoever does not it, let him sell his garment and buy a sword.

John 6,

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man hath given you.
for God the Father has confirmed it!

Romans 12,

1 I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to keep your
Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God: let this be your reasonable worship!
2 And do not conform yourselves to the course of this world, but change your nature through the renewing of your mind, that may prove what is the will of God, which is
good and pleasing and perfect.
13 Share in the afflictions of the saints, make every endeavour to
Hospitality!

Romans 15,

25 But now I am travelling to Jerusalem in the service of the saints.
26 For it pleased Macedonia and Achaia to organise a collection for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem;
27 It has pleased them, and they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles

have received a share in their spiritual goods, they are also obliged to serve those in the physical.

1 Corinthians 3,

21 Let no man therefore boast of men, for all is yours:

22 Whether Paul or Apollos, Cephas or the world, life or death, the present or the future, all things are yours;

23 But you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

1 Corinthians 9,

11 If we have sown you spiritual goods, it is a great thing if we

of you reap those for the body?

14 So also the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel, should live from the gospel.

1. Corinthians 16,

1 But as for the collection for the saints, you also do as I do
ordered it for the churches in Galatia.

2 Every first day of the week, each of you put something aside and collect, depending on how he ; so that not only when I come, the
collections have to be made.

3 But when I have arrived, I will take those you deem suitable with me.
Send letters so that they can deliver your gift of love to Jerusalem.

4 But if it's worth the effort for me to go, they should travel with me.

2. Corinthians 8,

1 But we make known to you, brethren, the grace of God which has been given to the churches of Macedonia.

2 For despite many trials of affliction, her overflowing joy and profound poverty brought out the richness of her generosity.

3 For according to their ability, indeed I , they were willingly

4 and with much persuasion asked us for the grace to take part in the service for the saints,

5 and not only, as we hoped, but they gave themselves, first to the

Lord, and then to us, by the will of God, 6 so that we promised Titus that we would finish this labour of love with you, just as he had begun it.

7 But as you are rich in all things, in faith, in the word, in knowledge and
in all the zeal and love you have for us, may this labour of love also abound among you!

8 I say this not as a commandment, but so that through the zeal of others to test the authenticity of your love.
 9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich became poor for your sake, that you through his poverty might become rich!
 10 And I give my opinion on this: It is fitting for you, because you have not only started doing, but also wanting since last year,
 11 that you now also accomplish the doing, so that the inclination of the will also corresponds to the accomplishing, according to what you have.
 12 For where there good will, one is pleasant according to what he has, not what he doesn't have.
 13 However, I am not saying this so that others can have relief, but you distress; but according to the principle of equality, in the your abundance will make up for their lack,
 14 so that their abundance may also make up for your lack, so that there may be a balance,
 15 As it is written: "He who gathered much did not have abundance, and he who gathered little did not lack."
 24 So give them the proof of your love and of our praise of you publicly in front of the communities!

2 Corinthians 9,
 6 But remember this: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows in blessing will also reap in blessing. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart not unwillingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver!
 8 But God is mighty to give you every grace in abundance, so that in always have all sufficiency for everything and abound in every good work,
 9 As it is written: "He has scattered, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."
 10 But he who gives seed to the sower and bread for food will *also* Give you the seed and multiply it, and the fruits of your righteousness will grow leave,
 11 so that you may be rich in all things to all joyfulness in giving thanks to God through us.
 12 For the ministry of this help not only fills the lack of the saints, but also overflows with the thanks of many towards God,
 13 by being led to praise God through the trial of this service

for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ and for the simplicity of contribution for them and for all; 14 and in their supplication for you they will have a heartfelt affection for you because of the abundant grace of God with you.
 15 But thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!

2 Corinthians 11

8 I have robbed other churches and taken wages from them to serve you; and when I was with you and suffered want, I am no burden to anyone fallen;
 9 for my need was by the brothers who came from Macedonia; and in I have been careful not to be a burden you and will continue to be careful.

2 Corinthians 12,

Let my grace be sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will rather be content with my weaknesses boast, so that the power of Christ may dwell with me.

2 Corinthians 12,

13 For what is it in which you have been made inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself have not a burden to you? Forgive me this injustice!
 14 Behold, now for the third time I am ready to come to you, and will give you do not be a burden, for I am not seeking what is yours, but you. Let there be It is not the children who collect treasures for their parents, but the parents for their children.

Galatians 6,

2 Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ!
 3 For if someone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself himself.
 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will find for himself the have fame and not for someone else;
 5 for every man shall bear his own burden.
 6 Let the one who is taught in the word share in the one who teaches him. all goods.
 7 Do not err; God will not mock him! For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
 8 For whoever sows to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but whoever sows to who sows the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.
 9 But let us not grow weary in well-doing; for in his time we shall

we will also reap if we do not grow weary. 10
Let us therefore, where we have opportunity
do good to everyone, mostly to fellow believers.

Philippians 4,

10 But I have been very pleased in the Lord that
you have recovered so far
to be able to provide for me; whatever else you
were anxious to do, but you
were not in a position to do so.

11 It is not for lack of trying that I say this, for I
have learnt to be content with the situation.
to be in the situation I myself in.

12 I am as good at being poor as I am at being
rich;

13 I am trained in everything and for everything,
both to be full and to go hungry, both to have
plenty and to suffer want. I can do all things
through him who makes me strong.

1. Timothy 6,

17 The rich in the present age are commanded
not to be proud, not even to be
We should not place our hope in the fickleness of
wealth, but in the living God, who gives us
everything in abundance for our enjoyment,
18 that they may good, be rich in good works, be
generous, and share,
19 and thus collect for themselves a nice capital
for the future so that they can attain true life.

2. Timothy 2,

4 Those who go to war do not get involved in the
business of everyday life,
so that he may please the one who hired him. 5
Even if someone fights, he will not be crowned
because he fights rightly.

Hebrews 13:5

Let your walk be without avarice! Be content with
what you have! For he himself has
said: "I will not leave you nor forsake you!"

Hebrews 13

16 Do not forget to do good and to communicate, for
such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

James 2,

15 If a brother or sister lacks clothing and daily food
16 And if one of you should say to them, 'Go in
peace, warm yourselves and be satisfied, but do not
give them what is needed to satisfy their physical
needs.

needs, what good would that do them?

James 5,

1 So now, you rich people, weep and howl over
the misery that is coming upon you!

2 Your wealth has rotted and your clothes have
become moth-eaten;

3 Your gold and silver are rusted, and their rust
will bear witness against you
and devour your flesh like fire. You have collected
treasures in the last
days!

4 Behold, the wages of the labourers who
mowed the fields for you, but who were paid by
been withheld from you, cry out, and the cry of the
reapers is to the

ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have wallowed and
splurged on earth, you have fattened your hearts on
a day of slaughter!

1 Peter 1,

7 so that the proof of your faith, which is much
more precious than that of the
perishable gold (which is tested by fire) will result in
praise, glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus
Christ;

1. John 3,

17 But whoever has temporal sustenance and
sees his brother in want and closes his heart to
him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 Little children, let us not love with words, neither
with the tongue, but in the flesh.

Action and truth!

3. Johannes,

5 My dear one, you act faithfully in what you do
for the brothers, and yet
on others.

6 They have borne witness to your love before the
congregation. You will do well if you give them a
safe conduct worthy of God;

7 for they went out for his name's sake
without accepting anything from the pagans.

8 So we are now obliged to accept such
people so that we can become co-workers
of the truth.

Revelation 3,

17 For thou sayest, I am rich, and have abundance,
and have need of nothing.

not that you are wretched and miserable, poor, blind
and naked!

18 I advise you to buy gold from me that is burnt in
the fire, so that you may be rich.

and white garments to clothe yourself so that the
shame of your nakedness will not be revealed, and
eye ointment to anoint your eyes so that you may
see.

Part 3: Diligence, work and laziness in the Bible Is
work a curse or is work a blessing?

3.1 What does the Bible say about laziness:
Proverbs 19:15 Laziness sinks into a deep
sleep, and a lazy soul must hunger.

Proverbs 31:27 She keeps watch over her
household and never eats the bread of
Laziness.

Ecclesiastes 10:18 Through slothfulness the
beams rot, and because of carelessness of
hands the roof runs down.

Proverbs 10:26 As vinegar is to the teeth and
smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those
who send him.

Proverbs 13:4 The lazy man desires much and yet
has nothing; the soul of the
But the hard-working get fat.
Proverbs 19:24 The lazy man puts his hand in the
pot and does not want it back
the mouth.

Proverbs 20:4 In the autumn the sluggard will
not plough; if he covets in the harvest, there is
nothing.

Proverbs 21:25 The lazy man must die of hunger
because he will not work with his hands.

Proverbs 22:13 The lazy man says, "There is a lion
outside; he could take me by surprise.
Tear it up in the street!"

Proverbs 26:14 The door turns in its hinge, and the
lazy man in his bed.

Proverbs 26:15 The lazy man puts his hand in the
bowl; he hardly brings it back
back to the mouth!

3.2 What does the Bible say about diligence?

Proverbs 12:24: A diligent hand will rule, but a lax
one must do forced labour!

Romans 12:11 Do not slacken in diligence, be
fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.
Hebrews 6:11 But we desire that each of you show
the same diligence to the end, according to the full
assurance of hope,
2. 1 Peter 1:5 Therefore add to this all your
diligence and reach out in
virtue in your faith, but knowledge in virtue,

Deuteronomy 11:13 Will you therefore diligently
obey my commandments which I have given you
this day?
command you to love the LORD your God and
to serve him with all your heart and with all
your soul,

Revelation 3:19 I love, I punish and chastise. So
then
be diligent and repent!
Hebrews 6:11 And we desire that every one of you
should show the same diligence to the end,
according to the full assurance of hope...

2 Peter 1,
3 After his divine power has given us everything is
necessary for life and godliness
through the knowledge of Him who has called
us by virtue of His glory and virtue,
4 through which the dearest and greatest promises
are given to us, so that
you become partakers of the divine nature through
them, after you have given way in the world to the
have escaped the corruption that reigns through
lust,
5 So add to this all your diligence, and in your
faith add virtue, and in virtue add knowledge,

Proverbs 31,
10 A brave woman (who can find her?) is worth far
more than delicious pearls!
11 Her husband's heart relies on her, and he
has no lack of profit.
12 She does him good and no harm throughout
her life.
13 She pulls wool and flax and processes it with
willing hands.
14 Like the merchant ships, it brings its bread
from afar.
15 Before , she is already up and gives out food
for her house and orders her maids.
16 She strives for a field and also acquires it; with
the yield of her hands
she a vineyard.
17 She girds her loins with strength and steels
her arms.
18 She sees that her work is thriving; her light
never goes out, even at night.
19 She reaches for the distaff and her hands
grasp the spindle.
20 She opens her hand to the unfortunate and
extends her hands to the poor.
21 She is not worried about the snow for her
house, because her whole house is covered in
snow.
Dressed in scarlet.
22 She makes her own blankets; linen and purple
are her garments.
23 Her husband is well known in the gates
when he sits among the elders of the land.

24 She makes and sells shirts and delivers belts to the trader.
 25 Strength and dignity is her robe, and she laughs at the day to come.
 26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and kind instruction is on her tongue.
 27 She keeps an eye on her housekeeping and never eats the bread of laziness.
 28 Her sons grow up and praise her happily; her husband praises her likewise:
 29 "Many daughters have become brave women, but you surpass them all!"
 30 Grace captivates and beauty fades; a woman who fears the LORD shall you can praise.
 31 Give her of the fruits of her labour, and her works will praise her in the gates!

3.3 What does the Bible say about work? Before the fall of man:

Genesis 1

15 And the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden, that he built it and kept it. After the fall of man:

1. Genesis 5,

29 He called his name Noah, saying, "He will comfort us because of the labour of our hands and the toil of the ground the LORD has cursed.

2. Genesis 31,

14 You shall the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Whoever desecrates it shall be put to death, and whoever does any work on it shall be put to death, whose soul shall be cut off from his people!
 15 Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day is the Sabbath, the holy rest of the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death.
 16 And the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, that they may make it an everlasting covenant for all their generations.
 17 He is an everlasting sign between me the children of Israel; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.

2. Genesis 35,

31 And the Spirit of God has filled him with wisdom, understanding and skill for all kinds of work;
 32 also that he can invent skilful work for execution in gold, silver and ore;

33 in cutting and setting gemstones, in carving wood to make all kinds of artistic work.

34 He has also it into his heart that he may instruct; he and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.

35 He has filled them with wise hearts, to make all kinds of work of an artist and inventor and colourful weaver in fabrics of blue and red purple and

36 Crimson colour and of fine white cotton, and of a weaver, that they may make all kinds of work and invent useful work.

3. Genesis 23,

27 On the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement, when you shall hold a holy convocation and humble your souls and offer sacrifices by fire to the LORD;

28 and you shall do no work on that day, for it is the

Day of Atonement, for your reconciliation before the LORD your God.

29 But whichever soul does not humble itself on that day shall be cut off become of their people;

30 And whatever soul any work on that day, I will destroy it from among its people.

31 You shall no labour. This is an eternally valid order for your genders in all your places of residence.

4. Genesis 4,

19 Therefore you shall do these things to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the Holy of Holies: Aaron and his sons are to go in and give each one his work and his burden.

23 From thirty years old and upward, to the fiftieth year you shall number them, all those fit for service to work on the tabernacle.

30 From thirty years old and upward, even to fifty years old, you shall number them, all those fit for service to work on the tabernacle.

31 Their task in the service of the tabernacle is to be the boards of the tabernacle, its bars, Carrying pillars and feet, ...

2. chronicle 8,

9 But he did not make any of the children of Israel serfs for his labour, but they were his men of war and captains of his charioteers and his horsemen.

Nehemiah 4,

17 did the work with one hand while holding the weapon with the other.

held.

Psalms 104,
23 But man goes out to his day's work, to his labour
until evening.

Psalms 128,
2 You will be nourished by the labour of your
hands; good for you, you are well off!

Proverbs 31,
18 She sees that her labour prospers; her light does
not go out even at night.

Lamentations 2,
18 I also hated all my work, with which I had
laboured under the
Sun, because I should leave it to the person who
comes after me.
19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a
fool? And yet he will be
all the power I have worked for with labour and
wisdom under the sun. That too is vain!
20 Then I let my heart despair of all the labour
with which I
I have laboured under the sun. 21 For the
wealth that one has acquired through
wisdom, understanding and
He must give it to another as an inheritance, who
does not care for it.
has endeavoured; that is also vain and a great
misfortune!
22 For what is a man profited by all his labour and
by all the diligence of his heart, wherewith he
labours under the sun?
23 For he is troubled daily with sorrow and
vexation; even in the night has his
Heart no rest; that too is vain!
24 There is nothing better for a man than that he
should eat and drink, and his
Let the soul enjoy good things in its toil!
But I have seen that this also comes from
the hand of God.

Lamentations 6,
7 All a man's labour is for his mouth, and the soul
is not satisfied.

Isaiah 53,
11 He will be satisfied with the labour of his soul;
through his knowledge he will
He, my servant the righteous, will make many
righteous, and their debts he will repay.
take.

Ezekiel 2,
4 ...be strong, says the LORD, and labour! For I am
with you, says the
LORD of hosts. 5...; do not be
afraid!

John 4,
35 Say ye not, There are yet four months, and then
cometh the harvest? Behold, I say
Lift up your eyes and look at the fields; they are
already white for the
Harvest.
36 He who reaps receives a reward and gathers
fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper
may rejoice together.
37 For here the saying is true: one sows and the
other reaps.
38 I have sent you out to reap what you have not
worked at; others
have worked, and you have entered into their
work.

John 6,
27 Labour not for the meat which , but for that
meat which endureth unto everlasting life ...

1 Corinthians 3,
5 What then is Apollos and what is Paul? They are
servants through whom you believe.
as the Lord has given to each one of you.
6 I have planted, Apollos has watered, but God
has given the flourishing.
7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is
anything, but
God who gives prosperity.
8 But he that planteth and he that watereth are
as one another: but every man shall receive his
own reward according to his own labour.
9 For we are God's co-workers, but you are
God's field and God's building.
10 According to the grace of God that has been
given to me, I, as a wise master builder
laid the foundation, but another builds on it. Let
every man see how he builds upon it.
11 For no one can lay another foundation except
the one that has been laid,
which is Jesus Christ.
12 But if someone places gold, silver, precious
stones, wood, hay on this ground,
Straw builds,
13 so shall every man's work made manifest; the
day shall make it clear, because it is
will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test the
nature of everyone's work.

1 Corinthians 9,
6 Or is it just me and Barnabas who are not
authorised to refrain from working?
7 Who ever goes into the field at their own
expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat
from its fruit? Or who feeds a flock and does
not feed on the milk of the flock?

1. Corinthians 15,
58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always increasing in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

2. Corinthians 10,
15 Nor do we boast to excess because of the works of others, but have
but the hope that, as your faith grows, there will be much more room for you to
win, according to our rule,
16 to preach the gospel also in the lands beyond you and not to take credit according to someone else's rules where the work has already been done.
is done.

2 Corinthians 11,
27 in labour and toil, often in night watches, in hunger and thirst; often in fasting, in cold and nakedness;
28 On top of all this, the daily influx to me, the care for all the churches.

1. Thessalonians 2,
27 in labour and toil, often in night watches, in hunger and thirst; often in fasting, in cold and nakedness;
28 On top of all this, the daily influx to me, the care for all the churches.

2. Thessalonians 3,
10 For when we were with you, we commanded you this: if anyone does not work
he should not eat.
11 For we hear that some of you walk disorderly and do not
labouring, but doing vain things. 12 such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that
they earn their own bread by quiet labour. Hebrews 6,
10 For God is not unjust, that he should forget your labour and the love which ye have shown.
against his name by serving and still serving the saints.

Revelation 2,
2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and that thou wilt not destroy the wicked.
and that you have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not able to bear it.
and have found them liars; 3 and you have endurance, and for my name's sake you have borne and have not grown weary.

After the return of Jesus: 1 Corinthians 6,
2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? ...

3 Do you not know that we will judge angels?

Revelation 20,
6 Blessed and holy is he who shares in the first resurrection. About this the second death no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and with
he reigns for a thousand years.

3.4 What does the Bible say about "bail"?

Spr.6

1 My son, have you vouched for your neighbour, for a stranger you
a handshake;

2 you are bound by a verbal promise, trapped by the words of your mouth,

3 Do this, my son: save yourself, for you have fallen into the hand of your neighbour.
Therefore, prostrate yourself before him and attack your neighbour.

4 Don't allow your eyes to sleep and your eyelids to slumber!

5 Rescue yourself from his hand like a gazelle and like a bird from the hand of the fowler!

Proverbs 11,

15 He who stands surety for another will come to grief, but he who is careful not to be a surety will be safe.

Proverbs 17,

18 A fool is one who pledges his hand and becomes a surety for his neighbour.

Proverbs 22,

26 Do not be one of those who are liable with their hand and become guarantors for debts;

3.5 What does the Bible say about greed?

1. Cor. 5:

11 You shall have nothing to do with one who is called a brother and is
a fornicator, or a covetous man, or an idolater, or a blasphemer, or a drunkard, or a robber; you shall not eat with such a .

1. Cor. 6,

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?
Do not be misled! Neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers,

Boy toy, boy abuser,

10 Thieves, the greedy, drunkards, blasphemers and robbers will not inherit the kingdom of God.

2. Cor.4:

5 I have therefore it necessary to admonish the brothers that they should to you to prepare the gift of blessing you have announced in advance, so that it is ready as a gift of blessing and not of greed.

6 But I mean this: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and he who Whoever sows in blessing will also reap in blessing.

7 Every man according as he in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

8 But God is able to make all grace abound among you, so that in all things you may always have full sufficiency and may abound in every good work;

9 As it is written, "He has scattered and given to the poor; his righteousness remains forever."

Part 4: God completes in us what he has begun

Isaiah 26,

12 But for us, O LORD, you will make peace, for you have also done all our works. accomplished for us.

Romans 8,

31 What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 Who spared not even his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also give us all things?

Ephesians 2,

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in it.

Philippians 1,

6... and because I am persuaded that he began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2,

13 For it is God who works in you both to will and to do, according to His good pleasure.

John 15,

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you give to the Father will ask in my name that he give it to you.

Hebrews 13,

20 But the God of peace, who is the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord

Jesus, raised from the dead by the blood of the eternal covenant,

21 Who will make you able in every good thing to do his will, and create in us, what pleases him through Jesus Christ, to whom be honour for ever and ever! Amen.

Part 4: Other areas in which God gives us gifts

The fact that God is our material provider is only one aspect of how he gives us gifts. He wants to be the source of everything. We should come to Him and get help from Him.

Other areas in which God gives us gifts:

Psalms 103,

Praise the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me to his holy name!

2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget the good things he has done for you.

3 Who forgives all your sins and heals all your infirmities;

4 who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with favour and

Mercy;

5 Who will fill your old age with good things, so that you will be as young as an eagle.

Isaiah 53,

Report about Jesus:

3 He was despised and forsaken men, a man of sorrows and pains.

familiar with sickness; as one from whom one hides one's face, so one despises

he was, and we didn't respect him.

4 But verily he bore our sickness, and our pains he took upon himself; we

but considered him to be punished, beaten and afflicted by God;

5 But he was pierced through for our transgression, crushed for our iniquity; the punishment of our peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

This means that we can become physically healthy through Jesus' death on the cross. (Not the body's self-healing powers, but the power of God that makes life possible).

Ephesians 1,

That is our prayer:

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that you may know him.

Ephesians 1,
18 And may he give you enlightened eyes of the heart, that you may know the hope to which you have called by him, how rich is the glory of his inheritance for those who have been called by him.
Saint is...

Guidance: Proverbs 3,
5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your
Know him in all thy ways, and he shall make thy paths straight.

Wisdom: James 1,
5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all gladly and upbraids no one, and it will be given to him.
6 But let him ask in faith, not doubting; for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and stirred by the wind.
7 Such a person does not think that he will receive anything from the Lord. Galatians 3,
13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for
has become us, for it is written:
"Cursed is everyone who hangs on the wood",
14 That the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus ...

=> God blessed Abraham in all things (Genesis 26:3+24)!
"It has been given to you to understand the mysteries of heaven" Mt.13,11
So it is given/gifted to us. This is passive on our part, active on God's part. Undeservedly, we also receive good things in this area (that is grace).
What a privilege to be able to understand the secrets of the sky! To recognise reality. To see the world as it really is! To understand the connections.

What are the secrets of the sky? Here is a short list:
God is the only God
Our salvation is in none other than Jesus. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.
The most important event in the history of mankind is that Jesus, out of love for
died on our behalf for our guilt and rose again.
He even conquered death.
By confessing our guilt, a new beginning in our lives is possible.
The mysteries of the rebirth (John 3), the kingdom of God, the Second Coming

Jesus, the marriage of the Lamb to the bride (Rev 19) and eternal life.
Physical healing and healing of emotional injuries are possible.
All of this is breathtaking! It is fascinating and humanly unthinkable.
But besides all the amazement - what do we do with the knowledge?
What impact do these gifts of knowledge have on our daily lives?
What consequences do we draw? Can we continue to live as before?

What does the Bible say about this?

► First: Love God and your neighbour as yourself.
This means that getting to know and love God better is the top priority. In practical terms, this means Spending time with him, cultivating our relationship with him, reading about what he is like and how he sees things.
► After that: It is about discipling others through us! It
is about evangelism as an initial part of discipleship:

Matthew 28,
18 And Jesus came and said to them:
All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of
of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
20 And teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with
all your days until the end of the world.

Mark 16,
15 And he said to them: Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.
16 who believes and is baptised will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.
17 But the signs that will follow those who believe are these: in
They will cast out evil spirits in my name and speak with new tongues,
18 Pick up snakes with your hands, and when they drink something deadly,
it will not harm them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and it will be better
with them.

What is the greatest miracle I can experience?
A physical healing, a lottery win, a harmonious partnership? The
to the Bible, the greatest miracle is the conversion of a person to God. Even the angels in heaven rejoice (Luke 15, 7+10).

My thinking and planning should be geared towards this - and when this happens, it is in turn a gift: Philippians 2:13
"for it is God who works in you both to will and to do, according to His good pleasure."

Part 5: Blessing and cursing - we have a choice! In Genesis chapter 28, God makes it clear that he loves his people and wants to bless them. However, there is a clear requirement that his blessing - also in the form of material things - to the benefit of his people, his "children": HORSE!

That means practical:
Worship God as the only God,
put him first in my life, give up idolatry at all costs (this can be: Greed for material things, status, sexuality, career, family members, cars, computers, television, Sport, striving for independence from God,...),
Repent (ask him for forgiveness and turn back)

It is crucial for us to have the right image of God - that is, to recognise God as he actually is, not as we think he is.

The Bible describes God as the loving, merciful, patient, gracious, long-suffering, faithful Father. But, and this is important, also as the all-powerful, wrathful, punishing, condemning, just God. This is always the case when his people disobey him, when other things become more important to his children than he does himself. God's grace is not limitless. That is the reality! To illustrate that God is the loving but also the righteous, the following scriptures:

Nahum 1,
2 A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; an avenger is the LORD, full of wrath; an avenger is the LORD against his adversaries; he persists in wrath against his enemies.
3 The Lord is long-suffering and of great strength, but he will certainly not leave you unpunished.
Hebrews 10,
31 It is terrible to fall into the hands of the living God!

Joel 2,
13 Rend your hearts and not your garments, and return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, long-suffering and of great favour

and repents of the evil.

Psalms 145,
8 The LORD is gracious and merciful, patient and of great kindness.

1. John 4,
7... For love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God.
God.
8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Conscious dependence on God and obedience to him is the key to our material provision.

Here are some quotes from Deuteronomy 28, the chapter on blessing and curse:

1 If thou wilt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, then the LORD will give thee rest, make your God supreme over all the peoples of the earth,
2 and because you have been obedient to the voice of the LORD your God, will come upon you and all these blessings will be bestowed upon you:
3 Blessed will you be in the city, blessed will you be in the field.
4 Blessed will be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your field and the young of your cattle, your oxen and your sheep.
5 Blessed will be your basket and your baking trough.
6 You will be blessed at your entrance and blessed at your exit.
7 And the LORD will smite your enemies who rise up against you before you. In one way they shall come out against you, and in seven ways they shall flee from you.
8 The LORD will command the blessing to be with you in all that you possess, and in all that you do, and will bless you in the land that the LORD your God has given you.
9 The LORD will raise you up as a holy people for himself, as he has sworn to you, because you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in his ways.
10 And all the nations of the earth shall see that the name of the LORD called upon thee, and shall be afraid of thee. 11 And the LORD will cause you to have an abundance of good things, of fruit of your body, of the young of your cattle, of the produce of your field, in the land, which LORD swore to your fathers to give you.

12 And the LORD will open to you his good treasure, the heavens, that it may be yours. Give the land rain in season and bless all the works of your hands. And you will lend to many nations, but borrow from none.

13 And the LORD will make you a head and not a tail, and you will be always ascend and not descend, because you are obedient to the

commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day to keep and to do,

14 and do not deviate from all the words that I command you today, neither to the right hand nor left, and not walk after other gods to serve them.

15 But if thou wilt not obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt not keep and do all his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day, then all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall befall thee:

16 Cursed you will be in the city, cursed you will be in the field.

17 Cursed will be your basket and your baking trough.

18 Cursed will be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your field, the young of your herds and flocks.

19 You will be cursed at your entrance and cursed at your exit.

20 The LORD will send among you strife, trouble and destruction in all you do, until you are destroyed and soon perish, because of your wicked ways, because you have forsaken me. 21 The LORD will inflict the plague on you until he has destroyed you in the land you come to conquer.

22 The LORD will strike you with exhaustion, inflammation and fiery fever, grain blight and drought; they will pursue you until you perish.

23 The heavens that are above your head will become brass, and the earth beneath you will become iron.

24 Instead of rain for your land, the LORD will give you dust and ashes from heaven until you are destroyed.

25 The LORD will smite you before your enemies. In one way you will resist They will go out, and in seven ways you will flee from them and go to the

Be a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 Your corpses will food for all the birds of the air and for all animals of the land, and no one will scare them away.

27 The LORD will strike you with Egyptian sores, with smallpox, with scabies and scabies, so that you will not be healed.

28 The LORD will strike you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind.

29 And you will grope at noonday as a blind man gropes in the dark, and you will not prosper in your ways, and you will suffer violence and injustice all your life, and no one will help you.

33 The produce of your field and all your labour will be devoured by a people whom you and you will be tormented and maltreated all your life

34 and will go mad at what your eyes must see.

35 The LORD will strike you with evil sores on your knees and calves, that you cannot healed, from the soles of your feet to the top of your head.

38 You will sow much seed in the field but gather little, for the locusts will devour it.

44 He will lend to you, but you will not be able to lend to him; he will be the head, and you will be the tail.

45 All these curses will come upon you and pursue you and strike you until you are destroyed, because you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God and have not kept his commandments and his statutes which he commanded you.

46 And these curses will be signs and wonders for you and for your descendants forever,

47 because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, even though you had plenty of everything.

Part 6: What should I do?

If the principle applies that God wants to give me gifts in all areas and that He wants to be the source - what is my task then? What is my part?

These are the prerequisites for God to bless me the way he wants to:

Dedication

To voluntarily place myself, my life and everything I am and have at his disposal. to me. Because he gave his life for me - out of love for me.

The task of the servant is to serve the master - the task of the master is to provide for the servant.

Coming to terms with the past

Don't lug around any old burdens. Clarify relationships.

Forgiving people who have hurt me. Making the right decisions.

Hate and forsake sin (praying that God will work this in me).

Setting the right priorities.

My life is successful when I am in the right place at the right time, do the right thing and have the certainty that God is with me.

It is also about the following points, which describe our strongest weapons: Repent, when I worried about material things and did not trust him that he can and wants to look after me.

Philippians 4,

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in all things let your requests be made in prayer and petition.

Make supplication with thanksgiving before God! 7 And let the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds. sense in Christ Jesus.

Give thanks, praise, thank God that he is and wants to be our provider - out of love for us. Thank him that he has always faithfully provided for us up to now and that this will continue to be the case. will not change.

Proclaim,

especially when doubts arise in us and fears (existential fears)

want to torture:

Speak out loud Bible verses in which God promises to be our provider (= proclaim).

Tell him if you have specific concerns:

"Father, I can't wait to see how you solve this problem again!"

Examples of proclamations:

Psalms 55,

23 "Cast your request on the Lord, and he will provide for you and for the righteous not leave us in perpetual unrest."

Psalms 27,

1 "The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom (or *what*, A.d.Rd.) should I be afraid?

The Lord is the strength of my life, of (or *what*, editor's note) should I be afraid?"

Proverbs 3,

5 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your

Know him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight."

Galatians 3,

13 "Through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, I have been freed from the curse and am

entered into the blessing of Abraham, whom God blessed in all things."

2. Timothy 1,

7 "... for God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and of a sound mind."

Part 7: Certificates

Financial miracles are among the most common.

There is hardly anyone who has not had some astonishing experiences in this area - e.g. receiving undeserved or unexpected financial resources.

God is still the material provider of his children today. It is in the nature of the Creator to provide for his creatures

Quote from the internationally recognised English Bible teacher Derek Prince in a

Lecture a few years before his death: "God is faithful. God is faithful. God is faithful."

Here is a testimony by Jan Schlegel, Herrnhut: Published in the magazine "Charisma" (January-March 2005 - Reprinted with permission of the author)

new ground...

From Aldi milk to the surge chamber

The cover story of our current issue contains a faith-strengthening and

very encouraging testimony - a report of God's work in our time and our latitudes, not imported, but experienced live in Germany! Let

Jan Schlegel, who has been working for Youth with a Mission for eleven years, in person.

report:

Collecting 270,000 euros in donations for the purchase of the moated castle in Herrnhut in just four weeks was our challenge and the start of a

adventurous story that I want to take you into.

How it all began...

I saw us go into an Aldi shop. We walked straight to the chiller cabinet, took out a litre of milk, went to the till, paid the 59 cents we wanted, left the shop and drank our milk. It all started with this dream

and he confirmed our impression that we had the moated castle in cash.

should buy.

God had challenged us from the very beginning, qualitatively very good, but favourable,

that means affordable training courses for everyone, We wanted to make the purchase

of the building through high school fees or rental income

finance. Our school of discipleship will only cost 1000 euros. We had just five weeks after being promised the purchase of the moated castle for 270,000 euros. The deadline for us to move in was 1 July and the previous owner wanted to have our proof of financing by then.

I still remember well how I wrote in our last newsletter: "... we will only buy the moated castle when we have the entire purchase sum together!" With this statement we made a firm commitment, it did not allow any alternative, such as financing part of the sum with a loan. We communicated with friends and also with the management of YWAM Germany about our impression. We received encouragement to take the plunge, but the Voices that advised us against this and advised us to have an alternative financing plan drawn up by a bank.

But we felt that this was not the way God had for us.

It was like a rollercoaster ride! On one of our "downhill rides" we had a

Crisis prayer time. We couldn't imagine how we were going to raise the money - in just four to five weeks! In prayer, our

Faith, and we asked God what his plan was. We had the impression that we the possible, God would then do the impossible. In this time of prayer, we also felt that we should go to Korea and America to see the Korean and American communities help. immediately started planning... the clock was ticking.

29 days to go. Korea.

I wrote an email to the Yoido Church, the largest church in the world with over 880,000 members, and asked for an interview with its pastor, Dr Yonggi Cho.

If any municipality could help us, it was this one!

Two days later

the answer: I had an appointment! That was a miracle in itself and

Together with Fred Markert, I flew to Korea.

Pastor Cho's assistant prepared us for the meeting. She said that Pastor Cho only receives four foreigners a month, and hundreds would ask for an appointment. We felt that God was here

had prepared something - we were thrilled.

The assistant's last sentence before

we went to the meeting was: "You can ask for anything but money! It would be

It would be very embarrassing in Korean culture if Pastor Cho had to say no." The

was hard! After all, that's why we flew to Korea! With great passion we shared about God's leading, in Herrnhut

to build a training centre for missionaries, of Germany's purpose, and that we believe that God wants to release a new wave of missionaries in Germany and Europe. The Spirit of God was at work, and Pastor Cho listened to us attentively. He told us that he has been praying for Germany for a long time and that he great importance to our cause. He promised to pray specifically for our work. Two days later we left Korea - without 270,000 euros.

That would have been too easy.

20 days to go. USA.

We also tried to get appointments with pastors from various churches in the USA. Nothing worked out, there simply wasn't enough time. We thought about flying to Dallas...that's where the biggest churches in the USA are. They could collect an offering for us! Or maybe one of the many millionaires would be touched, then we would be off the hook.

At 2.00 a.m., I received an unexpected phone call.

TBN, the largest Christian television station, was on the line and invited me to Dallas for a live television programme. Of course, I accepted immediately.

When we arrived in Dallas, a limousine picked us up at the airport and took us to our suite at the Hilton Hotel. All the costs were covered by the TV station, even 60 dollars pocket money was deposited.

Unbelievable, we had never experienced anything like it! The next day the programme started: Ted Haggard, the pastor of the New Life Church and President of the Association of the Evangelical Church of America, hosted the programme. The programme had already started, and just as I was about to walk to the podium

the programme manager came to me and said:

"You can talk about anything, but you can't ask for money." No, not again! I had prepared my appeal for donations so well!

Ted Haggard interviewed me for a few minutes, and then I was able to preach for 15-20 minutes to several million viewers around the world about what was on my heart: God's heart for the lost. - It was obvious that God had prepared all of this... but to what end?

We decided to spend a few days in the desert landscape of "Death Valley" to have some peace and quiet and encounter God. We could clearly feel the clock ticking, with every day we got closer to 1 July. Our appeal for donations had already been sent out for ten days and 22,682 euros had already been received. We were grateful, but to be honest, the 250,000 euros that were still lacking were invested more heavily in

our thoughts than the 22,682 euros we had already received.

For the first time, we were very encouraged and full of faith, and only hours later, reality seemed to catch up with us. Shortly before our journey home on 14 June, we had collected 44,636 euros in donations. That was twice as much, but still too little to in good spirits. Again and again we asked ourselves why God wanted us to bought our surge tank in cash. In order to be able to offer our training courses at a favourable price, that was clear to us. *But we increasingly understood that God wanted to show us and all Christians in Germany that he can provide, that it is possible for him*

270,000 euros in four weeks. We wanted to experience that! We were in the school of God, God was working on our character. We had to learn to trust Jesus completely and not hope in people! That's why God didn't allow a plan B. We knew we had done everything we could do - but that alone could not be the deciding factor before God. So our plea before God became more and more serious and desperate. Just like a year ago (when we were on the of buying a primary school), we sat The lorries for the move had been ordered. Again and finally, we were at the point of putting everything in God's hands and trusting him. 12 days left.....

During another phone call, we were offered the opportunity to receive the entire sum of 270,000 euros as an interest-free loan. The repayment could be made at the same rate as the donations received. We were looking forward to , but we soon realised that we couldn't accept this offer. Our word was that we would buy when we had the full amount in cash! So I rang the person in question and refused. But we agreed on a appointment to get to know us. In the meantime, 55,113 euros in donations had been received. 8 days to go.....

We received a letter in which someone offered to buy the moated castle in order to to give it to us free of charge for 99 years. Wow! We hadn't expected anything like this! Thomas, my wife Ute and I travelled to Hesse the very next day to meet the letter writer and possibly negotiate details with him. It was a great meeting, and somehow a real familiarity developed straight away.

Only 5 days left.....

Back in Herrnhut, we bought two bottles of champagne and celebrated. The glasses clinked, we thanked God and . It was a really good day until -----until they came the gentle voice that took all peace and joy from me: "You may use the Don't accept the offer!" The following night I could hardly sleep and I remembered the dream about the Aldi milk again. The next morning Then I felt really bad. I realised that we would have to turn down the offer. I first told my wife and then Tobias, who was in charge of the team in Herrnhut; everyone had the same impression. On the journey home, I thought about how I was going to make the good man from Hesse understand that we couldn't accept his great offer. We knew he would be disappointed and we didn't want to hurt him. However, the impression that we had to turn down the offer was confirmed when we realised that only a charitable organisation would be able to offer us a ride.

can buy the moated castle, as it was built a few years ago with appropriate was renovated with subsidies. Our notary said that the purchase by a private individual would only be feasible with the help of tricks. We didn't want tricks, we wanted a clean path.

On the way back from Herrnhut on 26 June, we met up with the family who had offered us the interest-free loan. It was a nice, cosy get-together. Our children played in the garden and we talked about what was on our minds, including the carton of milk at Aldi. Hans (name changed) asked us about the current level of donations. I told him 72,945 euros. Then the following dialogue took place between us:

Hans: "When do you need the money by?"

Jan: "Until 1 July."

Jans: "What exactly does the moated castle cost?"

Ute: "270,000 euros"

Hans: "But there are certainly at least 15,000 euros in fees on top of that, so it actually costs 285,000 euros."

Jan: "That's right."

Hans: "Now let's assume you've only received 50,000 euros in donations to date, because you always need money." Jan: "We've been told to build a fire escape as a second escape route and we also have to install an industrial kitchen."

Hans: "Then you're 235,000 short of buying the moated castle!"

In five days, how were we supposed to 235,000 euros together?! But the conversation went even further.

Hans: "Where should I transfer the money? We would like to donate the remaining amount to you."

Jan and Ute: Speechless!
 It really blew us away! You can't express in words what everything went through our heads and how we felt. It was incredible ... Seconds that changed everything ...
 Hans and his wife explained that they had been favourably observing our work for some time. When they received our newsletter and the appeal for donations they independently had the impression that they should give.
 As they had not heard a specific amount from God, they decided to donate the amount we were still short of. We had never experienced such generosity before!
 We then told our team on the phone what had happened. Now it was really the time to celebrate! On 1 July we had the entire sum together
 We had prayed for 270,000 euros and asked for donations in our newsletter.
 370,000 euros have been received in donations.
 We only had four weeks and thought we would just about make it. God is powerful and we can go forward courageously in faith. God does not abandon us! God has given us
 He has proven that he can provide, that it is easy for him to give 270,000 euros and even more!

This testimony is also for you. You can dare to do new things with God!
 This whole story has changed us.
 In all of this, we have learnt to give God more to trust. We could easily have taken shortcuts, but it was important,
 To God to the very end for the maximum - for what he had promised us.
 1 July 2004
 The keys were handed over that day. Unbelievable, we had it actually made it! We were able to experience a miracle of God, a powerful Confirmation for our service. Money from Korea or the USA would not be right have been. God brought us to Korea because He wanted to use the Koreans to pray for us. When they heard about our vision and challenge, they organised a night of prayer with 4,000 intercessors.
 We Christians from Germany have taken responsibility. That was God's plan. It is about Germany's destiny and heritage. God often has much greater plans than we can imagine. And just a few days ago I got
 Yonggi Cho agreed to be a speaker at our mission-live event next year.
 Conference 2005. And the television appearance at TBN in Dallas?

We received many invitations from many different countries for conferences or similar events.
 24 September 2004
 On this day, our first discipleship school began in Herrnhut. We were eagerly awaiting our students. When we opened this discipleship school year before at our mission-live conference in 2003, we had not yet no staff or even leaders for it. We had faith for 20 students and friends said that at the first school we were hoping for a maximum of 7 to 30.
 10 students could do the maths - that was the usual thing. In the course of the weeks
 First Tonia, our headmistress, and then other members of staff followed. This is how our school team was formed for a school with 20 to 30 students. In July we had our first 20 enrolments, by mid-August there were 30 and finally 45! Unbelievable! More
 The staff we need for such a large school arrived at the last minute
 added. On 24 September, 42 students from Germany, the USA, Austria, Nepal, Pakistan, the Czech Republic, Poland and Ukraine at our moated castle! It was a great day, we had been waiting a long time for it and worked for it.
 The goal: a new German missionary movement. It's not about the surge tank; that's beside the point. Rather, it is about
 God's dream that thousands of HIV-infected children in Africa will not have to live on the streets as orphans, that little girls from Nepal will no longer be sold into prostitution in India, that children will no longer have to fight as soldiers in Sudan, that prostitutes in Mumbai will experience God's love and forgiveness, that women in Ethiopia and other African countries will no longer be circumcised, that children in Pakistan will no longer be sold into slavery, that every language and culture will stand before God's throne and worship him. God sees all the need and suffering in this world. He is looking for men and women, who are willing to go to the most needy and unreached areas to bring his love to these places. We do not turn away either. Through our ministry, we want to help individual Christians and entire congregations in Germany and Europe get involved in world mission. We want Christians to
 Get God's heart for the lost and receive the passion and desire to go where God is calling them.

That's why God gave us the surge chamber!
Jan Schlegel

Literature

Books on the subject:

- Wolfgang Simson and Dr Thomas Giudici, *The price of money*, ISBN 3865060536
- Dr Thomas Giudici, *Money makes you happy*, ISBN 3761552734
- Earl Pitts, *Mice, Moths and Mercedes*, ISBN 3884041223
- Floyd McClung, *The Father Heart of God*, ISBN 389895031X
- Derek Prince, *Blessing and Curse - The Choice is Yours*, ISBN 3925968350

5.22 Body, body and soul - The biblical view of man

"Each of us has been created as a spiritual being with a body, a soul and a spirit. Our spirit is the part that is connected to God. When someone receives Jesus into their life, God's Spirit joins with our spirit and they become united with Jesus. God's Spirit bears witness to our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:16). When sin separates us from God, our spirit still functions, but because the spirit was created to be connected to God and to be in a relationship with Him, sin causes it to be separated from God.

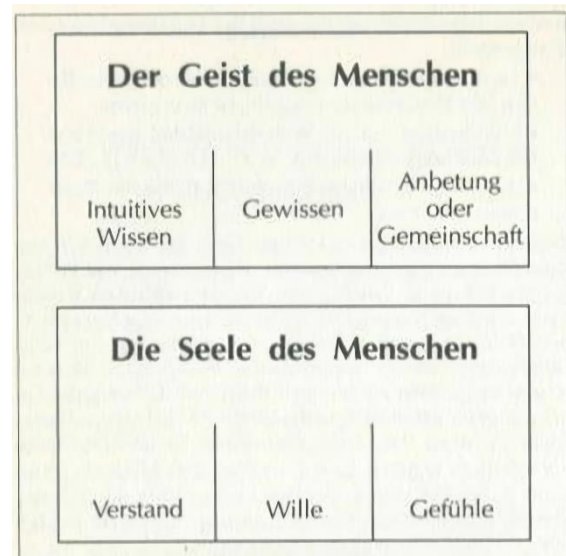
The soul is also a part of our inner human being. It contains our mind, which gives us the ability to think, our will, which enables us to choose, and our emotions, which enable us to feel.

Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It gives us our physical identity and enables us to enter into a relationship with the material world around us.

At the time of our conversion, we are completely redeemed - our body, our soul and our spirit. The spirit is completely redeemed when God's spirit joins with ours. The soul, consisting of thinking, will and feelings, is also redeemed.

1 Corinthians 2:16 says that we have the mind of Christ. Philippians 2:13 says that God is in us to work in us the willing and the doing of His good pleasure. In other words, God gives us the desire and the power to do His will. He redeems our emotions through the fruit of His Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23)."

Source: Dr Randy Clark, The Biblical Guide to Deliverance Ministry, p. 57.



willed, and to each seed his own special body.

39 Not all flesh is of the same kind; but the flesh of men is different, the flesh cattle is different, the flesh birds is different, the flesh of fish is different.

40 And there are heavenly bodies and bodies; ...

42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead: It is sown corruptible, and shall rise incorruptible; ...

44 A natural body is sown and a spiritual body is raised. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

45 So it is also written: The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam became a quickening spirit.

46 But the spiritual is not the first, but the mental, after which *comes* the spiritual.

47 The first man is from earth, ; the second man is the Lord from heaven.

48 As is the nature of the earthly, so are the earthly; and as is the nature the heavenly, so are the heavenly.

... 50 But this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither shall corruptible inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 suddenly, in a moment, at the time of the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise

incorruptible, and we will be transformed.
53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption,
and this mortal must put on immortality.

Joh. 20, 16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. Then she turns and says to him, "Rabbuni! (which means: Master!)

17 Jesus says to her, "Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

Joh. 20, 19 When evening had come on that first day of the week, and the doors were shut in the place where the disciples had gathered for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them: Peace be with you!

Math 10, 28 And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Luke 12:22 And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will put on.
23 Life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.
24 Consider the ravens! They neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouses nor barns, and yet God feeds them. How much more are you than the birds!

1Co 6, 13 Food is for the belly, and the belly for food; but God will put away this and that. But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

14 But God raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by his power. 15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? Far be it from you!

16 But do you not know that whoever is joined to a harlot is one body with her? "For," he says, "the two will be one flesh."

17 But whoever clings to the Lord is one spirit with him.

18 Flee fornication! Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the fornicator sins against his own body.

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy One who dwells in you?

Spirit, which ye have received of God, and that ye be not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God with your body.

1 Thess 5, 23 But he himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through, and your whole being, spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jas 2, 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

And: James 3:1-6; Jude 1:9; 2 Kings 13, 20+21; Romans 6, 5-16;

Bible passages on the spirit of man:

Job 32:8 But it is the spirit in man and the breath of the Almighty that makes them understand.

27 Proverbs 20, 27 The spirit of man is a lamp of the LORD; it searches all the chambers of the body. Zachariah 12:1 This is the saying, the word of the LORD concerning Israel: "Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens and founds the earth and forms the spirit of man within him:

1.Cor.2, 11 For what man knows what is in man except the spirit of man that is in him? In the same way, no one knows what is in God except the Spirit of God.

12 But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, that we may know what has been given to us by God;

13 And of this we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, judging spiritual things spiritually.

14 But the spiritual man does not accept what is of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand it, because it must be judged spiritually.

15 But the spiritual *man* searches all things, but he himself is searched by no one; 16 for who has known the mind of the Lord that he might instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

1 Thess. 5, 23; 1 Cor. 5, 3-5; Galatians 6, 18

Ephesians 6, 18 But in all prayer and supplication pray always in the Spirit, keeping watch for this purpose in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints,

1.Cor.14, 14 For if I pray in tongues, my spirit indeed prays, but my mind is without fruit.

1Co 2:9 But as it is written:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have into the mind of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him",

10 But God has revealed it to us through his Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of the Godhead.

11 For what man knows what is in man except the spirit of man that is in him? In the same way, no one knows what is in God except the Spirit of God.

12 But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, that we may know what has been given to us by God;

13 And of this also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, judging spiritual things spiritually.

Important biblical passage on "soul":

1 Genesis 2, 7 Then the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living soul.

28 Matth 10, 28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Luke 17, 33 Whoever seeks to save his soul will lose it, and whoever loses it will it life.

3 John 1:2 My beloved, I wish you prosperity and health in all things, just as your soul prospers.

5.23 Happiness - Recognise what makes you happy

What is happiness?

The Duden dictionary defines happiness as a "pleasant and joyful state of mind in which one finds oneself when one comes into possession or enjoyment of something that one has desired". It is a "state of inner satisfaction and elation".

God created humans with the ability to be happy. Unlike animals, humans have the ability to reflect on their state of mind and feel happiness.

Is the experience of happiness highly individual or are there general criteria?

Some experience feelings of happiness with a special hobby (horse riding, sailing, cooking, surfing, mountain hiking, etc.).

Others enjoy spending time friends and family.

What actually makes me happy?

Am I happy when I am successful? What is success? Success is being in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing and knowing that God is with me.

Ways to happiness: Happiness often has to do with love:

The most important biblical commandment is: "Love God and your neighbour as yourself." (So love three people: God, my neighbour and myself!)

The Bible says that God is love. Love needs relationships.

Being in love is a special feeling of happiness. So is love in marriage - with the intimacy/specialness the relationship and sexuality. These are feelings of happiness at the highest level.

A relationship with God also generates the deepest feelings of happiness. He is the source of all love.

Those who recognise their purpose as a son/daughter of the Almighty Father experience happiness, freedom, identity, affirmation and gratitude.

A great secret is happiness: "To please my father!" (To please my father in heaven!)

Great happiness is to have relaxed fellowship with God and to enjoy his love, acceptance, wisdom and practical help in everyday life. (To live in the blessing of God).

Gratitude makes you happy.

Those who are grateful focus on the good things in life.

Gratitude emphasises the positive aspects.

What can I grateful for today?

"Praise pulls you up. Giving thanks helps prevent wavering."

"Is the glass half full or half empty? The objective situation is the same - sometimes the perspective decides whether you are happy.

The main battleground for happiness is the mind. It's all about attitudes, judgements and insights.

Prerequisites for lasting happiness:

- The basic needs must be met (food, shelter, generally physical integrity, material provision, healthy loving relationships (friendships, family).
- The knowledge that my guilt, my sins are forgiven, that I can have loving fellowship with my Creator.
- Healing of emotional injuries.

Ps 34:13-14:

"Who has a zest for life and would like to see good days?

Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit; turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it."

What is the most important thing in life?

Health is important, but not the most important thing in life. Because even sick or disabled people can experience deep happiness.

What promotes happiness?

- Get enough sleep.
- Consciously enjoy one rest day per week.
- Eat what's good for me: less sugar, fewer carbohydrates, less processed food, more fibre, more good fats (omega 3 & 6), meat, fish, vitamins and minerals. Listen to my body: What does my body want to eat now? What is good for me?
- Enjoy alcohol - without poisoning your body.
- Sufficient exercise - every day. How can I get more exercise? Which exercise/sport is right for me?
- Spending time in nature.
- Spend money consciously. Donate 10%, save 10%.

What prevents you from being happy?

- Unresolved relationships, especially within the family.
- Unforgiveness.
- Get rid of ballast. Tackle and resolve conflicts. Live a liberated life.
- Hatred, pride, comparing yourself with others, envy.
- Negative talking and thinking.
- Wasting time.

Being obedient to God is more important than being happy. However, being obedient to God leads to happiness.

Tasks

To strengthen your happiness awareness: Think about five things that make you happy?

Why do they make you happy?

What can you do to experience these moments of happiness more often?

Reward yourself!

Little things in everyday life allow us to experience many moments of happiness (eating something good, meeting friends, sleeping in, doing nothing, ...).

God is a generous Father. He approves of our enjoyment of beautiful things!

Living life consciously: Set goals that are worthwhile and desirable for me. Take a step towards these goals every day. Think big and act more consistently.

What dream would you like to see realised in your life?

What is worth dying for?

Goals/dreams release life energy. Hope motivates and creates life.

The best foundations for happiness are

- To know and feel that I am loved by God. I am a beloved son/daughter of my heavenly Father.
That is our destined identity!
- Through Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross, my debts are forgiven, healing - physical and spiritual - is possible. Through the cross I am provided for and I will spend eternity with Him.
- God has a good plan for my life and He helps me to realise it.
- All my sources are in Him.

Literature:

Dr Emilia Vuorisalmi, *Super feelings, The best tips and tools to trigger happiness hormones (dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin) in you*, ISBN 978-3-431-07042-2.

More at www.Jüngerschaft.net: Topic 4.2 Purification of life, Topic 5.9 Who am I?

6.1 The third reformation - The rediscovery of the New Testament church structure (by Wolfgang Simson)

1. Reformation (The Reformation of theology):
Luther rediscovers salvation through grace and faith.

2. Reformation (The Reformation of Spirituality):
Since the 17th century, renewal movements - such as Pietism - have rediscovered the importance of the individual's personal relationship with God.

3. Reformation (the reformation of the structure):
Today - rediscovering the structures were common in the early days of the churches since Pentecost.

The three levels of the church: house churches, city churches and the global church
This short paper examines the structural forms in which Christians met in the 1st century AD. We have the impression that today God is in the process of showing us anew how he envisioned the structure of his church.

1. House churches in the letters of Paul The fact that Christians met in their homes in the first centuries AD can be recognised not only from the reports in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, but also from the letters of the Apostle Paul. Four biblical passages from the letters explicitly mention churches in private homes: The first two passages are about the house of Prisca and Aquila. (Paul in Rom 16:3-4):

"Greet Prisca and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus, who have offered their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; greet also the church in their house."

1. Cor 16,19: "The churches in Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla and the church in their house greet you in the Lord."

Paul's letter to the Colossians mentions the house church of Nymphas.

Col 4:15: "Greet the brothers in Laodicea and Nymphas and the church in his house."

Philemon also had a church in his house. Phlm 1-2: "Paul, a bondservant of Christ Jesus, and Timothy the brother, to Philemon the beloved and our fellow-labourer; and to Apphia the beloved, and Archippus our fellow-labourer, and to the church in your house."

The Christians therefore met in their homes. This is where a large part of church life took place. Here they had fellowship, ate together, helped and encouraged each other and "made" disciples.

In addition to these meetings, which large enough to fit into a house at the time, the Christians also came together for larger meetings.

2. The municipality

We know from the New Testament that they gathered as Christians of a city and a region on certain occasions. These city church meetings, where Christians from all the house churches came together, took place in Antioch and Jerusalem, for example.

We read of the churches in Corinth, Colosse, Laodicea and Thessalonica that the apostle's letters were read to "all the holy brethren" in the respective city. The New Testament provides no information about where the multitude of believers (the entirety of the house churches = the city church) met.

It is probably not mentioned because the location is unimportant. It must simply have been a suitable place for the crowd of believers.

Only a few different places are mentioned: the Christians met in the temple (which was destroyed in 70 AD and was not rebuilt - Acts 2:46 + 5:42), in a school of philosophers (Acts 19:9) or in the upper room of a house (Acts 28). We read nothing in the New Testament about a children's worship service, as is customary in our country. The spiritual upbringing of children took place in the family. Parents were responsible for the discipleship of their children. The children also experienced how Christianity was lived out in everyday life in the home church. In this relationship structure, they experienced at home how prayers were said for the sick, how communion was celebrated and how the Lord's Supper was celebrated.

The people were taught how to read God's word, how to share with each other and eat meals together with friends.

It is interesting to note that nowhere in the New Testament is it reported that Christians built a church or a parish hall!

And this despite the existing building tradition: the Jews built synagogues, the pagans built temples, but the Christians did not build churches. According to Derek Prince, the first church was not built until 222 AD - around 200 years after Pentecost. What significance does this fact have for us today?

Let's come back to the city-wide meetings of Christians. As I said, they took place in suitable places - how often and whether regularly is not known. Derek Prince reports from studies that say that the church in Antioch at the time when Paul and Barnabas were working there comprised around 40,000 Christians. They probably did not always all come together in this number. But if only half of the believers came to these city-wide events, there were still around 20,000 people.

The size of the congregation in Jerusalem at that time is estimated at 50,000, that in Corinth at around 25,000.

Where is the New Testament evidence for these general meetings? For Antioch: Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch after the first missionary journey: Acts 14:27: "And when they had arrived, they gathered the church together (singular!) and told how much God had done for them and that he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."

There is a report of another meeting in Antioch when Paul and Barnabas came to the city with the resolutions of the first apostles' council in Jerusalem (Acts 15:30). It is also reported from Jerusalem that the crowd of believers came together to hear Paul's report. (In general, it is interesting to use a concordance to find out when "the crowds" came together in the New Testament. Some examples: Acts 21:22; Acts 15:4; Acts 15:12).

Another clear indication that God sees all the Christians in a city as a unit can also be seen in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Revelation. The epistles described here are intended for the entire body of Christ in each of the seven cities.

In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, God's plan for the local city church is clearly expressed: (Eph 4:1-6) "I exhort you therefore, I who am bound in the Lord, that you walk worthy of the calling to which you have been called, so that with all humility and gentleness and patience you may bear with one another in love and be diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:

one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, over all, through all and in all."

The Christians in Ephesus already had to be admonished by Paul at that time not to divide themselves into individual groups. A city (Ephesus) should only have one church in which all Christians were part of the local body of Christ (a city-wide congregation consisting of the sum total of born-again Christians). Paul reminds them that there is only one Lord and one church.

For Paul it is therefore self-evident that, in addition to the house churches, the totality of all believers in a city form the local body of Christ: (Col 4:16)

"And when the letter has been read among you, see to it that it is also read in the church at Laodicea and that you also read the letter from Laodicea." (see also: 1 Thess 5:27)

In other letters, it is already clear from the salutation that for Paul the union of Christians into a local church is a matter of course:

Corinth (Greece): (1 Cor 1:1-2)

"Paul, a called apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes the brother, to the church (singular!) of God which is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, to the called saints, and to all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, with them and with us."

(As a reminder: the church in Corinth consisted of around 25,000 Christians at this time) (see also: Ephesians 1:1; Romans 1:7; Philippians 1:1).

In the 11th chapter of First Corinthians it becomes clear that the entirety of Christians came together as the local body of Christ (city church). This becomes clear because Paul says that the Christians should satisfy their hunger in their homes and then eat together.

should celebrate the Lord's Supper worthily as the local body of Christ (verse 33).

1. Cor 11:18 "For first, I hear that when you come together in the church,

...

20 Even if you come together in the same place, it is not to eat the Lord's supper...

22. have you no houses where you can eat and drink? ...

33 Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat (the Lord's Supper), wait for one another. 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him at home... (conversely, this means that the assembly took place as a local meeting of Christians - as a whole church - in Corinth).

The three biblical levels of the church: The individual Christians were therefore part of a house church
the local body of Christ (the city church/ the meeting of Christians)
of the worldwide body of Christ (the bride).

Bible passages on the existence of the church as the worldwide body of Christ (the bride):
Ps 45:10; Isa 62:5; 2 Cor 11:2; Rev 19:7-9; Rev 21:9; Rev 22:17.

Five theses on the development of the community:
The importance of the various churches,
denominations and denominations will diminish.
(Ephesians 4:13)

The universal priesthood will be and lived. (1 Peter 2:9; Rev 1:6; Rev 5:10)

Awakened churches network amicably.

The house churches will be re-established. The services of the individual churches and communities will become less important.

Another form of meeting will be rediscovered: Christians in a city will come together to receive ministries from apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, shepherds (Ephesians 4:11) and to celebrate communion together (1 Corinthians 11:18).

Summary:

The main realisation is that Christians used to meet in two structural forms: regular meetings in private homes (house churches) and

b) Overall meeting as Christians of a city.

Literature:

- Derek Prince: Lecture series "The Church".
- Tim Dowley (ed.): Handbook - The History of Christianity.
- Joachim Gnilka: The Early Christians (Herders Theological Commentary).
- Wolfgang Simson: Houses that change the world.

6.2 How did God plan "church"?

The summary

The five aspects of the New Testament church structure:

1. One place - one community

(a body of Jesus to which all followers of Jesus in the place belong with Jesus as the head)
(see 1Co 12:12; Col 1:18; Eph 1:22,23; Eph. 4,15+16; Eph. 5,30)

These arguments speak in favour of God wanting one church per city:

► In the entire New Testament - from the birth of the church in Acts to Revelation - we only ever read about one church per city! If you look up all the New Testament passages containing the words "church" and "churches" in the concordance, you get this interesting statistic (by Derek Prince - see references):

- Community in houses : 4x
- Church as a worldwide body (the bride of Jesus): 15x
- Municipality (singular) in a city: 61x
- Municipalities (plural, as sum of municipalities, e.g. region: 35x
- Municipalities (plural) in a city: 0x !!!

► God hates church divisions

Jesus prays to his Father for his disciples: "But I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they all may be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you; that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. And I have given them the glory that you me, that they may be one, just as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may attain to perfect unity, so that the world may know that you have sent me and love them even as you love me. (John 17:20-23)

► The divisions of the church of Jesus in one place each have their origin in injuries, disputes, discord, accusations, pride, know-it-all attitude, different insights. This leads to separation from one another, to speechlessness, confusion and disunity. They are therefore not an enrichment of spiritual life in a city, but an indictment of Christians. Furthermore, it is a victory for the enemy who, by destroying unity, successfully paralyses the churches in their external impact (John 17:21!). It does not have to stay that way. Repentance is possible.

2. House churches that networked with each other and multiplied themselves The mentions of house churches in the New Testament can be found here: Romans 16:3,4; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1+2.

In the house churches, Christians lived in a binding community. Through them, people were evangelised, discipled and life was shared. There are only three levels of churches in the New Testament: House churches, the city church and the worldwide church of Christians of all times.

3. The Christians of the house churches came together for city-wide meetings to receive teaching, listen to the apostles' travel reports and celebrate communion (e.g. Acts 14:26-28, Acts 15:22, Acts 21:2-22, 1Co 11:18ff, 1Co 14:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:27).

Today, these meetings are also an opportunity praise God together, pray for the city and demonstrate local unity.

4. The five-fold service

"And He has given some as apostles, some as prophets, as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God and *become* perfect men, to the measure of the stature of the full stature of Christ." Eph 4:11-13, see also: 1 Cor 12:28,29; Acts 3:21.

The fivefold ministry was given to the church by God so that Christians can be equipped. If one or more ministries are missing, there is a lack in the church. The result is stunted growth and paralysis.

5. A council of elders in the village

Ideally, a congregation should have a council of elders who are responsible for leading and presiding over the congregation as a whole. In the Old Testament, it is reported that the people of Israel were led by elders. In the New Testament, elders (always in the plural) were appointed in each congregation.

A council of elders consists of spiritually mature men and women who are called to do so. They take responsibility before God for what happens or does not happen in Nümbrecht, for example, in the spiritual realm.

Paul gives us a clear reference to the elders of the city church

(Acts 20:17): "But from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church."

Questions on practical considerations:

If this is how "church" was planned by God... What would this mean for me?

What would this mean for my ministry? What would this mean for my church?

What would this mean for cooperation between the individual municipalities in the city?

Tip:

Going into prayer; moving these thoughts in silence before God;

him for wisdom and clarity;

be open to the often quiet speaking of the Holy Spirit. The same applies here: test everything - and keep what is good.

Literature:

- Derek Prince, *The Church*, Part 1+ 2, ISBN: 3-932341-41-4 + ISBN: 3-932341-40-6.
- Jens Kaldewey, *The strong hand of God - the fivefold ministry*, ISBN-10: 3928093398.
- Wolfgang Simson, *Houses that change the world*, ISBN-10: 3928093126.
- Frank Viola, Georg Barna, *Heidnisches Christentum?, On the background to some of our supposedly biblical church traditions*, ISBN-978-3-936322-43-9.
- Frank Viola, *Ur-Gemeinde - Wie sich Jesus seine Gemeinde eigentlich vorgestellt hatte*, ISBN- 978-3-936322-47-7.
- Frank Viola, *Ur-Praxis, Gründung und Aufbau organischer Gemeinden*, ISBN- 978-3-936322-59-0.

6.3 "Church" (Ekklesia) in the New Testament

What information we find in the Bible about the term "church".

It is certainly helpful to examine what the Bible says on the subject of the "church":
"Church" is mentioned a total of 301 times in the Old Testament and New Testament.

How often do people talk about a community in the city?
And in which places? And which city are we talking about?
Statistics: Description of the body of Jesus in a city:

One municipality per city:
In 36 Bible passages.

Several churches in one city: In 0 Bible passages.

Number of cities mentioned by name in the Bible that had exactly one congregation: 17. Number of cities mentioned by name in the Bible that had several congregations: 0.

These 17 cities are mentioned by name, which had exactly one church! It is the church (singular) in Jerusalem, Antioch, Lystra and Iconium, Caesarea, Ephesus, Cenchrea, Corinth, Philippi, Colosse, Laodicea, Thessalonica, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis and Philadelphia. At no point in the New Testament is there a city that had more than one church!

There are already around 41,000 denominations worldwide!
(Source: Centre for the Study of Global Christianity (CSGC) at Gordon-Conwell Seminary - www.gordonconwell.edu)
These are tens of thousands of different churches, congregations and groupings. They often came into being through a schism and have split themselves once or several times in their history.
This is certainly not the unity for which Jesus asked his Father in John chapter 17:21: "Father, make them one, that the world may know that you have sent me".

The fragmentation of the body of Jesus in a city has little to do with the unity of the body of Jesus in a city.
Does today's structure (many churches in one city) contradict God's original plan?
Is the current structure of the congregational landscape in cities more conducive or more of a hindrance to Christian unity?

Wolfgang Simson asks in his book (title: Häuser, die die die Welt verändern):
"Why do Christians need special names, logos and flags?"

One of the most important questions is whether God wants to change and adapt today's church structures and restore His original plan for the church?
So far we have often only experienced the fragmentation of the body of Jesus into many different denominations that exists today.
For many, this is the normal state of "Community" in a city.
This disunity of the body is sometimes approved of as "unity in diversity".
Unfortunately, in reality this "unity" often looks like shaking hands over a garden fence - but otherwise remaining on the same side.
Unity is often limited to individual programmes (events) - such as the Evangelical Alliance Week of Prayer or ProCrist. The question arises as to whether the splits, through which many churches into being were in the will of God - or the work of men or the enemy.

Is today's fragmentation of the church in a city in God's will - or not? Is the division into denominations in a city good from His point of view - or not?
--

Here, too, it depends on how God sees things.
Our personal and my opinion on this is of secondary importance.

If God were to decide that the division of the body of Jesus is not in his favour, this would have practical consequences:
Then those who put God's will first in their lives would begin to ask Him how we should deal with the current situation.
She would pray something like this: "
Lord, your kingdom come, your will be done! What should change in our city?
What do you want us to do? Do you want to restore the biblical church structures? Or is the current structure "ok" in your eyes?"
You can read about the biblical structures of the church here: www.ein-herr-eine-gemeinde.de .

Important:
God sees all those who are born again, all

followers of Jesus, in one city as one church!

Digression on the term "church":

Today, the term "church" is mainly

- Buildings (church buildings),
- is seen as a description of a clearly defined, delimited group of believers (in the sense of membership in an organisation),
- as a legal entity (church under public law - K.d.ö.R.)

viewed.

Firstly, the term "church":

"Church" is not a biblical word.

"Church" is a term that only emerged hundreds of years after the New Testament was completed.

"Church" does not appear in either the Old Testament or the New Testament.

There is no Hebrew or Greek word for "church" in the original biblical texts. Today it is often a term used to distinguish between different theological insights and different forms of organisation (e.g. the Protestant Church, Catholic Church, Protestant Methodist Church, Lutheran Church, Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Church for Oberberg, ...).

Where does the term "church" come from?

Church (Alemannic *kilche*, *hile*, Old High German *chirihha*, Middle Low German *kerke*, borrowed from late Greek *κυριακόνkyriakon* 'place of worship') is a social form of organisation of religions. The term was brought to Central Europe (according to Heinrich Friedrich Jacobson) by Celtic Christians from Britain or during the Constantinian era in the Christianity of the Roman Empire. colonial cities (Metz, Trier, Cologne). Since then, it has mainly been applied to religious communities of a Christian denomination.

(Source: Wikipedia)

Conclusion: As the term "church" has no biblical basis and is used today - albeit often unintentionally - to distinguish it from other groups, it should not be used by Christians to describe the church of Jesus.

What does all this mean for us today?

What practical implications does God's view of "church" have for us?

Two questions:

1. because of the high level of mobility, it is normal today for Christians to a church outside their place of residence. This the question of whether this has changed God's view of the church (which says that there is a church in the place of residence).

Has the biblical "residence principle" evolved into a "living space principle"?

In other words, is it okay from God's point of view to attend the church where I live?

However, this would not abolish the principle of one local church to which all born-again members belong.

3. Have the divisions of the body of Jesus in church history changed God's view of the one church in the city?

4. Has God adapted his view of the church to today's situation, to reality (that there are many different churches in one city)?

Has God's plan for the church changed because there are 41,000 denominations today?

Through these biblical passages, the attitude of Jesus' heart becomes the theme

"community" clearly:

Jesus prays to his Father in John 17:21:

"Father, make them one, so that the world may know that you have sent me."

In the Old Testament we read in Psalm 133:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 Like the fine oil on the head, which flows down into the beard, the beard of Aaron, which flows down to the hem of his garments;

3 Like the dew of Hermon that falls on the mountains of Zion, for there the LORD has promised blessing, life forevermore.

6.3 The understanding of the community

"Community" has the following characteristics:

There are only three levels of the "church" in the New Testament

a) house churches b) the local church c) the worldwide church.

The house churches and the local church were presided over by elders who were supported by deacons.

The elders - together with the congregation - were served by apostles, prophets, teachers, shepherds and evangelists.

In the NT there was only ever one congregation per city.

The local congregations were independent of each other.

There were no community organisations, churches, free groups or other denominations.

Divisions among born-again Christians are sin.

There was no minister, pastor or church leader to head a church - only elders as a team.

What conclusions can be drawn from these findings?

We no longer want to be an independent Protestant free church.

We will not join any church organisation or denomination.

Instead, we are endeavouring to restore the house churches, the local church apostolic accompaniment.

We pray that the local church will find its true identity in the communities in which we live. Joint events as a local church are sought (house churches and the born-again Christians from the churches and denominations).

We pray for the restoration of the fivefold ministry (apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, shepherds).

The goal of the church is discipleship.

The logic factor: Even for non-Christians it is logical that Christians who recognise Jesus as their common Lord also form a local church together (divisions, demarcations and parallel, competing church services are illogical). What would Jesus do?

We long for a city-wide prayer offensive: continuous prayer and fasting for the lost and for the city (24-hour prayer).

We pray for a "pastor's breakfast".

Reappraisal of the history of our city (What sins of the past have an impact on today's spiritual situation?)

The house church and the local church are relationship-orientated and not programme-orientated.

Who leads and who is responsible for the people of the house church?

This can a spirit-filled man or a woman, ideally an elder couple.

Who leads the local church and is responsible for the believers of the place?

The elders of the city.

Financing of elders, church planters at home and abroad etc. via house churches. In concrete terms, this means that each house church supports its own elder(s) or missionary; plus a proportionate share of the costs incurred by the body of Jesus in the city (e.g. for the apostolic ministry or Christian meetings).

Literature:

- Derek Prince: "The Church" Parts 1+2
- Watchmann Nee, The local church
- Watchmann Nee, The Body of Christ
- Watchmann No, has Christ been cut in two?
- Francis Frangipane, The House of the Lord
- Wolfgang Simson, Houses that change the world
- John So, unity of the church - visible or invisible
- Joachim Gnilka, The Early Christians (Herders Theological Commentary)
- Tim Dowley (ed.): Handbook - The History of Christianity
- Magazine: Praxis No.78 "House churches"

6.4.1 Biblical structure: One council of elders per city

A council of elders in a city? If so, why?

Reasons:

In the Old Testament, the council of elders is the governing body of the people of Israel in a city.

Circles of elders in the OT (examples):

Deuteronomy 19:12: "... so the elders of his city shall send and him thence, and deliver him into the hands of the avenger of blood, that he may die."

Deuteronomy 21:4: "And the elders of that city shall bring down the young heifer into the valley of an ever-flowing brook, where there is neither labour nor sowing; and there they shall break the young heifer's neck by the brook."

Deuteronomy 21:6: "And all the elders of city nearest to the slain shall wash their hands over the young heifer whose neck is broken in the valley."

Deuteronomy 21:19+20: "...so his father and mother shall take him and bring him to the elders of his city and to the gate of that place, 20 and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and does not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard!'

Deuteronomy 22:15: "...so the young woman's father and mother shall take her and bring out the sign of the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate."

Deuteronomy 22:17+18: "And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 Then the elders of that city shall take the man and punish him ..."

Deuteronomy 25:8: "Then the elders of the city shall summon him and speak to him." Joshua 20:4 "And whoever flees to one of these cities shall stand outside the gate of the city and present his case to the elders of the city, and they shall take him into the city and give him room to dwell with them."

Judges 8:16: "And he took the elders of the city and brought thorns from the wilderness and thistles and chastised the people of Succoth with them."

Judges 11:5: "So when the Ammonites fought with Israel, the elders of Gilead went,

to bring Jephthah out of the land of Tob, ..." This is also the case in verses 7,8,9,10+11.

Ruth 4:2: "And Boaz took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye here."

1. Samuel 16:4: "So Samuel did as the LORD had told him and went to Bethlehem, where the elders of the town met him trembling and saying: Does your coming mean peace?"

1. Kings 21:11: "And the men of his city, the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had commanded them, as it was written in the letters she had sent them. They proclaimed a fast ..."

2. Kings 10:1: "Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria, to the leaders of the city, to the elders and guardians of the sons of Ahab; ..."

2 Kings 10:5: "Then the ruler of the house, the ruler of the city, the elders and the teachers sent to Jehu, saying, 'We are your servants, and we will do whatever you tell us. We will make no man king; do as you please.'

Ezra 10:14: "Let our rulers stand up for the whole congregation; and let all our cities that have brought foreign women home come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city and their judges, until the fierce anger of our God..."

Ps107,32: "Let them praise him in the assembly and in the council of elders."

So there are 17 places the Old Testament where "elders of the city" are mentioned.

In the New Testament, the council of elders in a city is the governing body of the church.

Circles of elders in the NT:

Acts 15:2: "Now when there arose a dispute, and Paul and Barnabas had no small quarrel with them, they ordered that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go to these

The apostles and elders were to go up to Jerusalem because of the dispute.

Acts 15:4: "And when they came to Jerusalem, they were received by the church (singular!), the apostles and the elders, and reported how many things God had done for them."

Acts 15:22 Jerusalem: "Then it pleased the apostles and the elders and the whole church to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas ..."

Acts 16:4: "And as they passed through the cities, they delivered to them for their observance the decrees made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem."

Acts 20:7: "But from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church (singular!)."
(Paul did not call the pastors or ministers - but the elders.
Note: In Ephesus - as everywhere in the New Testament - there was only one church per city).

Acts 21:17+18 Paul in Jerusalem: "And we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us with joy. And the next day Paul went with us to James, and all the elders were present."

Acts 22:5: (Paul:) "The high priest and the entire council of elders (of Jerusalem) can confirm this. I even had them give me letters of recommendation to the Jewish community in Damascus. I travelled to that city to arrest the followers of the new teaching there too and then have them brought in chains to Jerusalem, where they were to be punished."

Titus 1:5: "I have left you in Crete for this purpose, that you may put in order what is lacking and appoint elders in every city, just as I instructed you: ..."

1 Peter 5:1: "I exhort the elders among you, who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is committed to your charge, looking after it, not as though compelled, but willingly, as God is pleased, not for shameful gain, but from the heart; 3 not as those who rule over the churches, but as examples of the flock. 4 So, when the arch-shepherd appears, the

receive the unfading crown of glory.

5 Likewise, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders.

But all of you, clothe yourselves with humility, for God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Summary:

1. A council of elders in the city is therefore both an Old Testament and a New Testament order of God, a structure that He has given.
2. The introduction of a council of elders significantly promotes the unity of Christians in a city.
The elders do not always have to have the same theological opinion and knowledge. Rather, it is about recognising God's will for the city, taking responsibility together and fulfilling leadership tasks together.
3. Through leadership and the assumption responsibility, the council of elders strengthens the congregation in the city (clear structures - especially in front of the invisible world).
4. In the Bible, from the Book of Acts to the Book of Revelation, there is only ever one church per city. There was one council of elders per city.
5. In the Bible (OT and NT), "elders in the city" are mentioned 23 times. Followers of Jesus who love God devotedly and take the Word of God seriously will ask God what He wants to say to the church today.
Could it be that God wants to restore this order for the end-time church, for the last great harvest?

What are the pros and cons of establishing a council of elders in a town like Gummersbach, for example?

Arguments in favour:

- A council of elders in a city is an order of God in his kingdom.
- A council of elders promotes the unity of the community in the city.
- Increasing unity makes it much more difficult for the enemy to cause unrest and destruction.

Arguments against:

- Is a council of elders still up to date?
- The formation of a council of elders is unrealistic/imaginative.
- The developments in church history the last few centuries with the formation of denominations contradict a common leadership circle in the city.

The real question is:

Does God want to have a council of elders per city in our time?

What can the formation of a council of elders in a city look like in practice?

- Prayer and fasting: asking God for confirmation, correction and guidance.
- Information and teaching about God's orders and structures.
- Form a coalition of the willing: Already appointed elders, pastors and leaders start a joint (initially perhaps small) group of elders.
- Other elders, pastors and leaders in the city are informed and invited to

ask if they personally have a call to serve on a council of elders in the city.

God does not like denominations. The fragmentation of his body into over

41,000 churches and groups is anathema to him.

The divisions in the history of the church are the work of the enemy.

Jesus says in Mat. 18, 16 that He will build His church.

6.4.2 One city - one congregation - one body - one eldership

Jesus: "But I do not ask for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they all may be one, just as you, Father, are in me and I in you; that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. And I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one, just as we are one.

I in them and you in me, that they may achieve perfect unity, so that the world may recognise that you have sent me and love them even as you love me. (John 17:20-23)

1. One city - one congregation - one eldership

In the New Testament we read that there was only ever one Christian congregation in each city (e.g. Acts 14:27 + 15:30, Rev 2+3, Eph 1:1+4:1-6, Col 4:16, 1 Cor 1:1-2+11:18).

The Christians met in many small house churches that were scattered throughout the city (Romans 16:3,4, 1 Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 1,2).

In addition, the Christians of the house churches came together for city-wide meetings to receive teaching, listen to the apostles' travel reports and celebrate the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:18, among others).

Today's situation, where there are sometimes several dozen churches, free congregations and communities in one city, is an abnormal situation that is not in accordance with the Scriptures (e.g. John 17:20-23, Ephesians 4:1-6).

The various groupings usually came about through splits - even the Protestant church. It was usually the case that someone recognised a biblical truth anew and then took a new direction, e.g. Luther: salvation by the grace of God alone or that it is biblical to baptise adults instead of infants (later, however, Luther compromised on the issue of baptism).

Today's situation: There are many churches in a city that often accept each other as brothers and sisters of the one Lord, but never actually come together as Christians of a city - as the body of Jesus of a city - and have fellowship. It is also at this weak point within the body of Jesus that the Holy Spirit begins to work. Revival will not happen as long as the Christians of a city are not reconciled with one another - as long as there is disorder and disunity in the body of Jesus of a city. In the New Testament, there is only one church per city, to which one

presided over a common eldership (Titus 1:5; Acts 20:28).

This is how God planned the local body Jesus and the Holy Spirit is restoring this kind of local church today.

Christians were also served by the fivefold ministry: apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists and shepherds (Eph. 4:11).

The Old Testament parallel What the New Testament calls the

The concept of a house church and a city-wide/world-wide church has its origins in the Old Testament:

OT: God called Israel to be his people. The people consisted of individual extended families.

NT: God calls a second people:

The worldwide people of God (sinners who become born-again Christians).

In the beginning - in the first two centuries - they also met in "families" (house churches) until they began to build churches - around 222 AD.

2. God has good intentions for the different communities in a city

God wants to overcome the fragmentation in the body of Jesus. He begins to give Christians from different churches and congregations a love for one another.

Born-again and Spirit-filled Christians will begin to worship God together in their city, pray for the city and live in unity.

This is already being put into practice today at the leadership level through the friendly links in the regional networks and also through the 24-hour prayer initiatives.

3. Division is a sin like adultery (see Gal 5:19-21!)

The divisions that churches have suffered throughout history are not trivial offences. The Word of God is very sharp and clear about what happens to people who cause division: "Those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God!" However, repentance is still possible through confession and repentance.

To what extent are members of a church or community prisoners of the ways of thinking and dogmas (principles of faith) taught there?

4. What is the goal?

The Holy Spirit will bring Jesus a pure and spotless bride (the church) at the marriage of the Lamb.

God wants all people to be helped and to come to the knowledge of the truth (= revival)!

It is also about the Christians of a city standing together in unity to worship God, to learn from each other, to have fellowship and also to be able to resist the enemy with strength - so that peace and order reign in the city and it becomes easy for people to be saved and made disciples.

5. Who are our spiritual brothers and sisters?

For example, who belongs to the body of Jesus in a city? Ultimately, we humans cannot judge this. But there are clear biblical indications:

- Those who love Jesus (Joh. 14,23+Titus 3,5)
- and recognise that he is the Lord (Luke 2:11),
- that he died on the cross for our sins, rose again and lived again (Romans 5:8f),
- that he now sits at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:3),
- that it is necessary to be spiritually born again (Joh. 3,3),
- who believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16),
- who long for the bodily return of the Lord Jesus (Rev 22,20).

6. What does all this mean for us today in practical terms?

- Pray that God's will be done (possibly 24-hour prayer together with other local Christians).
- Coming to terms with the past: Where have we as Christians been guilty of something?
- Repent where we have caused division - to 'un-guilt' ourselves.
- Maintain friendships and contacts with other local Christians, serve them and come before God together.

7. No names! Why do Christians need additional names and designations? Either you are a born-again Christian or you are not. If so, you belong to the body of Jesus - to the city-wide church and should belong to a house church.

Why do we need demarcations such as Protestant, Catholic, Evangelical Free Church, Roman Orthodox, Methodist, Mennonite, Baptist, etc.?

The only biblical criterion for the demarcation of congregations is of a geographical nature. The city limits alone determined the demarcation from other congregations. We read about the church (singular!) in Jerusalem, Lystra, Corinth, Derbe, Colosse, Troas, Philippi, Rome, Thessalonica, Antioch, etc. .

In the New Testament there are also no nationwide church organisations, but instead an apostolic ministry.

This is God's plan as we read it in the New Testament. It is time to return to the biblical church structures - in order to be obedient to God and also for the sake of the lost!

Jesus' wish is still: Joh. 17,23: "...that they may attain to perfect unity, so that the world may know that you have sent me and love them...).

The good thing about our situation today is that God's love is beginning to work in Christians so that they recognise their brother and sister in the other church and community and learn to appreciate and love them. It is on the heart of our common Lord to restore the normal state of the body of Jesus in a city. God wants to do it - and with Him nothing is impossible!

Literature:

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6.5 and 6.6 (table) The five-fold service

The fivefold ministry was given by God to the church to equip Christians.

If one or more services are missing, there is a shortage in the community.

The result is stunted growth and paralysis. This happens in churches that are dominated by a pastor (Latin for "shepherd").

All five ministries are intended by God for the healthy growth of the church.

Bible passages on the fivefold ministry:

"And he (God) has given some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers, to prepare the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, and perfect men, to the measure of the stature of the full stature of Christ." Eph 4:11-13,

"But you are the body of Christ, and each one members in his own part. And so God has placed in the church firstly apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracle workers, then the gifts of healing, of helping, of administration, of different languages. Surely not all are apostles, not all prophets, not all teachers, not all miracle workers? Do they all have the gifts of healing? Do they all speak with tongues? Can all interpret? But strive for the best gifts; but I am now showing you a far more excellent way" 1 Cor. 12:27, 31.

"So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole building rests,

joined together, growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ..." Eph 2:19-21.

The mobile ministries are those of the apostles, prophets, teachers and evangelists.

Localised ministries are those of pastors and deacons.

Theologian Jens Kaldewey describes the fivefold ministry as the "key ministry of God". He writes:

"When an apostle appears, things start to move. New things begin."

"A prophet of God is a person who hears something from God and passes it on."

"A teacher pulls aside the curtain that so often hides the writing."

"The shepherd does not ask about special achievements, but about the person himself."

"I believe that God wants to authenticate the evangelistic ministry much more strongly through signs and wonders - also with us."

In the New Testament, 28 people are referred to as apostles and ten as prophets. In contrast, only one person is referred to as an evangelist.

Christians who consciously follow Jesus, who long for the expansion of the kingdom of God in their locality, will increasingly ask how God originally planned "church". This will lead to changes: structures that have evolved over the course of church history will be put to the test.

To what extent are they in with God's wise plans for his church? One effect will be a stronger return to the promotion of the fivefold ministry.

Literature

- Jens Kaldewey, *The strong hand of God - the fivefold ministry*, ISBN 3-928093398
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Der fünffältige Dienst (Epheser 4,11) aus: Jens Kaldewey, *Die starke Hand Gottes*

	Apostel	Prophet		Shepherd	Evangelist
W here he loves:	Länder, Regionen, Völker: Strategien entwerfen und umsetzen	Feel the heart of God, hear the voice of God	Das Wort Gottes studieren, verstehen und verständlich machen	A church, individual Christians. individual people: Building relationships with believers	Die Welt der Nichtchristen: Gottes Handeln an Nichtchristen hier und jetzt erwarten und freisetzen
W herever he	In die Weite	Into the depths	In das Wort Gottes	In the faces of Christians	In die verlorene Welt
W hats he looks: Main responsible localisation	Gründen, berufen, senden, multiplizieren. Das Ganze im Auge zu behalten. Langfristig und strategisch denken und planen.	Hear the voice of God and pass on what you have heard.	Das Wort Gottes verständlich lehren, Menschen im Wort gründen.	Following the sheep (Christians) and caring for them	Kontakte zu Nichtchristen aufbauen und ihnen das Evangelium verkünden, Gläubige zur Evangelisation ermutigen.
G reat risks and hazards of Overemphasis	Starkult; personenabhängige Megagemeinde mit vielen unmündigen Gläubigen und ausgebrannten Mitarbeitern	Immaturity of believers, lack of stability Danger of seduction, believers being tossed to and fro, spiritual sensationalism	Dogmatismus, Starrheit, Kopflastigkeit, zu wenig Aktion, Gesetzmäßigkeit.	Reconciliation, "cuddly Christianity" growth stop Emphasising one's own "stable smell"	Hohe „Kindersterblichkeit“, keine bleibende Frucht, keine Wachstum sichernde Maßnahmen, Gefahr der Zerstreuung des Gläubigen.
W hat are the effects and fruit	Bewegung, Ausbreitung, Multiplikation	Affected hearts Conversion motivation	Stabilität, Reife, Ausrüstung	Healing, security, OWeness, protection	Neue Menschen, neue Frische, zahlenmäßiges Wachstum
V arious der services	Gemeindeleiter einer großen, wachsenden und sendenden Gemeinde, Gemeindegründer, Pioniermissionar, Gründer translokaler (die örtliche Region überschreitender christlicher Werke, die nachher noch lange Zeit vor Ort selbstständig weiterarbeiten	Authorised preacher which lead believers back to God and to their first love: Intercessors who do not pray according to lists but receive their requests directly from God and often experience revelations about other people for whom they are praying Pastors whose main instrument in pastoral care is revelation rather than any specific pastoral technique	Prediger mit dem Schwerpunkt guter, verständlicher Predigten, Mentor, Schriftsteller, Bibelschullehrer, Hauskreisleiter mit dem Schwerpunkt Lehre.	spiritual mothers and fathers, leaders of extended families or therapeutic centres, pastors Home group leaders, fatherly leaders of small churches, kindergarten teachers, school headmasters.	Pastor einer jungen (!) wachsenden Gemeinde, Missionar, Leiter von Straßeneinsätzen, Jugendgruppenleiter.

6.7 The ministry of the elders

The ministry of the elder may and should be aspired to (1 Timothy 3:1)!

If we understand that all leadership in the church is servanthood, it shows maturity when someone aspires to the office of elder.

Old Testament background:

- ⇒ Family and clan elders (Genesis 50:7; Genesis 12:21)
- ⇒ Co-responsible with Moses (Numbers 11:16-17)
- ⇒ a kind of city council (1 Kings 20:8; 21:11)
- ⇒ Synagogue ruler (Matthew 16:21; Acts 4:5)

Elders in the New Testament:

1. Who are elders? (Please read the Bible passages!)

- ⇒ Shepherds (1 Peter 5:1-4) - they care for and guide the flock of God
- ⇒ Overseers (Acts 20:17+28) - they have the oversight and the overview
- ⇒ Leaders (Hebrews 13:7 + 17) - they stand before the church, lead, guide on!

By the way: Elders are always mentioned *in the plural* in the New Testament. They form a team and work together! (1 Timothy 5:17 ff)

2. What are elders for?

- ⇒ to lead (1 Timothy 5:17) They set an example, , train,
- ⇒ concerning doctrine (Titus 1:9) - they are for sound doctrine in the church responsible.
- ⇒ Pastoral care - they are responsible for the souls of the faithful, in that sense, that God demands an account from the elders for their service to the saints (Heb.13:17!).

3. They are to be good leaders (1 Timothy 5:17) Acts 20:27-32:

- ⇒ proclaim the whole counsel of God
- ⇒ Care for each individual
- ⇒ Protection from false doctrine and wolves (1 Peter 5:1-5).
- ⇒ not forced, but voluntarily and gladly
- ⇒ eagerly but not for their own honour
- ⇒ humble and not domineering
- ⇒ not as owners of the flock, but as appointed stewards

4. Qualities of an elder (1 Timothy 3:1-6) exemplary lifestyle:

- ◆ sober (not fanatical)
- ◆ level-headed (balanced)
- ◆ orderly (not disorganised, chaotic)

- ◆ not seeking one's own advantage
- ◆ do not become addicted
- ◆ Husband of one wife or single (like Paul)
- ◆ Good public reputation

Performance qualities:

- ◆ be able to lead your own family
- ◆ have been involved for some time
- ◆ teachable (able to teach others) (see 1 Titus 1:9)

5. How do you become an elder?

1. Through their own testimony: The aspirant must have developed a longing for responsible service in the house of God (1 Timothy 3:1).
2. Elders become elders through the Holy Spirit "set"! (Acts 20:17+28)
3. Through the confirmation of the apostolic ministry (e.g. Titus 1:5+ Acts 14:14+23).

6. How should elders be appointed? There is no generally applicable procedure in the New Testament - but there are two

Reports of the appointment of elders at church plants: A) By the apostles Barnabas and Paul in cities in what is now Turkey (Apo 14:14,23) and B) by Titus during his apostolic ministry in various cities on Crete (Titus 1:5).

- Peter writes that as an apostle he is a fellow elder (1 Peter 5:1). The new elders were chosen by the existing fellow elders (in Ephesus these were the apostles Paul and Barnabas) and "appointed" by the Holy Spirit: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with the blood of his own Son." Acts 20:28

Those who given a ministry of fivefold service (by God - according to Ephesians 4:11) are also "set apart".

1. Cor 12:28a: "And so God has placed in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, ..." Eph 4:11: "And he has given some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers.

A democratic vote or election by the congregation is not mentioned anywhere for elders. There are some biblical arguments in favour of the appointment of new elders by the existing eldership (or if there are none yet - the leadership circle):

1. In the case of church plants, we read that the existing leaders (the apostles) appointed the elders.

and not the church in general. This is where leaders appoint elders under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28).

2. It is part of the elders' remit to preside over the church (1 Timothy 5:1 + Hebrews 13:17), to feed, lead and guide it (Acts 20:28). The enlargement of the existing eldership is a typical leadership task.

The following possible procedure is correct according to the current state of knowledge: If the existing elders have recognised the calling to eldership in others and have agreed with prayer and fasting, it makes sense to submit the proposals to the congregation - with a request for consideration. The congregation is asked to pray whether they can see it that way.

Concerns can be communicated to the elders present or the accompanying apostle. The elders (the leadership) then consult again about the responses received. If there is agreement, the new elders are officially installed before the congregation with the laying on of hands.

7. The congregation and its elders

In the Bible, the main leaders are referred to as elders (1 Peter 5:1-4).

- ⇒ They should be shown respect and obedience (1 Tim. 5:17, Heb. 13:17, 2 Thess 3:14+15).
- ⇒ They are to receive material provision (1 Corinthians 9:7-14).
- ⇒ Complaints against an elder will only be accepted if two or three witnesses (1.Tim.5:19+20).

8. Ministries of the New Testament local church (definitions)

In the house church movement, the aim is to only have offices and ministries that are biblically verifiable. It is therefore important to know the meaning and origins of the terms elder, deacon, bishop, overseer and pastor.

Interestingly, elder (presbyteros), bishop/overseer (episkopos) and shepherd (= Latin pastor, Greek poimen) describe the same office, the same ministry or the same function in the church. The different terms merely describe the same person or the same ministry from different perspectives.

The qualification is that of an elder, the spiritual ministry is that of a shepherd and the work that needs to be done is that of a shepherd.

overseer. This is clear from Acts 20:17+28, Titus 1:5-7 and 1 Peter 5:1+2.

Elders are always mentioned in the plural in the New Testament. Church leadership by a minister or pastor is an invention of church history.

10. Elders as fathers and judges

Paul repeatedly explains that the elders who preside over a church also have the task of rebuke (1 Thessalonians 5:12; 2 Timothy 2:24+25).

Nevertheless, the rebuke should take place in a fatherly style and not in the style of a disciplinarian (1 Corinthians 4:15); for in Christ we are no longer under the disciplinarian (law), but have become sons and daughters (Galatians 3:25).

Rebuke, discipline and education must be orientated towards the fatherhood of God, from all fatherhood comes, and not towards the pedagogy of contemporary society. It is our mission "to make disciples and teach them to keep all that Jesus commanded" - that is what we should strive for!

11. Requirements to be an elder (according to 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9)

He should be "blameless", righteous, holy, the husband of one wife (or single), sober, honest, hospitable, skilful in teaching, not addicted to drunkenness, not violent and quarrelsome, not stingy, and he who is young in the faith should not become an elder.

12. Responsibilities of the Elder

The elder is of course first and foremost responsible for himself before God and people, but also for his family and for the people entrusted to him (e.g. the house church that he leads). He should have a responsible, binding discipleship relationship with them). Heb 13:17:

"Obey and submit to your leaders! For they watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with groaning, for this would not be useful for you." He is also accountable to the other elders and - if already present - to the apostolic ministry. The elders of a church or a city are responsible for what happens and what does not happen in the body of Jesus.

1. Thess.5,12 "But we ask you, brethren, to recognise those who labour in you and preside over you in the Lord and exhort you; hold them in even greater esteem for the sake of their work; live in peace with them."

Literature:

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- Derek Prince: Lecture series "The Church" 1 and 2.
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6.8 The ministry of deacons

Deacons in the congregation

The word deacon comes from the Greek word "diakonos". The word deacon comes from the Greek word "diakonos", which means "servant" or, more precisely, "one who serves at table". This word occurs 24 times in the N.T. - but it is only used four times in the sense of a special service.

1. Origin:

Acts 6:1-7:

"Now in those days, when the disciples were multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were overlooked in the daily service. But the twelve (*apostles/elders*) called the crowd of disciples and said: *It is not good for us to neglect the word of God and serve tables.*

So look around you, brothers, for seven men among you of 'good' testimony, full of spirit and wisdom, whom we want to set over this task!

But we will persevere in prayer and in the ministry of the word.

And the speech pleased the whole multitude; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Timon and Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

These they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly, and a great number of the priests became obedient to the faith."

The requirements that apply equally to elders and deacons:

1. Tim 3:1-13:

"The word is certain: if anyone desires a ministry of oversight, he desires a good work.

Now the overseer must be blameless, the husband of one wife, sober, prudent, modest, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not a brawler, but mild, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, who presides well over his own house and keeps his children in subjection with all honourableness - But if anyone does not know how to preside over his own house, how will he care for the church of God? -Not a new convert, lest, being puffed up, he fall into the judgement of the devil. But he must also have a good testimony from those who are outside, so that he does not fall into evil rumours and the snare of the devil.

Likewise the servants (Greek diakonoi): honourable, not double-minded, not given to much wine, not given to shameful gain

who keep the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. But they too should first be tested, then they should serve if they are blameless.

Likewise, women should be honourable, not slanderous, sober, faithful in everything.

The servants are 'each' the husband of one wife and are supposed to preside over the children and their own homes;

For those who have served well gain a good degree and much boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Rom 16:1:

"But I commend to you our *sister Phoebe, who is a servant (from: diakonos) in the church in Kenchrea.*"

In contrast to elders, who bear the ultimate responsibility for the congregation before God, deacons can therefore be both men and women.

2. Task

- to serve the elders by creating a Assume *partial responsibility* e.g. Finance, social services, caretaker, youth work, etc.

3. Qualities

- see: 1.Tim. 3:8-13: and Acts 6:1-7

4. Appointment

- The requirements are the same as for the elders.
- The congregation elects the deacons from among its members.
- The elders confirm and authorise by the laying on of hands.

5. Further points and differences between elders and deacons

- For deacons and elders, a kind of probation is recommended at the beginning of their ministry (1 Timothy 3:10: "They also are to be tested and only then admitted to the ministry...").
- A deacon is not required to be able to teach others. He should guard the mystery of faith with a clear conscience. Faith and life should be in harmony. This helps him to gain a good public reputation.
- The elders are to stand in prayer and in the ministry of the Word.

The deacons have practical ministries: organisation, feeding the poor, etc.

Most deacons carried out practical ministries.

Other tasks and activities of individual deacons are reported in the New Testament:

Example: The deacon Stephen
We know from the Acts of the Apostles (6:3ff+7:54-60) that he

- ◆ had a good reference from others,
- ◆ was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,
- ◆ the tables,
- ◆ full of grace and power,
- ◆ performed miracles and great signs among the people,
- ◆ was a good speaker and could argue well,
- ◆ was a visionary: he saw Jesus sitting at the right hand of God. He saw the glory of God,
- ◆ asked for forgiveness of their guilt on behalf of his enemies,
- ◆ was the first martyr.

Example: The deacon Philip

- ◆ He preached the gospel (Acts 8:5).
- ◆ He travelled a lot.
- ◆ He performed signs and wonders (8:6).

- ◆ Many sick people were healed through his ministry (8:7).
- ◆ He baptised (8:12+ 8:38).
- ◆ The Holy Spirit spoke to him and gave him crystal-clear instructions (8:26).
- ◆ He was supernaturally "beamed" by the Holy Spirit from one place to another (8:39).

6. The relationship between deacons and elders
The deacons support the elders by leading clearly defined areas of responsibility (whereby the ultimate responsibility remains with the elders).
The deacons thus set the elders free so that they can "persevere in prayer and in the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

The deacons are reported on:
"Those who have served well acquire a good degree and much boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." 1 Timothy 3:13

6.9 The Last Supper

The meaning of communion

For Christians, celebrating the Lord's Supper is a reminder of the victory that Jesus won on the cross for each and every one of us (e.g. freedom from guilt, sickness, lack; it also gives us direct access to the heavenly Father and eternal life).

In addition to thanking him for his obedience and love, the cup of wine reminds us that we are called into a new covenant (Luke 22:20):

We are redeemed to invest our lives in God's things (1 Peter 2:9)!!!

The biblical basis of the Lord's Supper The most important biblical passages:

Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-25;

Luke 22:14-20; John 6:54-56, John 13:1-30;

1 Corinthians 10:16,17 and the most frequently used introductory text at a communion service - 1 Corinthians 11:23-32:

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus took bread on the night in which he was delivered

24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.

25 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do as often as you drink in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as you eat this bread and the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 So whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29 For he who eats and drinks eats and drinks judgement on himself if he does not judge the body of 'the Lord' 'correctly'.

30 That is why many of you are weak and sick, and a good number have fallen asleep.

31 But if we were to judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we will be chastised so that we will not be condemned with the world.

Old Testament roots of the Lord's Supper The Lord's Supper has its origins in the Jewish Passover. The Passover reminds the people of Israel of their liberation from Egyptian captivity.

Figuratively speaking, the Lord's Supper reminds us of our liberation

e.g. of separation from God, of sin and of the inability to recognise (spiritual) reality (John 3:3).

The Passover celebration was led by the head of the family in the homes (Exodus 12).

The institution of the Lord's Supper

When Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples shortly before his arrest, he washed his disciples' feet during the meal, then sat down at the table again, broke a loaf of bread, gave them a cup of wine and explained these symbolic gestures to them (John 13).

The meaning of bread and wine Christians often believe that bread and wine are about the same thing twice,

namely the forgiveness of our guilt and our acceptance by God.

But that is not the case. The New Testament makes clear distinctions between bread and wine in at least four different places.

The bread is indeed about the fact that his body was "broken"/killed on the cross so that we can experience our own personal reconciliation with God, the liberation from sin that separates us.

And it is true that Jesus has redeemed us with his blood and made us God's children (e.g. 1 Peter 1:18ff). Nevertheless, the wine of the Lord's Supper involves an important additional aspect that is almost always neglected:

We read in all four accounts of the New Testament that the cup of wine "is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25, Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:23).

In concrete terms, this means that wine - in addition to redemption - is about the new covenant that Jesus made with his disciples.

What is this new covenant about?

(see *Topic No. 8: Old Covenant-New Covenant*)

1. We are called out into the Kingdom of God.
2. We are called out to proclaim the virtues of the one who called us (1 Peter 2:9; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20).

1. 1 Peter 2:9:

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession, that you may proclaim the virtues of him who called you out darkness into his marvellous light."

The Lord's Supper therefore reminds us that we are chosen and sent and authorised as a church to proclaim his deeds.

Communion therefore also involves the congregation recalling its identity as the people of God and celebrating and strengthening its calling.

In other words:

"We are the people!" - the chosen, the authorised and the sent people.

We recognise from this that the Lord's Supper is not about my personal, individual salvation (it is not just about my sin, my salvation, my eternal life). It is about much more! As the people of God, the church has been called out of darkness into the light, into the kingdom of God and into the new covenant. Firstly the redemption, the liberation, the calling - but then also the mission, the task of building the kingdom of God. Being sent does not only mean proclaiming his deeds abroad, but also in my circle of relationships - here and now.

Redemption has a goal:

We are redeemed so that we are worthy (in the sense of holy/righteous) and able to be sent.

The institution of the Lord's Supper by Jesus is therefore far more than a private farewell celebration in the circle of disciples and also more than a pastoral reassurance of the

personal salvation. Rather, Jesus set a milestone in the history of salvation with the Lord's Supper (redemption and mission!).

The desire of most Christians is to love God. This also means accepting his view of things. God thinks in terms of his goals, of building the kingdom of God. And for this he needs the church, a people that he can send.

And when his kingdom completed in the new world, Jesus will celebrate the Lord's Supper with his disciples again.

The Lord's Supper is not a sad ritual, but a lively, joyful celebration:

1. because Jesus has redeemed us.
2. because we are allowed to live in his kingdom and are called and authorised to continue building it.

During communion, we can marvel at God's love for people, recognise his mercy and return to our everyday lives strengthened and motivated.

Literature:

- Wolfgang Kraska, Our communion celebrations - only half a thing? in: 'Praxis' 1/00.
- Ian Seaders, First Steps, Chapter 8: The Lord's Supper.
- Mike Chance, Redeemed by his blood.

6.10 Together for our city

What is "Together for our city"?

"Together for our city" is an initiative of Christians from various churches who want to promote God's kingdom in the city together.

Goals of "Together for our city":

- ▶ Christians help and involved together in various areas of society.
- ▶ Strengthening the unity of the city's Christians.
- ▶ Citizens of the city get to know and love Jesus.

This is done by:

- ▶ The networking of existing services and offers,
- ▶ new practical offers of help,
- ▶ the increasing unity of the city's Christians.

This results in an important side effect: God's kingdom in the city becomes more recognisable from the outside.

Why does "Together for our city" exist?

- ▶ Jesus prayed in John 17: "Father, make them one, so that the world may know that you have sent me!".

The unity of Christians in the city is a prerequisite for a remarkable number of the city's citizens to come to know Jesus, be saved and become disciples. This is the central concern of "Together for our city".

- ▶ "Together for our city" aims to help with practical needs.
- ▶ "Together for our city" promotes existing services and offers through professional public relations work and the networking of like-minded people.

The structure:

"Together for our city" is a small, powerful, registered, non-profit organisation whose members are based in various communities and churches. "Together for our city" is not under the umbrella of a church, nor is it a new congregation or sect. "Together for our city" sees itself as a non-commercial service provider. It is financed on a donation basis.

It is planned to set up a shop in the city as a central contact point.

A regional "Thing Tank" (Christians with leadership roles in churches, politics and business) advises the initiative.

Communication: The focus is on personal contacts and friendly relationships. Communication also serves

the shop, the homepage, articles in the local press and information brochures/flyers.

Possible fields of activity of "Together for our city":

- ▶ Praying together for our city: promoting prayer initiatives with Christians from different churches (e.g. regular prayer meetings, worship nights, 24-hour prayer ...)

- ▶ Localisation of problems in the city (e.g. unemployment, debt, drugs, alcohol abuse, broken families, single parents, old people, sick people, lonely people, migrants, language problems, ...)

- ▶ Being a contact person for practical problems (small jobs, mowing the lawn, babysitting, shopping, dog-sitting, watering flowers, driving services, help with visits to the authorities ...)

- ▶ Establishment of a volunteer agency.

- ▶ Contact for emergencies: counsellor referral, abuse cases, child/student helpline... Possibly 24-hour hotline/on-call service

- ▶ Offers of conversation in the shop - e.g. over a cup of coffee.

- ▶ Homework supervision

- ▶ Networking like-minded people
"Together for our city" aims to promote Christian values in various areas of society - in business, politics, the media, the social sector, sport and education. Further forums are to be created: e.g. Youth Work Forum, International Forum (offers for migrants), ...)

- ▶ Initiator and organiser of regular joint meetings of Christians in the city.

- ▶ ...

The theological justification for "Together for our city":

Various verses in the New Testament (from the Acts of the Apostles to Revelation) make it clear: God sees the born-again Christians (according to John 3) as a church in the city/village.

For details see:

www.das-Wichtigste-auf-zwei-Seiten.de .

It is about appropriating God's view of "church" more and more.

God is in the process of building the church as he planned it from the beginning.

An important part of this is joint meetings of all Christians in a town/village.

"Seek the best for the city ... and pray to the LORD for it, for if it prospers, you will prosper." Jeremiah 29:7

"And Jesus said to his disciples, "Go into all the world (which also means: into every area of society) and preach the

The gospel of every creature. He who believes and is baptised will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned." Mark 16:15ff.

Similar initiatives already exist in Berlin (www.gfberlin.de), Hamburg (Gemeinsam für Hamburg), Nuremberg (Gemeinsam für Nürnberg), Siegen, Augsburg and other places.

6.11 Unity instead of division

"Is Christ divided?" Paul asked the Christians in Corinth when there was a danger of division in the one city church. He exhorted them to speak the same language, not to allow division, but to hold together in the same mind and the same opinion. (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). A few verses further on, he continues: "For first, I hear that when you come together in the church there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it; for there must be divisions among you, so that those who are approved may be made manifest among you."

Here the whole problem becomes clear: Are divisions in Christian congregations wanted by God, hated or merely tolerated "so that the tried and tested may be revealed" (and the right doctrine has room to develop)?

What happened in the course of church history? In the first two centuries, there was only one church per city. In the Acts of the Apostles and in the epistles, even in Revelation, there are only local churches (e.g. the church in Rome, the one in Corinth, the one in Antioch, the one in Colosse, the one in Smyrna...). The emergence of the state religion in 313 under Emperor Constantine the Great was a blow to the independent, localised church structure. In the 16th century, the Reformation led to the first schism in church history. The Protestant Church was split off. From the 17th century onwards, the free churches split from it. However, they later suffered from the same phenomenon: from the 20th century onwards, free groups split off from them. Today, the number of churches and denominations worldwide is around 30,000!

Was this development in the spirit of God?

What does the Bible say about unity, divisions and the oneness of the body?

Jud 22:

And rebuke those who separate.

Gal 5:19-21

But the works of the flesh are evident, which are: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, debauchery; Idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, ambition, discord, division, envy, murder; Drunkenness, carousing and the like, of which I foretell you, as I did before

said that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Jesus caused division on several occasions:

Jn 7,43- with the people:

A division arose in the crowd because of him.

Jn 10,19- with Jews:

Then again a division arose among the Jews because of these words.

Jn 9,16- with Pharisees:

This man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath! ...And a division arose among them.

Luke 12:49- Jesus said:

I have come to hurl fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to pass, and how I long for it to be accomplished!

Do you think that I come to give peace on earth?

No, I tell you, but rather discord.

For from now on five will be divided in one house, three against two and two against three, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

Acts 14:4:

But the crowd in the city was divided, some with the Jews and some with the apostles.

Ps 133:1-3:

A pilgrimage song. From David.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity. Like the delicious oil on the head that flows down on the beard, on Aaron's beard, which flows down to the hem of his garments.

Like the dew of Hermon that flows down on the mountains of Zion.

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life for evermore.

Zeph 3:9:

But then I will give the nations other, clean lips, so that they may all call on the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord. Phil 2:1-3:

Now if there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any heartfelt compassion and mercy, my joy is that you are of the same mind and love, of one accord, of one mind, 'doing' nothing for self-interest or vain glory, but

that in humility one respects the other more than oneself.

Jn 17,20-23:

However, I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; that they also may be one in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. And I have given them the glory that you me, that they may be one, just as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may reach perfect unity, so that the world may recognise that you have sent me and love them as you love me.

Eph 4:1-6:

I exhort you therefore, I who am bound in the Lord, that you walk worthy of the calling to which you have been called, so that with all humility and gentleness and patience you may bear with one another in love, being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, over all, through all, and in all.

Attempt at a conclusion:

- God has the unity of born-again Christians at heart. His goal is to prepare a bride for Jesus.
- Divisions were caused by Jesus when religiosity prevents people from being born again.
- Unity not at any price. Rebirth, discipleship, sanctification etc. must be possible.
- Divisions among born-again Christians are not acceptable. In other words, do not plant a new church if there is already a local church that has a vision for the body of Jesus in the city and that is not a church based on special knowledge (e.g. baptism of faith or spiritual gifts). The basis of the church must only be Jesus (no founder, no profession of faith, no knowledge). Today, there are several, mostly small communities in every major city with

born-again Christians. They sometimes accept each other, but generally have little or no fellowship with each other.

Questions:

- Could it be that today the Holy Spirit not only wants spiritual unity among the believers of a city, but also an organisational unity that is visible from the outside?
- Could it be that today the Holy Spirit wants to reintroduce the original church structure (one church per city, independent of any national church or organisation)? What consequences would this have?
- Is the reintroduction of the levels of the church mentioned in the New Testament a prerequisite for a revival in Germany?

The three community levels:

- Level: House churches (mentioned 4 times in the New Testament),
- Level: One municipality per city (61x),
- Level: The worldwide church (15x) Several churches in one city are mentioned 0x (!).

Unity is the most effective form of evangelisation (John 17:21).

Unity becomes possible when the vertical is right first (love relationship with God) - then the horizontal is also possible (unity among the brothers and sisters).

The biggest obstacles to unity are false/inadequate teaching and the ambition/pride of leaders.

The unity of the followers of Jesus in one place is not about ecumenism. It is not about the union of nominal Christians. It is not about the united church of the end times. It is not about the merging of existing churches.

The unity that Jesus asks of the Father (John 17:21) is about the church of Jesus, which consists of his born-again followers (his bride - Rev 19:7+8).

6.12 The house church movement

What is it all ?

- Promoting God's kingdom in the various areas of society.
- To make Jesus known so that people can be saved and made disciples.
- Through: Self-multiplying groups/house groups/house churches.
(It is about exponential multiplication of groups - instead of addition).

The initial situation:

- At the moment, the kingdom of God is only being built very hesitantly in the various areas of society. There can be no question of Christian ideas and values permeating.
- Hardly anyone finds a personal relationship with Jesus.
- Previous approaches, concepts and ideas for evangelisation have had results that are close to zero.

- At the moment, Christians still play an insignificant role in most areas of society and are barely noticeable overall.

Something has to change!

- The situation is dramatic! Millions of people are lost in this generation - they will not spend eternity with God! ("Whoever is not written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire." Rev 20:15)

How does God see the situation?

- He loves each and every one of them. Jesus gave his life for them.
- He wants them to recognise the truth, be free, saved and made disciples.
- He wants to use the gifts, abilities and finances to build his kingdom worldwide.

Characteristics of these groups - from experiences made worldwide with small group movements:

- What is a house church movement? Def: A rapid and exponential multiplication of small groups.
- Exponential growth is only possible if new groups are founded by existing groups.
- These are groups whose participants speak the same language and share same culture: e.g. business people and their families.
- The groups are based on the Word of God and the common priesthood.
- Prayer is a key component. Intensive prayer is part of the DNA of small groups. Worship plays an increasingly important role. (God is a God who wants to be worshipped)

- The movement should be fuelled by: Prayer, discipleship, leadership training and the small group methodology.
- The groups pray and reach out to increase a missionary fervour.
- The small groups are not controlled from the outside, but are accompanied by an apostolic ministry (e.g. by a strategy coordinator).
- The gospel is spread widely and with great effort. Feedback should be possible - people who express interest should find dialogue partners.
- The five basic principles are:
 1. Participatory Bible study (i.e. everyone is actively involved),
 2. Obedience the Word of God (this is the standard for successful action),
 3. The small groups are led by lay people in their profession,
 4. If the small group is too large, it will be divided (maximum 15 participants),
 5. The small groups do not meet in churches, but in private homes, restaurants or companies.
- New believers are immediately baptised and taught that it is natural to win others for Christ and form new small groups.
- Luke 10 is a suitable mission strategy (sent out in pairs to find the "man of peace" and lead him and his social environment to God).
- Each matter of faith and practical life is confronted with the following questions:
 - What would Jesus do in this situation?
 - What does God's word say?
- The 10 common elements of successful small group movements:
 - Prayer is the source of strength for the founder and is the most effective way of passing on the greatest wealth that he takes with him into his work.
 - Abundant sowing of the gospel
"He who sows abundantly reap abundantly."
 - Conscious and intentional multiplication of small groups from the first foundation.
 - The Holy Scriptures have supreme authority.
 - The small groups are led in a decentralised manner by local leaders.
 - The leaders are lay people.
 - The structure consists of small groups.
 - Multiplication through the creation of small groups by small groups.
 - Rapid reproduction is necessary for the existence of a movement. You

emphasises the importance and urgency of coming to faith in Jesus.

- Healthy small groups.

In all successful movements, small groups have these five values in common:

- Training and discipleship
- Worship/Prayer/Bible study
- Community
- Evangelistic and missionary endeavours
- Service (diaconal)

The ten most factors of successful movements worldwide

- Worship/prayer/study in a culturally appropriate way.
- Evangelisation has communal consequences in your own family, in the company, in the other social environment.
- Baptism immediately after conversion.
- Quick integration of new believers into the life and ministry of the small group.
- Act and live directly in an evangelistic way.
- Growing in discipleship and making disciples others.
- Helping to create new small groups.
- Passion and fearlessness.
- A sense of urgency and the importance of salvation and the need for conversion.

Ten practical tips:

- Work towards a small group foundation movement from the outset.
- Develop and apply a comprehensive strategy. It is based on at least four pillars:
 - Prayer God's
 - Word
 - Evangelisation Small group formation
- Plus supplementation through humanitarian aid, communication and other efforts.
- Assess everything in relation to achieving the end vision. Learn to say "no".
- Use target-orientated harvesting. Work with response options.
- Gather interested parties and win them over.
- Use several leaders per small group.
- "Fathers and mothers in Christ"/ elders (in the plural).

- Make the importance of witnessing clear from the outset.
- The small groups promote the unity of the local church (John 17) as they are not denominationally bound!

In the groups:

- Evangelisation of the target group
- Discipleship (teaching)
- Mentoring relationships
- Prayer for the sick
- Lord's Supper - Annunciation Supper, Proclamation
- Deliverance ministry (greed, addictions, etc.)
- Worship - God is a God who wants to be worshipped (praise + life)

How can business people, for example, live like this?

- Intercession, concrete - Top Ten Prayer Card
- Fasting
- Engaging the Holy Spirit in a good way (biblical teaching on baptism in the Spirit + putting it into practice)
- Apostolic accompaniment
- Prayer Force
- Baptisms
- Establish these groups in companies, among others
- Dealing with the sins of the past in the individual cities
- Seeking unity in the city ("By this the world will know that you have sent me, when they are one." John 17)
Consciously seeking and living community and unity with other local Christians.
- The small groups act like small communities.
Def: Church: "An assembly of Christians under leadership."
- Each small group is networked with other local Christians and receives apostolic support/correction if necessary.

Literature:

- Church Planting Movement, David Garrison, Freitagsfax Verlag, ISBN 3-927934-99-4.
- www.gloryworld.de,
- www.churchplantingmovements.com
- Houses that change the world, Wolfgang Simson, ISBN 3-928093-12-6.

6.13 Founding and multiplying house churches with "Alpha courses"

The initial question is:

How can people in business be reached with the gospel in a sustainable way, made into disciples and integrated into churches?

There are two forms that can be easily combined: The basic faith course "Alpha at Work" and house churches for business people.

Why do the two go so well together and complement each other?

- The Alpha courses lay a solid foundation and are the most effective tool in our culture for reaching people with the gospel (there are now over 1000 Alpha courses nationwide).
- Business people sometimes find it difficult to feel at home in existing communities.
- The existing municipal structures are only partially suitable for promoting the kingdom of God in the economy.
- The families of business people also find an environment in the special house churches where they feel at home and are made into disciples. Firstly, the Alpha course in the workplace: what makes it special? What are the special features? Alpha at Work is a fifteen-part, practically orientated introduction to the Christian faith developed primarily for people who have distanced themselves from the church and new Christians. Each week guests eat a small meal together while a live or video/DVD presentation on a central theme of the Christian faith. After the lecture, guests have the opportunity to discuss its content and compare their impressions in an open and neutral environment. As in the original Alpha course, the participants spend a weekend or a day together after about half of the course in order to deal with the person of the Holy Spirit.

There are some fundamental differences between Alpha in the workplace and Alpha in a community:

- the duration of the meetings is shorter
- The meeting place is the workplace, not the community
- there is no worship during the course, with the exception of the weekend or day together

- building relationships

requires, due to the shorter time

of individual meetings, more effort. All over the world, business people Alpha in the workplace.

Managing directors organise the course in the company management meeting room. Marketing managers meet in the department's own office.

Even factory workers the course in their canteen. Alpha at Work has been developed to suit every employee in every workplace.

And now to the house churches: What are house churches?

► House groups that act like mini-churches.

► They form the New Testament church structure.

► House churches do not belong to any denomination.

► House churches are independent - but networked with other house churches in the city.

► House churches seek fellowship and contact with other local Christians. One aim is for all born-again people in the respective city to meet together regularly.

► House churches are led by lay people (elders).

► They are cared for by apostolically gifted people and the other persons of the fivefold ministry (Ephesians 4:11 - apostles, teachers, prophets, shepherds, evangelists).

► House churches are constantly multiplying.

► In house churches there is a lot of prayer, fellowship, eating, teaching and mutual correction.

► You live in committed relationships.

► Business house churches consist of families whose members are involved in business (e.g. through self-employment or personnel responsibility).

► In business house churches, in addition to the basic discipleship topics, there is also teaching and dialogue about specific challenges that everyday business life brings with it.

► These elements should be present in a house church:

- Community
- Discipleship
- Services
- Evangelisation/ Mission
- Worship

► There are only three levels of church in the New Testament: 1. house churches, 2. city churches, 3. the worldwide church

What does the combination of the Alpha course at the workplace with business house churches look like in practice?

- In the beginning, an Alpha course is organised in a company or private home - prepared by Christians who form a core team. The target group are colleagues, employees, customers, suppliers, etc. . - People from the business world who do not yet know Jesus personally.
- After approx. 3 months, a party is to which people from the social environment of the current participants are invited. Goal: Another Alpha course at the workplace with people from their social environment.
- The "old" participants organise the new course and also meet - together with their families - in house churches
- to have community and for their own further training.

The 10 guidelines that can be observed in all house church movements worldwide:

5. Intense and persistent prayer
6. A burden for the lost that motivates evangelisation (wide distribution of the gospel)
7. The house churches are designed for multiplication from outset
8. God's word has the highest priority
9. Local management
10. Lay leadership
11. House churches are the structural basis
12. House churches found house churches
13. Fast reproduction
14. Healthy communities

The claim - This be possible through house churches:

Mark 15:16:

"And he said to them: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. But these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they shall cast out demons, speak with new tongues, 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.

...But they went out and preached everywhere; and the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the accompanying signs."

Of course, the combination of Alpha in the workplace and house churches is only one way of reaching people in the economy.

Integration into other church structures also makes sense - the goal of making disciples of this target group remains.

Literature:

Detailed information is available at:

- www.alphakurs.de/kurse/arbeitsplatz.html -
- www.hauskirche.de
- www.house2house.tv
- www.gloryworld.de
- Wolfgang Simson, Houses that change the world.
- David Garrison, House Church Movement
- Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz , Times of Restoration

6.14 What is a baptism?

Is an infant "baptism" a biblical baptism?
What is the truth about baptism?

Truth is recognised through the Word of God (the Bible) and the Holy Spirit. Jn 8:31-32:
"Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him: If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free!" For followers of Jesus, therefore, the statements of the Bible are given higher priority than the decisions of church councils and traditions. Based on the Bible and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is not difficult to learn God's view on baptism. What individuals or denominations think about baptism is rather unimportant - the only important thing is to recognise God's will.

What types of baptism are found in the New Testament?

- The baptism of John (the baptism of repentance).
- Water baptism (baptism that must be preceded by repentance and faith). It is a public sign before visible and invisible world.
- Baptism in the Spirit = "being baptised in the Holy Spirit"

Why is it important to be baptised?

- because it is in the Bible:
"He who believes and is baptised will be saved." (Mark 16:16)
- because Jesus commanded: Preach the gospel to the whole world and baptise them...
- because it is a confession before the visible and invisible world.

Aspects of baptism:

Penance:

Acts 2:37-38:

"But when they heard this, they were moved, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: What shall we do, men and brethren? But Peter said to them: Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Faith:

Mark 16:15-16

And he said to them: Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptised shall be saved, but he who does not believe be condemned.

Acts 8:36-38

As they travelled along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Behold, here is water! What prevents me from being baptised? Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, it is permitted. He answered and said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God! And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptised him.

Heb 6:1-2

"Therefore let us [now] leave the initial doctrine of Christ and go on to perfection, not laying the foundation again with repentance from dead works and faith in God, with the doctrine of baptisms, the laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement."

The request for a clear conscience:

1 Peter 3:21:

"As an image of this, baptism now also saves us, which is not a putting away of carnal filth, but the petition addressed to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ..." To summarise, the requirements for water baptism can be described as follows: A person wishing to be baptised must firstly have heard the gospel well enough to understand it, secondly have repented (repented) and thirdly believe that Jesus died vicariously for sin.

Become a disciple:

Matthew 28:19-20

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age!"

Facts about infant baptism:

- The original Greek word for "baptise" is "immerse/submerge" (do not sprinkle).
- First faith, then baptism. (Everything else is well-intentioned - but not biblically tenable)
- The Word of God is the standard - not a tradition.
- Infant baptism is not found anywhere in the New Testament.

Counterargument:

Proponents of infant baptism as New Testament evidence the biblical passages in which it is reported that a convert is baptised with his whole household.

(the assumption here is that infants were also baptised). However, it is clear from these verses that those who heard the gospel, believed and repented were baptised (but clearly excludes infants).

- There is also no baptism by sprinkling with drops of water in the Bible - neither for adults nor for children.
- Anyone who was "baptised" in church as an infant was not yet baptised in the biblical sense. Repentance and faith were not a prerequisite for baptism.
- What many people don't know: The reformers Luther, Zwingli and Calvin were initially against infant baptism. However, they later compromised.
- In the Protestant Church it is also officially possible to have an infant blessed instead of being baptised (baptism can then take place later if the person being baptised is able to turn to Jesus and believe in Him).

Why are babies baptised? It is assumed that baptism conveys grace.

So that "the stains of birth may be washed away" (Origen)

In 251 AD, a synod of 66 bishops established in writing that one is born again through baptism ("so that we do not expose the soul of the child to the danger of eternal damnation"). This is also the case in Lutheranism: "...in the waters of baptism we are reborn as children of God..."

With Constantine (312 AD), infant baptism took on a political -power-preserving- meaning: just as one became a Roman without personal conviction, one became a Christian without personal conviction. Calvin did not associate baptism with rebirth, but rather meant: by this

"the seed of repentance will be planted in the infants through the hidden work of the Holy Spirit."

Bromiley believes that infant baptism is a sign of the New Covenant, just as circumcision was a sign in the Old Covenant.

To summarise: as soon as you leave a biblically comprehensible teaching and follow your own opinion, chaos inevitably ensues.

Mt. 15,3: "Why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your traditions?"

Recommendation:

- to have babies blessed instead of being "baptised" (Jesus: "Let the children come to me and do not forbid them").
- Anyone who was "baptised" in church as an infant should examine the statements in the Bible and ask the Holy Spirit to confirm whether a baptism preceded by repentance and faith is right for them.
- Jesus us to live in peace with one another.

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6.15 Is there a baptism in the Holy Spirit?

The Bible is the standard for the things we believe. Everything in the Bible is important for our theology. Everything that is not in it is human, often legalistic or determined by tradition.

What does the Bible actually say about "baptism in the Holy Spirit"?

There are six biblical passages that literally mention the baptism of the Holy Spirit: Acts 1:5 + 11:17; Mat 3:11, Mk 1:8; Luke 3:16b; John 1:33:

Acts 1:5:

"...for John baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not long after these days."

Acts 11:16:

"Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptised with water, but you shall be baptised in the Holy Spirit."

Now if God has given them the same gift that he gave us after they became believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could have resisted God?"

Mt 3:11: John: "I baptise you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, so that I am not able to bear his shoes: he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

Mark 1:8: John: "I baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

Luke 3:16: John: "I baptise you with water; but one stronger than I is coming, for whom I am not good enough to the thong of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Jn 1:33:

"And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptise with water said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost."

It is therefore biblically correct to speak of a baptism in the Holy Spirit and desire it.

Seven other biblical passages report on the experience of the baptism of the Spirit among Jews and Christians: John 3:5 + 20:23; Acts 2:1 + 8:15 + 9:17-18 + 10:44-46 + 19:6-7.

There are therefore a total of 13 biblical passages that document this event.

e.g. Acts 8:15-17:

"John and Peter came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet come upon any of them.

They were only baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit."

Acts 9:17

Then Ananias went and entered the house; and he laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, Jesus, who appeared to you on the road you were coming along, so that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 10:44-47: "While Peter was still these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all were listening. And the believers from the circumcision, as many of them as had come with Peter, were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles as well. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter answered, "Can anyone refuse the water, that these should not be baptised who have received the Holy Spirit as we have?"

Acts 19:5-7

"When they (believers in Ephesus) heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

But there were about twelve men in total."

What is baptism in the Holy Spirit? You are saved through water baptism, born again, you make Jesus your Lord and receive eternal life.

- The baptism in the Holy Spirit is being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17 + 11:15 + 19:6).
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit releases the full power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17).
- The spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit wants to distribute are unfolded. This often involves praying in other languages (speaking in tongues) - Acts 2:4 + 9:17 + 19:6 + 1 Corinthians 12:10 + 14:15.

The Holy Spirit already works in us before conversion and before water baptism, because no one can call Jesus "Lord" except through the Holy Spirit - 1 Corinthians 12:3. The Bible therefore makes a clear distinction between the new birth (John 3), water baptism (Acts 22:16) and the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:16b).

The baptism in the Holy Spirit takes place predominantly through the laying on of hands (see Acts 8:17 + 9:17 + 19:6; but also without the laying on of hands in Acts 2:1-4 + 10:44-46).

It is therefore biblically correct for born-again Christians who have been baptised as believers to have hands laid on them in order to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Baptism is associated with the baptised person's desire for the Holy Spirit to bring to fruition all the gifts intended for them. By being baptised, the baptised person places themselves completely at the disposal of the Holy Spirit.

As Christians, we should not resist the Spirit (Acts 7:51) and not dampen Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19). We should not do this for our own sake. Therefore, even if we belong to a church that neither teaches nor practices the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we should be obedient to the Word of God and receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit - whether with or without the laying on of hands.

Baptism can take place, for example, in the house group by the house group leader, by elders of the congregation or by apostolic ministers through the laying on of hands.

Is being filled with the Holy Spirit a one-off process?

No! Although the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a one-time event (like water baptism), there are several passages in the Bible where Christians on whom the Holy Spirit fell were filled with Him again at a later time (e.g. Acts 2:4 + 3:14).

Paul also writes to the Spirit-filled Ephesians: "...be filled with the Spirit!" (Eph. 5:18). Paul and the centurion Cornelius first experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit - both were able to pray in tongues afterwards - and then they were baptised in water. Some commentators claim that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is always directly linked to conversion. This assertion is not tenable from a biblical perspective. Thus

For example, Peter and John laid their hands on born-again and water-baptised believers so that they could receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-17).

Paul experienced his conversion miracle outside Damascus. Here he called Jesus "Lord" and asked Him what he should do. Three days later, Ananias laid his hands on him so that he could be filled with the Holy Spirit. We know one consequence of this being filled from the letter to the Corinthians: Paul speaks more in tongues than the other Christians. Cornelius prayed to God without ceasing, even though he was not a Jew. He was pious, had a divine vision, feared God and was highly respected by the people (Acts 10). When Peter spoke to him, the Holy Spirit fell on him and those around him. As non-Jews, they experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit - this time without the laying on of hands. The result

was that they spoke in tongues and praised God. The disciples in Ephesus: For them too, conversion and the baptism in the Holy Spirit were separated in time. These disciples were baptised by John (baptism of repentance). John told them that they should believe in Jesus. But it was only Paul who explained the baptism in the name of Jesus and the baptism of the Spirit to the believers in Jesus (Acts 19:2ff). He laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Biblical facts about the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

- There is a baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a one-off event in the life of a Christian, such as water baptism. Filling with the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, can be a multiple experience.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit can be received through the laying on of hands or through another sovereign act of God.
- The visible consequences of the baptism in the Holy Spirit are in the majority of cases speaking in tongues, but also the gift of prophecy and praise, among other things.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit can be experienced directly at conversion or at a later point in time.

What pract. What practical effects can a baptism in the Holy Spirit have?

- Release of gifts according to 1 Corinthians 12
- Great freedom to work evangelistically (e.g. Saul/Paul)
- Courage instead of fear - e.g. Peter's behaviour changes when he is filled with the Holy Spirit. From the coward in Mat. 26,72 to the courageous in Acts 2,33.
- physical healing (Acts 9:18)
- Speaking in other tongues - this is the most common side effect (Apg. 2,4+ 9,17+19,6+1.Kor. 12,10+14,15).

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6.16 God: "I have a dream..."

God has a dream

... that one day the Christians in their city will realise that they belong inseparably together:

One body and one spirit, one hope; one Lord, one faith and one baptism.

(Eph 4:1ff)

... that one day Christians in one city may bear with one another in all humility and gentleness, in patience and love. (Eph. 4:2)

... that one day the Christians in their city may maintain unity in the Spirit through the bond of peace. (1 Corinthians 1:10-17)

... that one day the Christians in every city will worship Him together. (Acts 5:12b)

... that one day the Christians of all denominations in a city will gather together. (Acts 13:44+ Acts 21:22)

... that one day reconciliation will be possible among Christians, forgiveness will be asked of one another and mutually inflicted wounds will be healed. (Ps. 133 + Luke 6:37 + Heb. 12:14+15)

... that one day Christians will live in unity so that the people in their city will finally recognise that God has sent Jesus. (Joh. 17!)

God has a dream

... that one day Christians from all churches, congregations and Christian organisations and groups will work together to develop a vision for their city. (Jer. 29:7)

... that one day Christians will take responsibility in their city.

... that one day Christians will meet the needs in their city together. (Gal. 6,9+10 + Romans 12,21 + 1.Tim. 6,18)

... that one day Christians together will permeate all areas of society in their city with Christian values and principles.

God has a dream

... that one day Christians will rediscover together how God originally planned his church. (Phil. 2+ Acts 5:12

+ Rev 7:9+ Eph 4:11)

... that one day Christians will together in the gap for their city, praying to Him together and pleading for mercy. (Psalm 106:23)

... that one day Christians will be able to weep together for the lost in their city. (Mark 6:34)

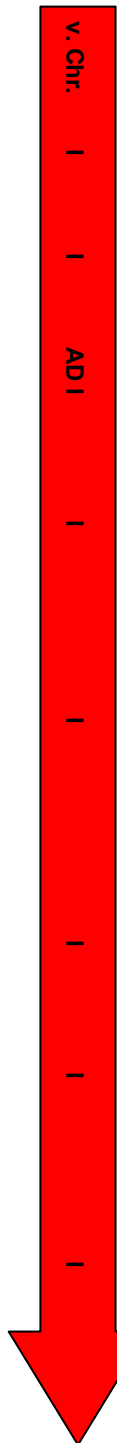
... that one day Christians together will invite the Holy Spirit to work in their city in the way he wants.

... that one day Christians will let Jesus build his church in their city and are prepared to help together. (Matthew 16:18 + Mark 16:15ff)

Prayer:

"Lord, please work in me that my thoughts and arguments may increasingly with your will." (Romans 12:2 + Matthew 6:10)

6.17 The temples of the different eras



Ca. 1500 BC: **The tabernacle**

- at the time of Moses (Exodus from Egypt)
(1492/1448 - 968/961 BC)
- "The glory of God among men"

Ca. 1000 BC: **1st temple**

- built by King Solomon (968/961 BC)
- destroyed by the Babylonians (586 BC)

515 BC:

2nd temple

- after the Babylonian captivity
- built under Zerubbabel (516 BC)
- also known as the Herodian temple,
because Herod had it extended in 21 BC;
- Destroyed in 70 AD (by the Romans)

until approx. 30 AD: Jesus

The **temple of his body** (John 2:21)

from ca. 27 AD: The **temple of the congregation**

- all who have been born again (John 3),
- all followers of Jesus
(1.Cor.3,16; 1.Cor.6,19; 2.Cor.6,16; Eph.2,21).
- Period: From Pentecost to the Rapture of the saints.
- A temple, but not a building.

today's date plus x years:

3. Temple

- Preparations for construction are in full swing: see
www.templeinstitute.org .
- The Antichrist will sit there and declare himself to be God.
- Destruction at the end of the 7-year tribulation period

After the time of trouble:

4. Temple

- during the 1000-year kingdom of peace= the temple from Ezekiel 40-48

After the 1000 years of peace:

- No more temple.
- **"God will be their temple."**
- Rev 21 + 22

Literature

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6.18 "The woman keep silence in the church? And cover her head"?

Theological aspects of the topic "The woman is silent in the church"! The biblical

passage:

1. Corinthians 14,

34 As in all the churches of the saints, so let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they shall be subject, as also saith the law.

35 But if they want to learn something, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is not right for a woman to speak in church.

36 Or did the word of God go out from you? Or did it to you alone?

In order to correctly interpret the meaning of these verses for today's church practice, it is important to ask the following questions:

- In what context, in what situation does Paul make this statement?
- Why does Paul it necessary to this statement in this way?
- What moves Paul? What is he trying to achieve?

that:

- Is this statement also valid for our church practice?

The following aspects apply:

► Important and generally valid theological principles are always found in more than one place in the Bible (usually at least three times and additionally in both the Old Testament and the New Testament).

"The woman is silent in the congregation" is only written in one place.

► Paul makes this statement in his letter to the Corinthians. The church in Corinth at this time was in a phase of great disorder - this in relation to sexual aberrations and spiritual confusion (explanations on the proper use of spiritual gifts in chapters 12 + 14).

► The cultural status of women back then was completely different to today. They were therefore less educated and had less access to basic teaching. Here, St Paul is rather defending against gossip.

He is not fundamentally against women speaking in the church: In 1 Corinthians 11:5, he explicitly says that women can pray and prophesy:

"But every woman who prays and prophesies ..."

► In 1 Cor. 11 Paul is concerned with the

Behaviour of the woman in the church. In verse 3 he emphasises the order of creation: Christ is the head of the man, the man is the head of his wife.

From this it follows for our church practice: If the husband of a married woman has no objection to her praying, prophesying, giving testimony or teaching in the church - there are no theological objections to this.

Unmarried women who want to speak in church need the protection - the spiritual covering - of the elders who have the responsibility in the church.

Another point:

When interpreting biblical passages, it is also important to ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom on how a particular biblical passage should be understood today.

2. Corinthians 3:6: "He has made us able to be ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

In other words, if one stubbornly follows the letter - without the Holy Spirit - there is a danger of legalism.

A similar question: "Should women cover their heads when praying?" The biblical passage:

1. 4 Corinthians 11, 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with something on his head dishonours his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head; it is

one and the same as if it were shorn!

6 For if a woman does not want to cover herself, let her hair be cut off! But if it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut or shaved off, then she should cover herself.

7 For the man must not cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. 8 For man does not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 nor was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. 10 Therefore the woman shall have [a sign of] power on her head for the angels' sake.

11 But in the Lord neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man.

12 For as the woman [comes] from the man, so also the man through the woman; but everything [comes] from God. 13 Judge for yourselves whether it is proper for a woman to pray to God uncovered. 14 Or does not nature already teach you that it is dishonourable for a man to wear long hair?

This is also about asking the Holy Spirit what this means for you personally. A woman who has the impression that she should cover her head with a headscarf when praying - out of respect for God and his word - should do so.

But it should leave others the freedom to decide for themselves - before God.

6.19 The restoration of the community

The process of restoring the community God has a master plan. From creation to eternity. World history runs according to it. He has everything under control. This is particularly true of Israel and its church. From the hour of its birth (Pentecost), it flourished and spread throughout the world with signs and wonders. Since Constantine (330 AD), from the 4th century onwards, there was a 1000-year degeneration of the church in the Dark Ages. It was not until 100 years before Martin Luther (1517 AD) that a first phase of the restoration of the Church of Jesus took place under the pre-reformer Jan Hus in Prague (church services in the local language instead of Latin. First turning away from the religious system of the Catholic Church. Personal experiences of God). Martin Luther then recognised in the Reformation: Sola gracia - by grace alone (salvation through the substitutionary death of Jesus). Sola scriptura - Scripture alone (without church tradition). Sola fide - by faith alone (salvation not by good works). Another 100 years later, John Wesley great influence with the Holiness movement (including Methodism; in the 18th century). This was followed by faith healing movements (including John Alexander Dowie, John G. Lake and Smith Wigglesworth). The restoration of the church experienced a further major boost through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit around 1903 AD (Pentecostal revivals, including William J. Seymour and Charles F. Parham). Around 1950, reactivation of the **evangelists** through the latter rain movement and liberation evangelisation. 1960: The Charismatic Movement. Reactivation of **pastors**, rediscovery of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the various denominations. 1970: The word and faith movement. Reactivating the **teachers**. Victorious attitude and victorious life. 1980: The Prophetic Movement. Reactivation of the office of the **prophets**. (Listening to God, the gift of prophetic speech, prophecies for individual believers through to prophecies about nations). 1990: The Apostolic Movement. Reactivation and recognition of the **Apostles'** ministry. Apostolic congregations and networks. Final restoration of the fivefold ministry.

What restoration processes are currently underway in the Church of Jesus?

- Overcoming religiosity and ecclesiastical power.
- Declining membership of the mainstream churches. Old church structures and also the **congregational structures** of the free churches are being scrutinised. (How did Jesus want to build his church - and what have we humans of it? Keywords here are: House churches, five-fold ministry, one place - one body.
- An (inner) overcoming of the fragmentation of the church of Jesus into more than 40,000 denominations worldwide. Because: Jesus asked the Father for **the unity** of the body of Jesus (John 17:21). That is why unity will come.

Then we will finally the phase that Dr Bill Hamon calls **the "day (time) of the saints"**.

This is the restoration of the full anointing of the 1st century Christians:

"Go and preach the gospel to the whole creation ... These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons and speak in new tongues, they will take up serpents, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick and they will be well ... and the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the accompanying signs." Matt. 28, 15-20

Are our prayers not yet fully effective because God's time is not yet ripe for them? (Because of: Lack of sanctification, wrong structures, lack of unity, ...?)

The great **goal** of human history is the marriage of the Lamb (Rev 19,6): Jesus will have eternal fellowship with his perfect bride.

The bride is the born-again followers of Jesus and Israel. All world events are heading towards this climax.

His bride, purchased by Himself, will **reign** with Him for eternity. And that over the billions of people of all times who are not in the New Jerusalem and not in eternal damnation! See also: Jens Kaldewey - Topic 3.10 "The three outcomes of God's judgement.

We are in the middle of the process of restoring the church. The time between the phases of renewal is getting shorter - at first it took 100s of years, recently only decades!

In Christ, God chose the church and the people of Israel together (Romans 10:12).

The restoration of the people of **Israel** as a God-fearing nation takes place parallel to the restoration of the church of Jesus.

The development of the church within God's master plan - also with the people of Israel - is (fortunately) unstoppable.

The restoration of the community

after Christ

→ ca. 34 AD: **Pentecost** - can be seen as the birth of the church.

→ ca. 330 AD: Emperor Constantine: 1st division of the congregation into clergy and laity instead of the general priesthood.
2. Construction of church buildings - instead of house churches, general meetings on site.
3. Merging the power of church and state - instead of independence.

→ The result: degeneration of the community for around 1000 years - the "Dark Ages".

→ New impetus for the community: pre-reformer Jan Hus in Prague.

→ Around 1500 AD: Martin Luther, Johannes Zwingli, John Knox, Georg Fox, ...

→ Around 1600 : Evangelical movement - water baptism, separation of church and state. Around

→ 1700 AD: John Wesley - the Holiness movement.

→ Around 1800 AD: faith healing movement - among others Maria Woodworth-Etter, Smith Wiggelsworth, Aimee Semple McPherson, ...

→ Around 1900 AD: Pentecostal movement - Azusa Street, William Braham, A.A. Allen, Jack Coe, ...

→ Around 1950 A.D.: Latter Rain Movement, the ministry of the **evangelists** is reactivated. Mass evangelisation - Billy Graham and others

→ Ca. 1960 AD: Charismatic Movement Ca. 1970

→ AD: Word and Faith Movement Ca. 1980 AD:

→ Prophetic Movement

→ Around 1990 AD: Apostolic movement

→ Today: rediscovery of the original church structures (house churches, five-fold ministry, elders, joint meetings of local Christians, ...),
Christian unity - (inner) overcoming of denominations. Jesus, the common Lord. John 17:21.

→ Afterwards: Restoration of the proclamation with the confirmation of signs and wonders.
Mk. 16, 15-20 ("The day of the saints").

→ Marriage of the Lamb to the perfect bride. (Rev 19)

→ Community and governance.

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