

# PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

*For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)*

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## Barriers to the Blessings of the Kingdom

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### Introduction

It seems to me that over the last few years that there has been an increase in the preaching about the blessings of God. This has been especially true with the television preachers (of course, this is followed by an appeal for money). Now, I have nothing against enjoying the blessings of God. They are great. However, the tendency of the preaching has been toward an idea that somehow God is obligated to bless you. Some have even suggested that if you will give a specific amount to their ministry then God will give you a double or even a triple blessing. Many do this and then are disappointed when the blessings don't appear because you cannot buy the blessings of God.

Does God bless unconditionally? Can we live wickedly and still expect the blessing of God? Does obedience play any role in blessing? Has the western church deceived itself with its sloppy grace and obligatory blessings? It seems self evident that in order to be blessed one must be blessable. This Teaching Letter is dedicated to trying to answer these and other similar questions about the blessings of the Kingdom of God.

### Being Blessable

The Scriptures make it very clear that God will not bless wickedness. God cannot even look on wickedness: ***“Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor. ...” (Habakkuk 1:13 NASB)***

The Psalmist tells us that holding wickedness in our heart will prevent the Lord from hearing our prayers.

If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear; [\(Psalms 66:18 NASB\)](#)

The most powerful promise of the Scriptures is the fact that we can call upon the Lord and He will answer us. However, according to Isaiah there are some conditions to this blessing if we want the Lord to speak.

"Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; You will cry, and He will say, 'Here I

am.' If you remove the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, (Isaiah 58:9 NASB)

The conditions are 1) removing the yoke from our midst; 2) removing the pointing of the finger; and, 3) removing the speaking of wickedness.

It would seem then that wickedness is a great barrier to the blessing of God. After all, God sent Noah's flood as a judgment for the wickedness of mankind.

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. (Genesis 6:5-6 NASB)

## Wickedness and Unforgiveness

We tend to think of wickedness as the most vile acts of which men are capable. However, the Lord has a broader definition than we do. Jesus tells us that unforgiveness is wickedness. Jesus is speaking about forgiving our brothers in Matthew eighteen when Peter asks Him how many times should we forgive. Jesus then tells us a parable [*a Kingdom parable, which means that it is to be understood only by disciples (Matt. 13:10-11)*].

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. "When he had begun to settle *them*, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. "But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. "So the slave fell *to the ground* and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' "So his fellow slave fell *to the ground* and *began* to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' "But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. "Then summoning him, his lord *\*said* to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. (Matthew 18:23-34 NASB)

The King forgave the slave a huge amount of money; however, the slave demanded re-payment from a fellow slave of a minor amount of money. While he had been forgiven, he would not forgive his brother. When the king found out what had happened, he called the one whom he had forgiven a "wicked slave". Unforgiveness in the heart of the slave is revealed as wickedness in his actions. The king then turned the slave over to the torturers until all was repaid. The application of this to us is then stated in the next verse:

**"My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart." (Matthew 18:35 NASB)**

From Jesus' statement here we see that the wickedness of unforgiveness puts us in a place of

judgment rather than a place of blessing.

Jesus said the Father would do the same to us. What does “the same” mean? In the parable the king turned the slave over to torturers until the debt was repaid. The same is what happens to us. The Father turns us over to “the torturers” until we forgive. What are the torturers? They could be many things but surely they include bitterness, resentment, and anger harbored in the heart even to the point that the person's health is affected. There is a loss of righteousness, peace and joy which is defined in the Scriptures as the kingdom of God [*Rom. 14:17*].

Jesus gave us the model prayer in Matt. 6:9-13 in which should ask the Father to “**forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors**”. Then He gives us the reason that we should pray in that manner:

"For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (Matthew 6:14-15 NASB)

If we do not forgive others and therefore remain unforgiven ourselves, are we blessable? I don't think so. We don't have the option of holding the transgressions of others against them if we want the blessings of the Kingdom.

## Pride

While unforgiveness seems to be one of the primary barriers to blessings, pride is a close second. We should remember that the original sin was pride; for it was by pride that our enemy was lifted up and fell from his place to become Satan. The Scriptures tell us:

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." (*James 4:6 NASB*)

This is very clear—God opposes the proud. If you are walking in pride, do you think that you are in a blessable place? How can God bless you if He is opposing you?

To be blessable we must clothe ourselves with humility.

You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, (*1 Peter 5:5-6 NASB*)

We humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. He will exalt us (bless us) at the proper time; that is, on His schedule and according to His criteria.

It is God's desire to bless us. He doesn't desire to withhold any good gift from His children. However, if we are miss-behaving brats, ignoring His commands and requirements, He will restrain His blessings. Let us examine our hearts and remove all barriers to the blessings of His Kingdom.

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