

# The Terms of the New Covenant

by Zac Poonen

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*The new covenant is a better covenant with better promises, and understanding its terms is essential for our salvation and our relationship with God.*

**Duration:** 54:34

**Scripture:** Hebrews 5:12, Hebrews 8:6-7, Hebrews 8:10-13

**Topics:** "New Covenant"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and following His will in our lives. He compares it to starting a new job, where we must first understand our role and follow instructions before we can effectively contribute. The speaker also highlights the need for both mercy and grace in our spiritual journey. He explains that while mercy cleanses our hearts, grace empowers us to resist temptation and overcome challenges. The sermon concludes with the reminder that God is a loving father who desires a personal relationship with each of His children.

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## Transcript

We are told in Hebrews and chapter 8 that Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry by as much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises. I have found in my own moving around many groups of believers that there are many things in the book of Hebrews which they have never taken very carefully to heart. And the book of Hebrews is not one of the popular books among Christians.

Hebrews itself says about those who drink only milk, Hebrews chapter 5, and who can't take strong meat, well, if you are going to be babies always, then we live on milk all the time. But if you are going to grow up, then we need some of the strong meat mentioned in the book of Hebrews. For example, Hebrews is the only book that speaks about Jesus as our forerunner.

The only book that tells us that Jesus was tempted in all points as we are and yet did not sin. And many other things like this, about looking unto Jesus and running the race. And Hebrews is the one book that explains the new covenant better than perhaps any other book.

And Hebrews is the book which also tells us that the first covenant is obsolete. Hebrews 8, verse 13, when God said a new covenant, He has made the first one obsolete. Now you know that the Bible has got Old Covenant and New Covenant, or what you call Old Testament and New Testament.

And the Old Covenant, or Old Testament, refers to the way God dealt with Israel by giving them the law and that came through Moses. And the New Covenant is something which is different, it's superior to the Old Covenant and it was given to us through the Lord Jesus. And John, when he writes the Gospel, he says in John's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 17, The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Now many people haven't understood grace. They think of a very commonly accepted definition of grace in Christendom. You know how much our minds are influenced by commonly accepted definitions which are not found in scripture at all.

One of these is grace. I've heard this definition many times. Grace is God's unmerited favor.

I'm sure you've heard it too. But the Bible says grace came by Jesus Christ. John 1, verse 17.

There was no grace before that. Grace is something God gave people, was never found anywhere. It says, for example, in Genesis 6, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and the real meaning is he found favor.

That is not the grace which Jesus Christ brought. The grace, as we read in the New Testament, is something that Christ brought. And if grace means God's unmerited favor, what about all those people in the Old Testament? They also got God's unmerited favor.

Noah got God's unmerited favor, and Abel got God's unmerited favor, and David got God's unmerited favor. Everybody in the world has got God's unmerited favor. Even the unbelievers get God's unmerited favor.

In that case, everybody gets grace. It's not true. Grace is not God's unmerited favor.

God's unmerited favor is given to everybody. We don't deserve a single thing that God gives us. Everything we get from God is unmerited, undeserved.

So I just warn you, don't accept these commonly used definitions because they may not be true. See if there is foundation in Scripture for it. In my younger days, when I did not know any better, then of course I was like a baby.

I accepted what other people told me. But like Paul said, when I grew up, I put away childish things. And when we grow up, we question.

That thing which I have learned for the last so many years, is it from Scripture? You can sit in a Bible school and learn things which are not in Scripture. You got to see, is it in Scripture or not? If it's not in Scripture, throw it in the garbage bin. It's not worth anything.

I don't care who says it, I don't care if 10,000 people say it. If it's not in Scripture, I don't accept it. That's the principle I've followed for 40 years and I've never regretted it.

Then you won't go astray. 10,000 people can be wrong. God is not wrong.

It's because people blindly accepted what tradition taught, that people followed the dead traditions of the Roman Catholic Church for many years until Martin Luther questioned it and said, Is that right? Is justification by doing a lot of works and giving money to the priests or is it by faith? And because he

questioned it, he discovered that millions were wrong. He came back to the Scriptures. I want to encourage you to come back to the Scriptures and accept only the Scriptures.

That was Martin Luther's motto, only the Scriptures. And so, here it says, the old covenant has become obsolete and whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. So the old covenant is obsolete.

God is not dealing with man according to the law today. And further, there's something more. It says in verse 7, If that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant.

If the old covenant was perfect, then there was no need for a new covenant. Why do you have Old Testament and New Testament in your Bible? Why did Jesus establish a new covenant? This is not really meat, it's actually milk. We should all know it right from the time we are converted, that we are now under a new covenant.

The Bible speaks about the blood of Jesus in Hebrews in chapter 13. It's called the blood of the new covenant. God, who brought Jesus up from the dead, Hebrews 13, 20, by the blood of the eternal covenant.

That is a new covenant, that's an eternal one. The old covenant was not an eternal one. It was temporary, faulty, faulty.

It says that in Hebrews 8, 7. And now obsolete, Hebrews 8, 13, put away. And now through the blood of Jesus, a new covenant has been established which is eternal. And you need to understand the terms of that new covenant.

Because that's the covenant we are under. And let's look at some of them. First of all, it says in Hebrews 8 and verse 12, this new covenant is described in verses 10 to 12.

And three things are mentioned. And it's good for us to know these three things of the new covenant, they are eternal. Let me start with verse 12, because this is the foundation.

It's like a building, it's built on a foundation. One very important part of the new covenant is, I will be merciful to their iniquities, Hebrews 8, 12, and I will remember their sins no more. Now this was not true in the old covenant.

In the old covenant, you never read about sin being cleansed away. In Psalm 32, it says, Blessed is the man whose sin is covered. Blessed the Lord, O my soul, Psalm 103, who forgives all your iniquities.

Good. Sin is covered, forgiven, but never cleansed. You know the difference between covered and cleansed? If I were to write all your sins on a blackboard here, and cover it with a sheet, it's covered.

But it's not cleansed, people can't see it. Because it's covered, but if somebody lifts the sheet, it's all there. Cleansed is, when you take a wet mop and wipe out that blackboard, it's gone forever.

It's cleansed. Under the old covenant, with the blood of bulls and goats, they could only cover sins, because the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin. It was only a picture of the blood which Jesus would shed on Calvary, which would cleanse sin completely.

And so, in the Old Testament, there was still that consciousness of sin. You could never get rid of that fact that you remember that what you did 20 years ago, what you did 10 years ago. Never any assurance that is blotted out permanently.

But when you come to the new covenant, it's different. There are sins and iniquities I will not remember anymore. And yet, there are believers today, who have confessed their sin to God, and they still remember things they did 5 years ago, 10 years ago, last year.

Now, if you have not confessed your sins, then of course, you need to confess it. But once you confess your sin, the Bible says in 1 John 1.9, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And 1 John 1.7 says that if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

And here it says in Hebrews 8.12, I will not remember their sins anymore. And we read in Romans 5.9 that we are justified by the blood of Jesus. That's the first thing in the new covenant.

A complete dealing with our past life, where we have no more doubt about what God thinks about our past. It's gone. Everything is gone.

If you don't start here, I want to say to you, you'll never be able to walk with the Lord. You'll never be able to come into a proper fellowship with God or with one another. You cannot serve the Lord if you have not started here.

This is so elementary and yet so important, the dealing with our past. And I have come across so many, many people who have been believers for many years. There's something in the past that still worries them.

And the devil keeps on reminding them of that. And they are never able to break through into a glorious abundant life with Christ. That's why the Bible says the devil is the accuser of the brethren, Revelation 12.9-11. He is the accuser of the brethren who accuses us day and night before God and he accuses us to ourselves also.

And it says in Revelation 12.11, but they overcame his accusations by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. Not the word of the testimony in the meeting, the word of the testimony to Satan. To say to Satan, the blood of Jesus has cleansed me.

Like I heard of a godly man who was being attacked by Satan once, whether in a dream or in some way. And the devil was telling him, don't you remember you did this and you did this and you did this and you did this. And he didn't tell any lies, he just kept on accusing him of all the wrong things this godly man had done in his past life.

And he listened and he listened and he listened and he listened. And when finally the devil stopped, this man said, have you finished? You know, there is more. I have done more wrong things than that.

Please make the list complete. And when it is complete, please write across it, the blood of Jesus has cleansed me from all sin. That's boldness.

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb. There is no other way. You don't get rid of your sins by repentance.

Repentance is necessary, but repentance cannot cleanse sin. The blood of Jesus cleanses sin. Any amount of repentance will not cleanse sin, even though repentance is absolutely necessary.

Weeping will not cleanse sin, because your tears are not enough to cleanse your sin. Some people think if they weep a lot, their sin will be forgiven. Garbage, rubbish.

Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse. Weeping may come because I am sorry for what I have done. That is necessary.

A deep sorrow for sin, a radical turning from sin, all that is necessary. But cleansing comes by the blood of Jesus. Justified means God looks at me just as if I had never sinned in my whole life.

Do you look at yourself like that? That's the way God sees you. I praise God for it. It has brought such tremendous confidence when I come before God.

It has given me tremendous boldness when I look at Satan. I am not afraid, because I know the blood of Jesus has justified me. That means God looks at me as one who has never committed a single sin in my whole life.

How many of you can believe I have never committed a sin in my whole life? None of us are like that. But when I am cleansed in the blood and justified, that is exactly what I become. God looks at me as one who has never sinned in my whole life.

Can you imagine the boldness we have when you can come into God's presence and you know that there is not a single wrong thing in your entire past history? Such is the power of the blood of Christ. And every time you remember that past which you have confessed, you are actually dishonoring the blood of Christ. You are making the blood of Christ like some cheap blood of bulls and goats, like those Old Testament people had to remember, oh, five years ago I did this, oh, ten years ago I did this.

And you are bringing the blood of Christ down to the level of that blood of the bulls and goats. You need to repent of that and say, Lord, forgive me. I didn't know that I was dishonoring you and your blood by still remembering things which I have already confessed.

Take it that seriously and then you will begin a life of fellowship with God such as you have never experienced so far. The devil does not want you to know the truth because the truth will set you free and he wants to keep you in bondage. So here is the first thing.

Your past sins and iniquities, the Lord says, I will never remember anymore. It's gone. It's gone forever.

Now, I want to put one qualifying statement here and I believe that is the truth. If you sin tomorrow, even if you fall into adultery, that's not going to bring back all your past sins. You need to confess of that adultery you committed now.

Even if you commit murder tomorrow, you don't have to go back and confess all your sins. Just that one sin that you commit tomorrow. I mention adultery and murder because those are what are considered the greatest sins in the world.

Even those sins will not bring back all your past sins. But there is one sin that you can commit which can bring back all your past sins into your record again. And you know what that is? It's the sin of unforgiveness.

When you don't forgive another person. Jesus told a parable in Matthew chapter 18 about a man who was forgiven millions of rupees by a king. He owed millions of rupees to a king and the king freely forgave him, saying, your entire debt of millions of rupees is forgiven.

That's the way God blots out our debt. But it says that that man went and met one of his colleagues and who owed him a very small amount. Very, very small amount.

Comparatively. A hundred denary. That's what he owed him.

No. A hundred denary. One denary was one day's wages.

So a hundred denary was about three, three and a half months wages. And three and a half months wages is not like five rupees or ten rupees. It's a sizable amount.

Three and a half months. You think of what your three and a half months salary is. It's quite a bit of amount.

But what he was forgiven by the king was millions, million times more than that. And he caught this man by the throat, it says, and began to choke him, saying, pay back what you owe. And that man said the same thing which this man had told the king a little while ago.

Please, sir, have patience with me. I'll pay back. And the king had said, OK, forget it.

You're forgiven. But this man said, No, I won't forgive you. You've got to pay it up.

You know, we can be like that to some people, that we don't release them. There's some invisible way in which we try to catch them by their throat. We got to hold on them and we try to squeeze them and choke them.

You know what happens when you do that? It says the king heard about it, Matthew 18, verse 31 and 32. And the Lord said to him, You wicked man, I forgave you all that debt just because you asked me. And you couldn't forgive your fellow slaves such a small amount.

Now, you are going to be handed over to the torturers, verse 34. And the torturers are evil spirits. And I'm sorry to say this, but I believe it.

God sometimes hands over His children to evil spirits. Paul once said in 1 Corinthians 5, That man who's living in sin, I want to deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that he'll be chastened, so that his spirit can be saved. God's aim is to deliver us, but He hands them over to the torturers, until you repay all those millions of rupees, which I forgave you in the morning.

Now in the evening, it's all come back into your account. And then, listen to this, verse 35. So shall my heavenly father do to you.

To you means, you must find out to whom Jesus is speaking. To whom is He speaking? You read in verse 21. Peter came to Him and said, Lord, how many times shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him.

And Jesus was replying to Peter. He was not talking to the Pharisees. He was talking to His disciples.

You. So shall my heavenly father do to you, Peter. Do to you, disciples.

You're asking me how many times you should forgive your brothers. Here's the answer. So shall my heavenly father do to you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

It's not enough to say superficially I have forgiven. From your heart. If you do not forgive, that is the only sin that I know of in scripture, that will bring the entire record of all the sins you committed from the day you were born, back into your account.

Murder and adultery will not bring that account back. I don't find any scripture that teaches that. Now I'm sorry to say that it's very rare to hear a preacher who preaches this message.

I've never heard anyone preach it in India. But I know people who have been saved from eternal hell by listening to this message. I know a very well-known preacher who came to our church about 18 years ago and opened his heart to this truth and two years later he died.

But just before he died, he called me to his bedside and he said, Brother Zack, you know, I had served the Lord for 20 years in this land, but I had so much bitterness in my heart against so many pastors who cheated me, told lies about me, did all types of evil to me and I was living with that bitterness and serving the Lord and it is only when I came to your meeting that I heard you say that if you don't forgive others, God will not forgive you. And you cannot go to heaven if you don't forgive other people. That's very simple.

I can prove that. I mean I can prove that to you right now. Can anybody go to heaven whose sins are not forgiven? Impossible.

Can your sins be forgiven after you die? Impossible. That is Roman Catholic teaching. It's not in scripture.

And if you can not be forgiven after you die and you die without your sins being forgiven, you cannot go to heaven at all, even if you live for 30 years as a Christian. And next question is, can your sins be forgiven if you don't forgive somebody else? The answer is no. So if I live 30 years serving the Lord and then before I die I don't forgive somebody, I die with my sins not forgiven.

And that is why Jesus so often emphasized forgive others. Forgive others. When you stand praying, forgive others.

He made a list of six requests in the prayer. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Thy kingdom come, and so on. Six requests.

And after teaching that prayer at the end, He picked out one of those requests in Matthew 6 and said, let me tell you about one of these. You must forgive others. Forgive us our trespasses as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.

And then He said, that request is very important. Because if you don't forgive others, your heavenly Father will not forgive you. I can't think of the number of times Jesus emphasized that, emphasized that, emphasized that.

He never said if you murder others it won't be forgiven, but He said, if you don't forgive others, then you'll never be forgiven. So shall my heavenly Father do to you. What will He do to you? Verse 34.

Hand you over to the torturers till you have repaid your entire debt. And I believe those torturers are evil spirits. And they can afflict you in your body, afflict you in your mind.

And I've seen believers like this who've had some grudge or a bitterness against somebody for a long time. And they are afflicted in their body, afflicted in their mind. Some are afflicted in their body, some are afflicted in their mind, some are afflicted in their spirit.

And they've lost grace, they've lost the anointing, they've lost their salvation. We must forgive. That is a very important condition.

And if you can remember that one thing, then you can live in the New Covenant with the perfect assurance that your past is blotted out. You can stand before God without a single sin on your conscience. That's the number one condition of the New Covenant.

Then let's turn back to Hebrews chapter 8 and we see here in verse 11. Another thing in the New Covenant is Hebrews 8.11 They shall not teach every man their neighbor and fellow citizen and every one his brother saying know the Lord for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest of them. In the Old Testament it was not like this.

In the Old Testament somebody had to come and teach you to know the Lord. Moses, maybe a prophet, maybe a priest. You couldn't contact God yourself.

You couldn't go directly to the Lord. You had to go through a prophet in the Old Testament. And if you were lucky enough to have a godly prophet nearby, then it would be easy.

But if there wasn't one nearby or there was not one in your generation, then it was just bad luck. But otherwise they went to the prophets and they would ask them. Even the kings.

Shall I go to battle against this person? And the prophet would say, Wait, I'll tell you tomorrow. And they would seek the Lord and tell them, OK, do this. That's how they found out God's will in the Old Testament.

Now in the New Testament it says you don't have to go to any prophet. Why do so many people go to all these so-called prophets then? Everywhere we find prophets with their consulting rooms and their consultation charges. And they are higher than doctors' charges, by the way.

Fooling people, deceiving people, leading people astray, giving so-called prophecies. Pastors who come to your church or to your house and say we'll pray for you and delivering prophecies, prophesying some judgment or a doom upon you and then you get scared. And then he says, never mind, I'll pray for you to deliver you from that.

Give me my fees. What is this? This is a racket. That is the thing Martin Luther fought against 500 years ago.

People who sold their prayers for money. You think that day is over? There are people today selling their prayers for money. In so many denominations.

And there are blind believers who are still doing the same stupid thing people were doing 500 years ago. You don't need to go to any man to know the Lord. Don't be afraid of all these prophets who come and prophesy some doom upon you.

They are only interested in your money or they are interested in controlling your life. Be free from them. Shake them off.

And say, I don't believe any of your prophecies. Don't waste your time in this house. Tell them that.

All shall know the Lord. And you say, well, I am not so mature. But it says here, from the least to the greatest.

Because today God is a Father. In the olden days, in the old covenant, nobody could say, God, you are my Father. They would say, great and mighty, terrible God, we come before you.

For thousands of years they said that till Jesus came and said, now say Father. Because the veil has been rent. You know, the veil in the temple was rent when Jesus died.

You could go right into God's presence now. In the old testament, you couldn't do that. You know, in the tabernacle in the old testament, there was a part called the most holy place in the inner part of the temple, in the inner part of the tabernacle.

And in front of that was a thick curtain called the veil. And God lived inside and the high priest could go there only once a year with blood. And there also he couldn't do much.

He just offered the blood and came out. Nobody else was allowed to go inside. Showing that nobody can approach God's presence.

And so people didn't know what God was like. Till Jesus came and rent that veil and said, come in and see. God's not a policeman.

God's not a dictator. God's not a person who's trying out to punish you for every little thing. God is a Father.

So pray. Father, who art in heaven, you can know him personally. And if a father is sitting with his children around his table, will he listen only to the older ones? Will he listen only to his fifteen year old son and not to his little one year old daughter? Will it be like that? Tell me.

If the fifteen year old son and the one year old daughter are both speaking at the same time at the dining table, who is the father you're going to listen to first? You're not father, so you don't know. I'll tell you. I will tell the fifteen year old son, please keep quiet.

I want to listen to this little girl first. That's how it is, you know. The weakest.

The helpless one. And the father will say, tell me darling, what do you want to say? I want to hear you. Do you believe God is like that? Do you believe God only listens to great mature people? From the least to the greatest.

If your heart is clean, your prayers heard, your sins are forgiven. It's only a clean heart. If you've got iniquity in your heart, Psalm 66, 18 is very clear, the Lord will not hear you.

Even if you're a believer for forty years, it doesn't make a difference. If your heart is clean, you may have been born again yesterday. He will hear you.

If your heart is clean, your conscience is clean, you can communicate with Him. All shall know me. Please remember this verse, my brothers and sisters, in the New Covenant.

We don't have to go to a prophet to find God's will for us. We can go to mature people for advice. Definitely.

The Bible says in the book of Proverbs, in the multitude of counselors, there is safety. And it's good to go to godly people for advice. But I'm very careful when people come to me for advice.

I say, I'll give you advice, but I will not tell you what God's will for your life is, because I don't know. I'm not an Old Testament prophet. I'm not here to find God's will for you.

You are a child of God. You have received Jesus into your life. Ask Him.

Take my advice, and take it before the Lord, and let the Lord guide your thinking, and let the final decision be yours, not mine. Even concerning things which I know very clearly from the Word of God. Sometimes people come to me and say, well, Brother Zach, I want to get baptized.

I have accepted the Lord. I say, OK. I'll show them what baptism is.

Then I tell them, listen, don't get baptized to please me. Don't get baptized because this church believes it, or any such thing. You must get baptized because you are convinced about it from the Lord.

And if you are not convinced, wait. Wait three months. Wait six months.

Wait two years. But do it when you are convinced. The same thing applies to everything.

A sister may come and ask me about wearing ornaments. I'll say, here is what Scripture says in 1 Peter 3 and 1 Timothy 2, but don't do it to please any man, and certainly not to please me. You do it when you are convinced that God wants you to do it.

Anything that you do to please a man, to impress a person, it's a dead work. Even baptism can be a dead work. A lot of people get baptized.

I've seen that sometimes happen. Somebody gets baptized your age, and you say, oh, if he gets baptized, he is my age, I also should get baptized. Not necessarily.

He was convinced, you may not have been convinced. It's a living work for him and a dead work for you. So, it's very important that whatever you do in the Christian life under the New Covenant, you do because you are convinced.

You have a living connection with God. See, just like this human body, every part of this body has got a living connection with the head. It has also got a connection with other parts of the body, but it's also got a connection to the head.

Let me use an example. Here is a little finger. It's connected to this hand.

It's part of this team, part of this church, let's say, this local church. So, wherever this hand goes, this finger also moves along with it because it's part of this team. But, in addition to that, it also has an individual connection to the head so that it can move on its own also because quite apart from this hand moving, it can move on its own.

It can pick up something on its own. So, that is the dual connection we must have in the Christian life, in the body of Christ. One, a direct connection to the head where we can hear the signals from the head

individually, personally.

And secondly, we work also along with a fellowship of a church or a team God has placed us with. But it must never be that I get all my guidance only from this team and I have no connection with the head at all. Then you are a paralyzed member.

See, when this finger gets paralyzed and the head says, lift yourself up, it cannot. It's paralyzed. It just moves with the hand.

It's part of the team. But it cannot act on its own. There are lots of believers like that.

They have no direct connection with the head because they are taught that, you know, submit to your leaders and leaders will tell you what to do and you just blindly follow. And ultimately, they have no connection with the head at all. That's like the Old Testament.

No, in the New Testament, please remember, there is this dual relationship. We are to submit to our leaders. But at the same time, we have an individual connection with the head.

And we listen. All shall know me from the least to the greatest. God wants you to know Him as a father.

If you don't know Him as a father and you just sit and find your security in the midst of other believers, you will be like an orphan. Many believers are like orphans. They are insecure.

They don't know what will happen in the future. They are worried. You know, just like orphans.

They have got no father, no mother. If other people take care of them in the orphanage, okay, they are okay. When the orphanage moves somewhere, they also move along with the orphanage.

But they have no father. But Jesus said, I didn't come here to make you orphans. I came to give you a father.

So don't live as an orphan in an orphanage. The church is not an orphanage. The church is a family.

Not an orphanage where there is a director who feeds everybody. But a family where you have a living connection with God as your own father. You can ask Him anything.

You can even ask Him something that you want. Provided you can conclude your prayer by saying, but not as I will, but as you will. Supposing you are madly in love with somebody and you want to marry that person.

Can you go and ask God? What do you think? Yes. Go and tell the truth. Lord, I am madly in love with that girl.

I don't want to bluff you. You know my heart. It's true.

But Lord, I don't want my will. I want your will. You can be a godly man.

There's nothing wrong in telling God what's in our heart. He already knows it. Provided you conclude your prayers with, but not as I will, but as thou wilt.

You can pray for anything under the sun. Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, take away this cup, but not as I will, but as thou wilt. God wants you to have a personal relationship with Him.

That is why I encourage all of you to develop the habit of talking to God many times during the day. See, prayer is not only talking, it is also listening. Prayer is like a telephone.

There are two parts to a telephone, hearing and speaking. And, you know, if you are speaking to a very mature, godly person on a telephone, if you are sensible, you will listen more than you speak. Right? Because the other person has more to give you.

So when you are talking to God on a telephone, are you going to speak more or listen more? What do you say? Listen. But many people, in their prayer, they are giving a big long lecture to God, telling Him all types of things, probably which He did not know. And, they think He doesn't know that, so I better tell Him.

Or they are trying to move God to love somebody who they feel God doesn't love. It's all crazy. God already loves them, more than you love them.

God already knows it. But He still wants you to say that to Him. But don't make saying everything in prayer.

Listen. In between, just like in a conversation with somebody you love. Listen.

Speak and listen. Speak and listen. It's like a lover and her beloved, husband and wife.

Both must speak and you must listen to what the Lord has to say to you. And that's how it must be. Develop that habit and let it become a habit in your life when you walk down the roads, when you are having a bath, when you are sitting in the bus, when you are going anywhere.

Develop this habit of communicating with God. It's like having a radio, aerial up always and switched on anytime a message comes, you hear it. Always alert to hear what God has to say.

That is the meaning of praying always. Praying always doesn't mean we are on our knees all the time or speaking all the time. It means that I am listening, always in touch with God.

That's the way we are to live every single day of our life. And the best time to start is when we are young. Jesus said about Mary who sat at His feet, compared her to Martha who was always doing some work, saying, Martha, you are worried about a lot of work, but that's not the most important thing.

The most important thing, in fact, the one thing which is essential is what Mary is doing. What was Mary doing? Listening. That is prayer.

It's a very major part of prayer. And Jesus said, do what Mary did. Listen.

Keep listening. And then, your service for God will be much more effective. Because God will ask you to do the five important things which need to be done.

Now, if you don't listen, you will do five hundred things and miss out those five things. Five hundred bright ideas that came into your head. And you waste your life.

I would rather do five things that God told me to do than five hundred things that come to my head which I think I can do for Him. We will discover in eternity that those five hundred things were useless. Not only

useless, but they were a hindrance to God's work.

See, when you are employed in a company, supposing you are a new employee and you are just joining the company and you are coming for your first day of work, you don't just straight away walk into some machine and start operating it and do whatever you like. They will throw you out. They say, what are you doing? You do what they tell you to do.

That may not be the machine you are supposed to work in. They may send you some other place to sit behind a desk. Everybody knows that.

That's exactly how it must be in the Lord's work, to listen, Lord, what do you want me to do? All can know Him. You can know the will of God yourself. Then, the third thing we read of the New Covenant in Hebrews in chapter 8 is, in Hebrews 8 and verse 10, the Lord says, this is the covenant I will make, I will put my laws into their minds and I will write them upon their hearts.

In the Old Testament, God wrote His laws on two tablets of stone and gave it to Moses. Today, the two tablets of stone are the mind and the heart. Those are the two in which God actually wants to write His law.

Jesus spoke about the finger of God being the spirit of God. In Luke 11, He said, by the finger of God, if I cast out demons in Matthew 12, He said, by the spirit of God. So, the finger with which God wrote His commandments in the Old Testament is the spirit of God.

And so, with that same finger, the spirit of God, He writes His laws today in my mind and in my heart. What does this mean? That means, He first of all makes me want to do His will, gives me a desire to do His will. Then He has written it in the mind.

And then, He gives me the strength to do that will. That is, writing it in the heart. So, He says, I will write My laws in your mind and in your heart.

This is explained in a different way when Paul writes in Philippians 2. In verse 13, God works inside you. That's what it says there. He works inside you.

That is, in your mind and heart. First of all, to desire His will. And second, to do His will.

To desire His will and to do His will. Now, if you have a desire to do the will of God in your life, do you know who gave you that desire? You thought you had it yourself. No, you didn't.

Left to ourselves, we would never desire the will of God. The Bible says, because there is no one who seeks after God. Romans chapter 3. You know why many of you have a desire to do God's will today? It is because the Holy Spirit has written something into your mind already.

A desire. God worked in you to will His good pleasure. And now, what about the second part? This is the part which many of us have a problem with.

Can I also have the strength to do His good pleasure? Yes or no? Yes. You can have the strength to do His will also. The same God who gave you a desire to do His will is also the one who gives you the power to do it.

And if God has done the first part, don't you think He will do the second part? And this power to do His will is what the Bible calls grace. You understood it now? That's what grace is. The strength to do the will of God.

See 2 Corinthians and chapter 12. 2 Corinthians chapter 12. We read, the Lord said to Paul, verse 9, My grace is sufficient for you because My power is made perfect in your weakness.

So you see there, grace and power are the same thing. Grace is not unmerited favor. Read the word of God.

Grace is God's power. Therefore, He says, I'm glad about my weaknesses. The power of Christ can rest upon me.

Now let me show you another verse. Hebrews 13 and verse 9. Hebrews 13 verse 9. It says, It is good for your heart to be strengthened, that is to get power, by grace. So the God who has written His laws into your mind already, given you a desire to do God's will.

Now He wants to write those laws into your heart to give you grace or power or strength to do that will. Every part of God's will that God has given you a desire for, He also wants to give you grace to fulfill. For example, if I see that the word of God is that I should never lust with my eyes and I see God has given me a desire for that in my mind, I believe He will also give me grace in my heart to live according to that standard.

If I see that the will of God is that I should never get angry in anything concerning myself and God has put a desire in my mind to never get angry, to never raise my voice at my wife anytime 365 days of the year, then I believe that God will give me strength to keep that. If you don't have faith, you don't get anything. But this is the new covenant.

You don't have to be defeated. How is it that God has already done one part of it in your mind by giving you the desire and you feel He won't do the second part? He says, I will put my laws into your minds, I will write them on your hearts. But you have to trust Him.

You have to open yourself to Him. We read in Hebrews 4 and verse 16, Let us draw near with confidence, with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we can receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Do you know the difference between mercy and grace? Lots of Christians don't know.

Mercy deals with our past life, the forgiveness of our sins. It was there in the Old Testament also. But grace deals with the future, strength to overcome sin in the future.

That's why it says, Romans 6, 14, Sin shall not rule over you, because now you are under grace. Not under mercy. They were under mercy in the Old Testament too.

Under grace. Grace is a power that helps us to overcome sin. So it says here, how to get it? Come to the throne of grace and say, Lord, give me this grace now to overcome.

This is my time of need. Now you can try this out and see if it doesn't work practically in your daily life. For example, supposing there is one particular sin that you are always falling into.

With one person it may be anger, with another person it may be lusting in their minds. It could be different things and different people. Maybe an unforgiving spirit of bitterness against somebody who has harmed

you.

And whenever the thought of that person comes to your mind, immediately all that bitterness comes out. It's different things with different people. But the Bible speaks about the sin which so easily besets us.

And you know what that is in your life. Okay, the next time you are tempted, of course, first of all, go to God and ask Him to give you mercy to blot out your past. That's taken care of.

If you don't do that, you can't go to the next step. First you need mercy. Lord, cleanse me with your blood.

Now, your heart is clean, but you find tomorrow, again you are tempted. In the same area. And you resist it and you find it comes back like another wave.

And you resist it and again it comes back like another wave of temptation. And you feel yourself weakening. You feel you are going to get into that bitterness again.

You feel you are going to lose your temper again. You feel you are going to lust again. What should you do? Cry out for grace.

Like Peter said, Lord, save me, when he was sinking. And Jesus immediately stretched out His hand and held him. Ask for grace in your time of need.

That's what it says in Hebrews 4.16. Lord, give me grace now. And see what happens. A miracle will take place.

And after some time, you will wonder, Hey, how is it I didn't fall that time? I come through. And that will be the beginning of many, many experiences in your life in many, many areas. Where you begin to experience grace coming upon you and sin cannot rule over you anymore.

This is the new covenant. It's better than the old covenant because the old covenant could only forgive you. Praise the Lord.

Let's pray. Now while I head about in prayer, I want to invite you again to open your heart and say, Lord, I want to enter into all three parts of this new covenant fully. First of all, I want to be absolutely sure that my past life is blotted out completely, totally, by the blood of Jesus.

I never want to have any more doubt once I get up from my seat. Today, I never want to have a doubt about anything about my past life. It's gone.

I'm declared righteous. Secondly, I want to know you from now on as my father who will listen to me with every silly little request I have. You'll at least listen to me.

Maybe you'll tell me that you're not going to give it. That's okay. But you'll at least listen.

You're my father. I don't have to be dependent on men even though I seek advice from godly men. I want to have a living connection with you, Father, where I listen to you and hear you speak to me and where I can tell you all the things in my heart every day.

And thirdly, Lord, you've already worked in my mind and given me a desire to do your will. Now I want you to work in my heart and give me strength to keep it. Every day, every moment, I want to be an overcomer.

I want to experience grace in the time of my need. And in future, I'm going to call out to you when I am in need. And I believe you'll give me as much as I want.

Grace upon grace. Heavenly Father, make this real in our lives so that we can see that these are not just empty theories but really practical in daily life. We ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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