

On Good Ground



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Live Under the Blessing

When man sinned through Adam, the perfect peace and fellowship that Adam enjoyed with God was broken. As a result, Adam and his wife went from being blessed to now living under the curse. God's pronouncement of the curse started with the serpent, which beguiled the woman into eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (from which Adam also ate). God told the serpent, "Because thou hast done this, thou art **cursed** above all cattle and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:14).

Then God turned to the woman and said, "I will greatly multiply thy **sorrow** and thy conception; in **sorrow** thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis 3:16).

Then the Lord dealt with Adam, saying, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: **cursed** is the ground for thy sake; in **sorrow** shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ... in the **sweat** of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Genesis 3:17, 19).

So we see that when sin entered the world, so did the curse, which brought with it pain, sorrow, sweat, toil and death. But God is good, and there is

good news to overcome the curse and all its sorrow, and it's found in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice on Calvary's cross.

Galatians 3:13-14 says, "*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*" Jesus took upon Himself all of the pain, sorrow and grief associated with the curse, so that we might enjoy the blessing of Abraham! So as born-again believers we no longer live under the curse, we live under the blessing!!

Under the blessing there is no more toil, sweat or sorrow. This doesn't mean we do not have to work or even work hard, but when we do, we do it with the Lord's strength that is available to us through the blessing. Psalm 127:1-2 says, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep."

The person described in this passage is a person who is living under the curse: laboring, worrying, getting little sleep, living an unhappy and unfulfilling life. Sadly, this is the life many Christians are leading because they are trying to accomplish things in

their own strength instead of through God's abundant grace. But as long as we try to do things by ourselves, all our efforts will be vain – useless and of no good – and we will live a life full of sorrow.

But when we allow the Lord to be the Master Builder, the Watchman and our Shepherd, we experience life under the blessing of Abraham, which is ours through Jesus Christ. And you know what that looks like, don't you? Proverbs 10:22 tells us: "The **blessing** of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth **no sorrow** with it." How do we get to this blessed place of no sorrow? Simply come to Jesus and let Him lead you in every area of your life.

Hear the voice of the Lord Jesus: "*Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.*" (Matthew 11:28-30 The Message Version)

Living "freely and lightly." Now that's life under the blessing, and it is your life as a born-again believer in Christ. Bring all your cares to Jesus and take your rightful place under God's blessing today!



Seeing Is Not Believing

One day a little girl was sitting in her classroom, while her teacher explained evolution. The teacher asked a little boy, "Tommy do you see the tree outside?" "Yes, Teacher." "Tommy, do you see the grass outside?" "Yes." "Go outside and look up and see if you can see the sky." "OK," said the little boy. Returning a few minutes later, he said, "Yes, I saw the sky." "Did you see God?" the teacher asked. "No." "That's my point," the teacher said. "We can't see God because He isn't there. He doesn't exist." The little girl spoke up and asked the teacher if she could ask Tommy some questions. As the teacher agreed, the little girl then asked Tommy, "Do you see the tree outside?" "Yes," said Tommy. "Do you see the grass outside?" "Yessss," Tommy said. "And you saw the sky?" "Yessss," Tommy replied annoyed at the questioning. "Okay, Tommy, almost done.... Do you see the teacher?" Said the girl. "Yes," replied Tommy. "Can you see her brain?" Chuckling Tommy said, "No." "So, does that mean she doesn't have one?"

Silly, yes. We know the teacher has a brain. Just as we know as people of God, that God exists. The point is people are always trying to say there is no God, simply because they cannot see Him. But as the story tells, just because you can't see a thing, doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Truth is, as people of faith we see God everywhere we look. With eyes of faith, we see Him. Simply put, we see, even when we don't, because we believe.



True or False. Since it's been a little while since our last quiz we decided to go a little easier on you and just give you a warm-up. So with that said, which ones are true, and which ones are false? And where is the Scripture to prove it? ☺

1. Satan convinced God to let him kill Job's wife.
___ True ___ False
2. The Ark of God contained the tablets of the 10 Commandments.
___ True ___ False
3. Elisha was a prophet before Elijah came.
___ True ___ False
4. David cut off a corner of Saul's robe.
___ True ___ False
5. Nehemiah rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem.
___ True ___ False
6. David pretended to be insane to avoid capture.
___ True ___ False
7. When Ezekiel's wife died, he was forbidden to mourn.
___ True ___ False
8. Jonah was eager to preach in Nineveh.
___ True ___ False
9. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, Elijah and Moses came and spoke to Him.
___ True ___ False
10. Mary and Joseph weren't married until after Jesus was born.
___ True ___ False

(Answers on next page)



Christianity is not something we do, it's something we are.

We wrestle as individuals, not as teams.

We are not what we are because we wanted to be. We are what we are by the grace of God.

We need to recall instead of think.

All the Christian disciplines are just exercises if there are no sacrifices behind them.

If we stay in the same place, the same thing will happen.

If God has sent, God will provide.

We have to be close enough to someone in order to feel the effect of their cup running over.

ONLY THINGS THAT ARE WOUND NEED TO BE UNWOUND. IF WE SPENT MORE TIME WITH GOD PERHAPS WE WON'T NEED TO UNWIND.

Moses did not go up to the mountain to get a shiny face, He went up there to spend time with God.

We should search the Scriptures to learn who God is, not to impress someone with what we know.

The only piece of clothing we need to be worried about wearing is the robe of righteousness.



The Prayer of Salvation

Father God, I come to You in the name of Jesus. Your Word says, 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved' I confess with my mouth Jesus as Lord of my life and believe in my heart that You raised Him from the dead. And I believe that I am saved just as You have said. Thank You for coming into my heart. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Praying from Inside A Fish

God told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and preach a message of repentance. Jonah rose up, went in the opposite direction and headed to the port of Joppa where he boarded a boat headed toward Tarshish. His plan was to get away from the Lord and escape the Lord's command. (Jonah 1:1-3).

But there is no escaping God. In Psalm 139:7, David declared, *"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?"* Jonah soon discovered that his plan of escape was futile. *There is no escaping God.*

Once on the ship, God caused a powerful storm to erupt on the sea that placed the ship in grave danger. The sailors soon discovered that Jonah was running away from the Lord and that he was the reason behind their predicament. After initially trying to row their way through the fierce winds and pounding waves, the sailors eventually picked Jonah up and threw him overboard into the raging sea. Immediately the storm stopped (vv. 4-16). The Lord then arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah remained inside that fish for three days and three nights (v. 17).

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to God. He did not ask for deliverance, instead he thanked God for saving His life. God heard Jonah's prayer of thanksgiving and commanded the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach (2:1-10).

Even though Jonah was inside the belly of the fish, deep in the dark waters of the sea, God still heard his prayers. And even though Jonah had deliberately disobeyed God by trying to flee to Tarshish, God still inclined His ear to Jonah's plea. This is the power and graciousness of our God.

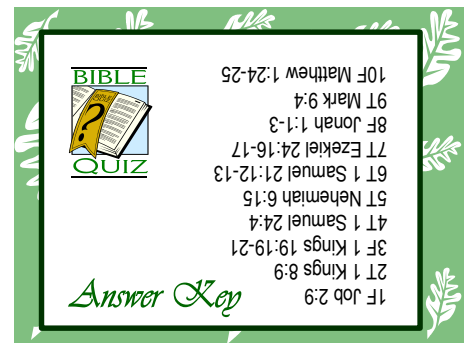
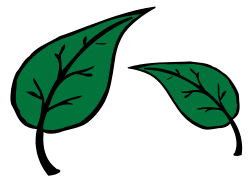
You may be in the midst of the darkest period of your life right now, but in the midst of your deep despair, God will hear your prayers. Even if you are in a jam that was directly caused by your deliberate disobedience, God still will not turn His back on you. When we find ourselves in the midst of trouble – even trouble of our own making – that is not the time to turn *from* God and to look to ourselves or other people for help. On the contrary, that is the best time to turn *to* God, trusting and believing in His unfailing love toward us and His willingness not only to hear, but to help.

The Bible says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). There will be many times in our walk with God that we miss what He is telling us or when we even purposely refuse one of His commands. In such times, we may find ourselves in a fix from which there seems no way out. But our God is a way-maker! He will bring us out of our troubles, if we will but come to Him with a truly repentant heart.

If God heard Jonah's prayer from inside the belly of a fish, surely He will hear yours, too! Don't spend another moment in that place of darkness and despair. Cry out to the Lord right now with a sincere heart. Do it in faith – not faith in your prayer, but faith in His love for you and for His willingness to restore you and bless you according to His perfect plan. God is able and ready to do it. He is simply waiting to hear from you.



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-Psalm 5:12 NKJV



A MOMENT WITH GOD

*"Help me to let my soul be at rest
 today."*





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Have you shared the Good News yet?

"But the ones that fell on good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience." - Luke 8:15

Say What He Says

Our words have power. Indeed, the Bible declares that "death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). So whenever we speak, the words we choose to utter are of utmost importance to our present and our future. Yet too many believers are careless with their choice of words and simply say whatever comes to mind. And because good things or bad things may pop into our minds at any given time, such an approach to speaking could be disastrous. The writer of Hebrews offers a better way. In Hebrews 13:5-6, it says: *"For He hath said ... so that we may boldly say ..."* Whatever God says, we should say the same thing, and say it with boldness! So if God says you're more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37), that's what you say. If He says all your needs are supplied (Philippians 4:19), that's what you say. If He says by the stripes of Jesus you are healed (Isaiah 53:5), then you say the same thing. In every area of your life, in every circumstance, say what God says. If you want to have, be or do all that the Bible says you can have, be or do, you have to rightly exercise the power in your tongue and speak life. Jesus said the words He speaks are spirit and life (John 6:63). Therefore when you speak about yourself, your family, your finances or whatever, simply say what He says, and then watch the power of His Word come to life!





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By inspiration of The Holy Ghost.

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