

The Believer's Riches in Christ

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The spiritual life cannot be fully understood or lived until the believer grasps the distinction between positional truth and experiential truth. Learning God's Word is always the starting point for the Christian way of life (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:16–17). Until the believer orients to what God has already accomplished at initial salvation, he cannot discern what God now expects in fellowship (Rom. 6:3–11). Confusion or neglect of Scripture inevitably drives the Christian into legalism, emotionalism, ritualism, activism, or frustration (Col. 2:8, 20–23; Gal. 3:1–3). Bible doctrine learned and applied provides the foundation for executing the spiritual life (Rom. 12:2; Jam. 1:22). God's riches for the believer include both positional and experiential blessings, and the former establishes the ground on which the latter are enjoyed (Eph. 1:3; Col. 2:6–7).

Positional truth defines the permanent assets God provides at the moment of faith in Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:13). These assets describe who and what the believer is in the sight of God, independent of experience, emotion, environment, or performance (Rom. 8:1; Eph. 2:5–6). They are judicial, irrevocable, and anchored in the finished work of Christ (John 19:30; Heb. 10:10–14). They include the believer's standing in grace (Rom. 5:1–2), his transfer from Adam into Christ (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:22), his new-creation identity (2 Cor. 5:17), his union with the resurrected Lord (Rom. 6:5; Col. 3:1), his membership in the family (Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:19), and the full portfolio of spiritual blessings assigned at salvation (Eph. 1:3–14). These realities exist for the believer alone. The unbeliever possesses none of them (1 Cor. 2:14). Because they rest on the integrity of God and the completed work of Christ, they cannot be cancelled or diminished (John 10:28; Rom. 8:38–39). To argue for loss of salvation is to imply that God is willing to rescind His many blessings and dismantle the very position He established by grace.

Experiential truth concerns the believer's condition rather than his position. It develops day by day as the believer responds to Bible doctrine and advances through positive volition (2 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 10:38). These blessings are genuine but conditional. Fellowship (1 John 1:7–9), inner stability (Isa. 26:3; Phil. 4:6–7), production of divine good (John 15:4–5; Eph. 2:10), and the abundant life belong to this sphere (John 10:10). When the believer understands and accepts his position in Christ and consistently brings his thinking and conduct into line with that position, his experience reflects his standing, and the spiritual life moves toward stability, productivity, and edification (Col. 3:1–2; Eph. 4:22–24). When he turns

negative to God, experiential blessings shut down, though his position remains untouched (1 Cor. 3:1–3; 2 Tim. 2:13). The Christian life therefore is never a struggle to acquire or maintain positional assets. The battle is to think, choose, and live in light of what God has already completed (Rom. 12:1–2). Position is the immovable foundation. Experience is built on this foundation through consistent obedience to the Word (Matt. 7:24–25; Col. 3:16; Jam. 1:22).

At the moment of faith in Christ, God performs a series of simultaneous divine acts that establish the believer's new status in grace. These are not experiences but instantaneous operations of the Father, Son, and Spirit. God has dealt with sin once for all (Heb. 9:26; 10:12), fully reconciled the sinner to Himself (2 Cor. 5:18–19), imputed His righteousness and eternal life (Rom. 5:17; 2 Cor. 5:21), declared the believer justified (Rom. 3:28; 5:1), and removed all condemnation forever (Rom. 8:1). At the same time, He imparts spiritual life (John 5:24; Eph. 2:5), places the believer into union with Christ by the Spirit's baptism (1 Cor. 12:13), indwells and seals him for final deliverance (Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13–14), grants full sonship and heirship (Rom. 8:15–17; Gal. 4:6–7), and identifies him with the death (Rom. 6:3), burial (Rom. 6:4), and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:5), so that he is a new-creation immediately (2 Cor. 5:17). These positional realities carry permanent privileges including direct access to the Father (Heb. 4:16), ambassadorship in the world (2 Cor. 5:20), stewardship of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:4–7; 1 Pet. 4:10), heavenly citizenship (Phil. 3:20), and the guaranteed expectation of resurrection (1 Cor. 15:51–54), glorification (Rom. 8:30), an imperishable inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4–5), and freedom from all future judgment (John 5:24; Rom. 8:33–34). These are the things that accompany salvation and form the unalterable foundation of the Christian spiritual life. According to Chafer, “The significant phrase, the ‘things that accompany salvation’ (Heb. 6:9), may be interpreted as referring to those mighty positions and possessions which are wrought instantaneously and simultaneously by God at the instant an individual exercises saving faith in Christ.”¹ The Christian possesses all these blessings, but the unsaved person does not.² Because eternal salvation is secured by an unchangeable standing in grace,

¹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 226.

² Chafer's classic enumeration of the “thirty-three things” limits itself to the instantaneous, simultaneous, and irrevocable works of God bestowed at the moment of faith. My list differs by distinguishing those permanent positional blessings from the conditional experiential blessings that shape the believer's daily fellowship and growth. Thieme's “forty things” likewise catalog the immutable assets conferred at salvation, but my framework separates these unalterable provisions from the variable, volition-dependent blessings that can be enjoyed, interrupted, or restored without affecting salvation itself.

the positional blessings God assigns at faith are irreversible. To suggest otherwise would require God to cancel every divine act accomplished at salvation, overturning His own judicial verdict, severing established relationships, and nullifying His transforming work. Such thinking has no place in Scripture and stands in direct opposition to the character and integrity of God’s saving action. The positional and experiential blessings are as follows:

1. **Regeneration** – The divine work of spiritual birth in which God imparts eternal life to the one who believes, effecting a transition from spiritual death to spiritual life (John 3:3, 6–7; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23). According to Walvoord, “As the word itself implies, the central thought in the doctrine of regeneration is that eternal life is imparted.”³ This renewal creates a new capacity for fellowship with God and responsiveness to His Word, though the sin nature remains operative until glorification (Eph. 2:5; Rom. 7:18; 1 John 3:2). Regeneration is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in the one who has believed in Christ, for “whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Scripture affirms, “It is the Spirit who gives life” (John 6:63). The reality of new life is created in that instant. Though the experience of new life may follow, the experience is not the life itself. Walvoord, notes, “While the regenerated soul may become immediately conscious of new life, the act of regeneration itself is not subject to experience or analysis, being the supernatural instantaneous act of God. The new life may be a source of experience, but the act of regeneration itself is not experienced.”⁴
2. **Indwelling of the Triune God** – The indwelling of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is a fixed reality for every Christian in the Church Age (John 14:16–17, 23; 17:20–23). Thieme notes, “At the moment of salvation, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit take up residence inside the Christian’s body, a spiritual phenomenon that makes this age unique.”⁵ This indwelling creates the sphere in which fellowship is enjoyed, growth develops, and genuine spiritual transformation is produced (1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 4:6; Col. 1:27).
3. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit** – The divine act in which the believer is united with Christ at the moment of faith, establishing an unbreakable spiritual identification with Him (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3–5). In the same instant, the

³ John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit* (Galaxie Software, 2008), 131.

⁴ Ibid., 134.

⁵ Robert B. Thieme, Jr. “Indwelling of the Trinity”, *Thieme’s Bible Doctrine Dictionary*, (Houston, TX., R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2022), 154.

Spirit incorporates the believer into the body of Christ, forming a new corporate identity that anchors fellowship with all who share this union (Gal. 3:27–28). Unger states, “The baptism is that divine operation of God’s Spirit which places the believer in Christ, in His mystical body, the church, and which makes him one with all other believers in Christ.”⁶

4. **The Sealing of the Holy Spirit** – Sealing is the divine act by which the Holy Spirit marks the believer as God’s own possession, guaranteeing the certainty of final redemption (Eph. 1:13–14; 4:30). This seal functions as God’s pledge of preservation, ensuring that no external force or internal failure can nullify salvation (John 10:28–29; Rom. 8:38–39). According to Paul Enns, “The principal idea of sealing is that of *ownership*. The believer is sealed with the Spirit to identify the believer as belonging to God...God has put His seal, the Holy Spirit, within the believer to verify that the believer belongs to Him.”⁷
5. **Adoption into God’s Family** – Adoption places the believer into a true parent-child relationship with God, granting full rights and privileges as His child. (Eph. 1:5; Gal. 4:5). This status confers intimacy with the Father and assures participation in the inheritance prepared for His children (Rom. 8:15–17; 1 John 3:1). Ryrie states that adoption is “The act of God that places the believer in His family as an adult son (Rom. 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5)...His position is one of full privilege; his practice involves growth in grace.”⁸
6. **Imputation of Divine Righteousness** – God imputes His own righteousness to the one who believes, granting a perfect forensic standing apart from works (Rom. 4:5). Scripture employs the verb *logizomai* to describe this judicial act, a legal reckoning in which God credits righteousness to the believer’s account. This righteousness is grounded exclusively in Christ, who was made sin for us so that we might be declared righteous in Him (2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9). It is freely bestowed and is called “the gift of righteousness” (Rom. 5:17). The believer truly possesses this righteousness, yet it is not an infused moral quality within us. It is Christ’s righteousness assigned to us by divine decree, giving us a flawless standing in God’s courtroom and securing His full acceptance of us **in Christ** forever.

⁶ Merrill F. Unger, *The Baptism and Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 21.

⁷ Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 269.

⁸ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update*, Expanded ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 1802.

7. **Justification** – Justification is the judicial act of God in which He delivers a once-for-all verdict that the believer is eternally righteous in His sight on the basis of Christ’s atoning work alone (Rom. 3:24; 5:1). This declaration does not wait for human reform or moral improvement. It rests entirely on God’s grace and is issued the moment a sinner believes in Christ. The verdict is instantaneous and irrevocable, establishing permanent acceptance before God apart from any merit or subsequent performance (Phil. 3:9). This foundational standing becomes the launch point for sanctification, the ongoing process in which the believer grows in holiness through the Word and the Spirit (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:2; Gal. 5:16). It also guarantees future glorification, when the believer will be fully conformed to the image of Christ in resurrection glory (Rom. 8:30; 1 John 3:2).
8. **Reconciliation to God** – The divine work in which He removes the barrier of sin through the person and work of Christ, restoring the believing sinner to a relationship of peace and fellowship with Himself (2 Cor. 5:18–19). This restoration is wholly God-initiated, accomplished apart from human merit, and establishes a new relational harmony in which hostility is replaced by access, acceptance, and ongoing communion (Rom. 5:10–11). Ryrie states, “God took the initiative and reconciled the world to Himself. This was done by the death of Christ, and that provision changed the world into a savable position before God. Yet though the world has been reconciled, man needs to be reconciled by changing his position about Christ.”⁹ Of course, this complete reconciliation occurs at the moment the lost sinner believes in Jesus as Savior.
9. **Propitiation** – Propitiation refers to the work of Christ in which His sacrificial death satisfies the righteous demands of God’s holiness and resolves the tension between divine justice and mercy (Rom. 3:25). The term *hilastērion* stresses that this satisfaction is Godward. From heaven’s perspective, the Father is fully satisfied with the death of His Son. Every requirement of His justice has been met, His wrath has been appeased, and the barrier of sin has been judicially removed so that He may offer salvation without compromising His righteous character (1 John 2:2). Unger states, “Christ’s atoning death for the world’s sin altered the whole position of the human race in its relationship to God, for God recognizes what Christ accomplished in behalf of the world whether men enter into the blessings of

⁹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 339.

it or not.”¹⁰ This satisfaction is objective, once for all, and does not wait for human response. God is propitious toward the world whether men believe or not. Propitiation does not mean the sinner is forgiven apart from faith. It means God is legally free to extend grace to all and to save any who believe. The benefits of propitiation are universal in provision, but they are applied only to those who trust in Christ.

10. **Redemption** – Redemption refers to Christ’s once-for-all payment of the sin-debt through His blood, a ransom that satisfied God’s justice and broke sin’s ownership over humanity (Eph. 1:7). Scripture uses *agorazō* and *exagorazō* to portray the purchase out from the slave-market of sin (1 Cor. 6:20; Gal. 3:13), and *apolutrōsis* to describe the full release secured by that payment (Rom. 3:24; Col. 1:14). Although the ransom was paid at the cross, its benefits become the believer’s personal possession at the moment of faith in Christ. At salvation the new believer enters a divinely granted sphere of freedom in which forgiveness is secured, reconciliation is established, and a liberated life before God becomes possible (Tit. 2:14; Heb. 9:12). Murray notes, “The NT language of redemption...refers to the salvific work of Christ and to its effect for humanity. The word of Our Lord places beyond question three facts: (1) the work He came to accomplish was one of ransom, (2) the giving of His life was the ransom price, and (3) the ransom was substitutionary in character.”¹¹

11. **Removal of Condemnation** – In Christ, the believer is freed from all judicial condemnation, since God’s verdict of “no condemnation” rests permanently upon every justified person (Rom. 8:1). This status cannot be reversed because it rests entirely on the finished work of Christ and not on human performance. Scripture affirms that the believer has passed out of death into life, securing a standing that no judgment can overturn (John 5:24; Rom. 5:9). This means the legal issue between the believer and God has been settled forever, and all sins—past, present, and future—are judicially forgiven (Rom. 4:7–8; Col. 2:13–14; Heb. 10:12, 14). Although God still disciplines His children when they stray (Heb. 12:5–11), that discipline never changes their eternal status because no sin can reopen a case that God Himself has closed.

12. **Gift of Eternal Life** – The believer receives eternal life as a divine gift, imparted at the moment of faith in Christ (John 10:28). Scripture affirms that

¹⁰ Merrill F. Unger, “Propitiation,” in *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, ed. R.K. Harrison (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988).

¹¹ J. Murray, “Redeemer; Redemption,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988), 62.

“the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). Tim LaHaye states, “We receive the gift of eternal life as soon as we believe in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:11–12). Our eternal destination changes at that moment. From then on, we are destined to heaven.”¹² Eternal life refers not merely to unending existence but to a quality of life that comes from God Himself. Jesus defined it when He said, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). This life is bound to the Son, so that possessing the Son means possessing eternal life in an unbreakable relationship (1 John 5:11–12).

13. **Deliverance from the Power of Darkness** – God rescues believers from the domain of darkness and transfers them into the kingdom of His beloved Son. Paul writes, “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col. 1:13). This deliverance establishes a new realm of spiritual authority in which the tyranny of Satan is broken. Believers are no longer under his legal claim, his blinding influence, or his ruling power. Christ now exercises authority over believers, releasing them from spiritual captivity and placing them under His gracious dominion (Col. 1:13–14), which grants them a new identity as those united with Him (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:4–6), new spiritual resources supplied through the indwelling Spirit (2 Pet. 1:3–4; Eph. 1:3), and a new capacity to walk in the light according to His revealed will (Eph. 5:8–10; 1 John 1:7).
14. **Believer-Priesthood** – Every believer is constituted a priest with immediate access to God for worship, intercession, and spiritual service (1 Pet. 2:5). This priesthood is royal in dignity and universal in scope, granting all believers equal standing before God (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). According to Thomas, “The priestly office established by the OT law was hereditary, and only members of Aaron’s family were eligible. Jesus Christ has provided a new family relationship by which all believers have a priestly ministry to God.”¹³ This means every Christian can draw near to God confidently, offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Him, pray on behalf of others, and serve directly under His authority without relying on a religious hierarchy (i.e. Catholicism). These spiritual sacrifices include praising God with lips (Heb. 13:15), doing good and sharing with others (Heb. 13:16), presenting our bodies as instruments of obedience (Rom. 12:1), giving generously to support the Lord’s work (Phil. 4:18), offering intercession and thanksgiving

¹² Tim LaHaye, “Eternal Life,” in *The Harvest Handbook of Bible Prophecy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2020), 114.

¹³ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1992), 71.

for all people (1 Tim. 2:1), and ministering the gospel of grace (Rom. 15:16).

15. Ambassadorship – Believers are appointed as ambassadors who represent Christ’s interests within a hostile world (2 Cor. 5:20). Through this office, God appeals to the world through their message and manner of life. An ambassador carries the authority of the One who sends him, speaks His message faithfully, and lives in a way that reflects the dignity of his King. Paul understood this so deeply that he saw himself as an ambassador even while imprisoned, describing himself as “an ambassador in chains” who still needed boldness to speak as he ought (Eph. 6:20). His circumstances did not cancel his commission. In the same way, Christians speak the gospel on Christ’s behalf and display His character before a watching world, regardless of where Providence places them.

16. The Call to Spiritual Warfare — As a soldier, the believer is called to endure hardship and remain focused on the mission assigned by the Lord (2 Tim. 2:3–4). Paul pictures the Christian life as active service under a commanding officer, where discipline, resilience, and single-minded devotion are essential. The soldier avoids being entangled in worldly distractions that compromise readiness or dilute commitment. Instead, he concentrates on pleasing the One who enlisted him, advancing His purposes, and standing firm in the face of spiritual opposition. This role highlights the believer’s need for perseverance, clarity of purpose, and unwavering loyalty to Christ in the midst of conflict. Earle states, “One aspect of the Christian life is that it is a warfare against the forces of evil... When Christ has enrolled us as full-time soldiers in his army, we should seek to please him by giving ourselves to his service without distraction.”¹⁴

17. Equal Privilege in the Plan of God – In Christ, all distinctions of ethnicity, social status, and gender lose their *spiritual* significance with respect to privilege, access to God, and standing in the body of Christ (Gal. 3:28). Every believer participates equally in His plan through the same resources and provisions of grace. Ethnic, social, and gender differences remain real as part of our earthly identity and calling, but none of them create a spiritual hierarchy. Union with Christ alone confers full standing before the Father, the same indwelling Spirit, the same access to Scripture, the same priestly privilege, and the same invitation to grow, serve, and bear fruit.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ralph Earle, “2 Timothy,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon*, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 399.

¹⁵ Ethnic identity, including Jewish ethnicity, is not erased at conversion. A Jewish believer remains a physical descendant of Abraham and part of the nation to which God made

18. Under the Law of Christ – Believers are no longer under the Mosaic Law but live under grace, guided by the Spirit’s enabling power (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 5:18). They now fulfill the Law of Christ, which centers on love and Spirit-led obedience (Gal. 6:2; John 13:34). This law emphasizes love, service, and Spirit-empowered obedience. Ryrie states, “The law of Christ is the system of rules or principles for conduct of the Christian today. Although the believer has been set free from the law of Moses, he is nevertheless under law—the law of Christ. Freedom from the law is not lawlessness or license (1 Cor. 9:21)...The law of Christ is a definite code containing hundreds of specific commandments.”¹⁶

19. A New Spiritual Creation – At salvation, the believer becomes a new creation in Christ, marked by a transformed spiritual identity (2 Cor. 5:17). Old positional realities pass away and a new realm of life and relationship with God begins. The person who once stood in Adam, condemned and spiritually dead, is now placed in Christ, accepted and made alive before God. This new creation does not erase personality or history, but it establishes a new standing, new capacities, and a new trajectory shaped by the indwelling Spirit and the resources of grace.

20. Deliverance from the Sin Nature’s Dominion – Through union with Christ in His death, the dominion of the old sin nature is broken so that believers are no longer enslaved to its rule (Rom. 6:6). They are now free to present themselves to God as instruments of righteousness, living under grace rather than tyranny (Rom. 6:14). This does not mean the sin nature is removed, but its ruling authority has been cut. The believer now has the capacity to walk by the Spirit rather than the flesh (Gal. 5:16), through the Spirit and the Word to wage effective warfare against sin (Gal. 5:17; Eph. 6:17), and to present his members to God as those alive from the dead (Rom. 6:13). The power that once held absolute control has been displaced by a new master, and the Christian is called to live out that freedom in daily choices that reflect his new position in Christ.

21. Identification with Christ’s Death, Resurrection, and Ascension – Believers are identified with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, sharing in the spiritual realities of His triumph (Rom. 6:3–5). This identification means God views the believer as having died with Christ to sin’s authority and as having been raised with Him to walk in newness of life. The old

specific covenant promises (Rom 9:3–5; 11:1–2). These ethnic and national distinctions have importance in God’s larger historical program for Israel, but they do not create superior or inferior classes within the Church, where all are “one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

¹⁶ Charles C. Ryrie, *The Grace of God* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1963), 105.

person in Adam has been judged and buried, and the believer now participates in Christ's resurrection life with a new capacity for obedience and fellowship with God. Furthermore, God has raised them up and seated them with Christ in the heavenly realm, assigning them a new position and status before Him that is secure and grounded in grace (Eph. 2:6). These positional truths are not felt experiences but divine facts to be believed, forming the foundation for practical sanctification.

22. Peace with God – Justification grants the believer enduring peace with God, ending the state of enmity that once existed (Rom. 5:1). Once God declares the sinner righteous through faith in Christ, the war is over and the hostility is removed forever. This peace is not an emotion but an objective legal reality grounded in Christ's finished work. Mounce states, “In Scripture peace is not tranquility but, as the Hebrew word *shalom* suggests, a state of well-being. To be at peace with God means that the hostility caused by sin has been removed.”¹⁷ Because the believer now stands accepted and reconciled, he is able to advance in fellowship with God without fear of condemnation. This settled peace becomes the foundation of spiritual stability, providing confidence to grow through the intake of Scripture (1 Pet. 2:2), to confess sin honestly with the assurance of forgiveness (1 John 1:9), and to walk worthy of the Lord with the knowledge that the relationship remains secure (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; 1 Th. 2:12).

23. Access to God – Through Christ, believers have direct and unhindered access to God the Father. Paul states, “for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father” (Eph. 2:18). This means that Christ's finished work has opened the way into God's presence, and the Spirit now mediates that approach. Believers do not come through rituals, priests, or sacred spaces. They come through the Son (John 14:6; Eph. 2:13; Heb. 10:19–20), empowered by the Spirit (Rom. 8:26–27; Eph. 2:18; Jude 20), and welcomed by the Father (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 1:3–6; Heb. 4:16). According to Chafer, “All three Persons of the Godhead appear in this brief text. It declares that both Jew and Gentile, being saved, have access through Christ and by the Spirit unto the Father...The all-important truth—marvelous beyond comprehension—is that each believer has perfect and immutable access unto the Father.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 41.

¹⁸ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 258.

24. A Heavenly Citizenship – The believer’s true citizenship resides in heaven, anchoring identity and hope in the realm where Christ now reigns (Phil. 3:20). This citizenship denotes that the primary homeland is not earthly but the sphere in which the Savior is seated and to which ultimate loyalties belong. Because believers are bound to that realm, their values and conduct are shaped by its standards, and their expectations are oriented toward Christ’s return and the life to come. Peter underscores this heavenly identity by describing believers as “aliens and strangers” in the present world (1 Pet. 2:11), affirming their belonging to a homeland yet unseen. Such a perspective requires a faith response to divine revelation, accepting God’s evaluation over natural viewpoint. By faith they acknowledge that this world is not their home and that their true identity, security, and future rest with Christ in heaven.

25. A Place in God’s Plan – God chose and predestined believers before the foundation of the world by choosing Christ as the Elect One and appointing a corporate people in Him (Eph. 1:4–5). This is not selection of certain individuals for eternal life but corporate election, where all who believe are joined to Christ and share the blessings of His chosen status. Election is also to purpose, in which God predetermined what He would do with those who are in His Son: make them holy and blameless (Eph. 1:4), grant them full sonship (Eph. 1:5), conform them to Christ (Rom. 8:29), and assign them a role in His eternal plan (Eph. 1:11–12). God’s plan centers on Christ and the corporate body united to Him, giving every believer meaning, direction, and a secure destiny within His eternal purpose.

26. The Availability of Divine Power – The same power that raised Christ from the dead is directed toward believers for spiritual strength and endurance (Eph. 1:19–20). Paul describes this power as surpassing greatness, the very energy God exerted when He raised His Son and seated Him at His right hand. That resurrection power now operates in believers through the ministry of the Word (Heb. 4:12) and the Spirit (Eph. 3:16), giving them the capacity to resist sin (Gal. 5:16), endure hardship (2 Tim. 2:3), obey under pressure (Phil. 2:13), and grow in godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). It is not human determination but divine enablement that sustains the Christian life. God supplies the strength, and the believer responds in faith and obedience, drawing on a power that originates in the triumph of Christ Himself.

27. An Eternal Inheritance – The believer’s eternal inheritance consists of the blessings, privileges, and future participation in Christ’s reign that God prepared in eternity past and guarantees for every member of His family (Eph. 1:11, 14, 18). This inheritance is reserved in heaven and secured by

the sealing ministry of the Spirit, who guarantees that what God has promised will come to pass (Col. 3:23–24; 1 Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:17). Raymer states, “A Christian’s inheritance cannot be destroyed by hostile forces, and it will not spoil like overripened fruit or fade in color...Each Christian’s inheritance of eternal life is kept in heaven or ‘kept watch on’ by God so its ultimate possession is secure (cf. Gal. 5:5).”¹⁹

28. **A Right to Pray to God** – Christ grants believers direct access to the Father in prayer through His name (John 16:23; Eph. 2:18). This means we approach the Father on the basis of Christ’s person, merit, and finished work, not our own performance or worthiness. Jesus opened a new avenue of fellowship where the believer stands welcomed and heard because he is identified with the Son. This privilege brings fullness of joy as God answers according to His will (John 16:24).
29. **Possession of a Spiritual Gift** – At salvation, God grants every believer a spiritual gift for the edification of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7-11). These gifts are divine enablements given by the Spirit, tailored to the believer’s role within the body, and designed to build up others rather than elevate self. Peter reminds us that these gifts are stewardships to be exercised in service to others (1 Pet. 4:10). The believer is therefore responsible to use his gift faithfully. According to Constable, “God has given every Christian at least one gift (ability) that he or she can and should share with others and, in so doing, serve them.”²⁰
30. **Deliverance from Eternal Judgment** — Those who belong to Christ are delivered from the second death, the ultimate judgment described in Scripture (Rev. 20:6). The second death is not annihilation but eternal separation from God in the lake of fire, the final destiny of all who reject His grace (Rev. 20:14). Believers are forever exempt from this judgment because their names are written in the book of life, sealed by God’s promise and secured through Christ’s work.
31. **Potential for Spiritual Production** — Through union with Christ, believers possess the capacity to bear fruit that has eternal value (John 15:5). Jesus makes clear that apart from Him, no spiritual production is possible, but abiding in Him enables a life that pleases the Father and remains significant in eternity. This fruitfulness is not self-generated effort but the result of the Spirit’s ministry within the believer, shaping desires and conduct. The Spirit

¹⁹ Roger M. Raymer, “1 Peter,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 841.

²⁰ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Pe 4:10.

produces a transformed character marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23). Such fruit reflects Christ’s life reproduced in the believer and forms the foundation for meaningful service and lasting impact in the plan of God.

32. **Provision of Logistical Support** — God provides every necessary resource for the believer’s temporal and spiritual life (Matt. 6:33). Paul affirms this when he writes, “And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). God’s supply draws from infinite wealth, and His care covers both the daily pressures of life and the long-term demands of spiritual growth. This makes the believer’s confidence rest not in self-sufficiency but in the faithful provision of a gracious Father.
33. **Promise of Glorified Resurrection Body** — The believer’s future hope includes bodily resurrection and transformation into Christ’s glorious likeness (Phil. 3:20–21; 1 Cor. 15:51–53). Our present bodies, marked by weakness, decay, and mortality, will be changed by the direct exercise of Christ’s power when He returns. Paul declares that Christ “will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory” (Phil. 3:21), replacing corruption with incorruption and mortality with immortality. In a moment, “in the twinkling of an eye,” the church will be caught up and every believer will receive a resurrection body suited for eternal life in God’s presence. This promised transformation is the capstone of our salvation and anchors our hope in the certainty of Christ’s victory over death.

Conditional Blessings

While the first thirty-three blessings of salvation are irrevocable and grounded in God’s grace, Scripture also describes a series of **conditional blessings** that depend on the believer’s fellowship, obedience, and daily walk with the Lord. These blessings do not alter salvation or positional truth, but they profoundly shape the believer’s **experience, growth, usefulness, and reward** in time.

1. **Fellowship With God** — Fellowship concerns the believer’s *relational closeness with the Father*. Though union with Christ is unbreakable, communion is not. Walking “in the light” keeps the believer in experiential harmony with God (1 John 1:6–7). According to Constable, “A practicing sinner cannot have close fellowship with a holy God, though he can have a relationship with God (i.e., be a true Christian). God revealed this truth throughout Scripture. We do not need to reestablish our relationship with God every time we sin, though we do need to reestablish our fellowship with

Him.”²¹ Sin fractures fellowship, not salvation. Confession restores fellowship and enables the believer to resume a walk of unhindered intimacy with God (1 John 1:9).

2. **Filling of the Holy Spirit** – The filling of the Spirit is the moment-by-moment condition in which the Spirit governs the believer’s inner life (Eph. 5:18). Sin *grieves* the Spirit’s influence (Eph 4:30) and *quenches* His ministry (1 Th. 5:19), while confession restores the believer to a state in which the Spirit can once again direct, empower, and produce godly living (1 John 1:9). Filling concerns *the Spirit’s operational control*, not the relationship or position. It is a repeated condition tied directly to humility and present obedience. This filling is a divine command, it is conditional upon ongoing obedience, and it is a repeated action that must be renewed throughout the believer’s walk.
3. **Experiential Knowledge of God** – Experiential knowledge concerns how God makes Himself known to the obedient believer. Jesus promises deeper disclosure, not new revelation, but heightened awareness of His presence and approval: “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him” (John 14:21). Paul captures this pursuit when he writes, “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil. 3:10). This is the fruit of loyalty to Christ’s commandments. It is not about confession, filling, or fellowship *per se*. It is the progressive, relational unveiling of Christ to the believer who consistently responds positively to His Word.
4. **Inner Joy, Peace, and Stability** – These inner qualities describe the believer’s mental and emotional state when rightly oriented to God. Prayer displaces anxiety with divine peace: “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6–7). Divine viewpoint fortifies the inner life because “the steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in You” (Isa. 26:3). Walking in the Spirit stabilizes the heart as He produces His fruit of “love, joy, peace...” (Gal. 5:22). These are effects, not causes. They represent the inward climate of the soul when the believer is thinking biblically and aligned with God’s will.
5. **Spiritual Growth and Maturity** – Growth concerns development over time through the intake and application of Scripture under the Spirit’s ministry. Peter commands believers to “long for the pure milk of the word, so that by

²¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Jn 1:6.

it you may grow” (1 Pet. 2:2). Hebrews explains that maturity belongs to those “who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Heb. 5:14). Growth is not emotional, accidental, or magical. It is the cumulative effect of learning and applying God’s Word to all of life.

6. **Effective Prayer** – Effective prayer focuses on conditions that give weight to the believer’s petitions. Jesus ties answered prayer to abiding in Him and His Word: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7). James emphasizes the spiritual integrity of the one who prays: “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (Jam. 5:16). Peter notes that unresolved relational conflict hinders prayer: “so that your prayers will not be hindered” (1 Pet. 3:7). Prayer effectiveness is not about fellowship, nor filling; rather, it is tied to alignment with Christ’s will, righteousness, and relational integrity.
7. **Divine Guidance** – Guidance is a conditional blessing for the Christian because it operates within the believer’s response to God’s revealed truth. God never withholds direction, but He ties experiential clarity to volition. A renewed mind perceives God’s will, and that renewal only occurs when the believer presents himself to God and rejects the world’s system (Rom. 12:1–2). If the mind is not being reshaped by Scripture, discernment collapses and human viewpoint predominates. Likewise, trust is not automatic. Solomon’s promise, in Proverbs 3:5–6, assumes the believer is actively acknowledging the Lord in every sphere of life. When trust is withheld and self-reliance dominates, the path becomes crooked. Guidance therefore emerges when two conditions converge. The mind must be aligned with God’s Word, and the will must rest on God’s character. Under those conditions, the Spirit stabilizes judgment, clarifies direction, and enables the believer to navigate life with divine viewpoint rather than human instinct.
8. **Fruitfulness in Service** – Fruitfulness concerns divine good production that flows from fellowship with Christ rather than human effort or religious activity. In John 15, Jesus makes clear that fruit is not manufactured by the believer but produced through sustained dependence and fellowship with Him. Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). This inner life is expressed first in the fruit of the Spirit, the Christlike character produced by the Spirit as the believer walks in dependence and obedience (Gal. 5:22–23). Paul adds the dimension of availability and usefulness. Paul ties fruitfulness to personal sanctification, where the believer is “a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work” (2 Tim. 2:21).

9. **Temporal Blessing** – Temporal blessing concerns God’s care in time for obedient believers. Scripture connects upright living with God’s provision and practical benefits: “those who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing” (Ps. 34:10). Jesus assures provision for those who seek the Father’s priorities (Matt. 6:31-32), saying, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33). Paul affirms God’s faithfulness to supply needs: “My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). Lightner states, “They had met Paul’s needs and now God would meet theirs. God would not only bless them *out of* or *from* His bounty but also *in accordance with* (*kata*) it: according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”²² The wise and maturing believer rests content in whatever the Lord sovereignly provides, having learned to be satisfied in every circumstance, whether in abundance or in need, trusting the Lord’s sufficiency rather than temporal conditions (Phil. 4:11–13; cf. 1 Tim. 6:6–8; Heb. 13:5).

10. **Avoidance of Divine Discipline** – Discipline concerns corrective consequences for disobedient believers. Scripture states, “For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives” (Heb. 12:6). The Father disciplines His children “for our good, so that we may share His holiness” (Heb. 12:10). Paul notes that persistent sin brought weakness, sickness, and even physical death to some in Corinth because they failed to judge themselves before the Lord (1 Cor. 11:30–32). It deals with negative divine intervention designed to correct a believer’s course. Obedience avoids the pain of divine discipline and preserves unhindered fellowship with God.

11. **Eternal Reward** – Reward concerns future evaluation, not present fellowship or fruitfulness. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, each believer’s works will be tested for lasting value: “the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work... If any man’s work remains, he will receive a reward; if any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved” (1 Cor. 3:13–15). Paul reminds us that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body” (2 Cor. 5:10). John warns believers, “Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward” (2 John 8). Eternal reward is based on faithfulness and Spirit-empowered obedience in time. Salvation is secure, but reward is conditional.

²² Robert P. Lightner, “Philippians,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 665.

12. The Abundant Life – The abundant life is the believer’s experience of Spirit-energized living in fellowship with Christ. Jesus said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). This abundance is not automatic. It is a conditional blessing that depends on the believer ordering his life according to God’s Word. Jesus describes this life as *περισσόν* (perisson), which refers to “being extraordinary in amount, abundant, profuse, going beyond what is necessary.”²³ The abundant life is maintained through abiding in Scripture (Col. 3:16; Ps. 1:2–3; Jam. 1:25), remaining connected to Christ for strength (John 15:5), and choosing to walk by the Spirit in daily pressures (Gal. 5:16). When the believer stays in fellowship and responds to truth with obedience, Christ’s own life, and the filling of the Holy Spirit, becomes the sustaining powers and the abundant qualities of the believer’s walk.

How These Blessings Shape the Christian Spiritual Life

The thirty-three irrevocable blessings received at salvation form the foundation on which the entire Christian life is built. They define **who the believer is, where he stands, and what resources he possesses** before he ever takes his first step of obedience. These truths anchor the soul in grace. The Christian does not strive for acceptance; he starts from acceptance (Eph. 1:6). He does not fight for life; he fights from life (Eph. 2:5). He does not labor for identity; he lives out the identity already granted in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Knowing these unchanging realities stabilizes the mind, protects against guilt and legalism, and furnishes confidence in God’s unbreakable promises. This foundation produces gratitude, freedom, and the capacity to grow without fear of losing God’s favor.

The conditional blessings describe the **daily experience** God intends for His children as they walk in fellowship with Him. These are not automatic. They depend upon the believer’s volition, obedience, submission to Scripture, and moment-by-moment walk in the Spirit. As the believer abides in Christ, these experiential blessings—fellowship, joy, peace, stability, spiritual growth, effective prayer, guidance, fruitfulness, temporal provision, protection, and eternal reward—become the normal pattern of life. When sin breaks fellowship, these blessings are interrupted, and the believer must return through confession and renewed obedience. This tension between permanent position and conditional experience explains why some Christians mature rapidly while others stagnate. Spiritual

²³ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 805.

vitality is never gained by striving for positional blessings already secured by grace. It is enjoyed by living consistently with the truths God has already established.

Together, the positional and experiential categories show that the Christian life is not about **earning** God's favor but **walking** in the light of what He has already accomplished. Position provides security; experience provides growth. Position supplies resources; experience requires volition. Position cannot be forfeited; experience can be lost and regained. This framework gives clarity to the believer's spiritual life, guards against confusion, and charts a path to maturity that is grounded in grace yet active in obedience.