



Issue # 02

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Reflecting Gods Covenantal Character Through Your Life Plan

According to Psalms 25:10, "All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of His covenant." Believers may think that we can keep these demands by following Biblical principles. This belief can mislead us in at least two ways. First, no believer can follow God's principles without humbly repenting and being filled with the Power of Christ, who upholds his principles on our behalf. Second, our relationship with God involves much more than principles. We must, as shown below, walk in covenant with Him.

How does a believer walk in a covenantal relationship with God? This brief essay seeks to answer this question by looking at how our Lord asks us to reflect Christ's covenantal character. The following sections review, (1) the elements of the covenant, (2) how the elements relate to Purpose, Process, Principles, Blessings, and use of Blessings to build a Succession of new covenant communities.

(1) Elements of the Covenant

The five main elements in God's covenant are depicted in the rainbow-colored text below. (According to Genesis 9, the rainbow symbolizes God's everlasting covenant.) As explained in books about the Covenant (listed at www.covenant.net), Scripture abounds with examples of how God reflects his character through people who...

Know Our Lord's TRANSCENDENT Purpose,
Hear Our Lord speaking through a Spirit-led HIERARCHY of prophets, priests, and wise counselors
Make Our Lord's ETHICS Known by Following His Principles,
Enjoy Our Lord's Blessings of OBIEDIENCE, and
Use Blessings to build a SUCCESSION of Covenant Communities

The elements above reflect God's transcendence (T), Hierarchy (H), Ethics (E), Outcomes of Obedience (O), and Succession (S). For example, the rainbow-colored text could be rewritten as follows:

This THEOS structure is evident throughout the Bible, especially in the organization of The Lord's prayer; the Great Commission; the writings of Moses; and the books of Psalms, Matthew, Romans, and Revelation. The THEOS structure is also evident in all covenantal commitments between God and man.

A practical application of the THEOS structure is summarized in the following passage from Colossians 1:9-12. Note how Paul first affirms transcendent wisdom and understanding. He then discusses our Lord's plan for representational hierarchy, ethics, outcomes, and succession. Paul writes, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

[Transcendence] And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord [Hierarchy/Representation] and may please him in every way [Ethics]: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God [Outcomes], being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father [Outcomes], who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. [Succession]"

The THEOS structure can form a Biblical model for reflecting Christ's character in families, education, social welfare programs, and the government. A future version of this essay will provide numerous references to explain how successful institutions apply the THEOS structure.

(2) Purpose, Process, Principles, Blessings, and use of Blessings.

God's Word guides us in applying the above concepts to life planning. Below are examples of passages that apply to the five elements of the covenant.

Know Our Lord's TRANSCENDENT Purpose

(Prov 19:21 NIV) Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.

(1 Pet 4:2 NIV) As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

(John 17:4 NIV) I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

(1 Cor 10:31 NIV) So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

(Eph 2:10 NIV) For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

(Phil 3:10 NIV) I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

Hear Our Lord Speaking through a Spirit-led HIERARCHY of Prophets, Priests, and Wise Counselors

(Col 1:9 NIV) For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

(Josh 24:15 NIV) But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

(Mat 28:19 NIV) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (Mat 28:20 NIV) and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Make Our Lord's ETHICS Known by Following His Principles

(Psalms 32:8 NIV) I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

(Proverbs 3:5 NIV) Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; (Proverbs 3:6 NIV) in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

(Mat 6:33 NIV) But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

(Mat 22:37 NIV) Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' (Mat 22:38 NIV) This is the first and greatest commandment. (Mat 22:39 NIV) And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (Mat 22:40 NIV) All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

(Eccl 12:13 NIV) Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

Enjoy Our Lord's Blessings of OBIEDIENCE

(Col 1:10 NIV) And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, (Col 1:11 NIV) being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

(John 15:1 NIV) "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. (John 15:2 NIV) He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. (John 15:3 NIV) You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. (John 15:4 NIV) Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

(John 15:5 NIV) "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:6 NIV) If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. (John 15:7 NIV) If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. (John 15:8 NIV) This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15:9 NIV) "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. (John 15:15 NIV) I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

(Prov 30:7 NIV) "Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: (Prov 30:8 NIV) Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. (Prov 30:9 NIV) Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Use Blessings to build a SUCCESSION of Covenant Communities

(Col 1:9 NIV) For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. (Col 1:10 NIV) And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

(Col 1:11 NIV) being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully (Col 1:12 NIV) giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

(Col 1:28 NIV) We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. (Col 1:29 NIV) To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

(John 4:34 NIV) "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

(Acts 20:24 NIV) However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

(Acts 1:8 NIV) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The above passages of Scripture explain the elements of the covenant. The THEOS structure corresponds directly to these five elements of a life plan: (1) Purpose, (2) Process, (3) Principles, (4) Outcomes (blessings and curses), and (5) Succession (use of blessings to build a succession of new covenant communities).

As individuals apply their covenant in their own life planning, they will gain the wisdom to apply God's teachings families, education, social welfare programs, and the government. A future version of this essay will provide numerous references to explain how successful institutions apply the THEOS structure.

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