



In the study 'The law and the curse'¹ we explain that the curse on the law has not been removed, but is still in force and that **Jesus has become the curse.**

As a result, the curse no longer has any influence **upon whoever is in² Him.**

That study was concluded with the text:

- ... *continue to work out (bring about, achieve) your salvation (deliverance, safety) **with fear and trembling**, ... (Philippians 2:12)*

Fear and trembling:

According to the OLB this is an expression describing the anxiety of someone who realises that he cannot completely fulfil all the requirements, **but devotedly does his very best** to carry out his task.

The above-mentioned thought is developed further in this new study.

Basic principle of life as a disciple of Jesus

The above-mentioned text is the basic principle for the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Paul encourages the Christians of Philippi to **do their very best to achieve their deliverance**, not only when he is present, but also when he is absent.

And he continues:

- ... *for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose (good will, pleasure, wish). (Philippians 2:13)*

Works: The Greek verb that can also be translated as **to bring about**, is conjugated here as a participle, i.e.: *bringing about in you* - as an ongoing action.

Interpreted freely:

A disciple of Jesus Christ must do his very best to achieve his deliverance, because God - because of His kindness³ - is bringing about willing and working in him/her.

God, from His side, has done everything possible to deliver man from the slavery of sin. Man cannot earn that deliverance; it is received/accepted through faith/trust in Jesus Christ⁴.

In this respect a believer, as a disciple of Jesus Christ⁵, will have to make an effort to hold on to that deliverance and thus to receive the full life that Jesus promised when He said:

- *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)*

1 Study: The law and the curse.

2 Study: Word study of the little Greek words epi, en, eis.

3 Study: Grace - definition.

4 Study: Conversion.

5 Study: A different schematic presentation.



The life of a disciple:

Life as a disciple of Jesus Christ is living in relationship with Him, protected by Him from the direct attacks of the devil⁶ and free from the curse upon non-observance of the law.

God accepts the fact that a disciple is not capable of obeying Jesus completely, but - as is stated at the beginning of this study - He expects him **'to do his very best'** to live as a child of God⁷, according to the rules of the Kingdom of Heaven.

This requires constantly making the right choice in life's challenges, in accordance with the will of God, as He has made it known to us in the Bible.

The desires of the flesh.

These choices can be hard, when the temptation of the world or of one's own desire becomes so strong that the whispering of the Holy Spirit is drowned out.

The Bible calls this: **the desires of the flesh**:

- the soul, which is no longer focussed on doing Jesus' will
- the soul that is focussed on the body (the flesh) and carries out the desires of the body or that which the world awakens via eyes and ears.

This is dangerous, because, as a result, the disciple leaves the protection of Jesus and risks falling back into a life under the curse of the law, for:

- *The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; ... (Romans 8:7)*
- *The mind governed by the flesh is death, ... (Romans 8:6)*

In several parables Jesus gives examples of people who went their own way and who, consequently, missed eternal life in God's presence.

Missing eternal life through 'neglect'. (Matthew 25:1-13)

Ten girls are looking forward to the coming of the bridegroom, the return of Jesus.

All ten of them weaken in their attention and all then of them eventually fall asleep.

The bridegroom arrives after a long wait. Five of the girls first have to put a number of things in order before they are able to follow him and they therefore arrive late at the wedding feast.

They called out: *'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'* (Matthew 25:11-12)

Jesus warns His disciples to be alert (verse 13) and to live consciously in an intimate relationship with Him.

Missing eternal life through 'lack of readiness to forgive'. (Matthew 18:23-35)⁸

A master settles his accounts with his slaves.

6 Study: Discipleship (1).

7 Study: Child of God.

8 Study: Forgiveness – basic principles 2.



A slave who owed him an enormous amount pleads: *Be patient with me, and I will pay back everything.* The debt was so large, however, that it was impossible for the slave to repay it. The master therefore absolved him from the debt.

Later, the slave meets another of his master's slaves who still owes him some money and he insists upon repayment.

Because the master's other slave asks him to be patient, because he is unable to pay, the first man puts him in prison.

When the master hears about this he now insists on repayment from the slave whom he had initially absolved, and he turns him over to the torturers.

Jesus' conclusion:

- *"This is how my heavenly Father will treat **each of you** unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."* (Matthew 18:35)

Missing eternal life through 'rebellion'. (Matthew 25:14-30)⁹

When leaving to go abroad a master divides his property among three slaves.

Each receives an amount in accordance with his competence.

One slave hides the money he receives in the ground. He disagrees strongly with any profit he might make having to be handed over to the master and he prefers to go his own way.

The life of this slave ends tragically in *"the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Missing eternal life through 'indifference'. (Matthew 22:1-14)

A king arranges a wedding banquet for his son.

Those who have been invited do not want to come, however, and a second invitation is ignored (verse 5).

The king then sends his slaves out to the street corners to invite everyone, the bad as well as the good (verse 10) and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

When the king came in he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. This person had apparently not found it necessary to change his clothes for the wedding clothes the king had made available.

He is tied hand and foot and thrown outside, into the darkness.

Warning against 'selfishness'.

Jesus said:

- *A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit **is cut down and thrown into the fire.** Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*
- *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*
- *Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?'*
- *Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. **Away from me, you evildoers!**'* (Matthew 7:18-23)

⁹ Study: Matthew 25:14-30 - The parable of the garbs of gold.



This refers to disciples of Jesus who have carried out great spiritual work and have probably been a blessing to many people.

Nevertheless, Jesus calls them “evildoers (literally: workers without law)”, because they have not exercised their ministry because they love God and their neighbour and have apparently claimed the honour for their work for themselves.

Waning against ‘legalism’.

Paul warns:

- *You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from Grace/kindness. (Galatians 5:4)*

A movement had come into existence in Galatia, in which the righteousness of God was not only expected from faith in Jesus, but by strictly following the laws of the Old Testament.

Whoever thinks he is able to add something to his salvation by legalism and no longer trusts completely in Jesus Christ for it, runs the risk of coming (returning) under the curse of the law, with all the consequences thereof - for eternity as well.

Living in accordance with the Spirit.

According to the Bible, a disciple who lives in a relationship with Jesus Christ and **‘devotedly does his very best’** completely to live in accordance with the norms of God’s Kingdom, lives in **accordance with the Spirit.**

However, anyone who lives in accordance with the Spirit cannot avoid ‘stumbling’ as a result of wrong choices.

There is then only one way back, in order to come under the protection of Jesus and to be free again from the curse upon non-observance of the law:

→ acknowledge that one has stumbled and **confess** the sin to Jesus Christ

For:

- *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 Johannes 1:9)*

This is living by grace, the kindness of God, in relationship with, and under the protection of Jesus Christ.

The Bible calls this **living in the Spirit**, with a tremendous promise, for:

- *... but the mind governed by the Spirit is **life and peace.** (Romans 8:6)*

Back to the beginning of this study.

This study began with:

- *... continue to work out (bring about, achieve) your salvation (deliverance, safety) **with fear and trembling,** ... (Philippians 2:12)*



This dedication encompasses two points of attention:

1. Knowing the rules of living of the household of God.

Whoever loves God as Father, receives a deep desire to live in accordance with the rules He has laid down for His family.

This implies in-depth meditation of Jesus' words, in order to be renewed in one's thinking and thus to discern what the will of God is: His good, pleasing and perfect will.

(according to Romans 12:2)

Or, as king Solomon knew:

- *Whoever gives heed to instruction (of God) prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD. (Proverbs 16:20)*

2. Release from one's own wishes and desires.

Jesus says quite sharply:

- *If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters - **yes, even their own life** - such a person cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26)*

Jesus does **not** mean that one:

- must hate people - for one must even love one's enemies (Matthew 5:44)
- must hate father or mother - for, on the contrary, it is important to God that children honour their parents (the fifth of the ten commandments)
- must hate one's own life - for how would one otherwise be able to love one's neighbour as oneself?

'Life' in this verse is the translation of '**psyche**', which is usually translated as '**soul**',

To be interpreted here as '**the seat of the wishes and desires**'.

This therefore means that honouring parents and family should not go so far as to become **more important** than following Jesus and that one's own wishes and desires must remain subject to His will.

Jesus says that one can only be His disciple if He receives the first place in one's life.

Whoever lives in such a way is free from the curse and will experience the full life as God has intended.

Or, as Jesus said:

- *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **If you keep my commands**, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:9-11)*

See also the study: Elisha and the men of Jericho.¹⁰

¹⁰ Study; Elisha and the men of Jericho.