



Blessing Does Not Seek Perfection

Living in the Image of God Module 02 Session 07

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Living in the Image of God

- God creates every person to represent him in interactions with others
- Be for others what God would be for them if he lived with us in human form
- He provides resources for people to perform the responsibilities and blesses those that do
- Program seeks to understand the meaning, resources, and human responsibilities and benefits of *Living in the Image of God*

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What We Will Learn

- Invitation to earn blessing through human service is open to all irrespective of any sin
- Earned blessing will endure to be fulfilled at God's choosing, irrespective of any incurred punishment
- Consistent with God's promise in the 2nd commandment
- Examples from ancestral lineage of Jesus
 - Judah
 - Rahab
 - Ruth
 - David

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2nd Commandment Promise

- For those that sin, promise of punishment will endure up to 3rd and 4th offspring generations
- For those that serve God, promise of blessing will endure up to a thousand offspring generations
- Separately for different people?
- Or coexisting for the same person?
- Exodus 20:4–6

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Exodus 20 (NIV)

4 “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

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Exodus 20 (NIV)

6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

- Based on examples from the bible
- Promise of blessing can coexist with promise of punishment for the same person
- And be fulfilled separately as if for different people

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Separate and Enduring Promises

- A person can earn blessing despite existing promise of punishment
- Or incur punishment despite existing promise of blessing
- Blessing does not seek perfection
- Examples from ancestral lineage of Jesus

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Judah, Son of Jacob

- Inherited Abraham blessing through Jacob
- Incurred punishment for marrying a Canaanite or going to bed with a woman he thought was a prostitute (Genesis 38)
- Earned blessing when he offered to be enslaved in Egypt in place of Benjamin (Genesis 44:33–34)
- Blessing was fulfilled through son Perez irrespective of punishment

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Rahab of Jericho

- Motivated by fear of God to protect people she believed were on a mission for God (Joshua 2:1–15)
- Earned blessing despite sin of prostitution
- Any punishment she incurred for prostitution had no effect on her blessing
- Blessing was fulfilled through son Boaz: father of Obed → Jesse → David.

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Ruth the Moabitess

- Inherited blessing from ancestral father of Moabites, Lot, for joining Abraham on mission
- Inherited generational punishment because of Moabites denying kindred care to Israel
- Earned blessing through compassion for mother-in-law Naomi
- Ruth's blessing was fulfilled through son Obed despite the Moabite generational punishment

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Example from David

- Inherited blessing from Abraham
- Earned blessing through lifetime service
- Incurred punishment for seduction, adultery, murder, and covetousness in the affair with Bathsheba
- Blessing was fulfilled through Solomon despite the promise of punishment
- Punishment was fulfilled in David despite the blessing
- The punishment did not affect the blessing
- Also, the blessing did not affect the punishment

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What We Learned

- Invitation to earn blessing through human service is open to all irrespective of any sin
- Promise of blessing and promise of punishment may coexist for a person
- Fulfilled separately as if for different people
- As God promised with the 2nd commandment
- Earned blessing will endure to be fulfilled at God's choosing, irrespective of any incurred punishment

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Blessing Does Not Seek Perfection

Living in the Image of God M02S07

The invitation to earn blessing through human service is open to every person irrespective of sin or righteousness. A person can earn blessing despite existing promise of punishment. Also, a person can incur punishment despite existing promise of blessing. Thus, one does not need to be perfect to earn blessing. Blessing and punishment are parallel promises of God, may coexist for a person, and will be fulfilled separately by God's schedule as if for different people, excepting the forgiveness of punishment through repentance.

This bible study seeks further understanding of God's invitation to every person to earn blessing by providing goods or services to benefit others. The invitation is open to all, irrespective of existing sin or righteousness. Further, God will fulfill every promise of blessing according to his schedule, irrespective of any incurred punishment. Consistent with his promise in the 2nd commandment, a promise of blessing can coexist with a promise of punishment and will endure through offspring generations.

Blessing and punishment are parallel promises of God and may coexist. A person can earn blessing despite an existing promise of punishment. Also, a person can incur punishment despite an existing promise of blessing. That means a person does not need to be perfect in order to earn blessing. Each promise will be fulfilled separately according to God's schedule as if for a different person.

We discuss the 2nd commandment to link its promise with the coexistence of blessing and punishment. Also, we discuss several examples from the ancestral lineage of Jesus to understand the fulfillment of parallel promises.

The 2nd Commandment Promise

In the 2nd commandment, God proclaims his promise of punishment for sin and declared the promise will endure to be fulfilled in up to 3rd and 4th offspring generations: "...for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me" [Exodus 20:5]. Also, his promise of blessing for those that serve him will endure to be fulfilled in up to a thousand offspring generations: "but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments" [Exodus 20:6].

The language of the commandment could be understood to indicate that the promise of blessing and the promise of punishment apply to different people. Such understanding could arise from seeing the commandment as a one-judgment application, whereby "those who hate me" (from Verse 5) and "those who love me" (from Verse 6) always refer to different people. However, the commandment also could refer to judgment of individual human deed, whereby a person could at one time do something that God sees as an act of hate and at other times do something that God sees as an act of love. Given such understanding of the commandment, one also would understand that a person may at one time incur punishment for an act of hate and at other times earn blessing for an act of love.

We discuss examples from the bible that point to the second understanding of the commandment: that a person can earn blessing despite an existing promise of punishment or incur punishment despite an existing promise of blessing. The examples are selected from the

ancestral lineage of Jesus. Each of the examples indicates an understanding that blessing and punishment are parallel promises of God, may coexist for a person, and will be fulfilled separately according to God's schedule as if for different people.

Example from Judah Son of Jacob

Judah, 4th son of Jacob, inherited blessing from Abraham: passed from Abraham to Isaac, to Jacob, and to Judah. Also, Judah incurred punishment for marrying a Canaanite and for going to bed with a woman he thought was a prostitute (Genesis 38). Furthermore, he earned blessing when he offered to be enslaved in Egypt in place of Benjamin (Genesis 44:33–34).

The blessing was fulfilled through his son Perez and was not affected by the punishment (Genesis 38:29 and Matthew 1:3).

Example from Rahab of Jericho

Because she feared God, Rahab protected people she believed were on a mission for God (Joshua 2:1–15). She earned blessing for protecting the spies, notwithstanding that she was a prostitute. Any punishment she incurred for prostitution had no effect on the blessing.

The blessing was fulfilled through her son Boaz, who was the father of Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David (Matthew 1:5–6).

Example from Ruth the Moabite

Ruth inherited blessing from Lot, the ancestral father of the Moabites, who joined Abraham on a mission to establish a home and ancestral lineage for the Messiah.

Also, she inherited generational punishment because of Moabites denying kindred care to Israel. The Moabites displeased God by presenting themselves as a source of temptation for alternative worship among descendants of Israel. Furthermore, they presented enmity when their prior relationships with Israel called on them to be friendly (see more under [Enduring Blessing—Lessons from Israelite-Moabite Interactions](#)). God frowned on their behavior and prohibited descendants of Israel from intermingling with Moabites.

Further, Ruth earned blessing through compassion for her mother-in-law Naomi.

Ruth's blessing was fulfilled despite the Moabite generational punishment. It is possible the promise of punishment against Moabites had run its course prior to Ruth's generation. However, whatever the reason, the Moabite generational punishment did not affect her inherited or earned blessing. She became a grandmother in the lineage of the Messiah: through her son Obed, father of Jesse, the father of David (Matthew 1:5–6).

Examples from David

David inherited blessing from Abraham, passed to him through his father Jesse and grandfather Obed. Also, he earned blessing through lifetime service that God announced to him through Prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 7:12).

Furthermore, David incurred punishment for seduction, adultery, murder, and covetousness in the affair with Bathsheba. The punishment was announced to him by Prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 12:1–14).

The blessing was fulfilled through Solomon despite the punishment. As we discuss previously under [Parallel Promises—in David-Bathsheba Relationship](#), the punishment was fulfilled but did not prevent or diminish the blessing he earned or inherited.

Summary of What We Learned

The invitation to earn blessing through human service is open to every person irrespective of sin or righteousness.

A person can earn blessing despite existing promise of punishment. Also, a person can incur punishment despite existing promise of blessing. Thus, one does not need to be perfect to earn blessing.

Blessing and punishment are parallel promises of God, may coexist for a person, and will be fulfilled separately by God's schedule as if for different people, excepting the forgiveness of punishment through repentance.