**Module 6: The True Understanding of Blessing (Payoff, Favor and Blessing)**

**Introduction**

Blessing is a very common word in Christian life. Neither our prayer or worship or testimony or preaching or simple conversation doesn’t end without word “Blessing”. Its very good to praise God for every aspect of our life and every blessing. However, it is also necessary to understand the true meaning of Blessing to become heirs of HIS Blessings in our life. To realize and claim the blessings that he kept in store for us.

If we just see around the world or around us, we always see people, specifically gentiles or who do not know the lord or who do not follow Christ in a proper way, are being blessed with so many things and sometimes we became speechless by the blessings they receive. We get lot of questions and debate in our mind to understand it. What is wrong with me? Or Am I in correct path? What exactly God wants from me? Why am I not blessed like them? And so on…

In this module we will try to learn the differences between Pay off, Favor and Blessing. This understanding will help us to cope with our situations and with the ongoing scenario of the world.

We will have 4 sessions as follows:

1. The concept of Payoff: Definition; Sowing and reaping; Concept of Grace against Karma, etc.
2. The concept of Favor: Definition; Difference between earthly and heavenly favor
3. The concept of Blessing: Definition; How it is different from Favor/ pay off; What is expected; The key to open Blessing doors
4. The concept of Covenant: Definition; How it works; Recap and consolidation of all aspects; Take home message

The 4 sessions are followed by a session for Q&A along with introduction to next module.

**Session 6.1: The concept of Pay off**

**Payoff:** Reward or Payback or Outcome of any act

For example, we work hard to get our pay cheques. We invest in something to get returns. We spend our energy/ time / money expecting something benefit to get out of it.

Proverbs 14: 23 says “In all labor there is profit, But mere talk leads only to poverty.”

If we do some work, we will definitely get payoff for it. Everyone on earth has some work to do and as per their planning & execution, they will grow and achieve certain things. Because Matthew 5:45 says,

**45**so that you may [show yourselves to] be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for **He makes His sun rise on those who are evil and on those who are good, and makes the rain fall on the righteous [those who are morally upright] and the unrighteous [the unrepentant, those who oppose Him].**

But the fact we need to remember is, all these payoffs/ rewards are against our work and they will not take us to heaven or make us righteous in sight of God.

We all know the verses at several instances in bible,

“In accordance with your standard of measure, will be measured to you”

“What you sow, you will reap”

Galatians 6: 7 says “**7**Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”

Based on this aspect, we always expect God to work in our lives based on our faithfulness and our efforts

For ease of understanding, lets see a hypothetical example

If a person is very sincere, good at heart, compassionate and strong believer. He does all work for Church and very helpful in community. But he didn’t prepare for exam and he went to exam, what happens? Will God make him topper or make him pass? Never it will happen because our God is just God.

Similarly, a person who is excellent in God’s work, devotes all his time, energy for God’s work but he got diabetes because of not having any physical activity. Should God be blamed for this?

Why the other person who is in world is very healthy and why not I am?

Why the other person who is in world is becoming wealthy and I am not?

**Remember, Our pay cheques are not measure for our relationship with God**

Lets see Hezekiah life Isaiah 38:1-8

Hezekiah God news of his death from God through prophet Isaiah. Immediately he wept facing the wall and prayed to God. His life was extended as God said “I have accepted your prayer”.

What is Hezekiah’s prayer? Vs 2

**2**Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, **3“Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.”** And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

So, he asked payoff for his acts and God gave him life for 15 years more. Now what happened?

If we see Isaiah 39, God send another message to Hezekiah about destruction of his kingdom and captivity of his sons to Babylon because of his boasting and ignorance of God’s mercy upon him.

In life of Eli also, we can see payoff- God told him that your descendants will be taken off from priesthood as you have not considered the wicked nature of your sons (I Samuel). It got realized in I Kings 2:26-27

**26**Then the king said to Abiathar the priest, “Go to Anathoth to your own fields, for you [[k](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=I%20Kings%202&version=AMP#fen-AMP-8797k)]certainly deserve to die; but I will not put you to death this day, because you carried the ark of the Lord God before my father David, and you suffered everything that my father endured.” **27**So **Solomon dismissed Abiathar [a descendant of Eli] from being priest to the Lord, fulfilling the word of the Lord, which He had spoken concerning the house (descendants) of Eli in Shiloh.**

We will see some more examples while we study the Favor of the lord next week. The payoff and favors works parallelly in Christian life.

From life of Ruth and Ahab, etc.

**The concept of Grace against Karma**

Karma says, if you do good you will receive good only. Every aspect of life we can fit in it.

While Grace says, you are saved by the grace of God, so do good in every aspect. All aspects of life cannot fit in grace because God is Just also.

For example in Karma, if anything bad happened to someone, we can easily come to conclusion that it happened because of their acts and at the same time, if something good happened, we remember the good acts they have done already. No need of applying God’s intervention here.

In grace concept we are being protected just because of his grace irrespective of our mistakes. But we need to remember that our God is Just and we will for sure get the payoff for what we have did. The thief on the cross got salvation right away but physically he suffered for what he has done.

For ease of understanding, we can say this

Karma says Do good to receive good but Grace says do good because you have received grace of God.

Karma accepts all sins whole heartedly (with strong belief system) as it correlates our previous acts (even previous life also). It also shows unity in spirit and mind among people follow the concept because all have same conviction about sin. But in grace, it is difficult to achieve unity in spirit and mind because each one of us is different and our sins are different, above all our understanding of scripture is entirely different.

In Karma, there is no comparison of faith with fellow believers and no question of spiritual pride because all are in same boat. They have fear of the God and/or rituals. They feel that their sins washed away by satisfying God with their offerings and following ritualistic principles.

But people in Grace struggle for getting priorities among the community and sometimes with spiritual pride. Unable to accept self-mistakes because we have reason/justification for everything. Always compare our faith with others, especially because of material blessings. Difficult to attain unity in spirit and mind as a community.

Some people mix the karma and grace and confuse their lives. They also bring in new thought process like, Because we are in grace, our mistakes will be forgiven easily. Its wrong understanding. I John 1: 9 says

**9**If we [freely] admit that we have sinned *and* confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins and cleanse us *continually* from all unrighteousness [our wrongdoing, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose].

Regarding the spiritual pride and comparative faith James 4: 6 says

**6**But He gives us more and more grace [through the power of the Holy Spirit to defy sin and live an obedient life that reflects both our faith and our gratitude for our salvation]. Therefore, it says, “God is opposed to the proud *and* haughty, but [continually] gives [the gift of] grace to the humble [who turn away from self-righteousness].”

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

When our belief system merged with grace concept gives a complex understanding on God’s love. I John 4:19-21 (NIV) says

**19We love because he first loved us.** **20**Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. **21**And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

I John 2:15-17 says

**Do Not Love the World**

**15Do not love the world [of sin that opposes God and His precepts], nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.** **16**For all that is in the world—the lust *and* sensual craving of the flesh and the lust *and* longing of the eyes and the boastful pride of life [pretentious confidence in one’s resources or in the stability of earthly things]—these do not come from the Father, but are from the world. **17**The world is passing away, and with it its lusts [the shameful pursuits and ungodly longings]; but the one who does the will of God *and* carries out His purposes lives forever.

What exactly scripture talks about Christian life/walk in Ephesians 4:17-24 (AMP)

**The Christian’s Walk**

**17**So this I say, and solemnly affirm together with the Lord [as in His presence], that **you must no longer live as the [unbelieving] Gentiles live**, in the futility of their minds [and in the foolishness and emptiness of their souls], **18**for **their [moral] understanding is darkened *and* their reasoning is clouded; [they are] alienated *and* self-banished from the life of God [with no share in it; this is] because of the [willful] ignorance *and* spiritual blindness** that is [deep-seated] within them, because of the **hardness *and* insensitivity of their heart. 19**And they, [the ungodly in their spiritual apathy], having become callous *and* unfeeling, have given themselves over [as prey] to unbridled sensuality, eagerly craving the practice of every kind of impurity [that their desires may demand]. **20But you did not learn Christ in this way! 21**If in fact you have [really] heard Him and have been taught by Him, just as truth is in Jesus [revealed in His life and personified in Him], **22**that, regarding your previous way of life, **you put off your old self [completely discard your former nature],** which is being corrupted through deceitful desires, **23**and **be *continually* renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh, untarnished mental and spiritual attitude],** **24**and **put on the new self [the regenerated and renewed nature], created in God’s image, [godlike] in the righteousness and holiness of the truth [living in a way that expresses to God your gratitude for your salvation]**.

Lot of times we take the grace of God for granted which puts us in more difficulties leading away from God. We never know, when we were drifted away. Romans 6:1-2 says

What shall we say [to all this]? Should we continue in sin *and* practice sin as a habit so that [God’s gift of] grace may increase *and* overflow? **2**Certainly not! How can we, the very ones who died to sin, *continue to* live in it any longer?

If we take his grace for granted, we will go through difficulties here on earth as well as in the eternity. So, never say **IT’S OK**. Because it’s not OK for God to let us die again and again in this worldly race. Paul says run for his kingdom and run in such a way to receive the prize kept for you and do not look to others what they have. You are unique in God’s sight.

Scripture says that we need to search for his kingdom and righteousness first then everything will be added onto it. But if we focus on earthly things, we will not be able to achieve our goal in Christ and because we become disobedient in God’s sight, we will not be able to get earthly benefits as well.

We will understand more about payoff while studying the concept of Favor next week and then we will better understand the concept. Lets all pray to God to keep his grace shine upon us and make us realize the righteousness and Just nature of God. So, that we can get our payoff in his kingdom.

Praise the Lord!