Life can be a battle. We go through difficult seasons where it is hard to believe and feel confident about our future. Some of those times, we may even question our faith or give up on it.

You know what I am talking about. We all go through bad seasons of either hardship or lacking of any kind—not just material: our mental and physical health is not well, our relationships are in disarray, our children don’t listen to us, we may be misjudged by others or let down by the people we trusted most, we are tired of constantly struggling with our finances. And, on top of all that, we may not feel God’s presence in our lives.

These are times when all the circumstances say we are stuck or out-of-luck, so just endure it. However, this does not mean that there is something wrong with us. If you read the Bible, you would know that even the most faithful people had bad seasons. Sometimes because they were unfaithful and unjust, but other times simply because that is life. No one is exempt of hardship.

Now, I am going to say something that may shock you: I believe in the Prosperity Gospel. I know you may be thinking about the Prosperity Gospel that preaches luxury and flashy materialism if you pray “the right way” or give something up, but that is not what I mean. However, I believe God wants to bless and prosper us in ways that are good for us. God is not a mean God that holds the blessings to make us suffer.

The question for us today is: Where is God’s blessing for me? How do we get it? Today we are learning that the reason why we are not blessed is not because of what God does not do for us but because of what we may do to ourselves.

A Scripture that speaks to that is Psalms 1:1-3:

“Blessed are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the [Word] of the Lord, and on his Word they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.”

Every time I read Psalm 1, I am reminded that it is possible to live a blessed life despite the troubles we face in this life.

The image used in this text to speak about this blessing is: “they are like a tree planted by a stream of water, which yield their fruit in season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.” This Scripture compares God’s children to “trees planted by a stream of water” that enjoy good seasons and endure bad ones. The key is that as long as the tree is rooted by the streams of water, it will not wither but prosper.

According to this Scripture, this is the blessing of the righteous—they outlast every bad season and remain fruitful.

I want this kind of life for me and my children and all of you: fruitful and prosperous, lasting.

Now, it is important to know that this sort of blessing is not contingent upon favorable circumstances—of course. It also can’t be manufactured, purchased, or acquired because we really want it, and it does not happen overnight. Instead, the Scripture states simply and clearly, “blessed are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, they meditate day and night.”

According to this text, to be blessed is not about getting everything we want but to be rightly related to God so that our lives are fulfilled. A healthy relationship with God leads us to a deep personal satisfaction in every aspect and area of our lives—whether it is relationships, money, school, work, etc. In other words, a healthy relationship with God sets our mindset to make the choices that lead to lasting blessings.

Interestingly, this blessing begins with the negative, not the positive. This blessing, the Psalmist says, results from not following the advice of the wicked, from not taking the path that sinners take, and from not sitting in the seat of scoffers. By all measures, these are those who afflict the vulnerable, accuse the innocent, undermine the trust of the faithful, don’t listen for God, and threaten the good of the community. In other words, as there are ways of living, attitudes, and behaviors that tend towards wellness, kindness, compassion, and righteousness, there are also others that tend toward oppression, injustice, abuse, and wickedness. The latter are the ones we are being warned against.

This means that blessings come not only from what we do but also from what we don’t do. Blessed people avoid certain behaviors, situations, and unhealthy relationships. To be blessed is not only about having more of the “good” but also having less of the “bad” in our lives.

It makes sense because we can’t live a life of disorder and then come to church praying for blessings expecting everything to change for us magically. The Bible is not a book of magic but wisdom and revelation. It teaches us goodness and shows us who God is so we can choose wisely how we live. So, if we are missing blessings in life, it could be not because we don’t know how to pray or pray enough but because before and after we pray, our actions don’t match our requests. For example: “God give me peace,” but then we go and offend everyone around us; or “God, I need money,” but we can’t keep a job and spend our money on stuff we don’t need.

You see, it is easy to go to church and pray when we want something, but it could be tough to change our behavior when we don’t care about our relationships with God and others. If all we want is the blessing, the stuff, we will never get it. Consider what James says about this in 4:3, “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.”

Instead, when we pray for blessings, it ought to sound something like this: “God, remove anything that stands between you and me, and then do as you please with my life. Give me the wisdom to do what is right and to stop doing what is wrong.”

As we can see, blessings come to us as a side benefit of the choices we make as we follow the counsel of God. Thus, it says, “delight in the word of God,” which implies that we know the Word and do the Word, and “you will be prospered.” This promise of blessedness comes from building our lives on the Word of God, from delighting in its teachings and wisdom.

What does it mean to “delight” in the Word of God? Think about it this way: to delight is to be so excited about something that you just can’t wait for it.

For example, take a young man who has fallen in love for the first time. Ask his friends, and they’ll say, “he is not the same guy he used to be.” They mean he has radically changed. He doesn’t want to hang around with them as often. All he does is talk about “that girl.” “Just look at him. He has this goofy grin on his face.” He is in love.

Now, apply that same principle to the Word of God. We are to delight in God’s Word as a lover delights in a text message from his or her beloved. Likewise, we are to delight with such a passion and expectation in God’s Word that every decision we make is faithful to our relationship with God, meaning that we don’t cheat God in the way we live. This is not only about being appreciative or respectful of God’s Word but excited about how it counsels and changes us to the point that we realize it not only makes us better people but gives us the right vision about life and our future.

This is how God’s blessings come our way: by keeping and acting on God’s Word.

Think about what Jesus taught us: be kind, compassionate, don’t cheat or lie, be generous and truthful, don’t judge but forgive. That is the stuff that changes us into better people and brings all kinds of blessings with it.

As you can see, when we listen and apply God’s Word to our lives, that is when we begin to build a strong and lasting life—even a legacy for our children. This is the life of the righteous that will never wither but prosper regardless of the circumstances. As it says, they are like “trees planted by streams of waters which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither.”

So it is in our lives too. Even in the toughest times, we are not withered; in fact, that may be precisely what we need to regenerate, grow, renew, get stronger and ready for the next fruit-producing season. But we need to keep showing up. The main reason why many people struggle to find their purpose in life is because they keep interrupting God’s process in their lives. Think of a seed that you plant and the next day you come back to harvest the fruit, but because the fruit is not there yet (How could?!), you move on to something else.

So many blessings are lost just when they were about to sprung because we could not hold on to it or did not want to stick around any longer. The reason why the “tree yields fruit” is because it is rooted by the streams of water. It does not go away when it is going through a bad or good season. It stays rooted. That is what I mean by “Be A Sticker.”

Friends, blessings and prosperity are often a fruit; they take time to grow and mature before we can enjoy them; they are not a product to grab but a becoming of who God calls us to be. So, when you want to let go of God or the church, don’t! Instead, hold on and wait for the next season that is coming—the next chapter, the turning point, the new beginning.

Be a sticker, stay rooted and hold on faithfully and hopeful to life, be a righteous person by keeping the Word of God and avoiding the advice and path of the wicked. Know that when we are kind and loving, trustworthy and generous, blessings and good people will gravitate toward us. The opposite is true too—so don’t the opposite and chase away God’s blessings.

In conclusion, we may face sorrow, abandonment, failure, disappointment, sickness, rejection, and discouragement in this world. But take courage because even then, we are not withered, but we will be prospered because we have sticked to goodness, faithfulness, and obedience and have kept the Word of God in our hearts. And when the time comes, we will flourish and overcome, and our fruit will burst out, for a promise has been given to us, “the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.” (Mark 4:20)