

TRUTH SERIES

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MINISTÉRIO SEARA ÁGAPE

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RECYCLE, CLEAN, RENEW



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Ensino Bíblico Evangélico

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Thanks to our Maker, who left His infinite wisdom printed in nature, showing us the beauty of His work and the need to renew ourselves daily as it was from the beginning. Thus, we learn that everything in the universe moves and changes through the action of the Spirit of God. The only thing that will last forever is His word: Jesus.

This book is dedicated to all those who feel this need for renewal in their lives and develop of their holiness diligently. They will be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure at the wedding of the Lamb.



“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”
(Matt. 24: 35)

Introduction

When we are born again we began a process of spiritual growth guided by the very Spirit of God and that will lead us to the perfecting of our salvation. Each one can give the name that wishes for this: God's trials, inner healing, emotional release, wars of conquest of our promised land, tribulations of life to which every believer is subjected, liberation etc. It is about the same process of cleaning that the Lord uses in our soul until we become holy, as was planned by Him, in order to reach our place at His side in the New Jerusalem. As it was written in the book about 'Work' (2nd book of this series), to do anything, especially in the kingdom of God, it takes some effort on our part.

God shows us this dynamic process in all kingdoms of nature (animal, vegetable and mineral) for us to understand that we need to follow the move of His Spirit and perfect our being. The only thing that will remain untouched and unchanging is His word, Jesus, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Thus, what is the reason for so much human resistance to God's work? The bible itself uses symbols for the Holy Spirit as: fire, wind and water. The three have movement. If God moves, why does the man want to remain static? It is because his hard and proud flesh does not want to see that it is imperfect and needs to renew and get rid of the chains of devil that hold it to sin, preventing its salvation. Other times it is laziness (<https://www.searaagape.com.br/livrosevangelicosonline.html> – 'Laziness' is the 3rd book of this series) that is used as a weapon of the devil to prevent God's plan for His children. In short, it is no use to walk with Him without letting us be changed internally. It is quite different from being a fickle person, as the apostle Paul said, 'children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine' (*Eph. 4: 14*). The real change generated by the Spirit firms us more and more in His word and leads us to climb greater heights of God's knowledge. We become safer people and able to accept His challenges. We learn from Him to be more flexible. With our permission or not all the divine plan for our lives will be fulfilled.

When Jesus called His twelve disciples, the calling was unmistakable. All of them left everything and followed Him. They gave up the 'avarice of themselves' to donate to the Lord and His will.

This book is an advice from God, reminding us that it is time to change and climb the stairs to His altar. It's time to recycle, clean and renew our inner house, throwing away the remnants of 'the old self.'

May you read it under the anointing of the Spirit, being willing to untie yourself from what no longer has interest, in order to be a vessel of honor in the hand of the Lord.

God bless you.

Tânia Cristina

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Notes:

- Words or phrases enclosed in brackets [] or parenthesis (), in *italics*, were placed by me, in most cases, to explain the biblical text, although some verses already contain them [not in italics].
- The version used here is the New Revised Standard Version, NRSV-1989 (1995)
- NIV = New International Version (it will be used in brackets in some verses to facilitate the readers' understanding).



To recycle

What is to recycle?

To recycle is to update, re-introduce in a cycle something that had already been disposed, re-use something, however, adding improvements. It's to take for example a used and creased can of Coke, pass it through a physical and chemical process of treatment and make it usable again. The same applies to programs and files from computer systems, which undergo a reassessment from time to time, and are improved so that the machine performance becomes better. The same occurs with man. We are born, learn, make mistakes, we know Jesus, we become believers and then we discover that many things need to be changed in our inner self. We must reformulate our concepts, so that we may be helpful as servants of God. We need a recycling. Let us go to the texts:

- *Gen. 8: 22*: "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." In the bible, God created the world and told the man that there would be cycles in nature, like seasons, for example, so that all species were benefited. What would become of us if only one prevailed?

- *Job 11: 16*: "You will forget your misery; you will remember it as waters that have passed away." When God heals our wounds, we remember them only as waters that passed away. When He forgives us, all the charges of the enemy no longer exist.

- *Ecc. 3: 1-8; 11; 15*: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace ... He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end ... That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by." There is a time for everything, which means that the time teaches us what recycling is.

- *Isa. 55: 10-11*: "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." The word that comes out of God's mouth is

like the water cycle; it goes its way, completes its job and returns to the origin. Thus the Word acts within us and performs our transformation. This is not true only in the emotional and spiritual life; in material, too. Money, for example, is like water to be released and reach its goals. Each of us is, so to speak, a stopping point of this cycle. If we receive an amount, it must be used properly (released) so that others may be blessed. We spend this money, knowing that later we will receive another amount by other means and other sources. If people only want to receive, retain for themselves, but do not bless others with it, the cycle is broken and creates scarcity and death in many others, likewise the lack of water brings a great inconvenience to the ecosystem. This money was not recycled. If we keep our past beliefs, before converts, and we don't switch them by the pure word of God, we can never say we have a new life because our mind was not recycled.

- *Matt. 19: 21*: “Jesus said to him, ‘If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’” When Jesus said this to the rich young man, He was not thinking about making him a beggar; He was just advising him to recycle, to throw away the greed and prioritize the values of God's kingdom.

- *Lk. 6: 37-38*: “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.” This means to recycle the spiritual values (judgment), the emotional (forgiveness) and material ones (donation).

- *Jn. 3: 8*: “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” The Spirit moves like the wind, so His children receive the same ability to move wherever He leads them. The Holy Spirit guides us always about what we have to do. There is no routine with Him.

- *Jn. 15: 1-5*: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” If God ‘prunes’ us periodically for us to bear fruit, why then would we prevent this work of spiritual recycling? If He sets us the example, why wouldn't we do the same thing with what is our responsibility?

All of this relates to recycle.



To clean

When we talk about to clean, we are referring to throw away what is no longer suitable; to leave empty what was overfilled, to remove the dirt from the body, soul and spirit, as well as from our homes, our workplaces, our e-mails, our relationships etc. Therefore, the same spirit of detachment and release is involved, because where there is attachment and avarice nothing can be transformed.

- *Deut. 23, 14*: “Because the Lord your God travels along with your camp, to save you and to hand over your enemies to you, therefore your camp must be holy [clean], so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you.”

- *Ps. 46: 4*: “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.” River refers to running waters; therefore, the word of God that comes to cleanse us and quenches our thirst. Water in ancient rituals was used for purification. It is the Spirit of God who sanctifies us, so Jesus said: “You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you” (*Jn. 15: 3*)... “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (*Jn. 17: 17*).

- *Ps. 51: 7*: “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Hyssop was a plant where it was sprinkled the blood of the lamb to be put on the doors of the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, in order to protect them from the Destroyer. It was in a branch of hyssop that vinegar was offered to Jesus to drink when He was on the cross. He drank it and said, “It is finished.” Thus, humanity was cleansed from the leprosy of sin. Therefore, the hyssop is related to purification and sanctification. David, after he sinned with Bathsheba, he begged the Lord that cleansed him and washed him from the stain of sin. So, when we sin, we must ask the Lord’s forgiveness and may His blood purify us from the marks of our error.

- *Ecc. 9: 8*: “Let your garments always be white; do not let oil be lacking on your head.” God has always given emphasis to the cleansing of our spiritual clothes and to the anointing (oil) of His Spirit on our lives. Thus, we may be recognized as His children.

- *Matt. 18: 18-20*: “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Through our words we cleanse our lives from the curses and the chains of darkness, and we connect to the throne of God and His blessings.

- *Matt. 21: 12-13*: “Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, ‘It is written’, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you are making it a den of robber.’” Jesus was

concerned with the cleansing the House of God, throwing away from it all sort of wickedness. May we also be concerned with the physical and spiritual cleansing of the temple of the Lord, which refers both to our inner temple and the church.

- *Lk. 3: 15-17*: “As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, ‘I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’” The baptism of John the Baptist was a baptism of repentance, where people were washed from their life of sin and received the new birth by faith. Jesus left us this as an ordinance.

- *Lk. 5: 12-16 / Matt. 8: 1-4 / Mk. 1: 40-45*: “Once, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, ‘Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.’ Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, ‘I do choose. Be made clean.’ Immediately the leprosy left him. And he ordered him to tell no one. ‘Go,’ he said, ‘and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them.’ But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.” With few words Jesus cleansed that leper and released him to have a decent life. Why do we keep sin, hurt, grudge, hatred, resentment, bad experiences, weights that belong to others, lack of forgiveness, bad relationships, dissimulation, hypocrisy and enmity with others and with God? Jesus came to cleanse us from all this.

- *Lk. 7: 36-50*: “One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee’s house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, ‘If this man was a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him – that she is a sinner.’ Jesus spoke up and said to him, ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’ ‘Teacher,’ he replied, ‘speak.’ ‘A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?’ Simon answered, ‘I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘You have judged rightly.’ Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, ‘Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.’ Then he said to her, ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, ‘Who is this who even forgives sins?’ And he said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you; go in peace.’” That woman acknowledged her mistake and her need to be touched and healed by Jesus. She went to Him, boldly, she humbled herself and she was cleansed and blessed. When we are cleansed by Him, His peace fills our lives.

- *Lk. 14: 33 (Lk. 9: 23-24)*: “So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.” When we really accept God’s call, we must be willing to cleanse our lives and to renounce all that our flesh was accustomed to, so that He makes us be reborn.

- *Jn. 7: 37-39*: “On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said,’ ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” When we believe in Jesus with all our strength, His Spirit starts to flow in all His fullness, giving us life and making of us a channel of blessings to our brothers.

- *Rev. 22: 10-11*: “And he said to me, ‘Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.’”

- *Rev. 22: 13-14*: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.”



To renew

Once we understood the need to recycle, i.e., not to let anything stuck in our lives, and learned to clean the ‘inner rubbish’, it is time to renew, that is, to live as new creatures, to have a new look, a new way to experience the things of God, start all over again in a better way.

- *Lam. 3: 22-23*: “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

- *Job 14: 7-9*: “For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease. Though its root grows old in the earth, and its stump dies in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth branches like a young plant.” Even if, often, our dreams seem dead, at the ‘scent of water’ (under the anointing of the Holy Spirit) they will be renewed.

- *Ps. 103: 1-5*: “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits – who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” The eagle symbolizes spirituality, renewal, majesty and the ability to see far and be free. The eagle experiences a process of physical renewal after attaining the age of forty, very similar to the work of renovation of the Holy Spirit in us. It’s a bird that has the most longevity, coming to live seventy years. However, by around forty years old, if it wants to continue living, it has to go through a renewal process. It begins to feel that its feathers are getting older; its beak is no longer as sharp and strong as before, that its claws are already weakening, and then it decides to take a drastic action. This process begins with the disruption of its routine activities as its flights, its hunting and adventures. So it flies high to the cliffs. There, alone and isolated, it begins by itself, the renovation work, traumatic, and that requires much courage, but finally will give it back the power and grandeur that seemed lost. The eagle begins to pluck its feathers with its beak, one by one, until it is fully plucked and disfigured. After that, realizing its beak is weak, powerless and full of scabs, it rubs it heavily on the rock until it is raw. Finally, are the claws; it does the same process it did with the beak, flapping its nails with violence upon the rock repeatedly until that callous and aged layer is ripped out and stays also raw. However, after this process of self-flagellation, new, beautiful and bright feathers begin to emerge. A new beak grows, claws begin to sprout with all force and it is completely renewed and revitalized. It gets a new look and descends from the heights to continue its existence. The eagle symbolizes he who managed to discover the greatest secret of life and went through the process of interior renewal, overcoming the ‘self’ and achieving,

finally, to get rid of the carnal yokes and burdens that prevent someone from achieving true spirituality and communion with God. The eagle doesn't cease to have its normal life as any animal, for it lives on hunting, but knows 'to go up' when it's necessary to stay above the small things.

Without this transformation, its chances of survival practically end. We are called by God's Spirit to renew ourselves from time to time, in order to ascend to the spiritual heights He wants to take us.

- *Ps. 126: 1-6*: "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them'. The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb [*NIV, Negev*]. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves." *Negeb (in Hebrew, Negev, dry)* is a desert to the south of Israel, near the Sinai Peninsula and the Mediterranean Sea and that only experiences life when the rains fill the beds of its dry rivers. The rivers are filled with the waters, the plants are watered and the animals quench their thirst. So, when God comes restoring the dead areas of our lives, we can experience the joy of His presence as winners, for we went through our personal desert.

- *Matt. 9: 16-17*: "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved." God can not give us something new before we divest ourselves of what is old (Wrong beliefs, prejudice, false doctrine, addictions, sins and works of the flesh that prevent His love to flow).

- *Mk. 10: 32-34*: "They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, 'See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again.'" The major work of renovation from God took place on the cross, through His Son. He renewed the hope of eternal life in us by the sacrifice of His blood, restoring our fellowship with the Father, and rose from the dead to show us that our faith in Him is not vain. Everything will be fulfilled as it was promised.

- *Lk. 3: 21-22*: "Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'" Jesus set us the example of how to 'be born again.' He cleansed Himself of His past life as a mere man, and was reborn in the Spirit to fulfill His mission as Savior of the world. We also clean ourselves from the sins of 'the old self' and are born as children of God.

- *Lk. 22: 15-20 (Matt. 26: 26-28; Mk. 14: 22-24; 1 Cor. 11: 23-26)*: "He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God'. Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes'. Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them,

saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me’. And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” God has always been willing to renew His covenant with men, now in the person of His own Son. Likewise, He encourages us to renew our covenant of love with Him and with our brothers.

- *Jn. 12: 24*: “Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” Jesus set us the example that the spiritual fructification begins with the death of the self. When we die to ourselves and live for Him, we find true *LIFE*.

- *Rom. 12: 1-2*: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

- *2 Cor. 5: 17*: “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!”

- *Rev. 21: 5*: “And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new’. Also he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’” With Jesus, everything is renewed.



Practical experience

In this experience proposed by the Lord, we'll put our hands to work, that is, put into practice what is written in *Lk. 14: 33*: "So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions." One of the most difficult things in us is to renounce something that is precious to us, at least that's what we think about it. Because this is a process of surrender to Jesus that goes gaining strength as we answer 'yes' to His challenges, we will start with something very simple, which is a cleaning in our closets and personal belongings. While we do the work in the natural world, the angels do it in the spiritual. Sometimes we keep certain possessions for years until the moment we realize that they no longer have the value they had before. This means that we grew, we changed, that we are no longer the same as before. Our biggest attachment may not be clothing, shoes or money, but intellectual knowledge and moral and religious values accumulated, even more if they are linked to an emotional charge. For example: books, objects, photographs, family jewels, teachings from parents and grandparents that have sentimental value for us. If you live with others, don't touch in their things, just search your belongings. If you live alone, you have more freedom to do this exercise and, if possible, do so under the direction of the Spirit of God to be truly effective. Obey His instructions: what can be given to someone, you give; what needs to be thrown away do it, even though many thoughts and feelings contrary to divine guidance may come to surface. Don't let your soul interfere in the work and in the release of your spirit. Try to be in tune with the Lord and realize if what He tells you to dispose is according to God's word. It says: "All things are lawful [NIV, permissible] for me, but not all things are beneficial" (*1 Cor. 6: 12*). For example: CDs with worldly music that don't bring the divine presence to your soul is no more suitable for he who wants to walk as a genuine child of God on earth. Lyrics that are depressive or contain lewd content are no longer compatible with God's holiness. Photos that bring you bad memories are no longer useful. Seductive clothes, books without content based on the Word do not edify your soul anymore; they need to be thrown away. Letters from friends or relatives that pull you back to the past and do not allow you to have a new life only bring accusations and chains; dispose yourself of them. Search also documents, calendars, emails etc. If necessary, disconnect yourself formally from any religious organization, association, union and public or private institution of which you took part in the past but that is no longer part of your life, especially if you are now a believer or changed your occupational field. Henceforth, hear the voice of the Lord and obey, even if your soul cries for a while; finally, you will see that it was worthwhile and you conquered many releases. Your soul, free from 'rubbish', is now open to receive the truth of God's kingdom. Remember some of the prejudice and distorted moral values and break them in prayer, declaring aloud that you no longer want them within your

heart and that you deliver them before the cross, so that Jesus' blood can remove them. Negative words that were said to you and hurt you or misrepresented your way of being must also be delivered before God, and the people involved in it, forgiven, so that there is true liberation. Here, I just want to talk a little about 'forgiveness.' It doesn't depend on feeling, but on the personal will to obey the commandment of God and release it (forgiveness) through the word that comes out of your mouth, even if your feeling is contrary to it or your mind tells that is not fair. Let God do justice and obey the word of Jesus that says, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (*Jn. 20: 23*). I want you to understand that it is God that forgives, but it is up to you to release this forgiveness here on earth through your word and it is up to those who need to receive it, to accept it by the recognition of their error and the repentance of their heart. You can ask me, "What if the person does not accept to be forgiven? What if he doesn't acknowledge he was wrong and never comes to ask for forgiveness?" I answer that you get rid of all chains and it is up to him to exercise his free will before God to be free too. Each of us shall give account of ourselves to God; that's what the bible says. Obedience comes first, the feeling will come later.

Since you are doing a complete cleaning, throw away certain idolatrous and superstitious habits and pagan or mystical objects in order to bring luck, because for God, this is all witchcraft. A true believer doesn't need any of that. In short, remove from your life everything that is not written in the bible or approved by God. Forget luck, misfortune, 'negative energy', plants or herbs used with mystical purpose, incense (In the bible, incenses are the prayers of the saints – *Rev. 5: 8; Rev. 8: 3*), images or statues used for idolatrous cults, sundries that has no use for Christians, certain foods commonly eaten in special occasions to bring good luck or other spiritual significance which are different from God's plan for them. Don't forget to throw in the trash some kinds of 'medicine' that are not real medicine, but just a superstition, and the worse, they are related to 'spiritual effects'; also objects of divination, strange paintings or pictures, souvenirs that you brought during some of your travels around the world to exotic places and you really don't know their really use or purpose nor can understand what it is written on them; and so on... The Holy Spirit will show you.

An interesting comment is about *luck*. Everyone wants to get luck. But what is luck? Does it exist? The Hebrew word for 'luck' is 'mazel', generally doing part of a well known expression: 'mazel tov.' The expression 'mazel tov' or 'mazel tov' (Yiddish – an old dialect from the medieval German) is used in Modern Hebrew to express congratulations for any occasion or significant or festive event (Since the obtainment of a driver's license or a birthday till the conclusion of engagement in the military forces). It can also be said after a very difficult test being overcome.

But 'mazel' or 'mazel' means 'constellation' or 'destiny' or 'a droplet from the top', that is, the literal translation for the expression 'mazel tov' is, 'a good and favorable zodiacal constellation', for it is linked to the word 'mazzâlôth' (planets), or 'Mazzoroth' ('constellations' of zodiac).

Although with this meaning, the expression 'mazel tov' is not used in the same way that one says 'good luck' in English. In fact, the Hebrew term indicates that a good event occurred. For Jews, the best way to translate it is: 'Congratulations', 'I am glad for this good thing that happened to you.'

For Jews, according to the Mishnah and the Talmud, the constellations in the sky guide the destinies of individuals and nations, so the literal meaning of 'mazel tov' is 'a droplet from the top', because, according to this reasoning, the stars 'drip' their influence over men, hence its original meaning as 'destiny', 'luck' (good or bad). Later, the destiny (fate) and the luck of someone, determined by the stars, were linked with

fortune (money). This has always been a god and people did everything to have it, associating it with happiness. That's why God condemned certain pagan practices among His people:

• *Isa. 65: 11-12*: “But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for *Fortune* [*in Portuguese: Luck – NIV; Fortune was a Babylonian deity*] and fill cups of mixed wine for *Destiny* [*in Hebrew, the word used is Mniy, transliterated as Minni, a pagan god, responsible by the fate, and acted through numbers, like a game of chance or numbers game*]; I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my sight, and chose what I did not delight in.”

There is *no fate or luck*. What exists is the will of God united with the free will of man. Therefore, the amulets to bring us luck are unnecessary.

The pagan luck, as mentioned above (as something by chance, randomly, like soothsaying), has nothing to do with the stones found in the garments of the priest of the Old Testament – *Ex. 28: 30* (Aaron), *1 Sam. 23: 6; 9-14* (David and Abiathar). The priest of the OT had two little stones on the breastpiece of his clothes: the *Urim* and *Thummim*. They were two flattened objects through which God's will was consulted. The two had written in one side the word *Urim*, derived from *'ārar* (*to curse*); on the other side it was written the word *Thummim*, from *tāmam* (*to be perfect*). If by casting lots, the two sides of the *Urim* stayed upward it meant a 'no' from God. If they were both *Thummim*, it meant 'yes,' and if one was *Urim* and another *Thummim*, it meant *unanswered*. As in the OT there was not the distribution of the Holy Spirit upon common people, only on the leader, with whom God spoke personally (In this case, Moses, Aaron's brother), consults were made to Him by the priest through these two objects. But this was only delegated to the priests. After the coming of Jesus the Holy Spirit began to speak to all His children (*Acts 1: 23-26* – This is the only time in the NT when are mentioned the act of casting lots as a means of divine choice; *Acts 13: 1-3* – here, there were already prophets, through whom the Holy Spirit spoke). The most important thing for us today is that we must *always consult the Lord*, in all circumstances of our lives, and hear clearly the voice of His Spirit in our hearts so that we take the right direction.

Epilogue

“Nature is work of my hands and is proof of my kindness toward the children of men. Observe it and learn from it; it is wise and efficient master. Learn from it the simplicity and surrender, because in nature everything changes. Let me change your heart and your life so you can walk lighter and free in the ways that wish to take you. Free yourself from greed, because it impedes the flow of my Spirit and of yours. Birds fly because their bones are soft, and boldness and freedom are part of their being. A spirit that loves, dares and dreams of freedom can fly. Only those who occupy themselves with things of the flesh and persist in sin cling to the earth. They are heavy and can not fly. Cast out the heavy luggage and take upon you the wings of my Spirit. Teach others to divest themselves of many things so that they can fly freely with me.”



A RAY OF LIFE

Thou art my refuge
Thou bring me victory
It's where I run to
To see thy glory
Thou art my refuge
Thou bring me victory
It's where I run to
To see thy glory

Thou art the Lord who comes to guide my steps
Thou art the Lord who lulls me in an embrace
Take me by the hand, search my heart
Make me feel thy purity, thy forgiveness

Spirit!

Take me to the Rock that is Jesus
Take me to the freedom of the cross
Take me to the altar of hope
Take me to the simplicity of the child

To find the light
To feel Jesus
Where I want to be
To worship
To worship, to worship
At the altar
(This is the literal translation of the song to English)