

truth by leaving out the “hard sayings” of Jesus. Seeking and presenting a gospel that demands no sacrifice may promise an easy way through life. Yet that easy way belies the warning of Jesus: “Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:14).

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What Can I Do?

Are you serious in your desire to share in the reign of Christ’s kingdom with Him? If your answer is yes, I would suggest that you commit some time to prayerfully read through the Scriptures I have quoted above. Let the Holy Spirit show you how each one applies to your own life, including the painful truth about areas in which you fall short. Then ask for the Lord’s help to make the changes that are needed. I believe He will gladly give you His help.

You can pray in your own words, or use the following prayer.

Dear Father, Until now, I have not really understood that Your purposes for my life go beyond anything I have imagined. I see now that you want me to reign with Your Son in Eternity. Please help me, Lord—I need so much preparation and I don’t really know where to begin.

I humbly yield myself to You. I pledge myself to a new level of commitment to Your Word and a greater obedience to Your Holy Spirit. Please establish in my life the qualities I need; endurance, meekness, purity, and a love of the truth. By Your mercy and grace, let this be a year of growth and fulfillment for me—for the sake of Your Kingdom. In Jesus Name, Amen.



THE TEACHING
LEGACY
 OF DEREK PRINCE



This message is taken from the Derek Prince teaching series entitled *Preparing to Reign with Christ*. For further study, we recommend the CD4340 *Take Heed You are Not Deceived*.

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THE TEACHING
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Reigning with Christ

As with all new beginnings, embarking on a new year—and a new decade—brings a sense of excitement, anticipation, and hope. Even when we don’t fully understand the events of our lives or what is to come, we can trust that the Lord is always at work, accomplishing His purposes and establishing His kingdom. In fact, it is a kingdom that you and I are going to have a part to play in. Understanding how to prepare for our future role in His coming kingdom will be the focus of this year’s Teaching Legacy series, *Preparing to Reign with Christ*.

Throughout the course of our lives, we are always being prepared. I vividly recall an example from my own life when I was 15 years old, attending Eton College in England on a scholarship I had won the year before. It was announced that all the students would be confirmed in the Anglican church. But I was already disillusioned with Christianity and did not want to participate. However, my father insisted, and so I went through all the processes and procedures of confirmation.

It would be years before I would understand that during those seemingly endless hours in religious services, the Word of God and seeds of faith were

being planted in my soul. The very event I most wanted to avoid—confirmation—was actually one of the most important milestones during my time at Eton. It was a time of preparation that God knew I would need, so that I might fulfill my role in His plan for His Kingdom.

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Is God’s Purpose Our Purpose?

When I was at Eton, I wasn’t thinking about God’s Kingdom or my role in it. I was at Eton to prepare for my life in *this* world. I have noticed, however, that even as Christians, when we talk about “God’s purpose for our lives,” we may also be thinking only of *this* life—life in *this* world. *Who am I supposed to marry? Am I in the right school, or church, or career? Am I called to secular work or to ministry?*

While these are important issues of life that deserve our time and attention, they are limited in impact. I believe the Holy Spirit is laying even greater emphasis on preparing us for a destiny that will happen beyond this life—our *eternal* destiny. How we should respond to that prompting of the Holy Spirit is the basis for this series, *Preparing to Reign with Christ*.



Negative vs. Positive Purposes

Let me begin by asking this question: Do you realize that God has a double purpose in redeeming us?

On the negative side, God's first purpose for our redemption is to save us from hell. (We should be eternally grateful for that!) As much as we need to be reminded that hell is real, that it is eternal, there is a purpose for which we have been redeemed. What is that purpose? It is gloriously positive. God has redeemed us to prepare a people for Himself who will share the throne with Christ!

Let's look at a few promises from Scripture that relate to this truth.

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? (1 Corinthians 6:2)

So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28)

"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels—as I also have received from My Father." (Revelation 2:26–27)

Preparing to Reign

Jesus Christ wants to bring you and me to a place of incredible responsibility and privilege within His kingdom. Before we go any further, let's pause

for a moment and consider what this means to us personally. As Christians, how can you and I be preparing ourselves to reign eternally with Christ?

To step into this awesome responsibility of reigning with Christ, it is vital that you and I make diligent preparation. It is not enough merely to claim to be "born again." In the end, that alone will not move us toward the level of maturity we will need. Here are some of the main requirements we need to prepare ourselves to reign with Him:

1. Endurance

"But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:28–30)

Many people started out as disciples of Jesus, but only twelve continued steadfastly with Him to the end. They alone were counted worthy to reign with Him over Israel.

"For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Timothy 2:11–12a)

If we are to share Christ's exaltation, we must first share in His suffering and death. We have to continue steadfast to the end—through many trials.

2. Meekness, Humility

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3)

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5)

God does not offer His kingdom to those who are arrogant or self-assertive, but only to those

who recognize that, in themselves, they are totally unworthy of such honor. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, declared in her song of triumph:

"He [God] raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory." (1 Samuel 2:8)

One thousand years later, the Virgin Mary—in an even greater song of triumph—proclaimed the same truth:

"He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly." (Luke 1:52)

3. Purity

Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." (Titus 2:14)

The people whom Christ acknowledges as His own are those whom He has redeemed from every lawless deed and purified for Himself.

Bear in mind that there are two sides to this process of purification: one divine, the other human. In 1 John 3:2, the apostle speaks of our hope of being transformed into Christ's likeness at His return; "...but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Then John adds, in verse 3, "And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." Jesus will only purify those who respond by purifying themselves. Furthermore, God has only one standard of purity: "just as He [Jesus] is pure."

How do we participate in purifying our own souls? We see from 1 Peter 1:22 that it is by "obeying the truth through the Spirit," resulting "in sincere love of the brethren." The purified soul is a soul filled with love.

4. Love of the Truth

It was by deception that Satan enticed Adam and Eve into rebellion against God. Not surprisingly, this has been his main weapon against humanity ever since. In Revelation 12:9, he is called "that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world."

In 2 Thessalonians 2:9–11, Paul warns that this satanic tactic will find its ultimate expression in the antichrist. He is the one who will deceive with all power, signs and lying wonders, all those who "did not receive the love of the truth."

Here, then, is our only protection: *to receive the love of the truth*. All who refuse to do so will not merely be deceived by Satan. God Himself will send them strong delusion.

Love of the truth is not mere conformity to a religious code, however "orthodox" it may be. Nor is it even reading your Bible and having "a quiet time" every day. It demands a total, unreserved commitment to believe and obey God's Word—one that rules out all forms of compromise.

In the time of Jesus, many Jews recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, but for fear of the religious authorities they did not acknowledge Him, "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). That is the essence of compromise. We each need to ask ourselves this question: *Which means more to me; God's approval . . . or man's?*

In Proverbs 23:23, Solomon counsels, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it." Truth is not cheaply obtained. It demands that we give ourselves to prayer and study of the Scriptures, followed by practical application in our daily lives. These disciplines must take priority over the many forms of cheap entertainment offered by our secular culture. They are a lifetime commitment.

We are also warned not to *sell* the truth. We can be tempted to purchase popularity at the price of