

5 keywords

From the beginning of creation, God tells something about our identity.

In Gen 1:26-28 and Gen 2:14,15 we come across five key words that tell how God looks at man and his identity.

Responsibility

God values caring for the earth from the beginning of creation. He has entrusted this to the people. God is the owner; you and I are the stewards. We each get our share to take care of.

Not only does God the Father give a piece of land, but He also gives His commission to care for, develop, multiply, and protect that piece of land.

Adam and Eve are given the authority for this. Just as identity and DNA go hand in hand, so do authority and responsibility go hand in hand. You cannot separate them from each other.

In this chapter I will refer to "your garden" as the area for which you are responsible.

In the OT, God gives the people much instruction about authority and responsibility. For example, the family, the company, the government, the temple service, your piece of land is clearly described as "your garden."

God gives instructions to take good care of your property and to treat the property of others with respect. You may rule over "your garden" and serve with your talents and gifts in "the garden" of your fellow man, company, school and church. So ruling here does not mean domination or the abuse of power, but to take care of "your garden" with all the strength, all the possibilities within you, with a heart that wants the best for the other in that area of responsibility.

Tribes

In Israel we see that eleven tribes are given a piece of land and one tribe is appointed separately to serve in the temple. The eleven tribes are assigned this land and are allowed to take care of it. They may help to further develop, multiply and protect it. The twelfth tribe is assigned to provide the temple service. Offering sacrifices and worship are central to this. Clear rules are established on how to serve God and the people. In this way the priest actually comes between the people and God. Moses gives important rules of conduct to the people; the 10 commandments and in addition the many other rules of conduct. The rule of blessing and curse applies here. If you live within the rules blessing will come into your life, if you don't and break the rules there will be punishment and in some cases you will be cursed.

All of life is actually governed by those laws. The authority holders monitor the people or their "garden" through these rules.

Jesus

In the NT we see how Jesus fulfills this law. Jesus fulfills the Ten Commandments but does not keep the man-made rules. Jesus makes everything very simple. He actually reduces the law in two sentences: Love God above everything and love your neighbor as yourself. We read that Moses gave the law and Jesus came with grace and truth. Another translation says love and devotion.

Then He says that we should love one another as Jesus loves us. He calls this a new commandment. If you think about this longer, you may wonder what's new about this commandment. Not only did Jesus love himself healthily, but he was willing to die for His friends and for us. This new commandment was no longer just about yourself, but about that other person. He does not say, as in the OT, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," but if you are struck on your left cheek, turn your right to him. And love your enemies. Forgive those who hurt you.

In this we see that giving and forgiving are reflected in the character. Jesus' 'inner I am' was very confident in who He was, namely the Son of God. No one could harm Him more than the Father



allowed. He was willing to give His life for you so that you could come back to the Father and receive again the identity that God intended. Jesus' "outer I am" was completely in harmony with the Father and His "inner I am." In this way God wants to harmonize your *outer I am* with your *inner I am*.

Why such a big difference between OT and NT?

In the OT man, including those who believe in God, lives under the law. Adam and Eve chose their values themselves when they ate from the forbidden tree. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was in their "garden", the place for which they had been given responsibility. The place where they were directed from their inner self by their own choice for knowledge of good and evil. Their outer self is now also controlled by that knowledge. We soon see in their family the comparison of who is better; Cain or Abel and finally we see death by a jealous brother. This was what God said. If you allow the knowledge of good and evil in "your garden", death will follow. Whether you are an entrepreneur, schoolteacher, employee, developer, draftsman or housewife, the outcome of your work in "your garden" is determined by your inner self. If it is guided by values of the tree of good and evil, this will become visible in your fruit in your outer self.

Jesus chooses to eat from the tree of life. Jesus' "inner I am" was nourished exclusively by the Father who spoke to Jesus' spirit through His Spirit. This created a healthy inner self that was focused on the essence of God the Father. He who is love, value and goodness and gives us free choice. Its nature is to give, not to take.

In Jesus' area of authority you see that people are allowed to follow, but never under pressure. People who follow Him, women and men, spiritual leaders as well as entrepreneurs, teachers and the poor, choose to come into the "garden" of Jesus. That's the Kingdom of God. Where He is recognized as King comes the blessing and multiplication. When He is your King, there is a connection with His words, this brings life to the garden He entrusts to you. There comes peace, it starts deep in the *inner I am*. From this comes fruit, this fruit will also multiply itself in "your garden". If you are a teacher, this will bring peace to your classroom. The students will find their self-worth, they will experience love and feel good about themselves. They will see the world as a challenge, rather than a threat.

If you are a dental hygienist and Jesus is your King, the Kingdom will become visible through you in practice. The patients in your chair will begin to experience the blessing in their lives.

If you are an entrepreneur in your company, the Kingdom of God will become visible through your company. To your employees, to your customers, to your representatives. Your community will know that the Kingdom of God is in the city.

As a mother who chooses to let Jesus be King in your life, you open the door to the Kingdom and the blessing of the King in your family.

EXERCISE

Describe those areas where have you been given responsibility by God. In which areas have you used that responsibility well? Describe the results of the areas where you have taken responsibility.

In areas where you have authority, where have you not taken proper responsibility? Describe the consequences of your passivity or failure to take responsibility.

PRINCIPLE 7

God gives you authority and with that comes the responsibility to use that responsibility to bring others to spiritual maturity, to grow and multiply your "garden".