

# FIRST PLACE

## God wants us to have first place!

### **1 Corinthians 9:24 (NLT)**

“Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!”

### **Matthew 20:16 (NLT)**

*16 “So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last.”*

### **Luke 14:10-11 (NLT)**

*10 “Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, ‘Friend, we have a better place for you!’ Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. 11 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”*

Having the best position in life is less about aiming for our own greatness and more about elevating God and others as greater than ourselves.

**It is from understanding our position in Christ that we derive the criteria of who we are and how we are to live.**

**Ephesians 2:5-6 (NLT)**

*5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) 6 For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.*

*“we're not a body that has a spirit, we are a spirit that has a body.*

**- Leonard Ravenhill**

**Before Christ, we were dead. This means dead in our spirit as a result of being separated from God. But God did not leave us in that sorry state, he made a way for us to change our spiritual position.**

**ASPECT 1**

**The Immediate (*Death to Life*)**

Death is not merely ceasing to function, it is the state of being separate from God.

### **Genesis 2:16-17 (NLT)**

*16 But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— 17 except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”*

### **Genesis 3:3-4 (NLT)**

*3 “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’” 4 “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman.*

With the devil’s new definition of death and life which Adam and Eve had accepted, death entered the human race by means of a broken relationship with God.

### **Genesis 3:9-10 (NLT)**

*9 Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”*

**But as death had entered into humanity through one man, so too, life entered back into humanity through another man, Christ Jesus.**

**Romans 6:5-11 (NLT)**

*5 Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 6 We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. 7 For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. 8 And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. 9 We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. 10 When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. 11 So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.*

Jesus' finished work on the cross opens an opportunity for us to experience new life.

## **Colossians 3:1-3 (NLT)**

*1 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. 2 Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. 3 For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.*

When we receive Jesus as our Lord and savior, at that moment, we ***immediately*** move from a position of death to a position of life.

## **ASPECT 2**

### **The Ongoing (*With Jesus*)**

#### **Our ongoing position means:**

*"the outworking of one's official position in daily life."*

- J. Robertson McQuilkin

Now, our daily life is one that is positioned in a way where we are focused on growing and developing to become a clearer reflection of our official position in heaven.

- With our new position in Jesus, we are made a new creation.

### **Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)**

*10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us **anew** in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, our minds are renewed, and our thinking is transformed and our desires are redirected. Where we were consumed with fulfilling our own desires, we now realize that pursuing God's desires for our lives will lead us to something far better than we could ever hope to achieve alone. This renewal affects our thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors, leading to a life that increasingly reflects Christ's character.

We become a new creation because Jesus changes even the inner most depths of who we are.

- With our new position in Jesus, we are made a child of God.

## **John 1:12 (NLT)**

*12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*

When we believe in Christ, we become children of God, we are adopted into His family.

- With our new position in Jesus, we are made complete.

## **Colossians 2:9-10 (NLT)**

*9 For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. 10 So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.*

Through faith in what Christ accomplished on the cross, we are now also brought to fullness and completeness.

## **1 Corinthians 6:17 (NLT)**

*17 But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.*

## **Galatians 3:27-28 (NLT)**

*27 And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. 28 There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

In Christ we find completeness, fulfillment, and everything we need for abundant life and eternal salvation.

## **ASPECT 3**

### **The Permanent (*Eternity in Heaven*)**

When we pass through that veil at the end of our lives and step into eternity, this results in the complete removal of sin.

## **2 Corinthians 5:1-2 (NLT)**

*1 For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. 2 We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing.*

We now have the promise of being with God forever, experiencing the fullness of His love and glory in the age to come our final and permanent resting place.