

Comfort in Suffering

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Lesson #5

Preparation to Study God's Word

Personal faith in Christ secures a permanent place in Heaven for you (John 14:1-3, 3:36, 10:28). But faith in Christ does not guarantee consistent fellowship with God.

Personal faith in Christ establishes a relationship with God which creates an opportunity for fellowship with Him. How long we stay in fellowship with God is a matter of choice.

Any moment we commit sin, no matter how little the sin is, we lose our fellowship with a holy God. However, we can regain fellowship with God by confessing or naming our sins to God the Father and the Holy Spirit will take control of our lives again (1 John 1:9; Revelation 3:20).

If we confess [acknowledge] our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [sins, known or forgotten] (1 John 1:9).

You may want to pause and acknowledge, directly to God, any sin that may hinder you from being fully blessed through the Word of God.

Job's Testing in Relation to His Wife - continued from Lesson #4

Spouses are supposed to support one another. Spouses should stick together in health and in sickness, in prosperity, and in poverty.

In Job's tests, the reverse was the case. Job's wife, the very person who was supposed to be on his side, said to him:

"Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9).

For she was familiar with God's punishment for cursing God as outlined in Leviticus 24:10-16.

Well, Job did not curse God. Even though he was taunted by his wife he held fast to his integrity with his answer.

But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:10)

Do you remember the story of Adam and Eve? Satan tried this method first -- when he used Eve to get to Adam. But this time, the power of Bible doctrine stored in Job's soul was greater than the test. His love for His God was superior.

Can your spouse turn you against God?

If you are suffering in this area today, can you relax and know that God knows what is happening? If you truly love God, can you say:

And we [I] know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28a).

If you can say this, then it is the grace of God that has allowed you to be: "fixing our [your] eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of [your] faith" (Hebrew 12:2a) knowing that He knows how He can turn your situation around for His own glory.

We are here for God's glory.

Job's Wealth Under Siege

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." So that we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper I will not be afraid; what will man [Satan] do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Many people, including believers in Christ, have become so much in love with money that their entire lives are centered around making even more money.

They go to churches that tell them, "Give, and God will double your bank account, for the more you give, the more the Lord will give you" as if God is in the moneymaking business.

"Give ten dollars and you will get twenty." I wish that such a sermon was Biblical, because if it were, I would not be working today. I would go to the bank, borrow ten thousand dollars, give it to the church, and wait for twenty thousand dollars from God! I would be a trillionaire by now.

If this was true, there would never be a verses like,

But by the grace of God I am what I am (1 Corinthians 15:10a).

... What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it [as a gift]? (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Everything we have from God is because of His grace.

Indeed, Job was a man of great wealth (Job 1:3). He was the richest man in his kingdom and one who always kept his personal love for God at a distance from his attitude toward his wealth. In that sense, he fulfilled the principle:

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money (Hebrews 13:5a).

Job understood that whatever prosperity he had, was from God. “The Lord gave ... “ (Job 1:21b), he acknowledged.

I once asked a man, “Why do you need money so badly?”

His response was, “Well, I want to buy a mansion.”

“And then what?”

“I want to buy a boat.”

“And what next?” I asked.

“Then I will buy everything that money can buy.”

“Then what?”

He had run out of answers. Why?

Because he was confused. He never said he would try to buy happiness.

Money cannot buy happiness.

Therefore, when one pursues money as their source of happiness, passing tests in the area of prosperity becomes extremely difficult. Mansions will come and go, beautiful cars will come and go, whatever money can buy will come and go.

... but the word of our God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8b).

This means that if you have God’s Word in your soul, it is all that will remain when other things are taken away.

Job passed the prosperity test when everything he owned was destroyed. Satan took away everything Job had but Satan could not reach Job’s soul. Therefore, Job was able to draw on the Bible doctrine stored in his soul and still fulfill the principle:

In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Job’s confidence was in his God and not in his wealth.

He knew that God, who had provided in the past, could replace Job's wealth if God chose to do so. He also knew that God, who was the source of Job's blessings, could never be taken away from him. And that was the difference in Job's life.

That can be the difference in your life, too, as you face testing in your life today, and tomorrow.

In Sickness

No one wants to be sick. I know what it is like to be sick. Illness is not something to be taken lightly; however, whether you are sick or healthy, the Lord Himself said:

“Lo, I am with you even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20b).

This should be a great comfort to you in your sickness.

With God's permission, the only thing that Satan had left for Job was his very breath. Job's body was tortured beyond recognition. The disease Job suffered from was an unusual one. Satan intended to physically wipe him out.

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes (Job 2:7-8).

Until it happened, Job had no idea that he was to suffer so intensely.

The question is, did God know what His obedient child was going through? Of course He did. He knew what was going to happen to Job since the beginning of time. Nothing ever eludes His infinite knowledge.

God is sovereign, so whatever He allows to happen, He does based on His perfect knowledge. He understands every pain and every weakness that you have or ever will have. If you are sick now, it is not an accident. God knew how you would suffer even before you were born.

In fact, there is no such thing as “an accident” or “a coincidence” or “luck” where God is concerned. To accept any of these things is to accept the fact that God is not in perfect control of human history.

In essence, you are saying that something awful (or so called bad luck) has come to you without God noticing, or that something good (or so called good luck) has mistakenly eluded God and come to you. Remember the believer is “in Christ, in God” and any suffering must first go through Them before it gets to you. The Bible assures us,

you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God (1 Corinthians 3:23).

Next time, in lesson #6, we will continue our study of sickness and look at something we all experience: testing in relationships. Till then may the Lord bless and keep you.