

# From Promise to Provision

## Introduction

As we have seen in previous lessons, man was created as a being with three components—body, soul, and spirit. All three of these components are active in our fall in the Garden and in our redemption through Jesus. When we are born again we receive a new spirit but we keep the same old soul. Our souls have to be sanctified or made holy by a process that is worked out in us. Jesus came that He might save souls.

### Philippians 2:12-13 NASB

- (12) So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;
- (13) for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

The working out of our salvation involves both our wills and our work. God works in us to cause us to align with His good pleasure. This involves change on our part.

The primary aspect of our sanctification involves our minds, which have to be renewed in order to align with God.

### Romans 12:2 NASB

- (2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

It is the renewing of the mind that transforms us and causes us to become truly functional citizens of His Kingdom.

After the fall of Adam, the tree of knowledge of good and evil is growing in our souls producing a warped perspective on the things of the Spirit. After being born again, Jesus as the tree of life is growing in us to make of us sons of God. Now we have two natures within us; two sources that evaluate and determine reality.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil is rooted in the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life and puts on branches of fear, guilt and self righteousness yielding the fruit of rebellion, independence, and resentment. The tree of life, as exemplified by Jesus, is rooted in humbleness, fellowship, and obedience yielding the fruit of peace, joy and righteousness in the Holy Spirit, which is the Kingdom of God [Romans 14:17].

We have to experientially deal with these two natures within us. The battlefield is in the arena of the soul—the minds and wills of men. Both God and the Enemy are contending for our wills. The Enemy

deceives us into cooperating with him; whereas, God doesn't force our wills but waits for our willing cooperation. The Lord achieves this through His promises and His rewards.

It is our wills that determine which of the two natures is expressed in our lives—the nature of Adam or the nature of Christ. James shows us this clearly in his epistle.

### James 3:10-12 NASB

- (10) from the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.
- (11) Does a fountain send out from the same opening *both* fresh and bitter *water*?
- (12) Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor *can* salt water produce fresh.

The same fountain cannot produce both fresh water and salt water. Yet, our mouths produce both blessing and cursing. Therefore, there must be two sources within us, two springs, one producing blessing and the other producing cursing. What is expressed through us is determined by our decision to walk in the spirit or to walk in the flesh. The Lord helps us with this for it is God who works in us to both will and do His good pleasure.

### 2 Peter 1:2-3 NASB

- (2) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;
- (3) seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.

His divine power has granted us everything that relates to life and to Godliness. It is that power that is at work in us. It is accomplished through the true knowledge of the Lord.

### 2 Peter 1:4 NASB

- (4) For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

It is by His divine power and the true knowledge of the Lord that He granted to us His promises. We experientially make them real in our life and it is through these promises that we become partakers of His divine nature, with the added benefit of escaping the corruption of the world. In other words, we become like Jesus, conformed to His image, by making the promises that have been granted to us real in our everyday lives.

## The Real Us

When Adam and Eve sinned, they hid themselves and clothed themselves with leaves—they covered their nakedness. Prior to the sin and their eyes being opened, they were covered by the glory of God. Clothing is a metaphor. We, as sons of Adam, continue to hide our real selves from God and each

other and even, sometimes, from our selves. In Christ, we will again become fully known.

### 1 Corinthians 13:12 NASB

- (12) For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

Now, we do not recognize people according to the natural, soulish appearance. We must recognize people by the Spirit.

### 2 Corinthians 5:16 NASB

- (16) Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer.

As our minds are renewed, the masks come off—the real us is revealed.

Our personalities are made up of two parts—1) our inherited traits; and 2) our acquired habits. Our inherited traits include all that we receive from Adam—the nature of Adam. The scriptures make it very clear that we are to make no provision for our inherited traits—we are to consider them dead.

### Galatians 5:24 NASB

- (24) Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

### Colossians 3:5 NASB

- (5) Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

### Romans 6:6 NASB

- (6) knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;

Once we consider ourselves dead to the flesh—the inherited traits of Adam, we have to deal with the second part of our personality—our acquired habits. These have come out of our Adamic traits and have developed over the course of our life. Some of them are good and some are bad; that is, based on the operation of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, as our minds are renewed, our acquired habits are held to the standard of the Word to determine whether they are good or bad.

### Jeremiah 13:23 NASB

- (23) "Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? *Then* you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.

This tells us the problem with our acquired habits that have come through our fallen nature. Just like an Ethiopian (black person) cannot change his skin or a leopard change his spots, one who is accustomed to doing evil cannot do good—it is against his nature. The word for “accustomed” in the original means “taught by long practice”, in other words, it has become a habit. One who has made a habit of evil cannot do good.

The basic habits of our life were developed before we knew Christ; therefore, even if these appear to be good, they came from our old nature. They are heathen in concept and application.

James tells us that there are four forms of wisdom or understanding that are a part of our life.

### James 3:15 NASB

(15) This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

These are the four types:

1. wisdom that comes from above
2. wisdom that is earthly or natural
3. wisdom that is soulish (the meaning of the word that is translated as “natural”)
4. wisdom that is demonic.

There is a downward progression in these with the end result being the demonic.

Earthly or natural wisdom is what we would call the laws of nature. It is the understanding that comes from observation of the natural world. Most of our science comes from this form of wisdom and understanding.

Soulish wisdom comes from how we interpret reality. We have seen that the fall of Adam caused them to see reality differently than previously. Although reality had not changed, the *way* they perceived reality changed. Their eyes were opened—the eyes of the soul. They now processed information from the soul rather than the spirit. Sin caused Adam and Eve to perceive themselves differently—they were naked and ashamed. Sin caused them to perceive God differently—He was someone to be feared and hidden from.

Demonic wisdom comes to us directly from demons who influence our thinking processes. Without Christ, we operate in natural wisdom with the soul interpreting the reality around us, which opens us to demonic understanding and influence.

So, the habits that we develop are based in these last three types of wisdom. It is heathen in its scope since it leaves out God completely. Getting born again doesn't change our habits. To change requires a decision of our wills and the application of that decision to our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Our Thought and Intents

We don't realize just how twisted our old nature is. It is depraved. It can't be cleaned up, dressed up, and sent to church and be acceptable to the Lord. The old nature absolutely must be crucified and buried in baptism. The new nature must be raised up in us and we must walk in the new nature to be pleasing to God. The new nature develops in us a new character that results in new conduct. New conduct that does not come from the new nature and character in us is simply legalism.

God's methodology for accomplishing this is to make His promises real in our lives. He applies His Word to us and it works like a sword in us separating soul and spirit.

### Hebrews 4:12 NASB

- (12) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

There are three things that come out of our character, our personality, that drive our lives:

1. our thoughts,
2. our intentions or motives, and
3. our actions.

These affect us in different ways:

1. actions have *external* consequences
2. thoughts have *internal* consequences
3. motives or intentions have *eternal* consequences.

The law produces legalism because it only deals with our actions—you are judged by what you do. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount moved the law from an external application to an internal condition of the heart. This takes into account both our thoughts and our motives. We are now judged by what we are.

Actions come from thoughts. Thoughts come from motives. Thoughts precede actions; motives precede thought. God gets down to motives. By changing our motives we will change our actions.

Habits that we have acquired become routine for us. We follow our habits without thinking. However, at one point, our thoughts were involved as we decided to do the thing that eventually become a habit, a habitual action—we chose the habit. Peter tells us that we have “a heart trained in greed” [2 Peter 2:14 NASB].

A change in activity is not a change of the heart. We can change our activity without changing our heart. When is a thief not a thief? Many will say when he is not stealing. However, a thief is a thief in his heart even if he is not stealing at the moment. Given an opportunity, what is in his heart will be expressed and he will steal. He stops being a thief when he has a change of heart. The Lord puts a new nature in our spirit that works to produce a new character in our soul, which is expressed through our body.

The church has stopped teaching people how to change their character but instead has taught them how to change their conduct. As heathens we had our personality traits rooted in our old nature which produced our conduct. The carnal mind thinks that good conduct that conforms to the law is righteousness. The carnal mind thinks that righteousness that comes from conduct is acceptable to God. However, God says that “our righteousness is as filthy rags”, that “our righteousness must exceed

the righteousness of the Pharisees”, which is the righteousness of the law.

#### Matthew 5:20 NASB

- (20) "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Pharisees were sticklers for the Law. You would be hard pressed to find anyone who lived according to the letter of the Law more than the Pharisees. However, the righteousness of the Law is not enough.

#### Romans 10:3-4 NASB

- (3) For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.
- (4) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Legalism does not, cannot, produce righteousness that is acceptable to God. It is only a carnal mind, thinking like man, filled with the ways of the world, that believes it can be acceptable to God through behavior modification only.

Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." [John 13:35 NASB]. Our actions, our conduct, reveals our love. Love is a motive, an intent of the heart. It is expressed through faith. Faith works by love<sup>1</sup> However, faith must produce something; without works faith is dead<sup>2</sup>. So, the outcome of faith, the working of faith must be motivated by love. Our actions, our conduct, toward one another reveals our love and proves to the world that we are the disciples of Jesus.

It is not God's purpose that we simply change our activity. The Law did that by enforcing behavior. It is God's purpose to change who we are.

#### Romans 8:14 NASB

- (14) For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

#### Galatians 3:26 NASB

- (26) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

We are becoming sons of God. The new birth brings us into the household of God as a baby. We grow up, mature into sons of God; that is, mature sons who can be entrusted with family business. This growth is a process and takes time. There is no such thing as instant maturity. If we love God and desire to be led by the Spirit, he will put us through the development process. It is our will that decides whether we yield to or resist the process.

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1 Galatians 5:6

2 James 2:17

## Outside Truth—Inside Truth

We have spoken previously of the difference between the legal and the experiential. What is legally mine has to be experientially possessed in order to be mine in practice. Another way of saying this is that outside truth must become inside truth. All promises belong to me but I am not walking in all provision. Our experiential position does not match our legal position. One definition of maturity is when our legal and our experiential position match.

Turning outside truth into inside truth *always* involves conflict because the Kingdom of God is *always* in conflict with the kingdom of this world. That is why it is “through much tribulation that we enter the Kingdom of God.”<sup>3</sup>

The Church has not matured because we have said it is all mine and then sat down on the pew and forgot about it, secure in the idea that we are going to Heaven. We have completely neglected the objective. Jesus' objective was not to get us to Heaven. Our traditions have blinded us. The objective is that we be conformed to the image of Christ.

### Romans 8:29 NASB

(29) For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Truth that is received will change your heart. I can't change your hear, even with teaching. Your heart is changed when truth is received and applied by the Holy Spirit. You must actively cooperate with God for your heart to be changed.

How does God turn outside truth into inside truth? He puts us into the middle of circumstances where we have to learn the truth and then put into practice the truth that we know.

## The 7 P's

God's *purpose* for us involves a *process* of *preparation* by which He gives us a *promise* and then puts us into a *problem* where we are to learn the *principle* so that we can receive the *provision*. This is fully exemplified for us by the Children of Israel leaving Egypt and journeying through the wilderness to the promised land.

This preparation process is what makes the promises real in our lives. It turns outside truth into inside truth. It causes us to grow up, mature in the Lord. As we learn to walk in the promises of God we are becoming conformed to the image of Christ. It is as Peter said:

### 2 Peter 1:4 NASB

(4) For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you

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<sup>3</sup> Acts 14:22

may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

We can't ignore the fulfillment of the promises in our life and still achieve the objective of being conformed to His image.

All of the promises of God are conditional. Even the promise of salvation is conditional upon our believing. We can't receive the provision of the promise until we have fulfilled the conditions of the promise. We can't fulfill the conditions until we have learned and applied the principle that is associated with the promise. To motivate us to learn the principle, God puts us into a set of circumstances, the problem, that is tailor made for us as an arena for applying the principle.

#### Deuteronomy 8:2-3 NASB

- (2) "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.
- (3) "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

#### Deuteronomy 8:16 NASB

- (16) "In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.

The Children of Israel had a promise while they were in Egypt that God would give them a land flowing with milk and honey—Canaan, the Promise Land. However, their hearts were not yet prepared to receive the fulfillment of that promise. So, the wilderness became their problem arena, the set of circumstances that would reveal their hearts so that they could change. They were to learn the ways of God (the principle) in the wilderness, which would prepare them to receive the provision—the land that was promised. However, the New Testament tell us that they failed to learn the principles.

#### Hebrews 3:10 NASB

- (10) "THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS';

These things were written as both an example and a warning to us. Why would we think that our hearts are any better than theirs? We have to walk through the same process in order to fulfill God's purpose for us. In that process we are subject to the same failings that they were. We, however, do have the benefit of a Helper, the Holy Spirit, sent to us by Jesus to teach us and lead us in all things, which would include our way through the wilderness.

#### Hebrews 4:1-2 NASB

- (1) Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

- (2) For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

The wilderness is a necessary part of the process. If we understand that and quit trying to avoid it, the Lord will take us through. We must unite the word with faith and expectation of the fulfillment of the promises to us.

Our next lesson will begin to look at the process in greater detail and how it works in our life to produce the fruit that God expects of us.