

Releasing Life

Introduction

Our last lesson looked at the soul side of our circumstances as the Lord works on our heart conditions. This is the place where we are put to the test. We undergo a series of emotional responses as the circumstances come to bear on our life and we can't seem to deal with them. As we resist the circumstances looking for a way of escape, we get depressed because things aren't going the way that we want them to go. Then, we get frustrated because we can't seem to change the circumstances. Then we get resentful of everything associated with the problems. Bitterness follows and then rebellion. This is an ever increasing cycle if we don't break it.

Our soulish response to our circumstances:

1. resistance
2. depression
3. frustration
4. resentment
5. bitterness
6. rebellion

The Example of Job

One of the best examples in the Scriptures of this process is Job. I have heard Job preached as if it were simply a cosmic game between God and the devil. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our God does not play arbitrary games with our lives and circumstances. He certainly has nothing to prove to the devil. All that God does has purpose and follows His plans.

As we begin to examine this, first, we need to realize that Job as a mature man of God. He was blameless and righteous. He feared God and he avoided evil.

Job 1:1 NKJV

- (1) There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.

Verse 10 tells us that God had put a hedge of protection about Job so that the enemy could not touch him. So, second, we need to realize that Job had done nothing to break his hedge of protection. Job was a mature, protected man and he did nothing that would compromise that. Therefore, we can conclude that Job's difficulties had nothing to do with Job's actions.

As we are about to see, Job had a hedge about him but he also had an enemy in his heart. In the previous lessons we have recognized the fact that God will cause the hidden things of our heart to be brought forth so that they can be dealt with in a proper manner. This is exactly what happens with Job.

[**Note:** The enemy could not do anything to Job without God's permission. As permission was given by God, in each case He still limited what the enemy could do.]

Job's Heart Problems Exposed

Our first hint of a hidden, unknown problem in Job's heart occurs in verse 5 of chapter 1. Job's sons and daughters would have feasts and celebrations. Job would then make sacrifices for each of them, *"For Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did regularly."* Job 1:5 NKJV. Job performed the sacrifices for his children "just in case". He wanted to do everything possible to make sure that things were all right. We do this too. Have you ever had things going so well that you were afraid that it wouldn't last so you were extra careful to do everything just right to maintain the status quo? This was what Job was doing, depending on his ability to maintain things. This is legalism, pure and simple.

The next hint of Job's heart is in chapter three.

Job 3:25-26 NKJV

(25) For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, And what I dreaded has happened to me.

(26) I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes."

What had happened to Job? What had come upon him? He had lost everything. And by his own statement here, that was a thing that he feared—he dreaded losing everything. That means that he was not actively walking in faith because fear and faith cannot co-exist. They are opposites of each other.

Therefore, if he was not walking in faith then he was acting from the natural, that is, the flesh nature. He did not rest in God but, instead, tried to maintain everything by his own actions.

After undergoing the full negative side of the process of change, Job's heart condition is fully revealed in chapter 13.

Job 13:15 NKJV

(15) Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.

The first half of this verse is frequently quoted by religious people to show their supposed trust in the Lord. However, few ever mention the second half of this Scripture. Who are we to defend our ways before the Lord? This is out and out rebellion against the ways of God. So, we have a form of rebellion hidden deep in the heart of Job of which Job was not consciously aware. The circumstances in which Job found himself were arranged by the Lord to expose the condition of Job's heart. This is how God chastises His sons to bring them to full maturity.

Later, after much discussion and argument between Job and his friends where Job condemns himself through his own words, the Lord speaks to Job clearly and calls him to task for his much speaking without understanding of the ways of God.

Job 42:3-6 NKJV

- (3) *You asked*, 'Who *is* this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
- (4) Listen, please, and let me speak; *You said*, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'
- (5) "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.
- (6) Therefore I abhor *myself*, And repent in dust and ashes."

The end result is that Job repents and the rebellion in his heart is dealt with fully.

Job's Example of the Emotional/Soulful Process

Now, let's go back and look at the results of Job's reaction to what was happening to him.

1. **Depression.** The first reaction is depression as we see in chapter 3:

Job 3:1-11 NKJV

- (1) After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth*.
- (2) And Job spoke, and said:
- (3) "May the day perish on which I was born, And the night *in which* it was said, 'A male child is conceived.'
- (4) May that day be darkness; May God above not seek it, Nor the light shine upon it.
- (5) May darkness and the shadow of death claim it; May a cloud settle on it; May the blackness of the day terrify it.
- (6) *As for* that night, may darkness seize it; May it not rejoice among the days of the year, May it not come into the number of the months.
- (7) Oh, may that night be barren! May no joyful shout come into it!
- (8) May those curse it who curse the day, Those who are ready to arouse Leviathan.
- (9) May the stars of its morning be dark; May it look for light, but *have* none, And not see the dawning of the day;
- (10) Because it did not shut up the doors of my *mother's* womb, Nor hide sorrow from my eyes.
- (11) "Why did I not die at birth? *Why* did I *not* perish when I came from the womb?"

2. **Frustration.** Chapter 6 reveals Job's frustration with his circumstances.

Job 6:8-14 NKJV

- (8) "Oh, that I might have my request, That God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!
- (9) That it would please God to crush me, That He would loose His hand and cut me off!
- (10) Then I would still have comfort; Though in anguish I would exult, He will not spare; For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.
- (11) "What strength do I have, that I should hope? And what *is* my end, that I should prolong my life?"

- (12) *Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh bronze?*
- (13) *Is my help not within me? And is success driven from me?*
- (14) "To him who is afflicted, kindness *should be shown* by his friend, Even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.

3. **Resentment.** The fullness of Job's resentment is revealed in chapter 9

Job 9:13-18 NKJV

- (13) God will not withdraw His anger, The allies of the proud lie prostrate beneath Him.
- (14) "How then can I answer Him, *And* choose my words *to reason* with Him?
- (15) For though I were righteous, I could not answer Him; I would beg mercy of my Judge.
- (16) If I called and He answered me, I would not believe that He was listening to my voice.
- (17) For He crushes me with a tempest, And multiplies my wounds without cause.
- (18) He will not allow me to catch my breath, But fills me with bitterness.

4. **Bitterness.** Resentment is followed by bitterness. Chapter 10 reveals the depth of Job's bitterness

Job 10:1-3 NKJV

- (1) "My soul loathes my life; I will give free course to my complaint, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
- (2) I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me; Show me why You contend with me.
- (3) *Does it* seem good to You that You should oppress, That You should despise the work of Your hands, And smile on the counsel of the wicked?

5. **Rebellion.** As the negative cycle completes the end result is rebellion—defiance against God.

Job 13:15 NKJV

- (15) Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. The King James Bible says it this way, "*...but I will maintain mine own ways before him.*"
Defending or maintaining your own ways before God is always a losing argument.

Soul and Spirit

We have been examining the natural or soulish side of the process of change, detailing the emotional reactions to the circumstances in which we find ourselves by the hand of God. Now we need to look at the spiritual side and the positive cycle that produces in us the end result that conforms us more to the image of Christ. However, before we go into that, let's do a chart that encapsulates our discussion so that we can see both the soul and spirit side of the process.

<u>SOUL</u>	<u>SPIRIT</u>
Cycle of the Process	Cycle of the Process
1. Depression	Seed
2. Frustration	1. Darkness
3. Resentment	2. Fire
4. Bitterness	3. Water
5. Rebellion	4. Pressure
Cycle repeats building upon itself	Life is released

The Seed

As we begin to discuss the spiritual aspect of the process we need to remember that these things have to be understood through the Holy Spirit and not the natural mind.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 NKJV

- (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.
- (13) These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.
- (14) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

The Holy Spirit was given to us so that we might know the things freely given to us by God; however, our natural or soulish man does not receive from the Holy Spirit because spiritual things do not make any sense to the natural, soulish person. We even have to be taught a spiritual language by the Holy Spirit in order to communicate spiritual things to others.

Jesus used the example of “seed” to illustrate the coming forth of resurrection life. He spoke of Himself as seed planted in the earth.

John 12:24 NKJV

- (24) **Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.**

He also spoke of the Word of the Kingdom as seed planted in the ground of the heart in the Parable of the Sower. The seed only produced a harvest when it was planted in good soil. Spiritual seed in our heart has within it the life of God. However, it has to sprout, grow and produce fruit before its purpose

is achieved.

While the seed contains life within it, a hard shell encases the life. The sprouting process releases the life that is in the seed shell. This is true spiritually also.

When a seed is planted it is enclosed in the soil in darkness. The first requirement for the seed to sprout is heat. That is why seeds don't sprout in cold weather. When the Word of the Kingdom is planted in us, the Lord begins the process of releasing life by applying fire so that the seed is heated up. Then, water is added. Spiritually, this is the water of Spirit and the Word. As the seed sits in darkness, full of heat, the water begins to soak it and pressure begins to build inside the seed shell. The fire, water, and pressure soften the shell so that the life that is within can break forth. Suddenly, something breaks and the life within is released.

As the Parable of the Sower shows the seed of the Kingdom is planted in our hearts. We undergo the process that will release the life that is contained in the seed so that out of our hearts will flow rivers of living water—the life of the Lord.

John 7:38 NKJV

(38) He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

This doesn't happen until something in us breaks—the natural, soulish man is put off and the spiritual man is put on.

Completing the Process

There are five steps to completing the process of change and releasing life in us and through us.

1. **Stop** trying to escape the circumstances—continued escape causes us to have to repeat the problem circumstances over and over. If we continue to refuse the circumstances, eventually God will put us on the shelf and stop dealing with us. I am not saying that we lose our salvation. I am saying that we become useless to the Kingdom of God. As Peter tells us, *“For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (2 Peter 1:8 NKJV) The converse of this is that if we do not have the qualities listed and that they are not increasing then we will be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord.
2. **Recognize** or embrace the circumstances as being ordained of God. Do we really believe the Word? *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* (Romans 8:28 NKJV) All things means even the things that we consider bad problems are still working for our good.
3. **Determine**, set our will, to receive from God. We have to set our will to do the will of the Lord. This is especially difficult when the will of God involves something that we don't want to do. *“Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, (Luke 9:51 NKJV)* Jesus knew that His time of suffering was at hand. He had to set his will to proceed with the Father's purpose. He

steadfastly, that is, methodically, continued even though He knew what awaited Him.

4. **Depend** on the Lord. We cannot trust in our own strength or abilities. As a matter of fact, the Lord will see to it that our circumstances are beyond our ability to cope without Him. *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”* (Romans 8:26 NKJV)
5. **Receive** correction and change. The Scriptures speak for themselves: *“If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. (Hebrews 12:7-8 NKJV) “Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”* (Hebrews 12:11 NKJV)

Correction may come directly from the Lord or it may come through one or more of our brethren. God will not always deal with us directly. We must learn to hear the voice of the Lord in other members of His Body. This is especially true of correction.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 NKJV

- (24) And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,
- (25) in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,
- (26) and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

Overview Recap

God *prepares* us for *purpose* by giving us divine *promises* so that by them we become partakers of the divine life. God then puts us in the *process* that provides for us divine *problems* in order that we might learn His *principles* and enter into His *provision* contained in the promises. This is part of the training required to qualify us to rule and reign with Him.