

IMPORTANT LESSONS GOD WILL TEACH US

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A Christian could not remind themselves too often that we can always thank God for getting us back to the Scriptures, and, back to a Scriptural attitude toward Him, toward His Word, and toward our fellow man (back to a true pathway of faith as Bible Christians walked on). If we allow 'God' to teach us, He will bring us to the place where we take a right attitude toward His teaching on finances, and, having a right attitude toward meeting other people right, (along with trusting God for our peace, for our health, and, for our divine protection).

Our position is to become just as Ezra said in introduction to a book of Psalms (1:13) "Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water;... And whatever he does shall prosper."

That is really the Bible pathway to prosperity (materially and spiritually). The Bible pathway is a very humble one, and a lowly one. In fact, it is a poor-people's pathway (but that is God's pathway). God inspired the Apostle (James 2:5-7) "Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble Name by which you are called?" [We should be pleased when referred to as a Christian.]

The facts are, we can never afford to get away from 'living humbly by faith'; nor ever get away from trusting in God alone for our daily needs. But we are to get away from trusting on someone else (or living on anything saved up) and get away from allowing our income to come between us and depending on the living God to provide for us. (Matt.18:2-4), Jesus "called a young child to Him, and, bidding him stand in the midst of them, said, "In solemn truth I tell you that unless you turn and become like little children, you will in no case be admitted into the Kingdom of the Heavens."(That is solemn warning.)

Jesus (the only One who can save and lead us to the 'Kingdom of the Heavens') did not mince any words about the importance of humbly trusting on God to provide during our life on earth (as a child depends on its parents to provide). (vs.4) "Whoever therefore shall humble him-

self as this young child, he it is who is superior to others in the Kingdom of the Heavens." We cannot allow any thing, or person, or laid up savings' to come between us and our placing trust on God. ("you will in no case be admitted into the Kingdom of the Heavens." (Jesus said).

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He said, (Matt.6:9-11) "in this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread." The disciples were given God's whole 'plan of trust' in that one prayer, which is to pray for 'our needs for today'. (Some hymn lyrics say it well, "Father, for tomorrow and its needs I do not pray. Keep me just for today.")

The reason God doesn't allow us to lay up human supplies to depend on, nor allow us to have pensions and social security monies laid up (nor insurance plans to protect us financially), nor does He allow us to depend on any money that somebody else has laid up or has willed to us, is, because He wants to keep us near to Him, and keep us depending on Him through faith. It is to keep us meek and humble through dependance on Him to supply for us. That is the attitude while on God's pathway to Heaven. It is way He said we must walk, ... ("unless you turn and become like little children, you will in no case be admitted into the Kingdom of the Heavens.")

We also have a magnificent and glorious example to follow in Jesus Christ. (1 John 2:6) "He who says he abides in Him" (that means in Jesus Christ), "ought himself also to walk just as He walked."

How did Jesus walk? He associated with the humble and lowly in heart, never lived on anything saved-up, trusted His Heavenly Father day-by-day. (the Bible says we "ought also to walk just as He walked".)

When a man came to Jesus and said, "I will follow you wherever you go",...Jesus replied, "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." He meant, I have not a place that I can call my home, ... (not even a room with a bed). There's an example of lowliness!...and one of 'living by faith' each day!...It was a living expression of God's will, His financial plan for us to live by faith, trusting God to bless us with enough to pay rent and buy food for each day (and without worrying about tomorrow's needs).

Paul told us that we should have that same attitude within ourselves. Let this mind (meaning 'way of life'), (Phil. 2: 5-8), "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (what counsel that is for us to follow), "who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond-servant" (that's a poor person), "and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." (That is how lowly Jesus became in our behalf, with His redeeming love for us.)

Paul tells us that's the mind we are to have. There was nothing high-minded about Jesus Christ. He associated with poor fishermen and unlearned men. And that is how we will do, how we will walk, and how we will live our life, if we will allow God to teach us.

The Lake of Fire is a most dreadful and horrible place, and none of us want to go there. Jesus said that anyone who did not get on Scriptural grounds financially, will go to the Lake of Fire. He said, we are not to lay up any treasure on earth, not to let any laid-up money come between us and depending on the living God to provide for us. (That means we are not to have anything ahead to depend on. He said, "unless you turn and become like little children, you will in no case be admitted into the 'Kingdom of the Heavens'.")

The widow of Zarephath had only a handful of meal and a little oil in a jar. But it makes no difference how little it is, how great it is, or the amount that we have, we must not allow anything to stand between us and our dependance on God!

God is the only one who can lead us out of our human 'place of trust'. He led the widow at Zarephath away from her trusting on a handful of meal and a little oil. She had to be willing to give that up to obey God's Word. If she had not been willing to give up the little bit that she was depending on, she could have slowly starved to death, went to the Lake of Fire, and still be there today (3000 years later),... and with no hope of ever getting relief!

Let us all consider that if that woman had to get rid of the little meal and oil that she was depending on (in order for her to be saved from the Lake of Fire), how much more do we need to get rid of every human thing we are depending upon! If we will allow God to teach and inspire us from His Word to get rid of those things (rather, to 'be trusting' on Him), we won't need to thank Elijah or an angel from Heaven to teach us that lesson (to save us from the Lake of Fire). God will inspire us to turn our trust to Him alone, if we will allow Him (and the sooner the better!)

When God wanted to teach the Israelites to trust Him, (to get them better acquainted with their 'living God' and prepare them for Eternal Life), He had to get them away from Egypt (and all its supplies which they were depending upon). The first thing God did was to get them out of Egypt (in a most miraculous way). He took them through 'the Red Sea as by dry land'. By the time the Egyptian army got through, the water came back (and they were drowned). The Israelites could not swim the Red Sea, neither did they have any vessels in which to go back to Egypt. They were in the wilderness with no food nor water, and they could not beg, borrow, nor steal if they had wanted to.

Why did God do that? It was so they would have to depend on the 'living God' alone (and not only for their food). Even if they wanted a drink of water, they had to get it from God! That's 'the way God works' to humble a person, and the way He prepares us to have faith on Him. That's how He develops people in His Truth and prepares them for Eternal Life! Through very humble circumstances He convicted Joseph of depending on the human efforts of other people; ... and that is how He trained Moses to lead His people into a life of trust, and to the Promised Land.

After Caleb and Joshua had gone through forty years of spiritual growth and training by God (to teach them to trust Him for their support and guidance),...they were enabled to walk seven times on the

seventh day around the heavily fortified city of Jericho (exactly as God had told them to do), and then to shout a great shout in real faith, to see the walls go down, and to capture the city.

It was through being trained by God through His financial 'plan of trust', that they were brought to that place of development of their 'faith'. Through the most meager of circumstances, and with nowhere else to turn except to the living God to provide and support them, ... they had learned that we can trust God for every need and situation in our life. God tells us solemnly that all of these people mentioned, were examples for us. (1 Cor. 10:11) "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition (our instruction), upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

Could any language tell us anything more plainly? Does it give us any room for being high-minded (or to have any supplies laid-up, or money saved up to depend on?) Does that kind of example and teaching from God, allow any room for us to depend on a pension, social security, financial insurance plans, or to have any kind of laid up income or supplies? The answer is "NO".

God's Word does not permit it any more than for us to go out and rob someone, because it is just as unscriptural. Depending on anything laid-up for the future, would take a person to the Lake of Fire (just as quickly as being a bandit). That's why God is so anxious to lead us out of our human place of trust. Aside from that, Jesus walked that same pathway of trust in the Father as an example for us, so we are perfectly safe in allowing God to bring us to follow Christ's example. When we face financial trials (and tests of our faith) we are perfectly safe in trusting on God to deliver us from those circumstances.

The apostle Paul was in those same circumstances (even though he was chosen and sent by God as a light to Gentiles). Paul wrote to the Corinthians, saying, "To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless." (1 Cor.4:11). That is a valuable and healthy place to be in (spiritually speaking), and yet, Paul did not have to stay in that position always. But, he had to be brought to those circumstances in order to become humble, and to be prepared for Eternal Life.

That is what God inspired Moses to tell the Israelites. (Deut.8:2) "And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger,".

We sometimes need to be brought to those same circumstances in order for God to teach us (and what a 'spiritually healthy' place that is)!! When a Christian comes to the place of an empty cupboard, and empty pocketbook, and an empty stomach (but with a good appetite and with nobody but God to supply what is needed), ... and they will meet the conditions right, they will take a long stride toward happiness, and blessing and victory, here (in this life), and take a long stride toward Eternal Life.

(Vs.3), "and (He) fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every [word] that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord." (When Jesus suffered from hunger, He responded with those same words of Scripture when the devil tempted Him to 'turn from trusting on His Father in Heaven' to deliver Him.)

God has not changed in the least, however, and He will deliver us in hard times (just as He delivered Jesus and Paul, after they were tested and tempted to turn their trust away from our living God).

Another result of allowing God to teach, test, and train us spiritually, will be in our dealings with others, and especially including our own family. There have been homes where members of that household were 'supposed to be in the Truth' for years (the Pastor said), yet they had never learned to meet fellow-members of their family in a right way. If anyone crossed their bow, you would see them flare up (and tell the other person a few things).

Do you think for one moment that Jesus Christ would act like that? Do you think for a moment that if Jesus would return (with them still in 'that attitude'), that they would have any chance for Eternal Life? It not only shows that a person resents things and people, ... but that they hold that resentment! It was never made right with God (or with the other person).

When a person is truly taught by God, that's the first thing they will want to do (make things right with God and man. If they would be tempted and overtaken in a fault (if they have said or done something to a member of their family (or anyone else) that wasn't right) ,... before five minutes passed (or as quickly as God shows them their mistake), they would immediately make it right with the other person.

When the apostle Paul realized his mistake (after he shouted at a high-priest), he apologized right away. That is what we will all do when we are taught by God. We will humble ourselves and get back to earth very quickly. It didn't make any difference how Jesus was insulted or how He was mistreated, He never resented it and He didn't even complain. He never 'got a grouch on', nor go around pouting and giving people the cold-shoulder.

God tells us how to treat others, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matt.7:12). He also tells us what attitude an employee should take toward their employer. (1Pet 2:18), "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh" (or unreasonable). God even thanks us for meeting wrongs in a right way (vs.19) "For this is thank-worthy (with God), if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully."

The devil will try to tell us to get even. The Holy Spirit reminds us, however, "if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt.6:15) So, what are we to do about wrong treatment?.. answer is, of course, 'we must forgive and forget as God's Word tells us to do.'

Following God's 'financial plan of trust', and 'meeting things right', is what we learn only from God's Word (under the teaching of

the Holy Spirit) (when we have surrendered ourselves to be led by the Spirit). Man could tell us a thousand times how to meet things, but when we submit to God's teaching we will learn the right way, and we will be tested for as many years as it takes for us to learn from Him, because God doesn't want us to perish.

The spiritual result of learning God's way (from Him), is, that it will put us in the very 'footsteps of Jesus'. (1 Peter 2:21-23) "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed [Himself] to Him who judges righteously;". [What a brilliant pathway that is, walking in the footsteps of Him who has all power and authority in Heaven and in earth."

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The First-Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

#S256R SOME MAIN POINTS:

1. To be of a humble nature so God can teach us to follow His Word in a life of faith, for, "God has chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." (Jam.2:5)
2. If we will humbly surrender to do our Heavenly Father's will as Jesus did ("who made Himself of no reputation and took on the form of a bond-servant" to be an example for us),... and, we are willing to submit to God's teaching,... He will use whatever means necessary to teach us (as He taught the Israelites in a desert wilderness), to depend on Him in every situation.
3. God will teach us if we are willing,... to give up even the least thing we are trusting on (as the widow at Zarephath was willing), rather, than to disobey God's Word and eventually go to the Lake of Fire if not repented of. God cannot help us if we are not willing to listen to Him and follow His Word in our life.
4. God will also teach us to meet other people right (especially others in our own household), and we will be tested for as many years as it takes us to learn from Him. He is patient because of His love for us, and wants no one to perish, but for all to repent.

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