

GOD'S PATHWAY OF GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT IN THE TRUTH-

PART II

S429R 0820 25W

We continue with a message on "GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT" on God's pathway, for Him to prepare us for Life Eternal (so that we may enjoy the comforts and benefits of that Life to come). As was stated before, for one to be converted and born again, and 'filled with the Spirit', are all necessary steps toward that Heavenly Goal, but the main thing and of most importance, is whether we grow; whether or not we turn aside from the Word and the Way, or do we go forward in the Way by our meeting the various circumstances which arise, as God's Word declares.

The first step for a born-again person is to sincerely and fully surrender their life to God, and the moment we will do that and say "Yes" to His Will (which is always best for us), He will fill us with His Spirit. Then we are to meet things exactly as His Word says, and just to the extent that we do, we will grow and develop.

"God has a plan" (as has been said many times before), a plan for every detail of life, which includes our home life, our bodies, our finances, and our work and workplace, and His plan for 'meeting things and people' right. And as said to the extent that we meet these things right, our growth and development in the 'Truth of God' will depend.

The importance of this cannot be overestimated, for the moment we fail to meet things as God says, at that moment we go backward instead of forward, (so God's merciful plan is for us to confess and repent). That is God's plan; if we will change and meet things as He says, we will then go forward; if we meet them contrary to what He says we will go backward (and soon be tempted to fall-away from the Truth of God).

If we will confess and we are willing to make the changes that God will inspire and bring about in a heart that is willing and submissive, He will lead us step by step. and He never asks us to meet a trial until we are ready for it; He then allows something to stir up our

resting place, a temptation or trial to throw us out of our nest.

We are to be in the hands of God exactly the same as is clay in the hands of a potter. We all need to learn that lesson of being pliable in God's hands, and be enabled to meet every requirement of God, the Master-Potter, so that we might grow and develop by His Grace and Guidance, and that we may have all blessings as needed (as He intends for us to have through our submission to Him).

We all need to realize that it would be far better if we went through with God at the beginning. However, it is encouraging to know that God does not desert us or throw us aside (even when we do make mistakes), or when we make a bad failure in our Christian life. There must come a time sooner or later, when we must go through with God, (nothing nor nobody left between us and God) when we are pliable in His hands, because it takes that pliability, that following Him, and that walking with Him, for us to be ready to meet Jesus. Unless we have learned our lessons and are pliable in His hands which will form us into the image that He wants us to be (prepared and ready for His coming). Jesus could not take us with Him.

Jesus said: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26) We will be brought into a difficult place, things to upset us, which calls us to choose between God and our families, between God and our money-matters, between God and our lives, between God and everything near and dear to us, humanly speaking. The person who always gives God their decision, chooses Him in every crisis, they will grow and develop rapidly. Such a person will never lose anything. Some people are led to think that if they displease their husbands, wives, or children in order to obey God, that it will drive those very people from the Truth, and will make great trouble for them personally.

Well, that might be true in human affairs, but 'one with God' is a majority. *When God's Will is put first, He will control the other person (or persons) involved with our decision to obey God. The cause of the trouble, Satan, will be cast out of that loved one, and God can make them to be kinder and gentler than ever, and*

soon be brought into the Truth. However, if we compromise with God's truth in order to please a loved one, it will just give Satan greater control over them, and they will become worse off than ever.

The Bible tells us **"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."** (Matt.10:39). That means it makes no difference what the risk may be, 'I am to put God first', then the power of the enemy is broken, and I am made 'more than conqueror' in everything.

The reason why God deals with us-is for Him to destroy the self-life in one's heart. Self is all wrapped up in its own plans, both for this life and everything that concerns it. But we must die to all those plans, lay them aside forever! Self has a plan for healing of the body, a plan for money matters to be decided the way the world decides, but those plans are entirely different from God's plans.

Another point to be made is that: anyone who has suffered or lost anything in going through the school and workshop of Christ, is to receive a hundredfold in return in this life (with persecutions), and in the world to come, life-everlasting. We want to always keep that before us. Could anyone invest in any better advantage than that? People are investing their money daily and only receiving a small percentage of interest. But there is an investment offered by God which will bring a hundredfold (which is 10,000 percent). Since God tells the truth, anyone should be willing to lose their reputation, their position, or whatever, and invest everything in God's Word and Promises, whatever the loss may be, for it will be returned a hundred-fold (along with His Promise of everlasting life as special blessing.)

We should call our attention briefly to the examples of Abraham, about two things in his life. We will notice that one will not be in God's workshop very long, before somebody will say or do something to them, or some trouble will arise from one source or another. Abraham had some troubles before he got very far in his Christian life of faith on God. There was strife between his herdsmen and the herdsmen of Lot, a quarrel between those two companies of servants, as to which should have the best pasture for their herds. But Abraham met that

circumstance exactly according to God's Word (as we read Col.3:15) **"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts,"** **"Let nothing be done through strife."** (Phil.2:3) (Also Phil.2:5) **"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"**

The real thought is that we are to settle things in a peaceable way, never to strive with any man; Do not seek the best of the deal, but allow the other person to have the advantage, and God will take care of us.

So, Abraham called Lot and they met together, and he said (paraphrased): 'Lot, it does not look well for you and I to be striving with each other, for we are brethren and God's children; let us not strive, but settle this right, as God would have us. Our lives should be different from the people of the world. These nations around us watch our lives, looking on us to see how we will meet things as they arise; so, let us act entirely different from them.'

'Lot, you take a look at the land; we will divide it, you take just what you desire, you make your choice, and I will take what is left. You may have any part or section of this country you desire; just say the word, and whatever is left I am satisfied with; I want you to take your portion.'

We need to notice how different this attitude is from those of the world, where everybody is looking out for 'number one' and caring nothing for the other person. So, Lot took a good look and chose the best part of the land, the well-watered, fertile, luxurious ground, with fine pastureland, and Abraham took what was left. Abraham settled the matter, and that completed their agreement.

Then God appeared unto Abraham and said: **"Abram, I want you to look at this whole land; you shall also have wells of water, well-watered and fertile land; look to the North, East, South and West; I am going to give you the whole land."**

By Abraham obeying God in this New Testament doctrine, it made him a Gospel man, and he received the main portion of the land, while Lot's portion was destroyed by fire and brimstone which came down from Heaven (and he had to flee for his life), while Abraham and his posterity continued through life with God's blessing. By meeting that trial right, Abraham received hundredfold for what he gave up to Lot.

The next trial which came into his life was that he was asked to offer up his only son as a sacrifice. This, no doubt, was the last foothold of self-will, because self will always love something on earth (just a little more than God). That is why we may need to die to family ties at times (as it were), and have to die to human plans, die to our own financial plans, to our healing plan; die to every human plan we have; and the moment that we do, there is a power and grace of God that takes its place; (that is what we receive in return for giving something up to obey God's Word!)

In Abraham's heart was a very tender spot for Isaac, and it was unconscious to him. Satan will always keep us unconscious of the love we have for something more-so than God, and so, not putting and keeping God first in our life (then to come between us and God.) He had strong feelings and attitude toward his boy (his son for whom he had trusted and believed that God would bless him with). That attitude had become supreme in the heart of Abraham's in his Christian life, so God exposed and presented him the opportunity to 'die to self'.

After every human hope had fled, God had given him a son, (and no one could blame Abraham for having such a tender spot in his heart for Isaac). But he had to die to that supreme love for Isaac, because it had come to be ahead of a supreme love for God. God commanded him to go and offer his son as a sacrifice. (We need to take notice that God did not ask Abraham to do that the first day of his surrendered life, nor ten, nor twenty years thereafter). He had a long and experienced Christian life, and this was a final test for him, a last lesson he had to learn as it were. So, the command was: "Offer up your son Isaac."

So, Abraham and Isaac started out for a three-day hike up the mountain. Abraham prepared for the offering of that sacrifice. He then put the wood on the altar, bound his son, laid him on the altar, and raised his knife to place it into that boy. But the moment he raised the knife that supreme love for Isaac had passed over, and the greater love, a deeper love, richer, fuller love came in. God really and truly became the Lord of his life. To have God as the Lord of our Life is the only hope of our own salvation.

God's blessing which came from meeting this trial right is wonderful indeed. "Immediately an angel called out of heaven and said: 'Abraham, Abraham!' So, he said, 'Here am I.' And he said, 'Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now, I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.'" (Gen.22:11-12).

Abraham could then see that God was behind the scene. Our trials may appear to be hard and mean on the surface and seem to be very difficult; they may strike us in a very tender spot in our heart and make life very unpleasant. But when we have made a true surrender to God, and desire to always do His Will in our life, then God is always behind the scene for us. If we meet right the trials that come before us, it will be made to work for great blessing. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." (Heb.12:11).

It applies to people who go through successfully. "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, 'By myself have I sworn,' saith the Lord, 'for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;" (Gen.22:15-17)

(He was saying) 'Abraham, I know that I have first place in your heart, and in making people happy I will put you first on the list; in multiplying, you will also not be forgotten; you shall have thousands and millions of sons of faith; men of faith are your children now.'

Abraham did not lose anything, although it did seem as if it would tear his heart in shreds; one more moment and he would have been the most miserable man on earth, but, because of his choosing Gods way, it was turned into greater, grander happiness and blessing, with heaven as his goal. Just think what God had in that trial for Abraham!

It is the same with our trials (the Pastor said). You may be a young girl and think you

appeared unto him. "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."
(Gen.15:1)

God had presented Himself to Abraham, saying: “I give myself to thee, and anything you may need, I will supply.” Abraham told Him that there was one desire in his heart which had not been gratified, he desired to have an heir. He had a vacant spot in his life. What a battle Satan put up in reference to that son, but Abraham believed against human hope, and he believed that what God had promised. He was able to perform. ‘God rewarded Abraham with Eternal Life’. ‘That is our Goal!’ &&&&&&&&

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After Abraham had refused to take the spoil of the king of Sodom, saying- “I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich;” (Gen.14:23) God