

SOME “DIFFICULT” TOOLS GOD USES TO SHAPE US

The Christian Response to Offences

“All things work together...to conform us to the image of His son.” Ro. 8:28,29

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Oct 11th

Reflection: Ro. 8:28,29 *“All things work together for good...to conform us into the image of His son.”*

This process of Transformation is:

- Purposeful (Ro. 8:28,29; 12:1,2; Job 23:13-16; Jer 29:11)
- Purifying (Job 23:10; 1 Peter 1:7; James 1:2-5)
- Painful (Is. 48:10,11; 1 Pt 1:7)
- Powerful! (Acts 4:13 Col 1:28-29)
- And involves a Partnership! (1 Cor 3:9; Ro. 8:28,29)

“Conform” Symmorphos’: jointly transformed

There’s a paradoxical pattern in scripture and history in which God uses the attacks of Satan (and others) to strengthen and develop us! (Job 23:10; Ps. 76:10; 1 Cor. 10:13)

Gen 50:20 *“ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good...”* (Ro. 8:35-37)

We’ve already discussed how God is able to use the Trouble, Temptation and even the “Trespasses” (Sins) of others to teach us to turn to Him, trust Him,

And even “temper” (develop) our souls. (Is. 48:10; 64:8)

Last week we discussed how Trespasses are: Sinful (Mt 18:7-15); Relatable to offences (vs 7,15)
Inevitable (vs 7); and Painful (Ps 55:12-13; Mt. 18:21)

Jesus then outlines for us in Mt. 18:15-35

The Christian response to offences involve:

1. Honest (private) Conversation. Mt 18:15 *“if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”*

Eph. 4:15 *“Speaking the truth in love, we can grow up into him in all things”*

Pr 9:8,9 *“rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser”*

A. If we fail to do this:

- 1) We Rob God of a chance to reconcile us.
- 2) We rob each other of the chance to grow!
- 3) We give Satan a chance to work! Rev. 12:10 “accuser of the brethren”

B. How we respond to confrontation/exhortation reveals much about our level of maturity!
(Heb. 3:13; Pr. 9:8,9; James 3:13-18)

C. If we speak to others about the offence, we may be sowing discord Pr 6:16-19

2. Objective Clarification Mt. 18:16 *“But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”*

A. We’re prone to self deceit! Jer. 17:9 *“the heart is deceitful above all things...”* (See Pr. 20:6,7)

B. Those chosen should be spiritually mature and objective. Gal. 4:1,2; 1 Cor 6:5 *“I speak to your shame. Is ...there not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?”*

3. Open, prayerful Confrontation. Vs 17 “Tell it to the church”

A. The goal isn’t winning the argument, but the winning of a brother or sister!
See Gal. 6:1,2 and James 5:19,20

4. Consistent Confirmation. Vs 17b *"If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican"*

A. The purpose isn't condemnation, but a clear and consistent challenge for restoration!

Rev. 3:19 *"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent."*

- 1) See 1 Cor. 5 for some practical examples of this.
- 2) See 2Cor. 2:6-11 for the purpose of this process.

Conclusion: The ultimate response to offences is forgiveness.

Mt. 18:21-22 *"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? (aphi'ēmi: to send away) Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."*

1) Forgiveness means to bear the wrong without emotional (or physical) retaliation.

Ro. 12:19 *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."*

a) Lack of forgiveness gets in God's way of dealing with the offender!

b) They (the offender) focuses on our response rather than their offence.

Gen 50:19-20 *"Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good."*

Ro. 12:20-21 *"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, (Remember "Offence" means a snare!) (Satan can use them to trap us!) but overcome evil with good."*

2) Lack of forgiveness produces:

a) Blindness. Mt. 18:28-33 *"shouldest not thou also had compassion?"*

b) Bitterness. Mt 18:34-35 *"deliver him to the tormentors..."*

Heb. 12:15 *"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness (pikria: poison) springing up trouble you (enochle'ō: crowd and annoy) and thereby many be defiled;" (miai'nō: contaminated)*

Application: A formula for forgiveness.

1) Remember God is in control. (Gen. 50:20) *"God meant it unto good."*

Lk 23:34 *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."*

Ro. 8:28 *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

2) Reflect on:

a) How much God has forgiven you. (Mt 18:23-27; Eph. 4:32)

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

b) The consequences of an unforgiving spirit. Mt 6:15; Mt. 18:34-35 *"his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due... So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses"*

3) Respond to God's Grace. Jms 4:5-10; 2 Cor 12:9 *"My grace (char'is: Divine influence) is sufficient (arke'ō: a barrier) for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness."*

Heb 4:16 *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, (El'eos: compassion {Remember Mt 18:33}) and find grace to help in time of need."*

➤ Is there anyone who has wronged you, who you have yet to completely forgive?

➤ Is there anyone you have wronged, and have yet to seek their forgiveness?

Jms 4:5-10 *"He giveth more grace... God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God, Resist the devil and he will flee from you..."*