

God's Direction for Difficult Times Part 2 Exodus 14:1-14

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Jan. 12

Pr. 3:5-9 *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honor the LORD..."*

Last week we began to look at some principles for Problems. We learned that God wants us to *"Walk by faith, not by sight."* (2 Cor 5:7) This involves elevating Divine Revelation above Human Reasoning. This is what Pr. 3:5-7,9 is all about. *"Be not wise in thine own eyes...honor the LORD"*

PRINCIPLE ONE: Remember Who Brought You Here!

Revelation 4:11 reminds us: *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure (thel'ema: purposes) they are and were created."* Ro. 8:28, 29 reminds us that God uses "all things" to *"conform us into the image of His son"* (make us "Christian") "All Things" include the distress and difficulties of problems to purify our faith. (Jms 1:2-5; 1 Peter 1:7) Isaiah 48:10,11 remind us that God *"refines us...in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake...will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? And I will not give my Glory to another."*

Our human nature is more concerned with our "Glory" than God's. (Phil. 2:21)

PRINCIPLE TWO: Be More Concerned With God's Glory Than Yours.

1. WE TEND TO ASK QUESTIONS WHEN WE'RE CONFUSED.

If we ask the wrong Questions, we'll get the Wrong Answer!

A. COMMON "WRONG" QUESTIONS:

- 1) **How did I get into this mess?** (This often leads to the *Blame* Game) (Rev. 12:10)
 - a) We want to learn from our "Mistakes" or those of others, but this is incomplete in itself.
 - b) This may cause us to miss the main *point* of our problems! 2 Cor. 12:9; James 1:2,3
- 2) **How can I quickly solve this problem and get on with my life?**
 - a) This is an understandable response. Even Paul did this in 2 Cor. 12:7-8
 - b) This may cause us to miss the main *point* of our problems! 2 Cor. 12:9; James 1:2,3
- 3) **Why did this have to happen to me?**
 - a) The problem with these natural questions is that they are focused on *ME!*

B. THE "RIGHT" QUESTION: *How Can God Be Glorified Through This?*

2. GOD ORCHESTRATES EVENTS TO PROVE HIMSELF.

A. THE RED SEA. (Ex. 14:4; 13,14)

- 1) God's power at this event has become the theme of songs for thousands of generations.
- 2) It gave notice to the Canaanites. Joshua 2:10,11

B. JESUS' MINISTRY:

- 1) **The Man born blind:** John 9:2,3 *"Who did sin...that this he was born blind? Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."*
 - a) **He endured decades of darkness for a moment of miracle!** (Vs 32)
- 2) **Lazarus' resurrection.** John 11:4 *"This sickness is...for the glory of God..."*
 - a) Mary and Martha endured days of fear, anxiety, and pain. Vs 21
 - b) If Jesus had immediately responded to their plea to "come quickly and heal", **many would be in hell.** (Compare Verse 21 with verse 45)

We want instant healing and help when in difficulty, but God often has bigger plans.

(Laura Story "Blessings")

C. Esther. (4:14) *"who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"*

3. Realize that instead of "Proving God", We tend to **PROVOKE** Him! (Provoke is Found 85 times, mostly about provoking God!)

Nu 14:11 *"How long will this people provoke me? (Mārar: bitter, to grieve) and how long will it be ere they believe me?"*

Ps. 78:40-41 *"How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited (Tāwâ: grieve!) the Holy One of Israel."*

Eph 4:30 *"grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."*

A. If we have the Wrong Focus, we'll have the Wrong **Response**.

- 1) God orchestrates / allows problems so He can reveal himself to and through us (to others).
- 2) When we focus on a quick solution to our pain,
 - a) We end up **failing** the test of faith, and
 - b) We **frustrate** God's purposes of revealing Himself to and through us!

Conclusion: Example of Asa 2 Chron. 16

- 1) God orchestrated (or allowed) an invading army to threaten Him.
 - a) *This same scenario happened in His youth and God miraculously delivered him. (Ch. 14)*
- 2) Asa failed the test, pillaging the Temple (vs 2) to pay a heathen army to defend him. (vs 3)
 - a) The plan seemed to work. *He won the proverbial battle, but lost the war over his heart.*
- 3) God sent the Prophet Hanani to confront him. Vs 9
 - a) Instead of recognizing and repenting: 10 *"Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage ... because of this thing. And Asa oppressed the people the same time."*
Bitterness poisons many! (Heb. 12:15)
- 4) God chastened him with sickness 12,13 *"And Asa ... was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: (another opportunity to trust & turn to God) yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians. (WHY didn't he want to seek God?) And Asa died..."*

Application:

When we're under pressure, our natural focus and feelings will be on ourselves and how to "fix" the problem.

Jesus, Facing his final week, knowing the betrayal that awaited Him,

Notice His:

- **Feelings** (Transparency) *"now is my soul troubled:... Father save me from this hour."*
- **Faith** (Realization of Purpose) *"but for this cause came I unto this hour."*
- **Focus** *"Father, glorify thy name."* (Jn. 12:27,28)

He didn't ask: "How can I get out of this?" but rather:
"How can God be glorified through this?"

1 Pt 2:21-23 *"hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"*

(We can know what Jesus would do by learning What He did Do!)

When God leads you into difficulties, you can be sure that He has purposes He wants to accomplish that will result in your ultimate good and His ultimate glory. (Romans 8:28,29)

Will you "prove" your love by committing your "Feelings, Faith, and Focus" to God?