

Principles for Powerful Living

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, March 12th

The world pressures us to conform. (Ro. 12:1,2; 2 Cor. 4:4) God challenges us to Transform!

(Ro. 12:2) Any truly substantial change is hard! It requires embracing biblical principles and building solid habits (based on those principles) into our lives that will produce positive / productive change. We can't "wish ourselves" into good habits. Habits take time to develop. Dave Ramsey observes that: *"Change is Painful! Few have the courage to seek out change. Most won't change until the pain of where they are exceeds the pain of changing."*

He's built an international business by creatively helping people incorporate basic and biblical financial principles such as Pr. 22:7 *"The borrower is servant to the lender"*

We've been focusing on some basic, biblical principles that will help us to make a positive difference in our homes, church, and communities.

We've already discussed the Passion Principle! Col. 3:16-25

This morning I'd like to introduce the Principle of the "Open Hand." Ex. 3, 4:1-17

DIRECTION: Moses had experienced enough disappointment in himself, his people, his circumstances, and perhaps (from his perspective) even his God to last a life time. He went from the palace, to his people, to a problem, to a pauper on the backside of the desert. At the age of 80 he was probably past the point of any hope (or even desire) for a significant change. While minding his business (actually his father in laws business) God confronts him with a major challenge in Ex. 3 and 4. Please notice:

- Little choices often lead to big ones! Moses Chose to investigate the burning bush. 3:3
- God Revealed Himself and His will to Moses. 3:4-8
- God revealed Moses' place in His will. (Vs 9-10) (That's when the problems started) Moses Began to make excuses, blaming...Himself (vs 11)...and the other Israelites.(4:1)
- God finally asked Moses *"What is that in thine hand?..."* Ex. 4:2

God used the principle of the Open Hand to encourage a reluctant Moses to get going.

1. Most Approach God (and others) With A Closed Hand.

History of the handshake: Ancient German duelists would greet another with an open hand as a signal of peaceful intentions.

A. A CLOSED HAND INDICATES:

- 1) There is something in our grasp that we don't want to let go of.
(A Possession, plan, person, or position.)
- 2) That we know better than God. (*We must protect ourselves or whatever is in our hands.*)
- 3) What we're Clinging too means more than God's will! Lk 22:42; John 5:40; 10:10,27,28

Jer. 29:11 *"I know the thoughts (maḥashābâ': plans) that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected (tiqwâ: hope, expectation) end."* {from 'aḥar: afterwards}

The trouble is that we have our own "expected end".

We're bound to our own plans (or those of others) and not considering "afterwards". (Mt 6:19-24)

2. God Will Often Ask Us To Surrender What We Cling To.

A. MOSES. Ex 4:2 *"what's in thine hand?"* Vs 3 *"cast it on the ground"* Ex. 4:3

B. ABRAHAM. (Gen. 22) "Release your grip" on Isaac.

C. PAUL (Ph. 3:7-10) *“The things that were gain to me, I count loss for Christ...”*

D. JESUS. (Phil. 2:5-10; Mt. 26:29; 2 Cor 8:9)

3. An Open Hand Indicates.

A. **SURRENDER** (A Willingness to *trust*)

1) Jesus revealed his submission to God’s plan for redemption in Mt. 16:21

22 *“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. 24 Then aid Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 25 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

B. **RECEPTIVITY.** (A willingness to *receive*)

Ps. 145:15,16; Lk 12:31-32; Ps 81:10-12

C. **COOPERATION.** (A Willingness to *“participate {partner}”*)

1 Cor 3:9 *“we’re laborers together with God”* (See also Mt 11:28-30)

D. **GENEROUSITY.** (A willingness to *Share*) 2 Cor. 9:6-8 *“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work;”* (See also 1 Tim. 6:17-19)

One by one He took them from me; All the things I valued most;
Until I was empty-handed, Every glittering toy was lost.
And I walked earth's highways, grieving, In my rags and poverty.
Until I heard His voice inviting, ‘Lift those empty hands to Me!’
Then I turned my hands toward heaven, And He filled them with a store
Of His own transcendent riches, 'Till they could contain no more.
And at last I comprehended; With my stupid mind, and dull,
That God cannot pour His riches, Into hands already full!

Conclusion:

Moses was full of excuses in Ex. 3,4; but when he finally opened his hand to God, his heart began to open again. God didn’t ask Moses to give Him anything that he didn’t have!

Since Moses was willing to “open his hand”, and give God what he had, God transformed the rod and it became known as “The Rod of God.” (Ex. 4:21, 17:9)

Application:

What’s God placed in your hands? Are you willing to give it to God?

If so, He’ll sanctify it and use it for His Glory.

Ex 4:17 *“thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.”*

(’ôt: evidence) (See Mt. 5:13-16)

**“How I praise Thee, precious Savior, that Thy love laid hold of me,
Though has saved and cleansed and filled me, that I might thy channel be.
Channels only, blessed Master, but with all thy wondrous power,
Flowing through us, thou canst use us, every day, and every hour.**

OR

“Is your life a channel of blessing? Is the love of God flowing through you?
Are you telling the lost of the Savior” Are you reading His service to do?
Make me a channel of blessing today, Make me a channel of blessing I pray.
My life possessing, my service blessing, Make me a channel of blessing to day.

**Giving starts in the heart (I want to), then moves to the head (I’m willing to)
then moves through the hands. (I am doing it.)**

Dorcus had a needle; David had a sling.
Samson had a jawbone; Aseph, he could sing.
The boy had loaves and fishes; Mary had perfume,
Someone shared his donkey; Others used the loom.
A woman built the chamber; Prophets used to rest.
The Magi gave their riches; starting on their quest.
Joseph gave reputation; Mary, a virgin womb,
Abraham had his only son; Joseph had a tomb.
Gideon had a pitcher; Moses had a rod.
Each were freely given; so each were used of God.

What’s in your hand?

I am your constant companion, I am your greatest helper or your heaviest burden.
I will push you forward or drag you down to failure. I am at your command.
Half of the tasks that you do you might just as well turn them over to me,
I will do them quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed, you must merely be firm with me.
Show me exactly how you want something done; and after a few lessons
I will do it automatically.

I am the servant of all great people and the master of all failures as well.
Those who are great I have made great, those who are failures, I have made failures.

I am not a machine, but I work with all the precision of a machine,
plus the intelligence of a person.

Now you may run me for profit or you may run me for ruin.
It makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will lay the world at your feet.
Be easy with me and I will destroy you. Who am I? My name is HABIT!