

## SOME “DIFFICULT” TOOLS GOD USES TO SHAPE US. Pt 3

*“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 4<sup>th</sup>

**Reflection:** God describes His people as precious jewels. (Ex. 19:5; Mal. 3:17; 1 Peter 2:9)

**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)
- **Powerful!** (Acts 4:13, 33)
- **Painful** (Is. 48:10,11; 1 Pt 1:7)

There’s a paradoxical pattern in scripture and history in which God uses the attacks of Satan (and others) to strengthen and develop us! God can use some of Satan’s “sharpest” attacks as tools to help shape us into the *“Image of His Son”*. (See also Gen. 50:20; Job 23:10) **Some of these tools include:**

- **Trouble** in order to: **Turn us** (*Pr. 1:23; Heb 12; Rev. 3:19*); **Tune us** (*Jn 12:27,28; 2 Cor. 12:7-12*) and **Teach us** to trust and touch Him. (*Rp. 8:28-39*)
- **Temptation to teach us to obey Him.** (*Jms 1:12*)

**Direction:** This morning I’d like to discuss how God can even use “Trespases” (*the sin or offences of others*) to teach us to Forgive! **“To err is Human, to forgive is Divine.”**

In fact, We’re never more like Christ than when we truly forgive!

**If Trials are situations designed by God to draw us closer to Him and Temptations are situations designed by the devil to draw us away from Him, then Trespases are situations designed by Satan and/or others in order to wound us.** (*causing bitterness Heb. 12:15*)

## Truths about Trespases Mt 18

### 1. Trespases are *sinful*. Vs 7-15

**A. Trespass: (hamartanō) means “To miss the mark (Drift) and so forfeit the prize”**

1) This is the root word for “Sin” ((hamartia)

**B. All Sin is a “trespass” against God in that it causes us to drift from God.**

(Gen. 3:8; Isaiah 59:2)

**C. Some sin causes others to trespass against us; (or vice versa)**

**causing us to drift (emotionally distance) from them.**

1) Jesus commands us to seek reconciliation. Mt 18:15-18 Mt 5:23-24 *“if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar.. First be reconciled to thy brother, (Diallas’sō: to change thoroughly, conciliate) and then come and offer thy gift.”*

### 2. Trespases are *relatable* to *offences*. Mt 18:7,15

**A. Satan uses them to try to “trap” us. (2 Tim. 2:24-26)**

**“Offence”:** σκάνδαλον (skandalon) a trap or snare!

- 1) Unforgiven offences produce bitterness. Heb. 12:15,16
- 2) Bitterness poisons (pikria) us and those around us.

### 3. Trespases are *inevitable*. Mt. 18:7 *“For it must needs be that offences come! “*

**A. Anything that moves produces friction.**

1) The greater the difference (*direction/opinion*) the greater the difficulty (*friction/offence*)!

Lk 17:1,3 *“It’s impossible but that offences will come... If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.”*

#### 4. Trespasses are painful

A. They feel like a betrayal (of trust). Ps 55:12-13 *"it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, (allûph: chief friend) and mine acquaintance."* (yada: to know)

B. Jesus knew this pain. Lk 22:48 *"betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"* (Mt. 26:34; Mk 14:50)

1) He can relate! Heb. 4:15,16 *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

2) If we truly follow Him, we'll experience it as well.

Phil 3:10 *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings,"*

2 Tim 3:12 *"all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

**Conclusion:** Since Trespasses (offences) are sinful, relatable, inevitable and painful;

It would benefit us to learn how to deal with them in a Christ-like way.

1 Pt 2:21-25 *"For 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:*

(See Luke 23:46) *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."*

**God wants to use, even the wrongs done to us to**

***"transform us into the image of His son."* Ro. 8:28**

Paul Stevens' daughter Cindy was stabbed to death by a neighbor in Evansville, Indiana, years ago.

Paul Stevens spent nearly a decade tortured by the memory of his daughter's killer.

A year later, the memories proved so hard to bear that Stevens moved his family from Evansville to a new home near Dawson Springs, Kentucky. His daughter's killer was released after seven years behind bars. Stevens's hatred twisted his psyche.

*"At that time I wanted to see that man dead,"* Stevens said.

In 1978, nine years after the murder, Stevens tried something radical. At a religious retreat, he finally grasped that his hate couldn't restore his daughter. He vowed to overcome the tragedy and devote his time to working with violent criminals. Since that time, Stevens has spent two days each week working as a counselor and lay minister at a maximum security prison. He has come to call some of the 29 prisoners on death row his friends.

I read about one of those prisoners who said he could never have been led to Christ except by this man who had such compassionate understanding. Stevens said treating violent criminals as human beings has helped him lose his hatred and made him a happier person.

If God could use this tragedy to transform Paul, He can use your hurts to help you...help others!

### **Application:**

**Please prayerfully read and reflect on Matthew 18 and ask God to reveal:**

1) **How Christ commands (and enables) us to deal with the difficulties (and inevitabilities) of Trespasses and offences.**

2) **The tragic and terrible consequences of neglecting his directions.**