

God's Teaching & Development

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The true believer continually meets one circumstance or another which are arranged and controlled by God in a way that is needed for our spiritual growth and development. God's love and mercy toward us compels Him to do what is necessary for our learning how to trust Him. He will teach us as quickly as we are able to learn, in order to change what needs to be changed.

There is no time to waste in allowing God to do the spiritual work that needs to be done on our heart. We must be ready to receive all the spiritual development possible with every circumstance met. It will always work Romans 8:28 *"for [the spiritual] good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

It matters not *what* is met or *who* it is from—and whether it hits us hard or easy—when it *is* met, it is just what the mercy and wisdom of God permitted to teach and develop our attitude to be what it should be. We began life with an opposite attitude toward God to what it must be, so it can take many lessons, and various circumstances, to bring the needed change.

We begin life totally in the dark concerning God—we have no idea about Him—what He is like, how powerful He is, or what He wants to do for us. This lack of knowledge about God is the basic cause of many problems we encounter. If we knew God, we would love Him with all our heart, soul, and mind Matthew 22:37. His con-

cern and love toward *us* would compel our love and loyalty toward *Him*.

When we know someone very well, it is easy to have confidence in them. Our faith is always measured by the knowledge we have of someone. Knowing how competent a repairman is, enables us to put our faith in them to do the job right. If we really knew God, we would really put our faith in Him to do the job of changing our attitude.

When King Jehoshaphat met with a serious situation, he responded as we should respond to things we meet. At first the king was fearful because he lacked a right knowledge of God, but after the battle, and meeting it in God's way, he understood how powerful God is. He then knew Psalms 46:1 *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

The Creator of everything would always be with him to protect him—Matthew 1:23 *"Immanuel"—which means, 'God with us.'"* No matter what difficulty we meet, God is by our side to protect us and to deliver us. Psalms 46:2 *"Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."*

Fear is the door of entrance for Satan's temptations. Job said Job 3:25 *"What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me."* The devil had to obtain Job's consent, by getting him to believe his lies, before he was able to oppress him. It is our choice to fear and be troubled, or to resist in faith and enjoy God's peace. King Jehoshaphat had to resist fear, and when he did, he enjoyed God's peace.

No matter what takes place in our life, we are not to fear, and we are not to be upset about anything. Every circumstance we meet is designed by God for our spiritual development—just as He permitted things to happen to those in the Bible. We are most fortunate that after two

thousand years, when the pure Gospel came to this earth, God has kept His Truth alive—and He will give His Truth to anyone else willing to believe, and ready to live by faith in Him.

The Christian church became corrupt in the 3rd century and that corruption has continued to this day. But since God has not changed, He will teach His Truth to anyone, if they will allow Him to do that spiritual work. Romans 8:29 *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

Jesus had to ask Luke 18:8 *"When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"*—because He knew that there would hardly be anyone, of over six billion people, who would be willing to truly trust God in faith for what they need in this life.

The average professing Christian has no idea that their eternal life depends on their learning to trust God in faith for things in this life. They are not taught that, but it is the only way we can be prepared for Paradise—and only God can teach us how to trust Him in faith.

Nothing can touch us except that which is permitted—because of some spiritual lack, or some knowledge of God we need to know. We should not blame people for things said or done to us, because difficult things reveal spiritual needs in us. Whatever happens is just what we needed.

The supporting pillar of self is resentment in our heart. Anger in our heart can stay hidden if everything went right and everyone treated us well. Satan and self are deadly enemies who can remain concealed until something really disturbs us. The more upsetting it is, the more self is exposed. God permits things to happen so we will learn to put them in His hands.

Mark 11:25 *"When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."* Mark 11:26 *"But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."* If we are not forgiven of sins, then every sin ever committed—even though they were forgiven thru the Blood of Christ—will be charged against us. Resentment *must* be confessed and forsaken, or we would die in our sins, and go straight to the Lake of Fire.

When we meet any difficulty as the Scriptures say to meet it, we will obtain an understanding of God and His Word. We should never complain, but to learn from trials, by responding to them as Bible believers did. The result is spiritual growth and development to a likeness of Christ.

God permitted circumstances in Job's life to prove that he did not know his Creator. Job's attitude was opposite to what it should have been, because he blamed God at first. Job thought things happened just because God was not concerned about him.

Job soon discovered that God was very concerned, and that if he held to his *faith* in God, he would learn what he needed to *know* about God. Job had to know that he himself was the cause of all the problems he experienced. He came to the place where he could say, like the thief on the cross said, Luke 23:41 *"We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."*

Satan and self had shut out any knowledge of God. To the extent those enemies are exposed and removed—to that extent, we will learn what kind of a God we have with us and by our side every minute. Job was finally able to say Job 42:5-6, *"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust*

and ashes." God was just the opposite to what Job had thought—God was loving, kind, faithful, and true. This valuable knowledge was learned thru patient trust on God.

Holding to our faith in God and trusting Him to bring about justice—when difficult things are encountered—brings the right result. James 5:9-11 *"Do not grumble [grudge not] against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering [affliction] and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance [patience] of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful."*

If we will persevere thru trials, with our faith still on God, His love, mercy, and power will work for us. Psalm 103:13 *"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him."* God is the One Psalm 103:3-6 *"who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit [destruction], and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires [mouth] with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed."*

The human heart is prone to complain. When Israel was short of supplies, this lack of food revealed their lack of *faith*. They even wanted to return to slavery in Egypt, and instead of praying, they were complaining. They said to MOSES Exodus 16:3 *"You have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."*

That attitude showed how little they knew about God's true character, because He *"satisfies your [mouth] with good things."* God

promised 4 *"Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day."* Some of those Israelites were taught and developed by God—like Caleb and Joshua.

Elisha the prophet was taught by God and developed spiritually. When his servant feared being captured by the military, the prophet told him 2 Kings 6:16 *"Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."* That is the response of someone taught and developed by God.

17 *"Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."* Really knowing God, really gives that result.

God wants to bring everyone to that place—where we will not fear, but will have peace no matter what happens. Isaiah 26:3 *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."*

When the apostle Paul was at Miletus, he told the elders of the church how he had always taught Acts 20:21 *"repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."* Also that 23-24 *"the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations [bonds and afflictions] await me."* It did not cause any fear at all, so he said—*"nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy."* That is the result of allowing God to teach and develop him spiritually.

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