

Recovery Principle: Submitting Through Trials And Correction

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Tuesday, May 10, 2016

Today's Scripture Focus: Isaiah 54:4-8
We are focusing on sin recovery principle number three of 12: "We have decided to submit our wills and lives wholeheartedly to God."



I admit that some of us Christians behave as though we can do no wrong, which is evident in the way some of us find fault with people before we lend a helping hand. Don't get me wrong, those who love God must help people who are consistently doing things God does not approve, but if we are to be effective, we must take our cues from Jesus. He always called sin by its name. He never sugar-coated it just to make people feel better. He knew that to shroud the facts would be detrimental to those living outside God's will. The key, however, was to help people see the error of their ways as He empowered them to live holy lives.

When hypocritical leaders heartlessly dragged a woman caught in the act of

adultery into the temple, Jesus did identify that she sinned, but He also empowered her to turn from it, rather than to condemn her to hell. She had a choice to either accept His love and power or reject it. The leaders chose to reject His grace and hold on to their hypocrisy to their detriment.

I know a prominent pastor whose story is the embodiment of our theme verses. At what may have been considered the apex of his career as a church leader, he found himself in a world of trouble. For some time, he engaged in sins that became public and devastated many who looked on. People were unable to reconcile the fact that he was such a powerful man of God and that he engaged in such activity. He had led so many people to right relationship with God. He had trained so many leaders for service. He was a great family man and a lover of all things holy, yet he fell prey to evil desires.



*“For a small moment
have I forsaken thee;
But with great
mercies will I gather
thee. In a little
wrath I hid my face
from thee for a
moment; But with
everlasting kindness
will I have mercy on
thee, Saith the LORD
thy Redeemer” (Isaiah
54:7-8).*

He had a decision to make. Would he wallow in self-pity and turn his back on

God forever or would he accept the consequences of his actions, invest time in righting his wrongs, and emerge from the experience a more refined believer than ever before? I am pleased to report that he chose the latter. I met him and spent lots of time with him over the years since then and his story of triumph in the Spirit is nothing short of remarkable. What I discovered was that his favorite text had become: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; But with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, Saith the LORD thy Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:7-8).

Like Israel of old to whom this referred, this man experienced the incredible love of God. He experienced the pain and shame of having deviated from God's path for a time. Like Israel, He felt the loneliness of exile when some colleagues and so-called friends wrote him off as though his sins were more egregious than theirs and that he could scarcely be recovered from his fault. He experienced the pain of feeling forsaken by God, but in mercy, our heavenly Father gathered this gentleman under His banner of protection. God gave this man of God the gift of repentance and has made his ministry more fruitful than it had ever been before. And many people have learned how to submit their lives to God even through their roughest, most embarrassing trials.

His story is an encouragement to me. If I did not already know that God loved me and could deliver me from any problem or sin, I certainly found out as I experienced this man's living testimony. God taught him submission. He can teach you too!