

## *Women & More*

### ***Remain Domain***

Lesson 10: **November 5, 2015**—*sanctification*

Our lives are lived out in increments of seconds which turn into minutes; then hours, days, weeks, and years. Few of us live seconds at a time; we're much more inclined to think of time-divisions in terms of moments (segments of seconds; measures of minutes, or parts and pieces of the grand plan): Moments of happiness or of sadness, of success or of failure, of growth or of stagnancy, of wellness or...not. The happy hours pass quickly, but the more difficult the experiences the longer the moments! The chorus of a song written by Gloria Gaither expresses the passing of a moment like this:

“We have this moment to hold in our hands  
And to touch as it slips through our fingers like sand;  
Yesterday's gone and tomorrow may never come,  
But we have this moment today.”

Here are four things that we cannot recover: The stone, after it is thrown; the word, after it is said; the occasion, after it is missed, and time...after it is gone! If time that is passed is irretrievable, then why would we waste time or, worse yet, kill time? Scripture teaches us in Psalm 90:12 “...to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” Most of us have reached an age where we can look back on our lives and see moments of rapid growth—physically and mentally—followed by slower progress, mixed with maintenance and regression, before getting additional growth.

So it is with our spiritual lives. When we receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, God seems to reward us with an encouraging growth spurt, as we readily share our new found faith, quickly learn truths from God's word, and excitedly embark on our Christian lives. God will often allow us to succeed, fairly effortlessly, in living for him at first. Just as children start out their lives with not a lot of responsibility or challenges are, at some point, challenged to stretch their selves. If believers choose to follow Christ closely and be his disciples, he will—sooner or later—take great pains with our training in righteousness.

These training periods can be tenuous and tedious, and even cause us to feel that we have failed some test or sinned some sin that we simply cannot identify. But God has actually pulled us aside to provide scrupulous training and special closeness which he will develop in us to carry out the plans he has for us. **And we must ‘remain’ in that teaching domain until he moves us on!** Often we won't have a choice. In our relationship with God, we are called to remain where he has us while he scrapes and shapes and makes us useable.

It is a painful process, but when the processor is none other than the Divine, we can be certain that the end result will be as much. As grapes on a vine, we must remain until we're ripe and ready for His picking! Henry van Dyke: "Remember that in this world every mountaintop of privilege is girdled by the vales of lowly duty. Remember that the transfiguration of the soul is but the preparation and encouragement for the sacrifice of the life."

♦Joseph is the perfect example of God planning to use his life, and then shaping him for that particular use. God had told Joseph the 'plan' in a dream at 17 years of age, but then sent him out to be trained—domains where he was forced to remain—until he was ready to fulfill the plan. Between the time that Joseph shared his dream with his family in Genesis 37 and when he finally said those famed words to his brothers in chapter 50, "You thought evil against me; but **God meant it** unto good," (KJV) a whole lot of 'remain' domain had occurred.

Pulled from a pit and sold to Potiphar by his brothers, and brought to Egypt to serve in the ruler's house, Joseph found favor with his master. But the master's wife tried to trap him into compromise. When that didn't work and Joseph ran, leaving his coat, she told her husband a lie that got Joseph thrown into prison. In prison, Joseph found favor with the guards and was placed in a trustworthy position. He correctly interpreted dreams for a butler and baker, which resulted in the baker's death and the butler returned to Pharaoh's service. "Remember me to Pharaoh," Joseph had asked the butler, who promised—but forgot.

Years later, as the brothers who tried to end his life and ultimately sold him into slavery stood before him in Genesis 50:19-20—"*But Joseph said to them, 'Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20You intended to harm me, but **God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.** 21So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.'* And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them." Notice that God intended it—He'd shaped Joseph and then used him to deliver the Israelites out of the jaws of famine. Oh, God had done a work in Joseph who was kind to the very ones responsible for his rough life. Throughout his training, he'd drawn closer to his God and he remained!

In his book, *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer said, "To drive us to cling to Him more closely is the ultimate reason, from our standpoint, why God fills our lives with troubles and perplexities of one sort and another—it is to ensure that we shall learn to hold Him fast. The reason why the Bible spends so much of its time reiterating that God is a strong rock, a firm defense, and a sure refuge and help for the weak, is that God spends so much of His time bringing home to us that we are weak, both mentally and morally, and dare not trust ourselves to find, or to follow, the right road."

◆In the biography of Puritan Pastor, Jonathan Edwards—*A Life*—by George Marsden, he told about one of Edward’s younger sisters, Martha, and described her as one who was not easy to get along with. Timothy Edwards, when asked for his daughter’s hand in marriage informed the suitor—who’d heard that Martha had received God’s converting grace—“Martha is a good girl,” he said, “**but the grace of God will dwell where you or I cannot.**”

Arrested spiritual development will be the result of a life unwilling to be trained and stretched to fit the plan God has for it. Mrs. Charles E. Cowman: “Lord, lead me into the depths of Thy life and save me from a shallow experience.” God desires for us to grow up in grace: to have an ever-deeper knowledge of him and an ever-closer fellowship with him. And he has provided an indwelling instructor—the Holy Spirit—and our part is to **remain** in the domain in which he places us for these hard experiences.

Webster’s *New American Dictionary* defines **remain**: 1 : **to be** left after others have been removed, subtracted, or destroyed 2 : **to be something yet to be shown**, done, or treated 3 : **to stay** after others have gone 4 : **to continue** unchanged. And in Scripture, John jumps right into the ‘remain’ domain:

John 15:4-10 “**Remain** in me, and I will **remain** in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself, it must **remain** in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you **remain** in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man **remains** in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing**. 6 If anyone does not **remain** in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are packed up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you **remain** in me and my words **remain** in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now **remain** in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will **remain** in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and **remain** in his love.”

Jesus exhorts us through John to **first** and foremost, with a promise: “*remain in me, and I will remain in you,*” because he is the branch and we are the vine. When a vine is disconnected from the branch it dies—it loses any effectiveness as a living extension of the vine: “*apart from me you can do nothing.*” **Second**, we are to see to it that his words remain in us (no explanation needed here), and **third** we are to remain in his love, and we do that by obeying his commands. And this is the formula: **The spiritual sap of the divine vine will flow freely into the staying soul!** And the divine vine will provide the staying power we need to remain. Sanctification is the process by which we grow in holiness—becoming more and more holy even as He is holy.

“The man who is really forgiven, is anxious not to offend again: the possession of justification leads to an anxious desire for sanctification,” said Charles Spurgeon. “‘*Forgive us our debts*’, that is justification; ‘*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*’, that is sanctification in its negative and positive forms.” The Holy Spirit, who came in at our justification will guide us through our sanctification process. Packer: “The true way to honor the Holy Spirit as our guide is to honor the Holy Scriptures through which He guides us. The Spirit leads within the limits which the Word sets, not beyond them. ‘*He leadeth me in paths of righteousness*’—but not anywhere else.”

The Holy Spirit will reveal and perform an anointing—consecrating—enabling us to devote solemnly to the Word of Truth in our lives: 1 John 2:20-27 “*But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son. 23No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

24“*See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25And this is what he promised us—even eternal life.*

26“*I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.”*

*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*: “Any teaching in the church should only be what was received from the beginning (Galatians 1:6; 1 Timothy 6:8; 2 Timothy 1:13; 4:3-5; Titus 1:9 and 2 Peter 3:2). The Spirit’s anointing teaches all things necessary for us to know concerning the Word of Life. John does not advance the idea that the Spirit will add new revelation to what has already been given, but that the Word of the Gospel must be heard, and be given a vital place in our lives.”

► Warning in Proverbs 19:2-3 “*It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way 3A man’s own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the LORD.*” Snap decisions, when implemented, often become unfastened!

**In Judges 11:30-31; 34-35 we read about zeal without knowledge.** “*And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: ‘If you give the Ammonites into my hands, 31whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD’s and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering.”*

34“*When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter dancing to the sound of tambourines! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. 35When he saw her, **he tore his clothes and cried, ‘Oh! My daughter! You have made me miserable and wretched, because I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break.**” We are so prone!*

♥By contrast, there was Hannah, who when maliciously tormented—opposed—by others because she could not bear children, did not answer in kind, but went to God with her need. She thoughtfully and prayerfully gave up her first born son—after he was weaned and some three years old—to the LORD who’d given him to her in answer to her many prayers (1 Samuel 1 and 2), and she gave birth to five more children after Samuel.

In an attachment to the worksheet: *What was so bad about where they were at that they needed to go where they went?* I describe a phenomena and plight of worms that leave their earthen domains looking for “greener pastures” where most meet their demise in one of several awful ways. It reminds me of Christ followers who chose to be his disciples—learners, pupils—but at the point where God is working them over to shape and mold them, to make them a sharp instrument of service, they go; they leave, and are in danger of experiencing the following:

- 1) drying up spiritually;
- 2) being grabbed up by doubt and unbelief; or
- 3) smashed by the wheels of legalism or, worse yet,
- 4) rendered ineffective through false teaching. Woe!

Repent, return and **remain!** Charles Spurgeon: “There is no place so well adapted for the discovery of sin, and recovery from its power and guilt, as the immediate presence of God.” Psalm 40:1-3 *“I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry.*

*2He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.*

*3He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD.”*

Mrs. Cowman: “You are in the quarry still, and not complete, but you are destined for a higher building, and one day you will be placed in it by hands not human, a living stone in a heavenly temple (ref: Isaiah 54:11). It is a sad mistake for men to break through God’s hedges. It is a vital principle of guidance for a Christian never to move out of the place in which he is sure God has placed him, until the Pillar of Cloud moves.”

♥I claimed this verse back in October 2006 after being just six months in Grove: *“But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me”* 1 Corinthians 15:8-9. It was April 2008—close to two years later—when God gave the go-ahead for *Women & More*. And with the great door for effective work comes the many who oppose: This is God’s sanctifying domain—and **we must remain!**