

## I. Introduction

- A. Welcome to part three of our series on spiritual growth.
- B. A while back, there was a fad that a lot of Christians got into. It was this pin that church people were sporting. It said: *PBPGINFWMY*
- C. This one is actually for sale on E-bay. Anybody remember this thing? It's from the late 1960's I think. Totally vintage.
- D. Know what this stands for?
  - 1. *Please Be Patient. God is Not Finished With Me Yet.*
- E. You would wear the pin. People would ask you about it. And then you have this spiritual conversation. It was weird retro cool.
- F. As weird as this might be, it's true. God is working on you. You are his workmanship, the Bible says. You are a work in progress. You aren't what you can be. You aren't what you shall be. But thank God, you aren't what you used to be either.
- G. If anybody says, You're an idiot. Just say, "Yeah, I know. PBPGINFWMY." Because they won't think you're an idiot any more.
- H. So you're a work in progress. You're on a journey. God is working on you.
- I. As you are listening to me right now, there are a lot of forces working on you. One of the forces is gravity. Gravity is holding you on the surface of the earth. Another force is momentum. Even though the earth is spinning at 1,037 mph (at the equator), we're all spinning with it. But we're moving super fast that way. There are other forces working on us, whether we feel them or not.
- J. In the same way, God is working on you. Sometimes you feel him. Sometimes you don't. Most of the time, you don't. Almost all the time, you don't.
- K. God is working on you with a reason, a purpose, and a process.
  - 1. The reason God is working on you is because you are his child, and he has a special love for you.
  - 2. The purpose God is working on you is to equip you to be the person he says you already are.
    - a) As we've been saying, God's purpose is to make your state match your standing. His purpose is that Christ in you would become Christ through you. Because that is the way you walk worthy of your high calling. You are royalty, now live like royalty. That's his purpose.
  - 3. The process by which God works on you is by taking you step by step through personal growth.
    - a) This process of personal growth has several names in the Bible. It is called sanctification. It is called making disciples. It is called growing up. It is called maturity.
    - b) There is another name for this process, and it is the name I want us to focus on today.
    - c) Think with me today on God's process called Edification.

## II. Edification

- A. The Bible actually uses this word about 20 times. But the concept is in the Bible a whole lot more than 20 times — hundreds of times. It's a pretty important thing.
  - 1. 1 Corinthians 14:26: Let all things be done for edification.
  - 2. 2 Corinthians 12:19: But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.
- B. What is edification? In today's English, to edify means to instruct or improve someone morally or intellectually. That's the current dictionary definition.
- C. But in Bible language, the word for edify is actually pretty vivid. You take the word for *build* and tack it on to the word for *house*. It means to build a house. (Oiko-domeo is the Greek word.)
- D. In other words...
  - 1. *Edification is the process of building an edifice.*
- E. When we say that God is working on you with a reason, a purpose, and a process, we are saying that God is at work building an edifice in your soul.
- F. A long, long time ago, I taught a series on this edifice in your soul. I gave that building project a name. I called it the Royal Palace of the Soul.
- G. If you are a Christian, God is working on you every single day. God is building a royal palace in your soul. A magnificent, soaring, glorious, beautiful, rock solid palace in your soul.

## III. The House in Your Soul

- A. *Jesus taught, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).*
- B. *Paul taught, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).*
- C. If you have received Jesus, you have received God.
- D. This is one of those things Christians have heard so many times, we've become immune to the absolute wonder of it. We begin to take it for granted.
- E. The Almighty Creator God of the Cosmos moved into... you.
- F. Bible experts call this his "indwelling." Ever since I've received Jesus, God indwells me all the time.
- G. And God is working on me all the time. God is working on me from the inside out. He's building something.
- H. This is edification.
- I. *Edification means to restructure your inner world.*
  - 1. *Edification means to create structures in your soul that can enjoy and respond to the presence of God.*
  - 2. *Edification means to create structures in your soul strong enough to withstand the storms of life.*
    - a) Do you remember the classic theological story called the Three Little Pigs?
      - (1) The first little pig built his house of straw. The big bad wolf came and blew his house down.

- (2) The second little pig built his house of sticks. The big bad wolf came and blew his house down.
- (3) The third little pig built his house of bricks. And no matter how bad the big bad wolf huffed and puffed, he couldn't blow the third little pig's house down.
- b) Edification is how you become the Third Little Piggy.
  - (1) You need to build a rock-solid house in your soul. Because the house on the stand goes splat, but the house on the rock stands firm.
  - (2) And here's the thing to not forget:
    - (a) There is a house in your soul. You can't get away from it. It's strong or it's weak. Either it's built on rock or built on sand. Either it's founded on Christ or founded on lies.

IV. Big Bad Wolves

- A. There are a lot of big bad wolves out there, but they belong to three main tribes: Temptation, Adversity, and Dysfunction.
  - 1. *Temptation (1 Thessalonians 3:5)*
    - a) This is the world's and devil's way of pulling you out of God's orbit by making you organize your life around treasure or pleasure and shortcuts to obtain them.
      - (1) *That is why, when I could bear it no longer, I sent Timothy to find out whether your faith was still strong. I was afraid that the Tempter had gotten the best of you and that all our work had been useless. (1 Thessalonians 3:5, NLT)*
  - 2. *Adversity (2 Corinthians 4:8-10)*
    - a) This is the world's and the devil's way of pulling you out of God's orbit by making you suspicious of the faithfulness and love of God through difficulties, heartbreaks, and pain.
      - (1) *We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-- always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Corinthians 4:8-10)*
  - 3. *Dysfunction (Romans 7:23)*
    - a) This is your inner dark side's way (the flesh) of pulling you out of God's orbit by burying your true identity beneath a false identity of self-defeating, relationship destroying routines built on a foundation of despair.
      - (1) *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Romans 7:23)*
- B. Here you are, created for fellowship with God. God lives inside you.
- C. And here you have three big bad wolves, trying to break the fellowship. Temptation, Adversity, and Dysfunction all have one Prime Directive: drive a wedge between you and God.
- D. They keep probing. They keep looking for an opening. They keep knocking.
  - 1. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Peter 5:8)*
- E. When temptation comes, when adversity comes, when dysfunction comes... there is only one house their huffing and puffing can't blow down.
- F. The edifice of spiritual maturity in your soul. The Royal Palace of the Soul.
- G. A fully constructed Royal Palace (spiritual growth and maturity) stands in the eye of life's hurricane. That's where you'll find peace in any storm. You'll find comfort when you're sad, guidance when you're lost, rest when you're weary, truth when you're confused, and grace when you've blown it.
- H. I want to do two quick case studies. One where a person was attacked and had the the Royal Palace in his soul. The second where the disciples faced adversity and didn't have the Royal Palace in their souls.

V. Case Study One: The Disciples on the Boat

- A. *On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" (Mark 4:35-41)*
- B. Epic fail.
- C. The Bible translators made this nicer than it really is. Jesus doesn't just say, "Why are you so fearful?" In the original Greek, it's Why are you such sissies? How is it that you have no faith?"
- D. Jesus is blown away. He's a ticked-off football coach. They heard him teach. They watched him do miracles. They had every opportunity to take in the Word of God, and they didn't.
- E. They set spiritual aside. They didn't dig in. They didn't trust. They didn't believe. They substituted occupation for edification. They were more interested in the activity of following Jesus than in the heart of knowing Jesus through his Word.
- F. So they were weak. They were sissies. When the big bad wolf came, their emotional houses were built on sand. Made of sticks and straw.
- G. When trouble came, they freaked out. And not only did they freak out, they took it out on Jesus. "Teacher, don't you care that we're perishing?" You heartless beast you.
- H. Christian, you carry within you an absolute amazing potential. You can have the authority and magnetism and impact and power that Jesus had. You can walk in his steps. You really can follow him.

- I. You can renovate your life from the inside out: your thinking, feeling, responding, and believing. You can become a mature Christian. You can grow up. You can make a difference.
  - J. You can walk the Grace Pathway.
    - 1. God saves you — receive him and be born again.
    - 2. God blesses you — build into your soul the absolute confidence of the gospel, and eternal security, and your riches in Christ.
    - 3. God grows you — understand the world, and the human heart, and good and evil, and the God who stands above it all. Go deep into the Bible.
    - 4. God uses you — contribute your life, your time, your gifts, your money to helping people find and follow God — helping everybody you know find the treasure you found when you found Christ. Don't be content to have him just for yourself. Spread the word.
  - K. In all this, the amazing thing is that the power for all this is not your power, it is God's power flowing through you just like it flowed through Jesus.
  - L. And you don't have to be religious or weird or super spiritual or phony. Be authentic. Be real. Be messy. Be true.
  - M. You can just be yourself and learn how to use the incredible grace-resources God has supplied for every moment of your life.
  - N. Jesus fully expected his disciples to be like him and do what he did. What did he do? He took a nap in the storm.
  - O. That's how edification is supposed to work.
    - 1. So that's a case study in how it all breaks down. When you neglect edification. Here's one where it works.
- VI. *Case Study Two: Daniel in Babylon*
- A. *"During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it with his armies" (Daniel 1:1, NLT).*
  - B. Six centuries before Christ, Babylonian armies conquered Jerusalem, razed the city, and forced the populace into exile. On the way out of town, they looted Solomon's temple, loading sacred gold artifacts worth millions into carts for the journey to Babylon.
  - C. They also looted the intellectual talent of the nation. The King Nebuchadnezzar captured the finest young scholars of Israel and enrolled them in Babylonian U. He commanded, *"Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good sense, and have the poise needed to serve in the royal palace. Teach these young men the language and literature of the Babylonians" (Daniel 1:4, NLT).* Nothing says "Welcome to Hell" better than required courses in "Polytheistic Decadence."
  - D. Daniel lost his home, his nation, his father, his mother, his sisters and brothers, his familiar places, his friends, his security, and his freedom. He lost his inheritance, his property, and his money. He lost a society that buttressed the values his parents taught him. Daniel lost everything in one terrible, horrible, no good, very bad week.
  - E. Daniel was fifteen years old.
  - F. Every big bad wolf came to blow his house down.
    - 1. He faced temptation: this came in the form of food (my personal love language) that would make him violate the laws of God, of spiritual caving in, and of a temptation for power.
    - 2. He faced adversity. We've already talked about that.
    - 3. He faced dysfunction. It's not explicit in Scripture, but nobody goes through what he went through without internal struggles and self-doubt.
  - G. Three quick questions:
    - 1. Question 1: Does Daniel's loss give him the right to collapse, turn bitter, and lash out at God for the rest of his days?
      - a) Answer 1: No. He does none of that. Daniel handles it, and he handles it like a champ. The Bible says, *"He purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself..." (Daniel 1:8).* Which leads us to...
    - 2. Question 2: What was in Daniel's soul that enabled him to handle such a loss? And...
    - 3. Question 3: Did his loss blockade the blessing of God?
      - a) The answer to question 3 is "no" because the answer to question two is "a recession-proof inner world." Daniel was the Third Little Piggy.
      - b) The guy was rock solid.
  - H. As a dad, I'm super concerned about the environment my kids will grow up in. But as a Christian dad, I have something I'm even more concerned about: the "invironment" that grows up in my kids. God wants me to have that exact concern, not only for my kids, but for myself too.
    - 1. *Environment is not as strong as Invironment.*
  - I. How was it that Daniel could be taken hostage at age fifteen, ripped from his family, torn from his homeland, transported to Babylon, pressured into adopting Babylonian values, yet follow Christ for seventy years without a flicker of unfaithfulness?
    - 1. Simple. Daniel had made his heart Christ's home.
    - 2. *For seventy years, three times a day, Daniel knelt down on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God (Daniel 6:10).*
  - J. Daniel withstood the pressures of Babylon. He had something inside him that kept him tight with God. He possessed a fully constructed Royal Palace in his soul. He visited daily with the King of Heaven and no matter how much the King of Babylon huffed and puffed, he couldn't blow Daniel's house down.
  - K. Jesus said, *"The kingdom of God is within you," (Luke 17:21).* Maybe one reason we're so vulnerable to adversity is because we've tried to build God's kingdom in the world but we've never built it inside our souls.
  - L. I've heard a million sermons about "seeking first" God's kingdom—usually in the context of giving more money to someone's church. But what if Jesus was talking about the kingdom within? What if he meant that we should prioritize the Royal Palace

in our soul and then all our blessings would flow and we'd have nothing to fear? How can we seek God's kingdom "out there" if we've never sought it in our hearts?

**VII. Edification**

- A. So this is edification. Call it Spiritual Growth. Spiritual maturity. Sanctification. The Grace Pathway. Discipleship. They're all interchangeable.
- B. But the day you got saved, God laid the foundation.
- C. Now he wants to restructure your heart.
  - 1. You begin to think like Jesus.
  - 2. You begin to believe like Jesus.
  - 3. You begin to have the same instincts about good and evil and people as Jesus.
- D. How do you build the house on the rock? How does God edify you? How do you go down the Grace Pathway?
  - 1. *The Builder is God (Psalm 127:1).*
  - 2. *The Permit Office is you (Isaiah 1:19).*
  - 3. *The Materials are the Truths of Scripture (Proverbs 23:3,4).*
    - a) *"Through wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; By knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches" (Proverbs 24:3,4).*
  - 4. *The Delivery Vehicle is Bible Study (Acts 17:11).*
- E. Salvation is the end of one thing, and the beginning of another thing. It is the end of your quest for God. It is the beginning of the adventure of a lifetime that stretches into eternity.

**VIII. A Profile of a Recession Proof Inner World**

- A. Kings came and went. Empires rose and fell. Conspiracies spun their webs around Daniel and dissolved into distant memories. A whole lot of huffing and puffing went on, but Daniel's house stood firm. No collapse. No self-pity. No getting even with God for ripping his life apart.
  - 1. Powerful emotions, yes.
  - 2. Turning against God, no.
- B. Even the pagan king, Belshazzar, figured out Daniel's secret: *"I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom [Scriptural truth] are found in you" (Daniel 5:14).*
  - 1. Daniel walked the whole Grace Pathway all life long.
- C. The man who subdued bloodthirsty lions, talked with angels, and comforted nervous kings said, *"But the people who know their God will be strong and carry out great exploits" (Daniel 11:32).* Daniel knew what he was talking about. He unraveled the monumental sweep of God's story and deciphered his place in it.
- D. To Daniel, God's Word become more than books and scrolls, it became his outlook on life—an unshakeable kingdom within. His story had no fairy tale ending, but he lived in a better palace than the world-conquering kings he served. He luxuriated in his very own Royal Palace of the Soul.
- E. And God will build the same glorious house in you and me too. God is working on you. He'll never give up. Today, tomorrow, everyday. You are his masterpiece... his work in progress.
- F. Cooperate. Don't fight him. Walk with him. Walk worthy. Don't be down on yourself. So...
- G. PBPGINFWMY. Please be patient. God is not finished with me yet.
- H. But he's working as fast as he can, and I'm not doing anything to slow him down.