

ARE YOU EARTH-BOUND?

What is the purpose of afflictions? God is working to draw us close to Him. The way we respond to opposition depends upon what is in our heart. If we are not living wholly for God, we respond to opposition by withdrawing.

If we are living wholly for God, opposition simply makes us draw closer to Him. This is an important truth that we must recognize and retain deeply in our heart. There is no greater test of our love for God than to go through a difficult period of testing. That testing is designed, not to see how strong we are, but to determine how motivated our heart is toward the Lord.

God desires a people with a pure motivation. He led the children of Israel for forty years through the wilderness to test them, to know their heart, to determine whether or not they were going to serve Him (Deuteronomy 8:1–6).

He wanted them to understand that man does not live by bread alone. He wanted them to be diverted from living in the temporal realm. Their focus had to be diverted from both temporal blessings and temporal oppositions. In the process of their daily living they had to be motivated to seek God above everything else; it had to be the hunger of their heart.

When people draw away from walking with God, it is usually because their motivation is wrong or it is not yet what God really wants it to be. When Jesus distributed the loaves and fishes to the multitude, the people had a

marvelous time. They listened to Him preach, they brought many people to be healed, and they had a wonderful picnic. However, when they learned that they could not make Him the kind of king who would always provide loaves and fishes, then they were ready to turn away from Him (John 6:66–69).

We must understand that we cannot serve God for temporal reasons alone. We must have a driving motivation to walk with God and to seek Him above everything else. When we seek first the Kingdom and His righteousness, then we can look for other things to be added (Matthew 6:33).

God brings us to the place where we simply believe Him and trust Him with faith. It all comes down to the fact that the beggars, the whiners, and those who withdraw will receive very little. God will bless those who press in to do His will.

We will be earth-bound as long as we are affected by earthly things. Jesus told His disciples, “Forsake all and follow me.” They did leave everything; they forsook every possession, every relationship, and every significant place in life. Why did God place that burden on them?

“As long as we are affected by the things on earth, as long as we set our heart on those things, we will not break through to the higher dimension of faith.” As long as our motivation and our heart’s desire is on an earthly level, we will live an earth-bound life. However, when we break through to a higher realm, we will live in the realm of faith.

This realm of faith is a higher dimension, we are filled with the Spirit with an awareness of the heavenly realm and the faith of God is just there as a result of being filled with the life of God.

We know that there is an earthly realm, but there is a realm above the earthly plane. Many teachings in the Psalms, in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the New Testament epistles indicate that there is a higher life, a life apparently governed by different rules and regulations.

As long as we are affected by the lower realm and bound to it, that is exactly where we will live; and that is where we will be tested. If all the blessings on the lower level are taken away, Gods intent is to bring us into a higher realm?

We know that God wanted to give Job a double portion, but because of his fear he went through devastation. Then God said, "Gird up your loins, Job; I'm going to talk to you" (Job 38:3; 40:7). Then Job stood before God, while He talked about some of the greatest mysteries of the universe. After his period of testing, he was moving in a higher realm than before. He was brought up to the realm where he could walk and talk with God?

Until we reach the place where nothing else matters except the Lord, we will live in the lower realm where circumstances, testing's, and trials constantly beset us.

When we are driven up into the higher realm, we find a whole new set of rules. For instance, Jesus never worried

about inflation. When there was a need for food, He blessed the loaves and fishes and they were multiplied. He did not worry about transportation or other problems. If He had to get across the sea, He could walk over it, because of His great faith. If there was a storm, He could stop it. Jesus moved with faith, and He was an example for us, showing how we ought to walk. He tried to teach us that there is a faith factor which is greater than anything else—a faith factor that looses us into another realm. As we seek Him first, we do not have to worry about many lesser things. He will give us the answers we need when we reach up and draw upon His grace.

We must break into this new dimension where the faith of God presides over our lives, where the promises of God are very real. It will not be attained by someone who exclaims, “Oh good, if I abide in Him and His Words abide in me, then I can ask whatever I will.” That is placing the emphasis on the wrong part of the verse.

The key to the breakthrough is that we abide in Him and let His Words live in us (John 15:7); we are living in a heavenly realm, then we reach the place where the lower realm does not matter too much—in fact, we will be able to control it very easily.

Then when we ask whatever we will, the desire for those things will no longer trouble us and therefore they will not become an occasion for defeat.

What did Paul mean when he said, “Henceforth let no man trouble me. I bear in my body the marks of the Lord

Jesus” (Galatians 6:17). “From now on let nothing and no one trouble me. Even if they want to kill me or beat me, it will be no trouble to me , because I already bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

I have suffered to the point where I know that my motivation is pure; I am set to walk with God, no matter what happens to me. From now on, nothing will discourage me.” It is necessary for us to see this aspect of Paul’s thinking.

The Bible tells of men whose motivation was so set on God that they reached into the upper realm, where they were governed by different laws and principles than those by which the world is governed.

When we read in the Word about a prophet who performed a miracle by his faith, we usually find that he was a man who cared very little about the natural realm.

Neither Elijah nor Joshua worried about anything except to wholeheartedly seek the Lord. Yet they both moved in a realm of authority that actually took dominion over the laws of nature.

Elijah brought fire down out of heaven, which consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and also licked up the water which flowed in the trenches around the altar (I Kings 18:38).

That miracle was an utter defiance of natural law! Joshua also defied natural law when he commanded the

sun to stand still, so that Israel could win the battle (Joshua 10:12–14).

Both Elijah and Joshua set their hearts wholly on God, even though great adversity came against them. Elijah experienced much opposition from King Ahab, Jezebel, and the prophets of Baal.

Joshua had to wander patiently through the wilderness for forty years, watching a whole nation drop dead around him. And yet, in spite of everything that happened, his heart was totally set on God.

When the time came to possess Canaan, he said, “Now we can do it. God’s promises are real.” When Joshua went into battle, he had already been thrust into the highest motivation that a heart can have: he was set to love and serve God with all of his heart and soul, mind and strength. Because he had reached that place, he was able to prevail. When he commanded the sun to stand still, it obeyed. He was able to see miracles wrought in the name of the Lord. The faith of God worked because he was motivated by His love for God.

If there is anything wrong in our dedication, we soon discover it when we come to a time of testing. If we reach a point where we are grumbling and complaining, and we say, “This is not the way of life I want for myself?”

People will settle on various levels, but blessed are the ones who will be content with nothing less than the highest

level of dedication, those whose motivation is to serve the Lord and to love Him with all their heart.

Walking with God should not be defined as a matter of completing the projects that are set before us. Often we are required to work hard. There are times when we probably would like to quit halfway through our job and do something else. But we will not quit, if we see that task as an expression of the will of God and not just as a menial job. Then we will submit to doing it joyfully and cheerfully.

In doing the will of God, we may experience a certain amount of drudgery and apparent confinement. All of those things test us until we come into a higher level. On that higher plane, every lowly task is dignified by the fact that we are pleasing Him. We glory in washing one another's feet. Even the most humble service becomes utter joy to us.

As our motivations are refined, through the testing circumstances and assaults, we will find our heart wholly set on the Lord. We will no longer be earth-bound, but we will live in the realm of spirit where the faith of God dominates and overrides everything.