

## How Does God Teach us; Does God use or send problems to teach and perfect Us? *Excerpt from Chapter Sixteen (Got Questions? Got Answers. Vol II)*

There are many teachings out there about how God teaches His children. Many say that God uses hardships, tragedies, sicknesses, and heartbreaks to teach, perfect, and disciple us. This is inaccurate. Before I discuss how God teaches us, I want to take time and discuss how He does not teach us.

- a) If God used problems to teach us, then all of us should be perfected by now. If it's the problems that perfect us, then what does the Word of God do? If you look around and within, it is true that the most troubled, most diseased, and those with the most hardships and problems aren't the most mature and perfected believers.
- b) It would be inconsistent for Jesus to go about healing all that were sick and oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38) if it is tragedies, and problems that perfected them. No one can name one person who Jesus put sickness on or any form of problem to teach, mature, or perfect them. Jesus did the will of the Father to perfection (John 4:34). He was the full manifestation of God and He embodied His fullness (Colossians 1:15,19; Hebrews 1:3). By seeing Jesus, we have seen the Father (John 14:9).
  - i) If you had a daughter and you wanted to teach her that sex outside marriage is wrong, you would not expose her to ungodly situations, so you can teach her? That would not be an appropriate way to teach her.
  - ii) We can learn either through the Word or by the school of hard knocks. Yes, we still can learn through bad things that happen to us, but that is not God's way of teaching, growing, or perfecting us.
  - iii) We can learn God's way (through the Word) or we can learn life's way (the school of hard knocks). We can learn either way, but not all ways are created equal. One is better than the other. One is God's preferred choice than the other.

"Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts."

—Jeremiah 2:19

"Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart."

—Jeremiah 4:18

These verses demonstrate that we can learn through the school of hard knocks. We can learn as a result of our wrongdoings, our sin, and our mistakes (if we choose to learn). We can be reproved and corrected through these means, but these means are not God's way of correcting us.

A lack of relationship, study, and depth of the Word of God in some people's lives is why some people blame God for their problems and conclude that He teaches them through all these hardships and difficulties. No parent, especially a godly one, wishes harm or evil upon their children so they can learn. How would you like to teach your child? Would you put disease or kill your child in order for them to grow and mature?

If God were the one who put some sort of sickness on me to teach me, I would have nothing to do with that God, and neither should you. I am here to tell you that it is not God who puts sickness or tragedy on you to teach you.

- i) Thinking that God is the one who does that evil defies common sense, let alone the Word of God, and unfortunately, many fall for it.
  - ii) If God uses all these miserable tragedies to teach us, then He is not a good God. The truth is there is nothing good about cancer, birth defects, failure, loss, death, or divorce.
  - iii) John 10:10 makes it clear who is responsible for all the bad stuff. It says, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
- a) In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. —1 Thessalonians 5:18.

- i) This verse is used by many to teach or believe that God is the one who uses bad things to teach them. Nothing can be further from the truth.
  - ii) This verse says that we should give thanks in everything, not for everything. It is not saying that we accept and embrace the bad things that happen to us as if they are from God.
  - iii) The will of God is not everything. Everything we go through is not God's will but giving thanks is His will.
- b) And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. —Job 1:21.
- i) This is another verse that people use to push a teaching and belief that God uses bad things to teach us and perfect us. Again, nothing can be further from the truth.
  - ii) We have to read this verse in the light of John 10:10—What Job said versus what Jesus said. Jesus' revelation (John 10:10) is superior to Job's faulty reasoning (Job 1:21).
  - iii) What Job said was based on the limited knowledge of God's nature he had at that time. Although Job's heart was right, what he said was not a true description of the nature of God. God doesn't give and take away. He doesn't take away to teach us or perfect us.
- c) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. —James 4:7
- i) If problems come from God to perfect us, then why do we have to resist anything? Why don't we just embrace sickness, disease, death, divorce, loss, destruction, you name it, so that we can be perfected?
  - ii) Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy. We must resist anything that comes to steal, kill, and destroy. How would you learn anything if you were killed?
    - o Sure, if we survive all these things, we can learn a thing or two, but the primary reason that all those bad things from Satan show up is to wipe us out entirely. Thank God for Jesus that we can survive many of these things.
  - iii) Fight your problems. Do not embrace them. Resist the devil and he shall flee from you.

- d) My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. —James 1:2-3.
- i) When most people read these two verses, they interpret them to mean, “God is the one who tries us through problems and temptation in order to perfect us.”
    - o This is very misleading and gives room to many weird doctrines such as God is the one who allows and brings problems in our lives in order to teach and perfect us.
  - ii) These verses do not say God is the author of our hardships, temptations, and bad things in order to teach us (James 1:13-14 “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”)
    - o God does not bring these bad things upon us, but is with us all the time, even in the midst of it. Therefore, there is a reason to rejoice.
  - iii) The word “worketh” used here comes from a Greek word which means “to work fully, that is, accomplish; by implication to finish, fashion: - cause, do (deed), perform, work (out).” (Strong’s Concordance).
    - o This word further explains and means to mature and to develop not to produce. Temptations, problems, and tragedies do not produce patience (faith sustained over a long period of time), nor teach and perfect us. It is wrong to try to embrace these things in order to become patient. They will instead destroy you.
  - iv) What temptations, problems, and hardships do is that they give us opportunity to exercise, mature and develop our patience, but they do not produce it and they do not come from God.
- e) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance self-control: against such there is no law. —Galatians 5:22-23 (emphasis mine).

Patience, learning, and maturity are produced from and by the Word of God, not from problems, tribulation, and hardships. Patience is also a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

- i) “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” —Romans 15:4.

- ii) "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." —Romans 10:17
- f) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. —Romans 8:28
- i) This verse does not say, "All things come from God to work together for good," yet many people read this verse like that. Then they end up saying that God allows, and/or causes problems to come into our lives in order to teach us.
  - ii) This verse does not also say that whatever happens to us works out for our own good. Problems, bad things, tragedies, and hardships do not come from God nor does He allow or will them to mature, teach and perfect us.
    - o At least that is not how God does it. Again, although some people might learn through their experience, that is not the way God teaches us (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
  - iii) What this verse is saying is that because we love God and are called according to His purpose, He will intervene in any situation and turn it around in our favor.
    - o When the enemy brings destruction, tragedy and problems unto us, God will come in and redeem that situation on our behalf.
- g) There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." —1 Corinthians 10:13.
- i) Some people have taken this verse to say that the Lord is the one who brings temptations, hardships, and bad things into our lives and that this is His promise that He will not put on us more than we can bear. That is not so. This interpretation goes against James 1:13-14
  - ii) This verse is not saying that the Lord causes or allows these temptations, hardships, sickness to come into our lives. It is just saying that God will not let temptations and hardships to overtake us. If those limits are reached, He will make a way of escape.

How then does God teach us?

There are multiple ways we can learn and change. Many have believed that the only way we learn is through experience, hence the phrase "Experience is the best teacher." Nothing can be further from the truth! I will show you multiple ways I believe through which we can learn, be taught, and experience change and growth which will include experience.

There are two primary ways we learn and experience change. We have a choice as to how we want to learn.

- a) Light—Light is in reference to revelation. This revelation comes through a few ways:
  - i) The Word—Psalm 119:130, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.
  - ii) The Holy Spirit.
- b) Heat—This is the school of hard knocks or hardships. This is bush university. I remember President Ronald Regan said that, "When you can't make them see the light, make them feel the heat." Heat is an option to learn and change although it is not the best option.

The best option is light.

## 1. The Word of God

God's discipline for His children is always one-on-one and always involves His Word, not a sickness, disease, natural disaster, or tragedy. Here are Scriptures that show you how God teaches His children (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:2; 1 Corinthians 10:6-11; John 14:26; John 15:1-3; Joshua 1:8; Ephesians 4:11-13; 6:17; Psalm 34:11; 94:12; 119:9-11,103,105,133; Hebrews 4:2; John 15:1-3; Rev 3:16-17).

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

—2 Timothy 3:16-17

- a) Able to make you wise unto salvation
  - i) God's word is and has the wisdom of God and is able to make us wise. We should take it seriously and humble ourselves and receive it, for it is able to save our souls (James 1:21). Humility means agreeing with God, depending on God, and doing what God has said.
- b) Reproof
  - i) The Greek word for "reproof" in this verse means "proof, conviction" (Strong's Concordance)

- ii) God's word brings conviction. True conviction comes from God's word. Conviction is not the same as condemnation. Conviction helps us change and become better, but condemnation says we can't change. Condemnation says you can't change but conviction won't let you stay the same. God's word is the chief agent for change in our lives.
- c) Correction
- i) The Greek word for "correction" in this verse means "a straightening up again, that is, (figuratively) rectification (reformation)" (Strong's Concordance)
  - ii) God's word will help correct us when we go astray. Judgment does not necessarily bring correction, but God has chosen to use His word to correct us. God always uses His word to correct us and He always does it one-on-one not corporately.
- d) Instruction in righteousness
- i) The Greek word for "instruction" used in this verse means "tutorage, that is, education or training; by implication disciplinary correction" (Strong's Concordance)
  - ii) True training and education must have its roots, foundation and basis on God's word. We need it to train our children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6)
- e) Make you perfect
- i) The Greek word for "perfect" used in this verse means "fresh, that is, (by implication) complete" (Strong's Concordance).
  - ii) We cannot be complete without God's word. God's word will make us mature and complete.
- f) Thoroughly furnished unto all good works
- i) The Greek word for "furnished" used in this verse means "to finish out (time); figuratively to equip fully" (Strong's Concordance)
  - ii) God's Word will fully equip us to live a godly life and be fruitful in all things.

## Clean through the Word

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

—John 15:1-3

- i) The word “purgeth” comes from a Greek word translated “to cleanse, that is, (specifically) to prune; figuratively to expiate: -purge.” (Strong’s Concordance)
  - o So, this is talking about cleansing and pruning.
- ii) I have heard some people teach and use this verse as a precedent for how God teaches us.
  - o They say that God must purge and prune us by problems, sickness, death, poverty, or misery so that we can bear more fruit which is a painful process.
  - o This kind of thinking leaves an impression that hardship, tragedies, sicknesses, bad things and so forth are all good things and it leads many people to embrace these things instead of rejecting and resisting them (James 4:7).
  - o It also paints a false picture that there is no bearing fruit without these problems and bad things.
- iii) However, if you read verse 3, you will see that it tells us exactly how God purges, prunes, and cleanses us.
  - o He does so through His Word, not through hardships, sickness, death, poverty or bad things that happen to us.
  - o True, some might learn through those hardships, tragedies, and bad things, but it is inaccurate to teach or believe that God uses those things to teach us.
  - o If your choice of learning was the school of hard knocks, do not blame God for your choice of learning because His choice is through and by His word.
- iv) God does not use tools of the devil to mature, develop and perfect His children. He uses His word.



- v) The irony of thinking that God is the one who does these things to us in order to teach us simply means that we should not resist these things if we are to be consistent with our thoughts or belief system.
  - o For example, you shouldn't go to the doctor if it is sickness that perfects, matures and grows us. If you do go to the doctor, you are just a hypocrite. You are going against "God's way" of teaching us. Why don't you let cancer mature and better you? Do you see how nonsensical this is?

### Teaches him out of Thy law

- "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;" —Psalm 94:12
- i) The law of the Lord is also referred to as the Word of God. It is through this that God teaches and chastens us. Teaching that God does it through tragedy or hardship is not the truth. Teach us through Thy word, oh Lord.

### Cleanse his way

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." 104-105 Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore, I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. 133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."  
—Psalm 119:9-11, 104-105, 133

- i) The way we can cleanse our ways is by and through the word of God. Understanding, completion, maturity comes from the word of God.
- ii) God's word gives us guidance and enlightenment, which helps us to mature. It is through His word that He orders and directs our paths and ways.
- iii) Notice that these verses say nothing about the problems or tragedies as ways in which God teaches us. There is no growth, learning and maturity outside of God's word. We need God's word for growth to occur (1 Peter 2:2).

### Milk of the Word

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

—1 Peter 2:2

- i) Growth comes from the word of God, not problems, tragedies, hardships or bad things that happen to us. Just as babes grow by milk, we grow by and mature through the word of God by the help of the Holy Spirit.

### Thy way prosperous

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

—Joshua 1:8

- i) The book of the law is another way of saying the word of God.
- ii) This Scripture teaches that it is through the word of God that we make our ways prosperous and have good success. Like many other passages of scripture, this one also clearly emphasizes that the word of God is the key to prospering, maturing, and increase.
- iii) As we begin to meditate on God’s word, we begin to develop and experience success, increase, and maturity.

### Chastisement

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

— Hebrews 12:5-9

- i) Contrary to what most people take from this verse, God does not chasten us with sickness, problems, tragedy, or bad things. This is not true.

- ii) The word “chastening” comes from a Greek word translated: “tutorage, that is, education or training; by implication disciplinary correction: - chastening, chastisement, instruction, nurture” (Strong’s Concordance) AND “chasteneth” comes from a Greek word that mean “train up a child, that is, educate, or (by implication) discipline (by punishment): - chasten (-ise), instruct, learn, teach.” (Strong’s Concordance).
- iii) We see clearly that these verses are talking about God correcting, educating, training (like training up a child), and instructing.
  - o This is exactly what 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches. God does His teaching to us through His Word, not through problems, bad things, and tragedy.

## 2. Revelation knowledge

We can also learn and change by receiving revelation knowledge from God and the word.

- a) Galatians 1:12, For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- b) 1 Samuel 3:21, And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

## 3. Holy Spirit

The scriptures also teach clearly that the Holy Spirit is our teacher. He wants to teach us all things.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

—John 14:26

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.

—John 16:13

- a) He will teach them ALL THINGS and bring all things to their remembrance. Notice He did not say that He will teach us a few or some things, but all things.

- b) No tragedy, problem or hardship can teach us all things. Only the Holy Spirit can through the word of God. Although, we all will learn from the bad things that happen to us, God does not teach us that way. It is just another way we choose to learn.
- c) Notice that this verse does not say that He will bring tragedies, problems, and bad things to teach us, but He will teach us through the Holy Spirit.
- d) The Holy Spirit is the Author of the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). He teaches us by pointing us to the word and expounding on it to give us understanding.

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

—1 John 2:27

- a) This is saying that we are not limited to a human teacher. If we were alone on the earth or even in jail and had no human teacher, we could be taught of the Lord through the Holy Spirit who lives on the inside of us.
- b) This is not saying that no one will teach you ANYTHING.
- c) In context, “all things” is talking about those who deny that Jesus is the Christ and were seducing others to believe the same.
- d) Paul was not taught of man but of the Lord (Galatians 1:11-12)

#### 4. Fivefold Ministry Office Gifts

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

—Ephesians 4:11-13

- a) When God wrote these scriptures, He forgot to say that problems, hardships, sufferings, and bad things would edify, mature and perfect the body of Christ, right? wrong!
  - i) These verses teach that we are given the fivefold ministry to help edify, mature, teach and perfect the body of Christ. The Lord did not give problems, hardships and tragedy as means for us to learn, grow, and mature.

## 5. Experience

Although some have believed that experience is the best teacher, it is the most expensive, and it is not always the best teacher. I'm not trying to disregard experience, but I'm rather trying to put it in the right perspective. Experience has to be evaluated for us to learn from it. Experience alone is not the best teacher.

**In life, sometimes we win and sometimes we learn—not lose.** We need to learn from the bad experiences and let them go. You can either focus on the loss, lesson, and/or the cross.

There are many people that have experience, yet they did not learn or change a thing, and some learn only the negative things such as not to trust, not to have high expectations, and so forth. Not all experiences teach as some have believed, but if it does, for one to learn and change through his experience, they have to want to learn and they should believe and trust God in that process as He is the best teacher.

### a) Personal Experience

Every past success or failure we experience can be a valuable source of direction, information, and wisdom. Success teaches us what we can do and gives us confidence.

And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.

— Genesis 30:27

i) Laban mentions that he learned that the Lord had blessed him because of Jacob. This learning was by experience. He learned by experience.

### b) Experience of others

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto

them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

—1 Corinthians 10:6-11

These verses teach that things in the Old Testament were written for our examples and admonition. In other words, this is saying that we can learn through another person's experience. We can learn at the expense of those written in the scriptures.

We do not have to go through bad things and hardships that others have gone through. We do not have to attend the same school of hard knocks nor the university of hardships. We can use the written word as an example and learn.

We can see the things that happened to the other people, learn, grow, and mature. We do not have to embrace their hardships. I believe that although people say experience is a good teacher, I believe that experience from the word of God is the best teacher.

- i) We can learn and change through and by the example and the experience of others. The word of God lists many examples, both good and bad of those who walked before us. One of the reasons it lists those examples is so we can learn from them and change.
- ii) We should not disregard other people's experiences in order to experience things ourselves. That is a sick mindset. If we look at things this way, many of us will not be around to see the fruit of those experiences. We do not have to make the mistakes ourselves to learn from them. Wisdom teaches us to avoid those mistakes by observing and learning the right lessons gleaned from other people.

In conclusion, it is trusting the Lord and studying the word that makes us stronger and better. Problems are not from God, but He does help us navigate through them if we let Him.