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A Learning and Worship Center

The Spiritual Cycle – Acts 1

A cycle of activity is found throughout the Bible. Whenever an event is recorded in the Scriptures it is for a purpose of relating our connection to God. The event will record either a warning of how not to live or an example of how living in God's will is producing a positive result. You will be able to apply the Spiritual Cycle in the events that are consistent with living in God's will. The cycle is particularly evident in the events recorded in the first chapter of the book of Acts. Here we find in Acts 1 after Jesus has died and risen, that people are listening to him in just a little different way. Before, when Jesus said something, they may have considered what he was saying but NOW they are listening with a much deeper respect and are in anticipation of and prepared to act on whatever he will tell them. They are truly listening because Jesus is about to give them some instructions: 1) Go to Jerusalem and wait, 2) Wait for a Word, not just any Word but God's Word that will be a visit by the Holy Spirit. They now know who Jesus really is and not what they had expected as the Jews were looking for an earthly king.

The **Word** establishes our relationship with God. We recognize that God is God and we are not. This then leads us into a position of true **Worship** which is the next step in the Spiritual Cycle. We are in awe of who Christ is. We are driven to our knees.

Jesus told them to go to Jerusalem and wait. (The Hebrew understanding of prayer was to wait for a word from God. Each year a chosen priest went into the Holy of Holies to listen for that word from God. It was not a grocery list of wants but a true listening being open to what God would give them; believing God would guide them and provide what they needed.) Jesus followers waited in Jerusalem in constant **Prayer** for some time, one day we are told, Peter stood up and spoke. Many people were gathered, the women were there and involved in the prayer along with the men. They were of one accord. Prayer is the natural result from a true Worship experience.

When Peter stood up and spoke, he quoted scripture (not NT, the OT), and gave a **Prophecy** which is merely an inspired reflection of the Word of God, often right from the Scriptures. The natural result of hearing a prophecy is to act upon it or put it into **Practice**.

They then acted upon the Word of prophecy that Peter had given them and followed the natural course of action that the prophecy informed them about. They then had an experience.

That experience broke out into reflective **Praise** of God, which is the natural result of acting upon the Word of God which then drove them naturally back to the **Word** of God for the cycle to start all over again.

This cycle of action and reaction is found throughout scripture. We can get stuck in any one of these cycle spots, but if we do the cycle is broken and our balanced relationship to God breaks down..

WORD – Father - Power
WORSHIP – Son – Glory
PRAYER – Holy Spirit - Wealth
PROPHECY – Father - Power
PRACTICE – Son - Glory
PRAISE – Holy Spirit – Wealth

There are three basic categories of in which all temptations fall. They are Power, Wealth and Glory.

Matthew 4 records the temptation event of Jesus where we find that He is driven by the Spirit into the desert.

- 1) Jesus is Tempted to turn stones into bread, but responds “man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of God’s mouth” – This is a temptation to demonstrate his POWER plus provide supernaturally for his physical needs.
- 2) Jesus is Tempted at the Holy city to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple to prove he is who he said he was, the Son of God, Satan arguing that angels will take charge and he would not get hurt – Jesus responds “you shall not tempt the Lord your God” – This is a temptation for GLORY and to subvert the purpose for which Jesus came.
- 3) Jesus is Tempted at a high place where Satan shows him all the wealth of the world and promises all things if he would just worship him – Jesus responds “you shall worship the Lord your God and him only do you serve” – This is a temptation for earthly WEALTH.

In order to best avoid temptation is to continue to live in the natural cycle of God’s plan for our lives. If we stop the cycle at any point, it gives Satan an opening to draw our attention away from God’s purpose and plan.

If you were to draw a line from the **Word** to **Practice** to **Prayer** then back to the **Word** it would form a triangle that reflects the actions of God toward us. God gave the Word; we don’t even know what to pray for unless the Holy Spirit guides us; God sent His Son to show us how to act in the flesh according to the given Word. When you draw a line from **Prophecy** to **Praise** to **Worship** and back to **Prophecy** it forms another triangle which reflects our own created tri-unity and our response back to God for what he has given to us first. The configuration that is formed is said to be, by architects, as the strongest support that can be built. This supports the idea that if we are inter-connected with God’s actions toward us that we will form the strongest foundational structure we can have on this earth.

All sin falls into the three areas of temptation that Jesus faced; Wealth, Power and Glory. For example: Idolatry as a sin, could be power, wealth, or glory. Sin can fall into any area, but the one who is responsible for the sin and God are the only ones who would know what classification of temptation the sin fall more into. What may be a temptation for one person may not be for another. You should be able to find a pattern of temptation that will point more to one area of weakness; that is either wealth, power or glory. If you go to the Spiritual Cycle and look at the activities that relate to the temptation, you will find where you will need to focus and re-engage a better cycle of being in God’s will. By becoming aware of where you are weak will allow you to pray and shore up your relationship to God and eliminate the temptation in you life by replacing the desire with an appropriate activity connected to God. All Godly activity will have a evil alternative to meet the needs that your life experiences will create. It is our choice whether we will choose Godly or ungodly activities to meet those needs and desires of our life.

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