

When God Takes Away

Job 1:20-22 - NKJV

²⁰ Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

²¹ And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb,
And naked shall I return there.

The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."

²² In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

The story is told of a famous sculptor created a beautiful statue of a famous Biblical figure.

- People came from miles around to view it's beauty and detail.
- It almost came to life as you gazed upon it, some said.
- The intricacies of the statue were beyond anything they'd ever seen.
- One day the sculptor was present at the statue's viewing.
- Someone said, "What a masterpiece you've created!"

He said, "***The masterpiece was always there***, I just chiseled away everything that was blocking it from view."

WHEN WE PRAY, "GOD MAKE ME WHAT YOU WANT ME TO BE", IT'S A DANGEROUS THING!

We pray, "***God, make me what you want me to be, but He's already made us what He wants us to be.***"

- The Bible says that we were all created in **the image of God**.
- **More specifically, God has created us individually to be what He wants.**
- **God has a vision** for each and every one of us.

Psalm 139:13-14 - NKJV

¹³ For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well.

Jeremiah 1:5 - NKJV

⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”

2 Timothy 1:9 - NIV

⁹He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

So, from these scriptures I can ascertain three things:

- 1.) God has created me individually and uniquely***
- 2.) Before I was even born He knew what he wanted me to be***
- 3.) God has a purpose for me that even I cannot change!***

God has taken this block of flesh and bone and muscle and cartilage, and in His mind He envisions greatness!

But, as our lives progress, **we add** a lot of things to our lives that hinder us from **accomplishing that purpose**.

We take on a lot of things that are not necessary in our lives, and actually keep us from being what God wants us to be.

That’s why **Paul spoke** to Christians in **Hebrews 12:1-2 NKJV - The Race of Faith**

12 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside **every weight**, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Definition - Whatever is prominent, protuberance, bulk, mass, hence a burden, encumbrance...

- ***Anything that becomes prominent in our lives that's not of God becomes a weight!***
- ***Anything that occupies the majority of my time and keeps me from my service to God becomes a weight!***

And when we begin to pray, God make me a man, or a woman of God, sometimes the first thing **God has to do is start chiseling away at that mass, that bulk, that prominent thing that is keeping us from becoming what He wants us to be!**

Sometimes to get us from what we are to what He wants us to be, **He must chisel away** some things that are not necessary in our lives.

However, **God cannot do that for us unless we give Him permission.**

Isaiah 43:13 - NKJV

¹³ Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"

- If I harden myself, God will let me continue in my foolishness for a while.
- If I refuse to let God sculpt me into the person He wants me to be, He will leave me alone.

It was **Ephraim**, whose name means "doubly fruitful", that **God spoke of** in

Hosea 4:17 - NIV

¹⁷ Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!

What a shame that a man who was born to be doubly fruitful **never fulfilled his potential**, because **he refused to let God remove the idols** that he had taken into his life.

God will not force himself on us, He is a gentleman.

Now, **you may say**, “Pastor, thanks for telling me that, ***I’m going to stop praying now, and everything will be alright***, my life won’t be turned upside down anymore, etc.”

Don’t do that, because you and I only have **two choices**:

- ***Let God chisel away everything that doesn’t need to be in our lives right now and He’ll reveal Himself in us,***
- ***Or, refuse to let God work on me and He’ll throw me away and I’ll be lost for eternity!***

Jeremiah 18 - **Jeremiah went to the potter’s house** and discovered that **the potter had a vision for the clay**.

If the clay was pliable in the potter’s hand, it might be:

- ***Mashed - Spun in circles***
- ***Had some hard lumps removed that would defile it later, and weaken it in the oven***
- ***Reformed – Re-shaping...***
- ***But, eventually, it would become a beautiful, useful vessel.***

However, **if the clay refused to be molded**, and **became hard**, it was **broken into pieces** and **thrown into the potter’s field**, **never to be used again!**

If you feel like your spinning in circles today, like you’re being mashed, and things are being taken from you – THANK GOD!

- ***You’re still on the wheel!***
- ***You’re still under construction!***
- ***God is still revealing a masterpiece!***

Don’t harden up!

- ***Don’t get angry and frustrated with God and take yourself off of the potter’s wheel – there’s only one place to go from there!***
- ***I can let God break me and shape me now, or destroy me later!***

Matthew 21:42-44 - NIV

⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

⁴³ “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. ⁴⁴ Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

Sounds like harsh judgment, to be sure, but what Jesus was saying was this:

- ***“If you’ll let me break you, and remake you the way I want to, you’ll live.***
- ***But, if you refuse that, the day is coming when I will fall on you in judgment and you’ll be destroyed.***

I would much rather allow him to break me right now and have eternal life, than to meet him at the judgment seat and hear Him say,

Matthew 25:41 - “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me**, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:**

If I am to be saved, I must allow God to break me, sculpt me, take some things away from me **that I don’t need, some things **that are blocking** the man/woman of God that is within me!**

- **I trust the sculptor, that He won’t take anything from me that I need!**
 - **I just let him work and know that He is God!**
 - **The statue is at the complete mercy of the sculptor, and ***I’ve put my trust in Him!*****
 - **The patient is at the mercy of the surgeon, having to trust that surgeon to only remove what is causing death and sickness and keeping that patient from being healthy and alive!**
 - **And I trust my God not to cut too deeply, but to only remove what is not necessary – what is hindering my spiritual health and prosperity!**
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USUALLY WHEN SPEAKING OF THE BLESSINGS OF GOD, WE THINK OF GOD ADDING THINGS TO US.

Psalm 68:19 - NKJV

¹⁹ Blessed *be* the Lord, *Who* daily loads us *with benefits*, The God of our salvation!

- *It's hard for us to equate the loss of anything with blessing.*
- *But, sometimes God blesses us by taking things away from us.*
- **Can we** still do as **Job did**, and fall down and worship **when God takes away from us?**

Can we trust the Master Sculptor to work on us, and remove everything that's not necessary?

- **Can we submit to the Rock**, even though it means being broken?
 - **Can we let God work** on us and remove the unnecessary weights?
 - **How will we respond when God takes away from us?**
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Close:

Nothing that God does or allows is without purpose or reason.

God never takes things away from us for the purpose of His cruel pleasure.

We say, "Pastor, ***I've tried to live for God with all of my heart***, but *found that God is cutting into my life, taking things from me* – **WHAT GIVES?"**

John 15:1-2 - The True Vine

15 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

God never takes away for the sake of taking away, but only for the sake of making it possible for us to have more than we had in the beginning!

- **Job** – *had double* when God was finished.
- **Peter** – *had the coarser portion sifted* away so he could preach Pentecost.

If God is taking away from you today, it's only for the purpose of adding something that you cannot even conceive of.

WORSHIP TEAM:

Can we **worship as Job did** when God is taking away????

Taking away - Job, potter's wheel, purging, Peter was sifted like wheat, God took things away from him, usually God adds, but sometimes the blessing is in the taking away of things.

The word "blessed" *also means* "to have God speak a good word about you"

Even when God took things away from Job, He was speaking good words about him....