

Intro: Twenty years ago this week a fantastic business book was published. Written by Jim Collins: *Good To Great!* It was a book about businesses reaching their highest and best potential, becoming everything they could be...becoming a GREAT company...not just being Good Enough. In the book Collins wrote about a mistake many companies make, that of *"Looking for Silver Bullet"*. A silver bullet is the ONE thing that will push you forward, or the ONE thing that will make you great, the ONE thing that will solve every problem...the ONE thing that will make you a great success overnight. His conclusion was that there is seldom...if ever...ONE thing! More often than not it is a small series of "right steps" A series of "right decisions" a number of small changes over time that help you BE GREAT

That is exactly what the Apostle Paul is saying to the Galatian Christians, and to US about becoming the person God created us to be. You see, the Galatian Christians had fallen into the trap of believing that the LAW of Moses was the spiritual "Silver Bullet". If they could just Keep the Law, that would help them Become what God created them to be. That would solve all their problems, that would propel them forward...that would make them great! Bound Self Up!

As we continue study in Galatians, talk about Freedom: Specifically: "Free To Be What God Created You To Be"
Galatians 4:8-31

In this section of Galatians Paul writes about the things God uses to help us grow and become what He made us to be. What we all want is the "Silver Bullet" approach to spirituality. God, Just DO it! MAKE me what you want me to be. And He does...but He uses all different kinds of "tools" along the way. Each one accomplishes something special.

Illus: High School, in one of my art classes: Option for leatherwork! Set of tools, each one does something different!
Image of Tools

He says here that there are 4 "tools" God uses to shape us. Pain; Process; Promise and Purpose Look with me at each

1. God Uses Pain To Shape Us Into The Person He Wants Us To Be! Vs 12-16

Pain is one of the tools God uses to shape us...and it is probably the one we like the least! Notice what Paul says to the Galatian Churches about how God used Pain in his life...and in theirs!

- *Because of an illness I first preached!* (Not sure what...eyesight!) 5:11
- *Illness was a "trial" for THEM!* Lit = Not something you looked down upon

Two things to notice here:

- God used physical pain in Paul's life to shape him and use Paul in ministry (Stopped his journey?)
- God used the physical struggle to shape the Galatians (I was here because of infirmity)

We almost always see pain, struggle, difficult as NEGATIVE

But...like it or not...God uses that as a TOOL...If we allow Him to do that.

Not isolated and just with the Galatians...Much of 2 Cor is devoted to showing us how God does that!

2Cor 4:7-12 Shows us how God can use those terrible times to bless us and others

(So His LIFE may be revealed in our mortal body!)

2Cor 1:3-8 (We are distressed for YOUR comfort!) God uses Pain to shape us...and to shape others!

2. God Uses Purpose To Shape Us Into The Person He Wants Us To Be. Vs 17-19

Here Paul says that it is a GOOD thing to be enthusiastic...as long as you are enthusiastic about the right things! He is using the example of the Judizers, saying, "Listen, they are doing everything they can do to win you over to THEIR way of thinking, to their Purpose. What you should be concerned about though, is GOD'S way of thinking! What is GOD'S purpose for you? That is where we get off target sometimes. We get sidetracked to a different purpose, and then when it doesn't work we think God has abandoned us.

Listen to me. As long as we are in line with God's purposes...we can absolutely depend on Him to be at work. He will bless us, He will produce spiritual fruit, and He will continue the process of shaping us into what He created us to be.

I hear people all the time saying...if only I knew what God's purpose for me was. Now, I can't give you the specifics. I can't tell you if you are to be a tech team members, a small group leader, a deacon or an elder or food pantry worker. But, what I CAN do is say this. When you match your GIFTS up with the overall purposes of God...on the right track!

- Acts 1:8 "Apostles: you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- Acts 9:15 "This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings..."
- 2Pe 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

You see, when we have our purpose right...when OUR PURPOSE lines up with GOD'S purpose, HE shapes us, He blesses us...He uses us for His Glory!

Here is a question for you...What purpose are you pursuing? Are you like the Judiazers, have you missed the purpose and plan of God, and are you pursuing your OWN purpose? Are you following your own direction? That doesn't mean that everyone is called to be a Pastor or Evangelist. But it does mean God has gifted you, called you...and wants to use you for HIS purpose.

If you are struggling with Purpose ask yourself..."Am I pursuing God's purpose for me...or MY purpose for me?"

3. God Uses PROCESS To Shape Us Into The Person He Wants Us To Be. Vs 19- 20

"I am in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!" A couple very important things to note here.

Formed: Lit = *to move; rearrange or reorder the parts until something is in the right form or shape!*

- God shaping you is a LIFETIME process! Phil 1:6
 - >God is shaping you.... Easy way...or hard way! Change management Ice: Thaw/Refreeze: BREAK!
 - >Guaranteed: Confident: I am actively convinced, persuaded, moment by moment, God will do it!
 - >Carry it on: Continue to work with you, continue to move the parts, rearrange:
 - >Completed: God started it...and God will complete it: You will be fully finished: COMPLETE
 - >Day of Christ: Glorification: The moment Christ returns...whatever is left to be done...finished!
 1. Justification: Saved from penalty of sin Once for all
 2. Sanctification: Saved from Power of sin Ongoing process
 3. Glorification: Saved from Presence of sin Work is FINISHED!

God WILL do His work in you. He will shape you, He will continue to move the parts...put the pieces in place.

He is going to shape you into what you were created to be! This process never stops...in this life:

He uses Pain: Shapes you! He uses Purpose: Shapes you! Process: Shaping you!

4. God Uses PROMISE To Shape Us Into The Person He Wants Us To Be. Vs 21-31

Paul finishes up this section on God's work of shaping you with an illustration. This is VERY important to track! Don't get lost in the weeds here...Stay with me. His point is this: There are TWO ways of viewing God's work of shaping you.

- Works of Flesh: You can try to HELP Him! That is Hagar!
- Works of Spirit: You can trust the promise of God...WAIT on Him, Trust Him, Believe Him...Until He acts

To make his point Paul goes back to Abraham again, the Father of the Jewish nation...and says...

DON'T BE LIKE ABRAHAM!

In this instance...He got it wrong! He was RIGHT in initially believing...but when God didn't work on Abrahams time table...He took matters into his own hands...and "HELPED GOD!" and in doing so he created a mess that would plague him, his family, his descendants and the nation forever!

- Gen 16:1-3 No kids yet...Take Hagar...Abraham listened to the voice of Sarah: NOT GOD!

This is EXACTLY what the Judiazers are doing! They are trying to HELP God!

Listen to me: One of the WORST things you can do...is HELP God! Take matters into your own hands...and not wait on the promise of God. As hard as it is...HOLD ONTO THE PROMISE! DON'T LET IT GO! WAIT!

- Hab 2:3 Prophet was waiting for the promise of God...everything looks dismal...hopeless...

"For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay."

CONCL: Pain: Are you hurting: God wants to use it to shape you
Process: Quit looking for silver bullet: Takes Time

Purpose: Struggling: Get in line with HIM!
Promises: DON'T help God! Flesh/Spirit!