
3 things



3 Things – Part 4

As we begin our final episode of **3 things**, let's quickly refresh our journey. I have asserted that we all have a trust problem when it comes to God, evidenced by the fact that there are so many areas in our lives where we do not live like a little child dependent upon Yahweh for all things, all the time.

But to overcome this trust issue, there are really only **3 things** we need to believe, **3 things** that we need to bet our lives upon, and if we do, we will come to know and experience the deepest intimacy with God, privileged to abide in His joy, peace, and rest.

The **3 things** we need to believe are as follows:

1. **Yahweh is the sovereign Lord** (in control of all things all of the time).
2. **Yahweh is good.**
3. **We are aliens and strangers in this world.**

That is really it. 3 simple things to actively believe, to bet our lives upon, and I guarantee that if we do, we will come to trust Yahweh, like that little child, and begin to experience the depth of His character and find that we can abide in His joy, peace, and rest. Again, 1) Yahweh is the sovereign Lord, 2) Yahweh is good, and 3) we are aliens and strangers.

We have studied how the Bible clearly declares the first **2 things** and does not leave room for any opinion that might conclude otherwise. God is absolutely sovereign, and He is absolutely good. One would simply have to cut out many parts of the Bible, or live in total delusion, to come to any other conclusion. When it comes to the character and nature of God's personhood, He is abundantly clear. He wants us to know Him, He wants us to understand Him, He wants us to embrace Him, and believe Him with our heart, mind, soul, and strength.

The topic of God being the ultimate and absolute sovereign Lord is hard for us to accept as our personal truth because we are faced with the reality of all manner of evil and darkness in this world as well as the darkness and evil in our own soul. Therefore, if He truly is ultimately sovereign, then He has to take responsibility for it all. And He did! That is why Yahweh gave His Son a body, so He could be responsible for all the consequences of evil in this world.

In the topic of God being good, we explored the fact that God created evil, sin, and the devil, and how it all works together as the Father finds and prepares a pure bride for His Son. He is out to find a woman who has the opportunity to choose anything else and anyone else, and who probably did for a big part of her life, but ultimately chose to set it all aside, to reject it, in favor of the Son.

This woman becomes a spiritual virgin that loves the Son with her heart, mind, soul, and

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strength. But if it were not for her ability to choose anything and anyone else, she would never know that all she has ever wanted for real was the Son, and her heart would always be wondering, “what if?” And that is why, despite the damage which evil does in this world and to our lives, God is good!

And this leads us to the 3rd thing that we must believe, and that is that we are **aliens and strangers in this world**. This 3rd thing brings even more clarity to the purpose of evil and how God uses all things as a tool to accomplish His good.

Value Disconnect

One of the first things, however, that we must come to grips with is that there is a significant value disconnect between the things God deems important and the things we deem important. His values are simply not our values. God has one maniacal goal, and that is that we become lovers of His Son thereby allowing Him to transform us into the image or into the likeness of His Son. And the Father will use any and all things, people, situations, and so on to accomplish this goal. His utmost desire is unity between the Father, the Son, the Spirit, and the Bride.

After all, He is playing for eternity, playing for keeps. Therefore, the things of this world, including our physical and emotional construct are just part of the tools that He will access and utilize to ensure that we are not clinging to, valuing, or holding up anything in this world above Him. And this is God’s goodness in action, for He knows that we will never be safe and secure from evil until we are found abiding in His Son and His Son is found abiding in us—until we learn to depend upon Him for our very lives (much like a branch to the vine).

The sooner we can accept this goal and align our values to the values of the Father, we will begin to understand why we must go through the things we go through, why we must face trial after trial, why suffering has been such a large part of our lives for far too long, and why it is not just necessary, but is Good.

Aliens & Strangers

The idea of our being aliens and strangers in this world comes primarily from **Hebrews**, where the Spirit describes the lives of people whom He considers to be heroes of our faith. For instance, in speaking of Abraham, the Spirit said, “By faith he lived as an **alien** in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”¹ And in **1 Peter**, the letter is addressed to those who live as aliens, as not belonging to this world.²

¹ **Hebrews 11:9-10**

² **1 Peter 1:1**

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Therefore, he admonishes them: “Beloved, I urge you as **aliens and strangers** to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.³

The fact is that if we are in a love relationship with Jesus, then we do not belong to this world in any way, shape, or form. That is ridiculously hard to understand at a deep emotional level because we live in this world, operate or function in this world, and people depend upon us in this world and we depend upon people. We have responsibilities, we have duties, we have relationships, and we have a life to live. Nevertheless, we do not belong to this world; we are temporary visitors sent on a mission from God.

The way the Spirit explains it is that we are Christ’s ambassadors, **sent** into this world, so that through us God can make His appeal to those who have yet come to be in love with Him, to be reconciled to Christ.⁴ The idea of being **sent** seems a bit odd since we have been here all along. But Jesus, when talking to His Father, said that His bondservants are not of this world, even as He is not of this world. And that as the Fathers sent Jesus into this world, He has **sent** them into the world.⁵

**THE REALITY FOR EVERY CHILD OF GOD IS THAT THEY ARE NOT A PART OF THIS
WORLD, AND THEY DO NOT BELONG TO THIS WORLD.**

The 3-Fold Antagonist

The problem we all face with the truth that we are aliens and strangers is 3-fold. First, there is the issue that we are incredibly sensual beings. We see, we touch, we feel, we absorb, we take in all the tangible and intangible beauty, light, ugliness, and darkness around us. We taste, we smell, we hear, and we are incredibly impacted by all that of it.

This ties us to this tangible world, and to the world’s system, because to us it is all real. There is no “blind-faith.” In this world, we get to walk by what we see, we get to make decisions by what makes sense, and we get to seek out that which helps us feel good in our mind, bodies, and in our emotions. In this world, our comfort as well as our distress is quite real, though temporary in nature.

Second, we are indelibly tied to this world by our pain. The trauma we have been through, and all the resulting pain, ties us to our bodies, to the experience, to the memories (known and

³ **1 Peter 2:11**

⁴ **2 Corinthians 5:20**

⁵ **John 17:14, 16, 18**

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unknown), to the fear, and to all the dysfunctional coping mechanisms we created to keep us safe—to ensure that we never have to be hurt like that again, or at least if we are, we are prepared to deal with it.

Our pain has, in effect, created chains that bind us, and one way or another, these chains keep us tethered to all the horror we have ever experienced. And armed with a generous supply of denial and delusion, we spend our lives trying to mitigate the effects our past traumas have on our now and upon our perceived future.

Third, we are tied to this world because of our *flesh*, our **old sinful nature**, that part of our being that is great friends with Satan (and his demons), and which really, really, hates God.⁶

Before we were born-again, the *flesh* defined our existence and directed all that we did. It stood in opposition to God, was, and is, downright hostile. Our *flesh* is unable to obey God, it simply does not have the capacity. And it was this internal rebellion in our soul, this sick aspect of our heart, rooted in unbelief, that dominated and ruled over our feelings, our thoughts, and our actions. This is why those who are in the *flesh* cannot please God.⁷

But when we came to Christ, God circumcised our *flesh*. Now let's be clear, He did not destroy our *flesh* or remove it from our being; rather, He cut away the chords which had us bound to the flesh.⁸ In so doing, He dismantled its ability to *automatically* control us.

Thus, technically, we are no longer under any obligation to obey its wishes; we are no longer enslaved to its desires.⁹ We no longer have to listen to its voice. Hence, we are charged to put on the Lord Jesus and make no provision, or no room, for the *flesh* in regard to its lusts.¹⁰ In other words, once circumcised, we now have a legitimate **choice** to listen to our *flesh* or to listen to the voice of the Spirit. We are now free in that regard (though we are so used to our *flesh* that we seem to not want to let go of its wisdom or direction).

In addition, when we came to Christ, God also infused within our being a **New Nature** that is contrary to the *flesh*, and our New Nature is created in the likeness of God, holy, righteous, and true.¹¹ The New Nature is where the Holy Spirit of God literally takes up His residence in our lives. Think about it. Our bodies could not contain the presence of God's holiness, we would explode. Thus, God had to create this New Nature in His image (also called the New Creation in some

⁶ See **Romans 7:5, 14, 18, 25, 8:3-13, 13:14; Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:9; Galatians 5:13-24, 6:8; Ephesians 2:3**

⁷ **Romans 8:8**

⁸ See **Romans 2:28**

⁹ **Romans 8:12**

¹⁰ **Romans 13:14**

¹¹ **Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17**

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translations) so He could literally dwell in us.

This is what Jesus was describing when He said: “No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.”¹²

The *flesh*, however, sets its desires against the Spirit and the Spirit against the *flesh*, for they are in opposition to one another, so that we may not do the things that we please, or those things of which we are automatically conditioned to pursue due to our years subordinated to our *flesh*.¹³ Thus, we have this constant tension within us as our *flesh* urges us to listen to its voice and the Spirit urges us to ignore the voice of the *flesh* and desire the ways of the Spirit. For if we walk in the Spirit, or listen to the Spirit, we will not carry out the deeds of the *flesh*.¹⁴

Now despite the New Nature, and despite our freedom from the *flesh*, we know the *flesh* well, we are intimate with our *flesh*, it has been our guide, it has been our wisdom, it has been our trusted source of what we need to navigate this life. All throughout our lives, it has played the role of the Holy Spirit, the role of our trusted counselor. Therefore, despite being set free from its control, for the most part, we are addicted to its companionship, to its advice, to its wisdom, and we go back to it over and over again to deal with all that we do not understand in this life. In fact, our *flesh* is the source of our denial and delusion, and that is simply not easy to give up; after all, it is what has been our safety and security.

Think about all the ways we protect ourselves. We establish boundaries, divisions, we find those who agree with us and make factions, we desire what others have (envy), we argue and fight to ensure that we get what we deserve, we use anger as a weapon, we find comfort in things that are not of God, not pure, we idolize that which we think will make us successful in this life, (whether people, money, personality, intelligence, and so on), and we make decisions based on our sensuality, what feels good to us, what makes sense to us, and what is practical and reasonable. But all of this, and more, is described as a fruit of the *flesh*, what the *flesh* literally produces from our lives.

It is also important to understand how much the *flesh* loves religion, it loves law, it loves a standard whereby we have to prove ourselves worthy of the love of God and worthy of His blessing. However, since no one can keep the law, the *flesh* keeps us bound to shame, guilt, sin, failure, repentance (in a religious sort of way). And it all makes so much sense. We experience limited blessing in this life because we sin too much, whether in thought or deed. God can't and

¹² **Mark 2:22**

¹³ **Galatians 5:17**

¹⁴ **Galatians 5:16**

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won't bless us with all our disobedience. Our only hope to find favor with God is to deal with this issue of sin, hold ourselves accountable, and then, maybe, God will bless us.

Yes, the *flesh* loves religion; in fact, practically the entire religious system we call Christianity is built upon controlling and limiting the impact of the *flesh* in our lives. Ironically, this just keeps us striving to do things right and not wrong, to be good for God, and so on.

The *flesh* refuses to believe that **only God is Good**. Hence, God says the answer to our problem with the *flesh* is to walk in the Spirit, He does not tell us to control, work on, or in any way manage the *flesh* or keep it accountable. Rather, if we walk in the Spirit, we will not carry out the deeds of the *flesh*.

The 3-Fold Antagonist

And it is because of these 3 things which bind us to this world that God goes to war against us, for us.

1. Our tie to what is tangible,
2. Our clinging to our dysfunctional coping methods, which are rooted in our pain, and
3. Our addiction to our *flesh*, especially its love for religion.

We may be convinced (whether consciously or subconsciously) that in some way, shape, or form, these 3 antagonist help us get through this life, but they are actually limiting our ability to simply dwell in the Spirit and be in constant communion with our God.

These antagonists keep us bound to this world instead of living like those who have no home in this world, but have been **sent** into this world on a temporary mission that we might be part of the Father's will in heaven being done here on earth.

A Call to War

Therefore, Yahweh Mekoddishkem and Yahweh Qanna spring into action to convince us that these 3 antagonists to our faith must be destroyed. For as long as they are active in our lives, we will be limited in our ability to walk in the Spirit doing only what our Father in Heaven wants us to do, **when** He wants us to do it. Hence, severely restricting our intimacy with God.

Yahweh Mekoddishkem¹⁵ speaks of the God who makes us holy, literally sets us apart for Himself and for no one else. Those who have come to God and have chosen to live dependent upon Him, like a little child, are His personal possession.¹⁶ And being that we were chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world,¹⁷ it makes sense that from the beginning of our lives

¹⁵ *Exodus 31:12-17; Leviticus 20:2-8*

¹⁶ *1 Peter 2:9*

¹⁷ *Ephesians 1:4*

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(sometimes even in the womb), He has gone to war over everything that stands in opposition to His possessing us. In all He does and has done, He desires to secure us for Himself, such that we will one day live separated for His purposes only.¹⁸

And Yahweh Qanna¹⁹ speaks of the God who is jealous, so jealous that He will do whatever it takes to have us for His own. In the eyes of Yahweh Qanna, nothing of this world is sacred nor worth preserving; remember, we are talking about a man who is crazy in love with His woman. Thus, everything is ultimately disposable, and can be used as a tool to accomplish the goal of Yahweh Mekoddishkem to make us completely His.

Yahweh Qanna is like the mother bird that aggressively protects the nest from intruders. He is a vigilant guardian protecting what belongs to Him. Hence, we can be confident that the Lord our God will protect us for what we were made for (which is Himself); and anything that gets in the way, including our *flesh*, He will strike down. In other words, He desperately wants all of us: our heart, mind, soul, and strength. And since His name is Jealous, He will aggressively go to war to protect what is His by going after each and every enemy internal and external to our soul that threatens this relationship.

Now that all sounds a bit over the top, but the reality is that God has needed to hurt us, He has needed to crush us, and He has needed to put down enemy after enemy in our being, every wrong belief and unbelief that stands in opposition to His rule and reign in our lives.

The terrors and tragedies that we have gone through are nothing short of terrible and the whole thing tends to be extremely confusing. Therefore, our *flesh* tells us that God is cruel, mean, unjust, unfair, unloving, and ruthless. And, for once, our flesh is not lying, as that is exactly what our *flesh* experiences from God; after all, our *flesh* is an enemy of God. God's intentions, however, are never understood nor are they accepted by the *flesh*.

Consider for a moment how all manner of evil, darkness, and relational sewage has been passed down to us from our forefathers, something which I like to call generational sin. Each of our families are unique, but each of them has been bound by certain dysfunctions and have learned to cope in certain unhealthy ways, and all of that has been passed down from one generation to another. And it all builds like a gigantic snowball, as each generation adds their own flair, their own sin, their own compulsions, and their own methods for coping. And by the time it reaches us, there is so much in the way from our ever being positioned to trust God much less love Him, that He has to go to war.

¹⁸ **John 12:25-26**

¹⁹ **Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9; 6:15**

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He goes after our generational sin to break its bondage over our lives. And keep in mind, every dysfunctional coping mechanism we have adopted and inherited is based on a lie, a fundamental belief that defies God, defies His care, defies His love, and is rooted in self-protection.

God's goal in this war, however, is not to stop the behavior, but to transform our belief, to dismantle the lie. After all, all our behaviors are just the fruit of what we think, which is the fruit of what we feel, which is the fruit of what we believe. Thus, the problem is what we believe not what we do. And trying to control or manage what we do is futile and exhausting. Hence, our battle with sinful behavior is absolutely ridiculous and pointless. We need to change what we think and what we believe, and what we do will flow accordingly.

For example, when due to our circumstances, we come to believe that we are not safe, we are on our own, no one is looking out for us, and so on, it produces all manner of selfish, self-protective, and aggressive behaviors that do not come from the Spirit of God. And if we were able to be honest about ourselves, which is exceedingly difficult, we would be able to trace each of our dysfunctions back to what we think, what we feel, and ultimately to what we believe. And God is interested in getting us to truly examine what we believe.

So step-by-step, from our earliest of years, God wounds us. He wounds us so deeply that we eventually get in touch with our need for something other than ourselves. Honestly, if it were not for His wounds, we would never even consider turning to Him for help. Remember, the Spirit is abundantly clear (again not one of those issues subject to opinion), left to ourselves we would never seek God and we would have no fear of God.²⁰ So, He does not leave us to ourselves.

And the depth of our wounding has a lot to do with the thickness, so-to-speak, of the generational sin which He must bust through to get to our hearts. From our perspective it is all mean, cruel, and not really necessary, but from Yahweh's perspective, it is all meted out with surgical precision, and there could have been no other way.²¹

If He did not hurt us, we would never choose to dig down deep in our soul and look to Him to be our protector, our security, or our comfort, and we would remain complacent in our religious delusion. The result being that we would always be unprotected, vulnerable to the enemy and to his craft of deception and destruction.

But God is our Yahweh Yasha, the one who saves us from the enemy by freeing us from ourselves—from our insolent *flesh*. And, if we let Him, He fully intends to heal us. With our cooperation and our agreement, Yahweh Mekoddishkem and Yahweh Qanna will bring healing

²⁰ See *Romans 3:10-18*

²¹ *Deuteronomy 32:39; Jeremiah 30:7; Isaiah 30:26; Hosea 6-7; Job 5:8*

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to the very wounds He caused.

The Substitution Principle

There is a principle which is intimately tied to the **Design Point** of true Christianity, and that is that we are to exchange all that we are for all that He is. This is the **Substitution Principle**. Christianity was never intended to be a help for us, but to be everything to us. And this is why Paul says, “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.”

This is the **Design Point**: Christ in us. And the pathway to the **Design Point** is death—imaged in the long slow painful demise of crucifixion. And this is what our wounding is all about, effecting a complete substitution: his life for our life. He wants us to let Him put to death, to crucify our *flesh* and all that keeps us tethered to this world, all that stands in opposition to His possessing our being. Again, the goal is complete substitution, in order that He can do His works in and through our lives, so His *agape* love can be shared with others. As a result, when people meet us, they actually have an encounter with Jesus. This is the example Jesus set for us when He explained that those who have met Him have met the Father.²²

This is what we signed up for, whether we know it or not, when we asked Christ to come into our lives. We thought we were just getting a golden ticket to heaven, but He intended so much more. He wants us, and not just a part, but the whole. But it is our choice to let Him. It is always God’s responsibility to act (since only He is good) and it is our responsibility to choose to let Him have His way with us.

The **Design Point** is great in theory (again, one of those lofty concepts), but who really wants to let God crucify their *flesh* and slowly kill off everything that He does not like? Who really wants to exchange all that they are for all that He is? Who wants to traverse the valley of the shadow of death? I am fairly sure that no one is fan of the process, and far too few actually understand this process. Just the thought of it brings up the fear of pain and prolonged times of intense suffering. Ugh! Haven’t we suffered enough already?

Feeling Betrayed

Back to our trust issue. The problem is that most of us have not accepted, much less understood, God’s intention or purpose in our suffering, especially when much of it came early on in our lives and at the hands of those who were responsible to love us and care for us. And it is my belief that regardless of one’s logical and emotional reasoning about the sovereignty of God, or even His existence, or the goodness of God, everyone at the deepest unconscious regions of their soul knows that Yahweh is responsible for their pain. I always joke that I have never met

²² *John 14:8-12*

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a true atheist, just people who have many good reasons to be very mad at God.

Therefore, at the core of our being is this deep festering wound of **betrayal**. Right or wrong, most people feel betrayed by the people who should have loved and accepted them (both in the past and in our present), and they feel betrayed by God for not protecting them and not delivering them from evil. After all, isn't that what a "good" God is supposed to do, protect those he loves?

For some individuals, this sense of betrayal has risen to a cognitive level, but for most it is buried deep within, never to be seen or understood, but always impairing the quality of their relationships both with people and with God. In fact, this sense of betrayal seems to be deep in our fight or flight mechanism of our brain.

This creates quite a conundrum when it comes to the desire of Yahweh to heal us from the very wounds He inflicted. How will we ever trust God to remove our pain if we do not trust Him to remove our pain? As He says, "unless your faith is firm, I cannot make you stand firm."²³ Or said another way, "without firm faith that God is sovereign, God is good, and we do not belong in this place, we will not be firmly established in our faith."

Let us consider a few facts that might help us wrap our head around this issue of the **WHY**, as in why God deemed it necessary to wound us so deeply.

1. All have sinned and therefore fall short of the glory of God, which is the standard of perfection.²⁴
2. We are to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.²⁵
3. But there is none righteous, not even one. There is none who understands, there is no one who seeks for God.²⁶
4. We are by nature children of God's wrath. ²⁷
5. Yet, He chose us from before the foundations of the world were laid, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.²⁸
6. And since Christ suffered in the flesh, we are to arm ourselves with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of

²³ *Isaiah 7:9*

²⁴ *Romans 3:23*

²⁵ *Matthew 5:48*

²⁶ *Romans 3:10-11*

²⁷ *Ephesians 2:3*

²⁸ *Ephesians 1:4*

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the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.²⁹

In sum, from the beginning of our lives we are a total mess with hearts turned far from God, and we are destined for wrath because we did not want God. Therefore, since He chose us to stand before Him holy and blameless, He must start work early and often to turn us away from ourselves, away from this world, and away from our *flesh*, and towards Him, the only one who is holy.

In the book of *Job*, it says that it is “by means of their suffering that He rescues those who suffer, for He gets their attention through adversity.”³⁰ In fact, it is through our suffering that He brings our soul back from the pit that He may enlighten us with the light of life.³¹ Yes, it is through crushing that we begin to emit a beautiful and marvelous fragrance of life.

Ironically, it is through our suffering that we learn how to trust ourselves to Yahweh and to no longer live for the lusts of men, whether that lust is expressed in anger, rebellion, hate, murder, idolatry, sensuality, selfishness, or simply good religion. And since we are birthed with this “sin” condition, and it seems to mutate and grow exponentially as it is passed down to each generation that has not been enlightened with the light of life, He has to start His work of redeeming our soul from the pit from our earliest days in the womb.

It is not intuitive at all, but what has felt like **betrayal** is **anti-betrayal**—God working a pathway for our redemption that we might be with Him. And what has felt like **betrayal** from people, well, they were just the tools that Yahweh used to bring the necessary adversity in our lives such that we would one day turn to Him to find the life He has promised us. Sucks for them for sure; but truth be told, we have all been that tool in someone’s life, far more often than we would like to admit.

So even when we do not comprehend all the aspects of our suffering, there is intention and purpose, and it is for our freedom. Yes, all He does in the lives of those He has chosen is an expression of His great love so that He might lead them to freedom from all that binds them to this world and restricts their intimacy with the Son.

I know far too well that His chosen pathways do not feel like love, but without His aggressive and terrible intervention, we would either remain children of wrath or we would quit and walk away in unbelief. And because of the arrogance and pride within our humanity, it takes a while (some longer than others) for us to be convinced that our *flesh* is so vile and hateful that it always

²⁹ **1 Peter 4:1-3**

³⁰ **Job 36:15**

³¹ **Job 33:29-10**

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fighters against God's love.

Therefore, if we are not trained, through being tested through the fires of adversity, to now and continually be found believing in His love, our *flesh* just might win the fight. For the gate is small and the way is narrow (or filled with tribulation) that leads to life, and there are few who find it.³² Therefore, strive to enter through the narrow (pressure) door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.³³

OUR SUFFERING IS NECESSARY: WE HAVE TO DIE TO LIVE AND WE HAVE TO LIVE TO LOVE!

As we discovered, God tests our faith, or prepares us through trials and tribulations, it is how He crucifies our *flesh* and puts down everything that stands in opposition to His rule in our souls. But as with all things, His grace has provisioned us to be able to endure each-and-every test and trial. In fact, He has given us everything we need for life and godliness.³⁴ We just need to now and continually choose to rely on His grace, fully assured of His love, believing that when we run to religion in an attempt to control the events of our lives (acting as the lord of our life), or when we run to our lusts to deal with the pain and uncertainty of life, we will never be free.

Here is the truth which I have learned, if we are willing, we will be able to take advantage of the abundant grace which He supplies for every terrible circumstance of our lives. It is a matter of belief. After all, He wants us to confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, so I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me."³⁵ The implication is that they can do nothing as He is the one in control, He is the one who initiated this time of crushing, and it will accomplish His beautiful purposes in our lives (to make us like Him) if we let Him have His way.

Our being aliens and strangers in this world gives meaning to all our suffering, no matter how dark and evil it was, or even now is. He wants to fully redeem us from this life and set us free from all rules over our soul.

And only He knows what is necessary, only He knows the depth of depravity in the human heart. We are deceived by our heart, loving our own goodness, that we do not realize it is more deceitful than all else. But He searches out our hearts, He tests our minds, and gives to each of

³² **Matthew 7:14**

³³ **Luke 13:24**

³⁴ **2 Peter 1:3**

³⁵ **Hebrews 13:6**

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us according to our ways.³⁶ In other words, He does only what is necessary. He is intimately familiar with all our ways, how we will choose, and He knows every nook and cranny filled with deceit. He just needs us to see it and to decide that we want to have Him replace all that darkness with the glory of His presence.

God wants us to be identified in the core of our being—in our souls—as children of God and He wants others, by experience, to know that is true. Therefore, He wants us to be convinced that, as our Lord, everything we experience in our lives, is carefully selected by His hands. He wants us to be entirely confident that every bit of it is measured, prescribed, and extremely intentional. And as our lover, He wants us to be certain that all of it (no matter how distressing) is **good** and is exactly what we need in order to know Him for real, to trust Him for real, to be like Him, to think like Him, to share His mind, and to be found in Him, thankful and full of wonder and awe.

I once received this amazing word from God that speaks to this issue:

“I am not an angry God. I do nothing out of resentment, hurt, or pride. I am not mean. I am not hateful. I am in control, but I am not controlling. I am good. I am fair. I am faithful. I know some of you want to fight Me on these, because that is not what your past life, present life, or perceived future life looks like. Why did I give you your dad? Why did I give you your mom? Why were you so lonely growing up? Why were you mistreated, not cared for, ignored, abused, abandoned, molested, shamed, kicked, make fun of, controlled, manipulated, starved, left alone, not seen, not appreciated, not communicated with, not chosen, not pursued, not wanted, rejected, not loved, not touched, not given what you wanted? Look at that list – My Son experienced all those things when He was on earth. And if not Him personally, someone that was very dear and close to Him. How could I ask you to trust Me if I did not understand all that you've been through? How could I ask for your hand if I could not care for you in your pain? How could I leave you in the destructive wake of sin (both of your ancestors and yours) that is so damaging? My heart, My desire for you is love. I wish, I long that you could feel the depths of My desire for you. There is no hatred in Me, only love. I know the only way for you, and to have a genuine relationship is for you to ask Me these hard questions and to not accept surface-y, watered-down answers. I'm not expecting you to be okay with a quick, "Because I love you." But I ask you to not give up. Don't rely on what your eyes see and what your feelings try to

³⁶ *Jeremiah 17:9-10*

3 Things – Part 4

convince you to believe. I will never leave you or forsake you, and it will break My heart if you leave and forsake Me.”

To ponder living this way, seeing God and our lives through this lens, is a little bit crazy, radical, extreme and sets us apart as a freak—even amongst so called believers. But from God’s perspective, this way of living is to be our norm. We are aliens and strangers and although we can enjoy aspects of this world, it does not belong to us; therefore, we are not to find our life, our identity, our purpose, our comfort, or anything else here in this world that He is to be for our lives. Again, we are to be truly identified, at the core of our being, as children of God, as aliens and strangers in this world.

3 Things: Recap

When need to settle with the truth that all things come from His hands, and even if He uses various agents to accomplish His will, it is still all Him. He takes full responsibility for it all. We need to settle with the truth that His fundamental nature is **good**, and that even evil, Satan, the demons, and people (good and bad) are just tools which God uses to raise up a pure virgin bride for His Son. Thus, we can begin to understand that all He does is just and good and reveals His glory and majesty. We may not like it, it may feel terrible, but it is all necessary to circumcise us from this world, from our pain, from our *flesh*, so we can learn how to be wholly dependent upon Him for all things, all the time.

And in this place, we can find rest, a lack of worry or anxiety, a place of peace knowing that everything that He brings in to our lives, and has brought into our lives, is an expression of His great and unyielding love for us.

Just **3 things**. If we can get our heads and our hearts around these **3 things**, then, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can begin to believe them and feel them and trust them. This is the pathway to His promise of rest and peace. And it is remarkably simple, just **3 things**—the simplest hardest 3 things you could ever imagine. He loves us, and causes all things for us, so that we might belong only to Him. That is where we find our safety, security, protection, and everything else He has promised is ours. It is all found in Him, in Yahweh, our Lord God Almighty.