

Changing Directions in Life

Introduction:

1. At one time or another, virtually every one of us has discovered that we were traveling in the wrong direction, and we had to turn around and go in the opposite direction.
2. Every case of genuine repentance in the Bible involved a change in direction.
 - a. From *Metanoeo*, "lit. to perceive afterward." From *meta* (after, implying change), and *noeo* (to perceive). Note Matt. 21:28-29; Matt. 3:7-8.
3. In the secular world many people have reached a point in their lives when they recognized the need to change directions, to try something new, or take a different route.
 - a. Reportedly, Walt Disney worked for a while as a newspaper editor, but was fired because "he lacked imagination and had no good ideas." It is said that at one point in his twenties he was so poor that he resorted to eating dog food.
 - b. Colonel Harlan Sanders was virtually penniless at age 65, when he retired to receive his social security, the first check being for \$ 105.00. However, he loved to share his fried chicken recipe and traveled from door to door, and house to house. He wanted to partner with someone to promote his chicken recipe. It is said that he made 1,009 such calls; he finally persuaded Pete Harman in South Salt Lake, Utah to partner with him and he launched his first "Kentucky Fried Chicken" site in 1952. He virtually went from rags to riches, from consistent failure to great success. He changed directions in life!
4. The fact is, many people have yearned for the direction of their lives to change for the better.
 - a. That is true of many living today.
 - b. This is true of many Bible characters, including Job.

Discussion:

I. Note how things were with Job when we are first introduced to him.

- A. He was a man of great wealth, and had the approval of God.
 1. His this-world situation, Job 1:1-3.
 2. He had God's approval, Job 1:3.
- B. Job, in chapter 29 in the midst of his misery, gives a "flash back" of how life used to be with Job, note v. 2. Note: This chapter is an emotional recall of his former happiness, wealth, and honor.
 1. God "*preserved*" him, v. 2-3
 2. God was "*with*" him and his children "*about*" him, v. 5.
 3. He was respected by both the young and the old, v. 7-8.
 4. Dignitaries respected him and refrained from criticism, v. 9-10.
 5. He was a great help to the less fortunate, v. 11-16.
 6. He felt fixed for life, 17-20.
 7. Others sought him out for his counsel, and did not talk back, vs. 21-25.

II. But His Life took an Abrupt turn in the opposite direction; life for him "fell apart!"

- A. Note the conversation between Satan and God in Job 1:6-12.
 1. Satan, in essence, was saying that Job was not serving God out of devotion or commitment, but because God had so abundantly blessed him.
 2. We should keep in mind the fact that Job was not privy to this conversation.
- B. Observe the step by step downward turn.
 1. He had 500 yoke of oxen and 500 donkeys (v. 3), and the Sabeans took them away, v. 14-15.
 2. His other animals, along with his servants, were consumed by fire, v. 16.
 3. The Chaldeans attacked, killed more servants, and took away his camels, v. 17.
 4. All ten of his children died in another calamity, v. 18-19.
 - a. His response, Job 1:20-21.
 5. But Satan was not through with him! Job 2:3-5.
 6. He was smitten with sore boils from his feet to his head, Job 2:7.
 - a. He took a potsherd to scrape himself and sat down among the ashes.
 7. The "last straw" was his wife who said "*curse God and die,*" Job 2:9!
 8. Then his friends came to "*comfort him,*" v. 11.
 - a. Their initial response stated in Job 2:12-13.

b. But pretty soon they became “*miserable comforters*,” Job 16:2; in essence, telling Job that all your troubles have come upon you because you are a terrible sinner!

(1) **Note:** Job’s friends were not privy to the discussion between God and Satan in Job 1:6-12, and neither was Job aware of that discussion!

III. **But in chapter 42 the direction of Job’s life took a dramatic turn for the better.**

Note: We suggest that the things which worked for Job can also work for us.

A. Job acknowledged the greatness of God, Job 42:1-2.

1. He said “*I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*”

B. Job acknowledged his own ignorance, Job 42:3.

1. “*Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*”

C. Job exercised the power of prayer, Job 42:4.

1. He prayed for himself, “*hear, I beseech thee...declare thou unto me,*” v. 4.

2. He prayed for others, including his detractors, Job 42:7-8,10.

D. Job humbled himself in genuine repentance, Job 42:5-6.

1. Note: Job was first described as being “*blameless*,” Job 1:1, but in the interim (after his afflictions) he uttered some unkind words toward God!

E. The Lord “*gave Job twice as much as he had before,*” Job 42:10.

1. His herds doubled in size, Job 42:12.

2. His again had seven sons and three daughters.

3. After this he lived 140 years, and saw his sons, and his sons’s sons, even to four generations, Job 42:16.

IV. **It is interesting how those who evidently had deserted him in his affliction now gravitate to him!**

A. **Note** Job 42:11: “*Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house, and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.*”

1. But where were they when Job was in the midst of his affliction??

a. Job 19:14-19 informs us of the response of his family “friends” (?) during the time of his affliction and suffering.

2. Yet Job apparently was both forgiving and receptive of them?

a. Would you, or I, have forgiven them?

Conclusion:

1. The directions in Job’s life changed dramatically for the better! Why?

a. He acknowledged the greatness of God.

b. He acknowledged his own ignorance.

c. He exercised the power of prayer.

d. He humbled himself in genuine repentance.

e. Though he, in the midst of his affliction and being falsely accused by his friends, Job refused to turn from God. In fact, he said “*though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain my ways before him,*” Job 13:15.

(1) Job was a good man before he was afflicted, but he was an even better man after his affliction!

2. Job is one of the oldest books in the Bible. Yet the pattern he followed in changing directions is the same pattern we must follow today. Cf. Romans 15:4; James 5:11.

3. If you are not a Christian, you are headed in the wrong direction; if you are an unfaithful child of God you are headed in the wrong direction!

a. Every case of true conversion in the Bible is an example of someone whose direction in life was dramatically changed for the better!

--Bobby Witherington, Sept. 20, 2015