

PLAYING THE HAND DEALT

This is the last lesson from our series entitled: Chasing the Wind.

When I was a child, I would hear adults talk about the importance of “playing the hand dealt them.” I was aware that they were using a common playing card illusion to teach a principle of life.

I came to realize that for some people it was an illustration of a fatalistic approach to life. The fatalistic approach to life says that it is just dumb luck to have either a good or bad hand.

But as a spiritual advancing believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, I have learned “playing the hand dealt” is the faith approach to life. The faith approach to “playing the hand dealt” was given by Solomon in our passage – **“When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad. Consider: God has made one as well as the other.” (Eccl. 7:14) NIV**

The Hebrew word for consider is (raah) [to see]. It is used figuratively two times as the kal imperatives. It is translated consider to emphasize the seeing with the mind (Eccl. 7:13, 14).

1st **consider** (kal impv.) – **“Consider** what God has done: Who can straighten what He has made crooked?” (Eccl. 7:13) note the question.

“What is twisted cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.” (Eccl.1:15) “We should learn to happily accept (RMA of grace orientation) the things the way they are and to accept our divinely appointed lot in life.” (NIV, Eccl.1:15)

2nd **consider** (kal impv.) – “When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, **consider**: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future.” (Eccl. 7:14) note the conclusion.

This lesson will study THREE aspects of “Playing the Hand Dealt” to the spiritual advancing believer by the will of God.

1. A believer cannot discover anything about his future, present, or past apart from faith in God’s word. “Therefore, a man cannot discover anything about his future.” (Eccl. 7:14)

Two important doctrinal principles are taught by the word CONSIDER.

1st – We cannot change what God has determined or willed done (Eccl. 7:13).

2nd - We must learn to be content with God’s will revealed in the word of God (Eccl. 7:14).

- “When times are good, be happy.”
- “When times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other.”

“And we know that ALL THINGS works for the good of those who love Him, who have called according to His purpose.” (Rom.8:28)

“No, in ALL THESE THINGS we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that (1) neither death nor life, (2) neither angels nor demons, (3) neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, (4) neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom.8:37-39)

2. Paul taught this same doctrinal principle of “playing the hand dealt you” to the Corinthian Church in 1 Cor.7:17-24.

“Only, as (hos) the Lord has assigned (merizo / perf.a.ind) to each one, as (hos) the God has called (kaleo / perf.a.ind) each, in this manner, let him walk (peripateo / p.a.impv). And thus I direct (diatasso / p.m.ind) in all the churches.” (1 Cor.7:17, NAS)

Each Christian is to live contentedly for the Lord in whatever status quo he is saved until the Lord changes it.

“Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him.” (7:20)

“Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.” (7:24, NIV)

OT Joseph is an example of this doctrinal principle (prophet, pit, Potiphar, prison, Prime Minister, and preserver of nations – “When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant.” (Gen.39:3-4)

When times are bad, can you faith-rest that God has made one as well as the other? Can you say with David, “This is the day the Lord has made: Let us rejoice and be glad in it?” (Ps.118:24)

3. The believer’s status quo may change in life dramatically or simply due to the will of God.

Yet the spiritually advancing believer must be willing to play the hand dealt which means adjusting to it spiritually and doctrinally.

It is important for the believer to know that his status quo in Christ is more important than the any status quo category in the world (2 Cor.5:17).

Paul explains to spiritually advancing believers how to play the hand dealt you in Phil.4:11-13.

- Contentment (Phil.4:11) learning to trust God as the source and not the detail of life
- Circumstances (Phil.4:12) living to trust God in every situation of life
- Christ (Phil.4:13) leaning upon Christ who give us enduring inner strength

How you play the hand dealt you by God can lead to an enormous opportunity of witness of your faith in Jesus Christ to others.

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