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Four Phases Of Existence

By Mark Gorman

A few months ago, God began speaking to me about something which I hadn't previously understood. Basically, He allowed me to see people's lives, their past, present and future, in one of 4 different Phases.

He showed me that, not all people progress from one Phase to the next on a "set schedule". In fact, it's sad to say that, many people live their entire lives in only one, or two of these 4 Phases Of Existence.

And, although we could definitely view these 4 Phases as stair steps, each one higher than the one before, people do not necessarily always move "upward" to the next higher Phase Of Existence.

In fact, the more I pray and meditate on this, the more clearly I see how easy it is to view ourselves as God must surely see us, either progressing to the next Phase Of Existence, or seemingly stagnating in the same Phase we've come to know, oh so well, with a familiarity which could only result from the monotonous, repetitive drudgery of refusing to move onward and upward, but rather, to settle for the mediocrity with which we have become so comfortable over the years.

And sadly, there is that third group, who not only have not progressed to the next Phase Of Existence, or even to have remained in the same old Phase Of Existence in which they have languished for many years, but sadly, this group has actually regressed, stumbling down these stair steps, to a lower form of existence on this earth.

And, as we begin to study these 4 Phases Of Existence, I first want to state, for the record, that my motive is NOT to merely point out the apathy or seeming failure of those who have either remained in the same Phase, far too long, or those who've actually moved

backward, losing any “ground” which they may have gained, before their “fall” to a lower Phase of existence.

But rather, my true goal and purpose in this teaching is to first, describe the Four Phases Of Existence, and then, hopefully, to inspire each of us to believe that we can, and should, move onward and upward, as we progress from one Phase Of Existence to the next.

And, my guess is that, as we study The Four Phases Of Existence, you will very likely begin to see yourself, clearly, in one of these 4 Phases Of Existence. And hopefully, you will be inspired, and challenged, to do what it takes, to grow – to change – to take on the challenge before us, to prove to ourselves, and others, that God not only wants us to progress, but He has also instilled in each of us, the ability to dream. Before you were born, God placed inside you, the ability to imagine – to hope – to dream – to believe in something you can’t yet see, and to believe that it can be done – not just by someone else, but by you as well, with God’s help.

Now, let’s take a look at the list of the Four Phases Of Existence:

1. Self-Destruction
2. Survival
3. Success
4. Significance

I know that some of you are probably saying, “Is that it? Do you mean that you’ve spent the last few minutes, creating the interest – the curiosity, giving us the ‘buildup’, and after all that, you give us something this simple?”

Well, let’s first admit that, often, the simple can be the most profound.

In fact, it is my contention that many people, possibly most people, often miss the foundational principles of life, the keys to success and achievement, because they’re looking for the complicated, intricate, mysteries of life, and missing the whole point, because the simplicity of “the basics” is staring them right in the face.

So, if you’re looking for profound, I really do feel that you’ll get it. But don’t assume that something has to be complicated or ethereal, to be profound. Because one of the greatest keys to winning in any and everything, is “Don’t Forget The Basics”. When we find it difficult to identify the great keys for success, it is usually because we’re trying too hard – thinking too “lofty” – missing the simple, basic principles of life, which are right before us.

I won’t even attempt to cover this topic in one teaching e-mail. It would be presumptuous of me to think that I could distill all this into a 2-page synopsis. Because, although these Four Phases are basic and simple, they are not remedial, or simplistic. Let’s not make the mistake of thinking that the basics are so obvious, that we can digest and assimilate them into our lives in a few moments.

As I said at the start, God has been speaking to me about this for several months. So, hopefully that will help you to see that, until now, I didn't feel that I was even capable of discussing these Four Phases Of Existence in a way which would systematically detail all the wonderful intricacies and subtleties of each of these Four Phases.

And, even now, as I approach this topic, I do so with great respect, not only for the wonderful simplicity and applicability of each of these Four Phases to each of our lives, but also, with the understanding that, even now, I still feel that I am only beginning to understand these principles. So, I look forward, not only to sharing what I've learned with you, but also, to learning with you, as God reveals these principles of life to all of us.

Now, let's start with the first Phase Of Existence: Self-Destruction

Surely, each of us know someone who is in this lowest, least desirable, of the Four Phases Of Existence. And, our hearts go out to those whose lives have been damaged and wounded by self-destructive habits like, alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling addiction, and more.

But we will make a major error if we assume that this is the only type of "Self-Destruction".

It has been said that, if you know you have a problem, that's at least 50% of the solution, because now, you can start doing whatever is necessary to correct the problem. But, on the other hand, those who do not even realize that they have a problem, are not even close to finding a solution, because they spend much of their time blaming others for their own problems.

You see, we tend to think of destruction as something we DO.

Similarly, most people think that sin is something we do. But, James 4:17 says that, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (That was one of the first scripture verses my mother taught me to memorize as a child. I still remember when I was in first grade, one morning my dad had given me a ride to school. Just before I opened the car door to make my exit, and run to class, my dad asked me to quote a scripture. At that moment, the first verse that came to mind was James 4:17. He was very proud of me as I quoted it to him.)

But, although I memorized that verse at the age of 5, I can still say with surety, that I have sometimes forgotten the meaning of that verse.

Why? Because in our world – our society, we think of evil as an action or activity. We think of sin as a verb – something we do.

But God's word clearly tells us that sin is also what we DON'T DO.

I realize that this teaching is already getting pretty long, so I need to end it for today. But next week, I want to pick up where we left off today, and look further into the First Phase Of Existence, Self-Destruction. Because I'm convinced that most of the people who are in this Phase Of Existence, do not realize it.

And, the most dangerous enemy is the one you cannot see. We are in much greater danger when we deceive ourselves into thinking that we are "OK", instead of being more introspective, truly asking God to help us know ourselves as He sees us.

Remember David's prayer in Psalm 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

If I were him, I wouldn't have prayed this prayer until I had already searched my heart as thoroughly as I could. Only then, would I ask God to look into my heart, to see if there is any "wicked way in me".

But, this is the kind of heart we must have if we are to, not only, Survive, but also, to achieve Success & Significance.

It all starts with an attitude of humility – being honest with ourselves. We MUST know our own hearts – our motives, if we are to identify the areas of weakness, which are in need of "attention" in order for us to move on to a higher – greater Phase Of Existence.

I look forward to sharing more with you next week.

Blessings,
Mark Gorman

PS: It's not too late to register for the Valentine's Marriage Getaway here in Nashville. It's gonna be awesome! Don't miss it! We'll see you, Friday, February 15! (What a great "Valentine's Gift" to your spouse, to not only say "I Love You", but even more, to say, "I want to be a better husband or wife – a better person – for you.")

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