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Four Phases Of Existence Part 2

By Mark Gorman

Last week, we introduced a new topic, which we'll be studying for the next several weeks, the **FOUR PHASES OF EXISTENCE:**

- 1. SELF-DESTRUCTION**
- 2. SURVIVAL**
- 3. SUCCESS**
- 4. SIGNIFICANCE**

I've never heard anyone teach these 4 phases, or read it in a book either. It's been stirring in me for the past few months. I truly believe that God gave me this insight, not only to help me, but also so I can share it with you, and others as well.

Everyone on Planet Earth is presently in one of these four phases.

And if we transition from one phase to another, we are NOT automatically moving up to a higher phase. Often, it is a step backward – a regression – a step down to a "lower" phase of existence.

(As I was writing the teaching last week, I struggled with whether I should tell you all 4 phases "up front", or only tell you one phase at a time, to prevent anyone from "jumping ahead of the class", missing out on the systematic study of each phase, in turn. But, I felt that I should go ahead and give you all four, and if you choose to jump ahead, you'll be the one who's missing out, because there is much to say about each phase, ESPECIALLY the first one.)

So, we continue with our discussion of **SELF-DESTRUCTION:**

Self-destruction is so much more than a bad habit or addiction. Although they are definitely destructive, I'm actually more concerned about what I call the "Termites Of Life".

I HATE TERMITES!

And I know that there will probably be some "tree hugger" out there who will disagree, and say that we should love all things, even the termites. (By the way, if you are that "sensitive", how on earth did you get on my e-mail list? Ha!)

But really, termites are so destructive! And the thing I hate most about them is that they are usually found, only AFTER most of their destruction has already been done.

Very rarely will someone say, "We found termites in our house, and it's gonna cost \$20 to repair the damage."

Usually, termite damage is so great, it's in the thousands of dollars.

And why do we allow these despicable, destructive insects to wreak havoc on the homes where our families live? Why don't we stop them sooner?

Very simply, we didn't SEE THEM!

And so usually, we only know where they've been, not where they are!

In the same way, the most destructive problems in each of our own lives, are those we cannot see, until the damage has already been done.

This is why God told us in the book of James, that the Bible is like a mirror, which enables us to see a reflection of who we are –so we can see those areas in our lives which are in danger. We can introspectively search for those hidden corners of our lives, which are being attacked by these unseen enemies – "The Termites Of Life".

And, for those who choose to think "only the best" of themselves, never even admitting to the possibility that there may be some need for correction or improvement, those people are deceiving themselves, while the "Termites Of Life" steadily eat away beneath the surface.

To illustrate my contention, that most "Self Destruction" occurs passively, rather than as a result of us, actively destroying our own lives, let's take a look at this, scientifically.

The scientific principle I'd like to cite in this discussion is actually "The Second Law Of Thermodynamics". It's also called "The Law Of Entropy".

In fact, noted scientist, Albert Einstein, considered the Second Law Of Thermodynamics – Entropy, to be the "premier law of all science", because of its application to ALL things.

Simply stated, the Entropy Law states that anything which is organized, tends, with time, to become disorganized. Although originally linked with the science of heat energy, Entropy has since been found to apply to every physical process, helping us understand how atoms operate, and even, the chemistry of our own physical bodies.

This scientific law is used by some scientists to substantiate their belief that the sun must eventually burn out. Many scientists also believe that this same law, of Entropy, is at work in each human life, causing aging, and physical death.

So I believe, as did Albert Einstein, that Entropy relates to all of us – all the time.

I often illustrate Entropy by asking how many people in my audience have ever had a teenaged daughter in their home. I tell them, “A teenage girl’s bedroom illustrates the Second Law Of Thermodynamics. Entropy is proven when we simply place a teenager in a clean, neatly organized bedroom. And, within a short span of time, without any encouragement or directives from others, a “natural process” takes place.

Remember, I explained Entropy by saying that anything which is organized, tends, with time, to become disorganized. And, without any provocation, these teenagers automatically prove the Second Law Of Thermodynamics in their own rooms, as organization becomes disorganization. HA!

(Admittedly, this may seem a bit unfair, to pick on teenagers in this way, but really, haven’t they “earned” it? Ha! And I’ve been told that, in rare cases, this doesn’t happen, but I wonder if that’s just “Urban Legend”.)

Now, you may ask, “What does this have to do with me, and the 1st Phase Of Existence, Self-Destruction?”

Very simply, it serves to support my contention that, in most cases, this “Self-Destruction” is not restricted to something so blatantly destructive as drug addiction, alcoholism, or some similar destructive habit. But, rather, I believe that most self-destruction actually occurs automatically, not as the result of something we DO, but what we DON’T DO.

You see, when scientists “establish” a scientific, or “natural” law, this is not their own desire to “create” some process which will “hopefully” continue to function. No, they are actually recognizing something in our world – in nature, which was already at work, long before they ever noticed it.

For example, when Sir Isaac Newton “authored” the Law Of Gravity, he didn’t say, “We need to have a law which causes everything on earth to be attracted to the earth – something which would keep everything from just merely floating around in space. Let’s call it gravity.”

No, he merely recognized a force – a law – which had been at work in our universe, long before he was ever born.

In the same way, when I tell you of Entropy – The 2nd Law Of Thermodynamics, I'm not suggesting that you start "trying" to make Entropy "happen". Actually, I'm saying, this may explain many things in your life, when you realize that this Natural Law has already been at work, functioning in our world, long, long before you were ever born. And, once you understand how it works, my guess is that it will explain a lot – about you – and, about other people in your life, as well.

Now, I've gone to all this "trouble", giving this loooooong, drawn out explanation, to provide a foundational basis for my contention that, even if you do NOTHING, you can be Self-Destructive!

Self-Destruction can occur if you sit still all day long – doing absolutely NOTHING!

Why? Because of things like atrophy!

What's that? Basically, if you never move a muscle in your body, as a result of remaining dormant, those muscles will actually become weaker, and, over time, they can become so weak that you couldn't even stand or walk.

And to think, that's not a result of what you DID, but of what you DIDN'T DO!

Scientific studies have proven that the act of merely walking, builds bone mass.

Did you get that? WALKING MAKES MY BONES THICKER – STRONGER!

And the only thing you need to do, to lose bone mass and muscle strength and tone, is to do absolutely nothing!

This proves that, if you want to just SURVIVE, you have to DO SOMETHING! In other words, to survive – to stay even – not progressing, but just maintaining – you must be pro-active. Just to "maintain", you MUST DO SOMETHING!

Laziness, apathy, lethargy, are all destructive – not because they actively cause destruction, but merely by the fact that you are lethargic, lazy, apathetic (don't care), Self-Destruction is the ONLY POSSIBLE RESULT!

This brings us back to the Bible verse I cited in my previous Teaching E-mail on the topic of the "Four Phases Of Existence". In the book of James, in the New Testament, we are told of God's view of sin. (Because most people think that sin is only what I do.) But, James 4:17 says, to him who knows to do good, and doesn't do it, to him it is sin.

Further proving that Self-Destruction – Sin – is not always a destructive act, but is often a LACK of ACTIVITY!

That's why I introduced this by referring to it as "The Termites Of Life". Why? Because we don't readily see these things – inactivity - as destructive, just as termites destroy – unseen.

Look, I know that when we are in pain, whether it is emotional pain, or physical pain, we often find some "comfort" in simply stopping – sitting down – lying down – resting.

And, I don't want people to misunderstand what I'm saying here. I'm not telling you that we can NEVER rest.

But deep down, whether you want to admit it or not, we know the difference between the rest that we need, and the lethargic, self-destructive attitude of self-pity or laziness, which basically refuses to get up and do "what needs to be done", but rather, chooses consciously to do NOTHING, although we know what really does need to be done.

Again, I know that when you are in great pain, there are times that you simply can't go – you can't move.

But I've also learned that I can't make a lifestyle of "self-pity", EVEN if everyone around me, including my doctors, tells me that I should "take it easy" because my "condition" or "situation" is sooooo bad.

Although it may seem very tempting, to take that advice, especially when I have a REALLY GREAT EXCUSE, and the pain is overwhelming, I know that my LACK of activity will only WORSEN my situation. If the pain is bad today, and I remain motionless all day, just to avoid doing anything which may cause more pain, that inactivity – that motionless-ness will actually potentiate and perpetuate the painful condition, and tomorrow, the pain will be greater, and I will be weaker – not because of what I did, but because of what I DIDN'T DO!

So, no matter how great the pain, you've got to get up – start moving – put one foot in front of the other – move forward – walk – refuse to take it lying down – and as you do this, as you walk right into the pain – as you overcome inertia – grit your teeth and face the day, by virtue of merely putting one foot in front of another – walking – you are telling your body to add bone mass – to "thicken" those frail, brittle bones – you are adding muscle tone – overcoming atrophy – gaining strength by pressing through the fatigue – the weakness and pain.

Trust me, I know – from my own experience – that pain is a formidable obstacle, which is sometimes so great, that you have NO CHOICE – you have to stop, lie down, take a break, and heal.

But NEVER fool yourself into believing that by lying down and doing nothing, you're somehow getting stronger.

True, you may need to have those “temporary seasons” of rest and healing, but the strength comes from motion – activity – movement.

You may say, “But Mark, you have no idea what pain I have, and how it makes me feel.”

And you know what, you’re right. I may not fully understand all your pain.

But I do know that, if you allow it, pain will make your choices for you – it will choose the path of least resistance. And we know that muscle is only built through resistance.

So, if you’re living a life in which you face NO RESISTANCE, and everything comes easily, very simply, you’re NOT getting stronger – you’re not growing. In fact, it’s very likely that Entropy is at work, and that “lack of resistance” – that “easy life” may actually be much more destructive than you had realized.

Embrace resistance, and appreciate what it offers – an opportunity to grow stronger – to gain strength we’d never have, if there were no resistance.

I decided years ago that pain will never make my choices for me.

In closing, let me borrow from a great American Poet, Robert Frost, and leave you with these words:

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

Blessings,
Mark Gorman

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