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Four Phases Of Existence Part 4b - The Wrong Side of Jordan By Mark Gorman

Our previous teaching left off where the leaders of two tribes of Israel, Reuben and Gad, came to Moses with a proposition. They asked permission to settle on "this side" of Jordan, instead of in the "Land of Promise" with the rest of the Israelites.

When Moses heard their proposal, Moses became furious! He reminded them that their forefathers had doubted God, forty years ago. And when they said that they did not believe that they could possess the land, and that it would be too difficult to overcome the enemies there, God became so angry, that he declared that none of those men over the age of 20 would live to see the Promised Land, except Joshua and Caleb – the only two who had remained positive, believing God's word.

So, He caused them to wander in the desert for 40 years, basically to allow time for all of the adults to die off, before Israel would be allowed to enter the Land of Promise. In this way, only those who had not doubted God, would be allowed to inherit this land of abundance.

In the process of negotiating the terms of this agreement, Moses stipulated that, even though they wanted to "settle" for the land on "this side" of Jordan, the East Bank, they would still have to cross over to the other side with the rest of Israel, to help them fight and wage war against the inhabitants of that land. And, they would not be allowed to return, to live in the land they had chosen, until all of Israel had safely settled into the Promised Land on Jordan's West Bank.

There is so much that we can learn from this story. And I'm finding it difficult to "stay on point" with what I'm teaching here, simply because this story contains so many great analogies from which we can benefit. But for now, let's focus on one particular aspect of this story.

Keep in mind, we've been studying the FOUR PHASES OF EXISTENCE:

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

And, as of now, we've only studied the first of the four, Self-Destruction. One of the main reasons to stay on that one topic is that, unfortunately, there is more of a tendency toward Self-Destruction in each of us, than we would think.

As we studied the Second Law Of Thermodynamics, The Law Of Entropy, and how it relates to our lives, we saw that, without any effort or activity, our "default" Phase Of Existence is Self-Destruction. It's important for us to acknowledge this, because without that understanding, there is a tendency for us to "flatter" ourselves, thinking that, in a dormant state, we are at least, in "Survival" mode.

James 4:17 reinforces this by telling us that sin is not only "commission", but also, it is "omission". Sin is not just the evil we choose to do, but also, it is the good we choose NOT to do. It says that when we know to do good, and we don't do it, that is sin.

This helps us to understand that, if left to ourselves, without specifically committing any act of evil, we are still in a Self-Destructive Phase. So, if we are to even Survive, we must take action, to move away from the "default" state of Self-Destruction.

This story of God's Chosen People, Israel, serves as an example of how we can miss out on wonderful blessings in life, by resisting change, and settling for less than God's best.

When they approached Moses, to broker this agreement, for the land on the East Bank of Jordan, they were basically slapping God in the face, saying, "We don't believe You. We trust our judgment more than we trust You."

And think about it, if it's a Land Of Milk & Honey, where there will even be enough flowers growing wild, for bees to make honey, what kind of grass do you think there would be, for their cattle? Duh!

Isn't it fun, to look at other people's mistakes? Doesn't it bring a smile to your face, when you see that somebody else screwed up a lot worse than you? Ha!

What are the most popular publications at the supermarket checkout line? It's the tabloid newspapers and magazines, which detail every misstep made by a celebrity, or a famous person. Isn't it sad, that our society derives such pleasure from learning of the failures of others?

Whether you want to admit it or not, it's true. We live in a world which seems to take great delight in the shortcomings of others.

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