BC/AC: Before Christ and After Christ

We are going to continue with the Holy Spirit’s help to position ourselves to participate in the prophetic word from the Lord given through the Prophet Brother Copeland. Remember, we discussed what it means to participate. To take part, to have a part or share in something. We are going to be discussing things that can keep us from taking part and having a share in this prophetic word from God.

Please understand, we do have a right to participate and to be a partaker of this prophetic word from the Lord. AMP Hebrews 3:14-15;For we (believers) have become partakers of Christ (sharing in all that the Messiah has for us), if only we hold firm our newborn confidence (which originally led us to Him) until the end, while it is said, “Today (while there is still opportunity) if you hear His Voice, do not harden your heart, as when they provoked Me (in the rebellion in the desert at Meribah).”

Holding firm, like we discussed in our previous lesson. Holding firm to the Head, Jesus the Christ. And as stated in this verse of Scripture, holding firm to our newborn confidence in Christ Jesus (the Word of God made Flesh). Clearly, we see in these verses of Scripture we are partakers or participants of all Christ has for us. However, there is a condition, constituted by the word “if.” If we hold firm to our newborn confidence and if we hear His Voice and do not harden our heart. It’s important to understand this condition because it determines whether or not we will become participants in all Christ has for us.

What does it mean to harden your heart? In this verse of Scripture the word “harden” is the Greek word skleryno (sklay-roo- ‘no). It means to become obstinate or stubborn. In addition, the word “heart” is the Greek word kardia (kar-dee’-ah). It means of the will and character. Now, let’s bring these two words together for a better understanding. In other words, to be unwilling to change your character. As converts to Jesus Christ from the devil and this world order, we understand we had a b/c. We all had lived without God. However, now we are supposed to be converted a/c. A life now lived with God. A convert is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as to change from one form or function to another. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul reveals to us in his letter to the Colossians. AMPC Colossians 1:12-14; Giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified and made us fit to share the portion which is the inheritance of the saints (God’s holy people) in the Light. (The Father) has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His Love, in Whom we have our redemption through His Blood, (which means) the forgiveness of our sins.

So, we have already been changed from one kingdom to another, and from one form or function to another. Before Christ we functioned in darkness or ignorance of God and His Way. B/C according to the Word of God we lived to gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God). Interestingly, Colonel William C. Menninger a colonel in the United States Army, who enlisted during World War II and was a psychiatrist, and the director of the Psychiatry Consultants Division in the office of the Surgeon General. He had been studying the behavior of the soldiers and noticed what he considered unusual behavior in some soldiers.

He observed that some soldiers were not compliant with the military. They weren’t openly defiant but expressed their civil disobedience what he called “aggressiveness” by “passive” measures, such as pouting, stubbornness, procrastination, inefficiency, and passive obstructionism (deliberate interference with the progress of business especially of a legislative body) to what he saw as immaturity. Colonel Menninger, who later would become a brigadier general, termed this behavior as passive aggressive. However, this passive aggressive behavior isn’t anything new, it’s the flesh (human nature without God).

Colonel Menninger defined this passive aggressive behavior as seemingly harmless, accidental, or even neutral but indirectly displays unconscious aggressive motive. For example, this behavior can appear in the form of resistance to another person’s requests by procrastinating, expressing sullenness, or acting stubbornly. Passive aggressive people allow others to take control and exert their control over situations in a less direct or recognizable way. This person will repeatedly claim that they are not mad or upset. In denying what they are thinking and feeling, and refusing to be open and honest about it, they shut down and don’t deal with the issues, in turn is what causes this type of behavior.

The Apostle Paul describes this passive aggressive behavior in his letter to the Galatians. AMPC Galatians 5:19-21; Now the doings of the flesh are clear(obvious) so obvious even Colonel Menninger could see them. They are immorality, impurity, strife, jealousy, anger (ill temper), selfishness, divisions (dissensions), party spirit (factions, sects with peculiar opinions, heresies), envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. Paul wanted the Galatians and us to understand there is a b/c before Christ and there is an a/c after Christ. When we were still in the kingdom of darkness b/c we lived and operated in the flesh (human nature without God). Let’s take a closer look at the word “operate.” The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines operate as to perform a function; exert power or influence. When we allow ourselves to be influenced by our flesh then the flesh will be our operations or works. Paul warns those who operate this way what will be the result or outcome. AMPC Galatians 5:21; I warn you beforehand, just as I did previously, that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. How could YOU inherit the Kingdom of God with operations of the flesh? YOU can’t! To inherit the Kingdom of God YOU must choose to operate in the Kingdom of God Principal! And isn’t the passive aggressive flesh!

What is the Principal (most important, or influential) in the Kingdom of God? The Apostle Paul answers this very important question in his letter to the Corinthians. AMP 1 Corinthians 13:13; And now there remain: faith (abiding trust in God and His promises), hope (confident expectation of eternal salvation), Love (unselfish Love for others growing out of God’s Love for me), these three (the choicest graces); but the greatest of these is Love. God is Love! Just as Colonel Menninger by his personal observation and experience came to know the passive aggressive flesh, John came to know God is Love!

AMP 1 John 4:16; We have come to know (by personal observation and experience), and have believed (with deep, consistent faith) the Love which God has for us. God is Love, and the one who abides (or operates) in Love abides (or operates) in God, and God abides continually in him. So, b/c we operated in the passive aggressive flesh. Now a/c we should be operating in the Love of God or Agape. In order to do this, we must renew or retrain our thinking (Romans 12:1-2) to renounce the b/c life of the passive aggressive flesh by considering ourselves dead to that life because we died with Christ on the Cross and are now raised with Christ to the New Life of the Love of God. AMP Romans 6:8-14; Now if we have died with Christ, we believe (your thinking) that we will also live (together) with Him, because we know (the self-evident Truth) that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has power over Him. For the death He died, He died to sin (ending its power and paying the sinner’s debt) once and for all; and the life that He lives, He lives to (glorify) God (unbroken fellowship with Him). Even so, consider (your thinking) yourselves to be dead to sin (and your relationship to it broken), but alive to God (in unbroken fellowship with Him) in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let (allow) sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts and passions. Do not go on offering members of your body to sin as instruments of wickedness. But offer yourselves to God (in a decisive act) as those alive (raised) from the dead (to a new life), and your members (all your abilities sanctified, set apart) as instruments of righteousness (yielded) to God. For sin will no longer be a master over you, since you are not under the Law (as slaves), but under (unmerited) Grace (as recipients of God’s Favor and Mercy).

Now that we a/c Paul wanted us to understand the operation of the Love of God. AMP 1 Corinthians 13:1-8; If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not Love (for others growing out of God’s Love for me), then I have become only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal (just an annoying distraction). And if I have the gift of prophecy (and speak a new message from God to the people), and understand all mysteries, and (possess) all knowledge; and if I have all (sufficient) faith so that I can remove mountains, but do not have Love (reaching out to others), I am nothing. If I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned but do not have Love, it does me no good at all.

Before we continue, I want to make an important point. The “do not have” being used here is the Greek word echo (ekh’-o) and it’s not referring to YOU not having or possessing the Love of God because we already know Paul has explained in Romans 5:5 that the Love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. What this phrase is referring to is not holding oneself to a thing, not clinging to or being closely joined to a person or thing. This is the origin of the word “echo.” Echo is defined as one who closely imitates or repeats another’s words, ideas, or acts. In other words, choosing to act like b/c instead of a/c.

Let’s continue, Love endures with patience and serenity, Love is kind and thoughtful, and is not jealous or envious; Love does not brag and is not proud or arrogant. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked (nor overly sensitive and easily angered); it does not take into account a wrong endured. It does not rejoice at injustice, but rejoices with the Truth (when right and Truth prevail). Love bears all things (regardless of what comes), believes all things (looking for the best in each one), hopes all things (remaining steadfast during difficult times), endures all things (without weakening). Love never fails (it never fades nor ends). But as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for the gift of special knowledge, it will pass away.

As YOU can see, the Love of God and passive aggressive flesh are diametrically opposed. Paul helps us to see this as well. AMPC Galatians 5:17; For the desires of the flesh (passive aggressive) are opposed to the (Holy) Spirit, and the (desires of the) Spirit are opposed to the flesh (godless human nature); for these are in direct opposition to each other (continually in conflict), so that you (as believers) do not (always) do whatever (good things) you want to do. Paul educates us on the conflict between the old passive aggressive flesh life and the New Life in the Spirit.

If you will take notice here, Paul didn’t one time mention the devil. Of course, there are times we contend with the devil. However, in most cases we are in conflict with ourselves. This is why “The Ministry of YOU” is so important because it causes us to be aware of getting the beam out of our own eye (Matthew 7:2-5). A/C or B/C is the conflict until YOU settle it and choose one! The old life of passivity is being receptive to the outside (the world) impressions or influences but unreceptive to God. The New Life in the Spirit according to Paul is walking in the Love of God, with a crucified passive aggressive flesh with its affections and lusts, living and walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25).