The Law of Environment presented by The Ministry of YOU: 8/27/24

The Law of Environment according to John Maxwell is growth thrives in conducive surroundings. He gives a quote that embodies this law. Mark Caine, an analyst, strategist, and communicator says, “The first step toward success is taken when you refuse to be a captive of the environment you first find yourself in.”

Let’s take a closer look at the word “environment” that is used in this law. According to the Webster and Merriam dictionary environment is defined as the circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded. Jesus teaches the Law of Environment, and it is recorded in the book of Mark. He is teaching this law by a parable. The Lord is warning us to make sure we have a conducive environment for our growth.

Jesus emphasized the importance of this lesson. AMPC Mark 4:3; Give attention to this! Behold a sower went out to sow. It’s important for us to understand what we are sowing! AMPC Mark 4:14; The sower sows the Word. So, Jesus is talking about the handling of God’s Word. The Word of God needs a conducive environment in order to grow inside of us. James, the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ gives us some insight into the correct environment. AMPC James 1:21; in a humble (gentle, modest) spirit receive and welcome the Word which implanted and rooted (in your hearts) contains the power to save your souls.

The Word of God needs to be received into a humble, gentle, and modest heart. This is the conducive environment needed for the Word of God to grow and save our souls. The word “receive” in the Greek text is dechomai (dekh’-om-ahee) and it means to take hold of, to receive or grant access to, a visitor, not to refuse intercourse or friendship, to receive favorably, to give ear to, embrace, make one’s own, to receive, to take upon oneself, sustain bear, endure. Now let’s return to the teaching of Jesus. AMPC Mark 4:4; And as he was sowing, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. What is the Lord saying about this person? AMPC Mark 4:15; The ones along the path are those who have the Word sown (in their hearts), but when they hear, the devil comes at once and (by force) takes away the message which is sown in them.

Now, that we understand the proper environment for the growth of God’s Word in our heart we should be able to see the problem with this person. The devil was able to come immediately and take the Word that was sown because they really didn’t humbly receive the Word of God into their heart. Remember, we just read what it means to receive. If they had truly received the Word of God into their heart, then the devil wouldn’t have been able to take it!

Let’s continue with Jesus’ parable. AMPC Mark 4:5-6; Other seed (of the same kind) fell on ground full of rocks, where it had not much soil; and once it sprang up, because it had no depth of soil; and when the sun came up, it was scorched, and because it had not taken root, it withered away. AMPC Mark 4:16-17; And the same way the ones sown upon stony ground are those who, when they hear the Word, at once receive and accept and welcome it with joy; and they have no real root in themselves, and so they endure for a little while; then when trouble or persecution arises on account of the Word, they immediately are offended (become displeased, indignant, resentful) and they stumble and fall away.

So, this one did receive and welcome the Word of God into their hearts. Then what was the problem? Jesus said no real root in themselves. No real root, this is a person who is still immature in the things of God. They haven’t had the opportunity to become rooted in the Word of God yet. This is why discipleship or mentoring is so important to help believers to get rooted in the Word of God. This person needed to be taught that receiving the Word of God means to hold on to the Word of God and endure the trouble or persecution that comes on account of the Word. AMPC John 10:10; The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy. The enemy is coming to steal the Word we are receiving and sowing into our hearts.

Young believers in Christ are usually very excited and enthusiastic in the beginning. So, they joyfully receive almost anything anyone shares with them. However, if they don’t know and understand the enemy is coming to steal the Word by initiating trouble or persecution; they are going to get offended and fall away from following the Lord. Let’s continue with Jesus’ teaching. AMPC Mark 4:7; Other seed (of the same kind) fell among thorn plants, and the thistles grew and pressed together and utterly choked and suffocated it and yielded no grain.

AMPC Mark 4:18-19; And the ones sown among the thorns are others who hear the Word; then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age (social media), and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke the Word, and it becomes fruitless. This person is someone who is more mature than the previous person. The Word of God was received and has taken root. What’s the issue with this person? They have allowed other things to take root along with the Word of God. Remember, the word “receives” in the Greek text states that receiving is an intercourse and friendship with the Word of God. Unfortunately, this person is allowing intercourse and friendship with worldly things also. They are not keeping a conducive environment for the Word of God. So, now these other things that were allowed into the heart, have been allowed to grow along with the Word, has now choked or overtaken the Word of God and caused it to be fruitless or useless in them and in their lives.

That’s why Proverbs warns us that it is our responsibility to guard our hearts so we can maintain an environment conducive for the growth of God’s Word in our hearts. AMPC Proverbs 4:23; Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flows the springs life. The word “keep” in the Hebrew text is nasar (naw-tsar’) which means to guard, watch over, to preserve, guard from dangers, to be kept close, be blockaded. We do this with vigilance. In the word vigilance, is the word “vigil.” A vigil is the act of keeping awake at times when sleep is customary, a period of wakefulness. In other words, this is not the time to sleep on the job of keeping an environment conducive for our growth.

Now Jesus describes the conducive environment for the growth and fruitfulness of God’s Word in our hearts and lives. AMPC Mark 4:8; And other seeds (of the same kind) fell into good (well-adapted) soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing, and yielded up to thirty times as much, and sixty times as much, even a hundred times as much as had been sown. AMPC Mark 4:20; And those sown on the good (well-adapted) soil are the ones who hear the Word and receive and accept and welcome it and bear fruit; some thirty times as much as was sown, some sixty times as much, and some (even) a hundred times as much. This is a person who is a spiritually mature believer. Jesus referred to them as good (well-adapted). The word “adapted” is defined as suited by nature, character, or design to a particular use, purpose, or situation. This spiritually mature believer has humbly (gentle, modest) spirit received the Word of God. This mature believer has received the Word of God or the Wisdom of God as a friend just like Proverbs admonishes us to do. NLT Proverbs 7:4; Love wisdom like a sister; make insight a beloved member of your family. Our perception of the Word will determine whether or not we properly receive the Word of God into our hearts. They have taken the time to implant the Word of God into their hearts and have patiently allowed the Word to take root in their hearts by believing and acting on the Word. So, now they are productive or fruitful. At, this point they would be seeing the results of God’s Word manifested in their lives.

John Maxwell makes a very important point. “It’s possible to change without growing, but it’s impossible to grow without changing.” “One of the keys to making right changes that allow us to grow is knowing the difference between a problem or challenge.” He says, challenges are things that you can’t change, like where you were born. However, a problem he says is different. A problem is something that you can do something about. He states, “Its something you can grow through.”

He gives a few things for us to consider in order to put ourselves in a better place for growth.

1. Assess Your Current Environment: If you are going to make changes, you must make sure they’re the right ones. So, assess where you are now and why you want to change. One of the ways to judge whether or not you’re growing in a conducive environment is to discern whether you’re looking forward to what you’re doing or looking back to what you’ve done. If the future looks dull, routine, or confining, you may need to start looking to make changes. You need to find an environment that is going to promote your growth.
2. Change Yourself and Your Environment: If you know you need to make a major change to your environment, you must also determine to change yourself at the same time. Change yourself but not your environment, growth will be slow and difficult. Change your environment but not yourself, growth will be slow and less difficult. Change your environment and yourself, growth will be faster and more successful. By putting both together at the same time, you increase and accelerate your chances for success.
3. Change Who You Spend Your Time With: According to research by social psychologist Dr. David McClelland of Harvard, the people with whom you habitually associate are called your “reference group,” and these people determine as much as 95 percent of your success or failure in life. King Solomon states, “Walk with the wise and become wise.”
4. Challenge Yourself in Your New Environment: One of the most positive things about being in a growth environment is that it gives you room to fly, but you must be intentional about finding and creating those growth opportunities. You must develop the habit and discipline of challenging yourself. A better growth environment won’t help you much if you don’t do everything in your power to make the most of it. You must seize the growth opportunities you have and make the most of them by challenging yourself.
5. Focus on the Moment: The changes we want to make in our lives come only in the present. What we do now controls who we become and where we are in the future. We live and work in the present. Mother Teresa observed, “Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.” If you need to make changes in yourself and your environment, don’t dwell on your past. You can’t change it. Don’t worry about your future. You can’t control it. Focus on the current moment and what you can do now. The Word of God says, “Faith is now!”
6. Move Forward Despite Criticism: In his classic The Science of Getting Rich, author Wallace D. Wattles writes, “Do not wait for a change of environment before you act. Cause a change of environment through action. You can act upon your present environment so as to cause yourself to be transferred to a better environment.” Growth always comes from taking action, and taking action almost always brings criticism. Move forward anyway. To reach your potential, you must do not only what others believe you cannot do, but what even you believe you cannot do. Most people underestimate themselves. They shoot for what they know they can reach. Instead, they should reach for what’s beyond their grasp. If you don’t try to create the future you want, you must endure the future you get. However, as you take action to change yourself and your environment, you will almost certainly be criticized for it. Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson observed, “Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising which tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a plan of action and follow it to the end requires some of the same courage which a solider needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men to win them.”