



(October 8, 2009)

THE STORY OF THE TEAPOTS AND THE CLAY

This is the story of the teapots and the clay. God used our T-Times¹ to help tell this story at our October 28, 2009 meeting. To grasp the full effect, you may want to use physical objects performing each action as you go through the story. Even if you don't have the items we used, clearly identified substitute objects can work.

We opened the evening with two teapots and four pieces of colored clay before us: an opaque teapot, a transparent teapot, one piece of **black** clay, one piece of **red** clay, and two pieces of **blue** clay.

We began our night with a T-Time of Hebrews 4:12 that revealed how God's Word divides between our soul (the **black** clay) and our spirit (the **red** clay). Once we finished T-Time, the teapots and the clay had a story to tell. It is a bit different than the live demo; however, it is still a story worth listening to. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you as He did to us on that evening, as we walk through each of these ten principles. Come. Join us.

Before us, on our right, we have a flowery, opaque teapot. This teapot represents us before we come to God. Since the teapot is opaque, no one can really see the inside of us. Thus, we are judged by our exterior (i.e. our actions). Some may like the flowers and think the teapot is pretty (i.e. good). Others may hate flowers and think the teapot is ugly (i.e. bad). However, God does not look at the outer appearance; He looks at our heart (1 Samuel 16:7), and what He sees is the sin nature we are all born with (represented by placing the **black** clay inside the opaque teapot). This **black** clay represents the sinful nature that Paul discusses in Romans 7--the one that doesn't do what we want to do, but does what we don't want to do. Thus, **the very first principle the teapots and the clay teach us is we must each recognize the sin nature within all of us!**

However, by recognizing the sin nature that lives in all of us, we are faced with the **second principle that the teapots and the clay teach us: "What type of soil do we want to cultivate?"** In our first T-Time, *Kingdom of God vs The Things of the World*, we discovered we had two choices: soil which leads to the *Kingdom of God* or soil which leads to the *Things of the World*.

Thankfully, Scripture tells us how we can choose to cultivate soil that leads to the Kingdom of God. We can begin cultivating godly soil by implementing the **third principle in our lives, which is to acknowledge our sin before Jesus and accept**

¹ T-Times mentioned in this document can be located on the Documents page at www.wow2women.com.



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Him as Lord. If we have ever told a lie or done anything else we knew to be wrong, we have sinned. As a matter of fact, Scripture teaches us we have all sinned and fallen short of God's glory (**Romans 3:23**). The Good News, however, is in Romans, where Paul teaches us that when we repent for our sins and confess Jesus as Lord, Jesus rescues us from our sin nature (**10:9-10, 7:24-25**). To illustrate this, we place one piece of the **blue** clay inside the opaque teapot to show how Jesus comes to live within us alongside our sin nature (the **black** clay which is already in the teapot). However, the Father no longer sees our sin nature. What He now sees is the blood of Jesus has forgiven us our sins (**Matthew 26:28**) and we are now the righteousness of God *in* Christ Jesus (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). Keep in mind, just as the black clay does not go away, our sin nature does not go away either. It is always there seeking to have a voice in our lives, which is why we need to work OUT our salvation with fear and trembling (**Philippians 2:12-13**).

A good place to start working out our salvation is to **acknowledge where we are in God, which is our fourth principle**. When we confess Jesus as Lord, we are birthed into the Kingdom of God, and begin our process of spiritual growth! However, we are not birthed into the Kingdom full grown! We are birthed as babes! Our second T-Time, *Parable of the Soil vs Spiritual Growth*, revealed to us how our soil (our heart) affects our spiritual growth. While God may see us as forgiven and righteous, because we are babes, our actions don't always align with that. However, if we are not careful, those actions can bring about guilt and condemnation. Therefore, we must know *when* we are *in* Christ, we are a new creation, old things pass away and all things become new (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)! However, the process of becoming new *takes time*, and it can be a bit painful! A Christian baby learning to live according to the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is not much different than a baby birthed into the earth having to learn how to live in her surroundings! Both are dependent upon those who are more mature to care for them! Be mindful our spiritual growth began when we were birthed into the Kingdom. It continues as we go through our spiritual childhood and adolescence, and even after we achieve spiritual adulthood!² However, the question now becomes, how *do* we grow that we may be IN Christ? If we look inside our opaque teapot, we find our answer. We see that in order to cultivate Godly soil we must learn to live *in* Jesus (the **blue** clay) instead of living according to our sin nature (the **black** clay). Therefore, our answer for how to grow spiritually is we learn to ABIDE in Him AND His Word in us (John 15:7). Now, what does abiding look like?

One, abiding looks like our **fifth principle; we learn who our real enemy is and the weapons God provides for us to fight that enemy!** Our third T-Time, *Whole Armor of God vs Wiles of the Devil*, taught us about the armor God provides for us to combat the

² Paul D Meier, M.D et.al, *Introduction to Psychology and Counseling: Christian Perspectives and Applications*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1982, 1981), 256-257



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wiles of the devil. In this T, we learned that while people are not our enemy, they ARE how the enemy comes at us, causing us to have to withstand in the evil day! We also learned our very first piece of armor is the belt of truth (Ephesians 6:11). In Scripture, Jesus tells us if we abide in His Word, we are His disciples and we will know the truth and the truth will make us free (**John 8:31-32**). Therefore, one of the first places we can begin our journey for spiritual growth is to spend time studying God's Word, asking the Holy Spirit to teach us the things we need to know (**John 14:26**), so we can be freed from the hurts and wounds of our past that we may freely grow in our relationship with Christ and with others. As we learn to abide in God's Word, we will learn how to spend time in His presence through prayer, praise, and worship, eventually learning to include Him in every aspect of our lives!

Two, abiding looks like our **sixth principle; we learn how to go through our trials**. Every time we plant a seed from God's Word into our heart, that seed must process through the four soils until it finds a home. Will it fall by the wayside, in the rocks, among the thorns, or in good ground, which takes us to our forth T-Time, *Cast Down vs Conquered*. In this T, we discovered during our trials, things may not always *feel* good, but we can experience those feelings without allowing the devil to conquer us, for we are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus (**Romans 8:7**). However, in order to be more than conquerors, we must learn how to receive God's love and then not allow ANYTHING to separate us from that love. We must learn how to REPENT when needed and accept God's FORGIVENESS so the seeds we are seeking to plant do not fall by the wayside. We must learn how to CHOOSE to do the things we know to be right based on what God has taught us, *even* when it hurts, so our seeds do not fall on rocky ground. We must learn to TRUST God with all of our heart, leaning not to our own understanding, but acknowledging Him in all our ways, so He can direct our paths (**Proverbs 3:5-6**), so our seeds do not fall on thorny ground. Finally, we must learn to not be wise in our own eyes, but to fear the Lord and depart from evil, so our seed can fall on good ground (**Proverbs 3:7**). These are all ways we learn to abide in Jesus. These are all ways we learn to obey Jesus. These are also ways we learn to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for in this season, we are still the opaque teapot. We have been made right *by* Jesus, but we have not yet learned to do right *for* Jesus!

Thus, abiding also looks like us **learning how to walk in love and grace, which is our seventh principle**. Learning to do right *for* Jesus means we must make the hard decisions needed to progress from childhood to adulthood? But, how do we learn to make these hard decisions? To begin, we learn to walk in LOVE! Love God and love others (**Matthew 22:37-40**). Did Jesus not say if we love Him, we will obey Him (**John 14:23**)? Love becomes the motivation for the things we do, and from our pure motive we can produce a quality action! Thus, when we find ourselves faced with a decision, we are now able to recognize "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God" (**2 Corinthians 10:4 NKJV**), which helps us remember flesh and blood *is not* our enemy, but it *is through* flesh and blood the evil one comes at us (**Ephesians 6:12**). By



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learning to walk in love, we can see beyond the person to what God is seeking to do in us and or through us. By learning to walk in love, we can also overcome the pride of life (**1 John 2:16**), that our heart may be humble before God. Now, with humble hearts, we know we cannot do this alone, but we must seek help from the Lord (**Psalms 121:2**). Since God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (**James 4:6**), with humble hearts, we can freely and boldly go to the throne of GRACE to get mercy *and* grace to help us in our time of need (**Hebrews 4:16**).

With love, grace, and humility operating in our heart, abiding begins to look like our eighth principle; we choose to make decisions based on the Word of God. Now that we have stopped fighting people and starting fighting our true enemy, the devil and his demonic influences, we are in position to make our decisions based off what Jesus has spoken to us and not according to the circumstances of our life. Jesus tells us if we abide in Him and His Word abides in us, *we can ask what we desire*, and it will be done for us (John 15:7). Thus, while before the throne of grace, instead of seeking to have our own way, we ask the Holy Spirit to bring back to our remembrance all Jesus has spoken through His written Word (**John 14:26**), so we can learn how to pull down strongholds, cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (**2 Corinthians 10:4**)! In other words, we seek for the written Word to become revelation knowledge that produces wisdom in us! Like Jesus in the wilderness (**Luke 4:1-13**), we reply, "It is written;" as a result, we make new decisions based off God's Word instead of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" (**1 John 2:16 NKJV**)!

Lastly, and probably most importantly, abiding looks like our our ninth principle, which is to allow the Word to show us ourselves when we are making our decisions! Even though we are now making new decisions, we must ensure those decisions are from pure motives; otherwise, like with Jesus in the wilderness, the enemy will try and tempt us to apply God's Word to our lives for our pleasure and not for God's glory! In our fifth T-Time, *The Word of God Divides*, we found getting from where we are to where we are going *includes* allowing the Word of God to divide between our soul (**black** clay) and our spirit (**red** clay), our joints (the things we desire to hold onto, but need to let go of) and our marrow (the things of God that, when deposited in us, will produce life). Remember, we are still opaque teapots, for our **red** clay is still sitting with one piece of our **blue** clay OUTSIDE of either teapot. But, they will not be there for long! While they are there, we must know that when we allow the Word of God to discern between our thoughts and our intentions, WE WILL GO THROUGH TRIALS! WE WILL SUFFER! WE WILL EXPERIENCE feeling hard-pressed, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down, but we DO NOT HAVE TO BECOME crushed, in despair, forsaken, or destroyed. Instead, we can continue learning how to abide in Jesus and for His Word to abide in us. We can continue learning how to receive love and grace that we may give love and grace! We can continue learning how to seek the Holy Spirit's help in bringing the written Word to life in our circumstances so we can move from



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quoting the Word to living the Word, *despite* the pain we feel in that moment. We can learn to count that momentary pain as joy because our faith is being tested for a greater good (**James 1:1-4**)! We move from basing our decisions off our sin nature, to basing our decision off His Word, until we reach that point of abiding that says, "I die daily," that Christ may live in me (**1 Corinthians 15:31**)!

When we learn to die to self that Jesus may live in us, we *are* abiding in Jesus and His Word in us. Now, we are ready to turn our attention to the transparent teapot on the left. Our transparent teapot represents us *after* God has refined us through the furnace of affliction (**Isaiah 48:10**). We open the lid, and we place the **red** clay (representing our born again spirit) inside! We have gone through our trials, and the God of all grace has perfected, established, strengthened, and settled us (**1 Peter 5:10**). We are no longer opaque being judged only by our outward actions. We are now transparent so others can see the Jesus who dwells in us (represented by placing the second piece of **blue** clay in the transparent teapot). Our soil is now good ground for the seed of His Word, thus we are able to patiently produce fruit. Fruit for ourselves *and* fruit to share with others! Thus, we are ready to implement **our tenth principle; we learn how to walk in our transformation also sharing what we have learned with others!**

We have been TRANSFORMED by the renewing of our minds (**Romans 12:2**). We have become new teapots, vessels of honor, "sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" (**2 Timothy 2:21 NKJV**). We are now so transparent that instead of people seeing us and our dueling natures (the opaque teapot and its clay), they now see Jesus in us and our new spirit nature (the transparent teapot and its clay)! However, let us turn for a moment and look back inside the opaque teapot. In there we still have **blue** clay and **black** clay. So, while our sin nature still exists, we can see it is now hidden with Christ (**Colossians 3:3**). We now make our decisions from our spirit (**red** clay), which has been washed in the blood, for we have overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony (**Revelation 12:11**)! We now choose to walk according to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus instead of the law of sin and death (**Romans 8:2**). Old things have passed away, and all things have become new. Our sin nature (**black** clay) is left behind with our old man (the opaque teapot), but we must be mindful our sin nature is still there seeking to have a voice in our lives. Anytime we fail to abide in Christ or His Word in us, we make ourselves vulnerable for a reawakening of our sinful nature. Thus, we must never think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (**Romans 12:3**). Likewise we must take heed when we think we are standing lest we fall (**1 Corinthians 10:12**). Through it all, we must know Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us, for the **blue** clay is still side-by-side in the opaque teapot with the **black** clay (**Hebrews 13:5**). If we find ourselves having an opaque teapot moment, we know that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness" (**1 John 1:9 NKJV**, capitalization added)!



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Ah, there is so much more we can learn from the teapots and the clay; however, for now, we have ten principles to plant deep within us so we may abide in Jesus and His Word in us that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance (Luke 3:8). Jesus, we praise Your Holy Name!