

**How's That Workin' For You?**  
**Making Decisions That Will Bless Your Life**  
*“Why Isn't Life Working?”*  
**July 25 & 26, 2009**  
(Part 1)

**Intro:** Walk on stage with an umbrella – Why do I have an umbrella on a 100 degree day? This umbrella represents the protective covering and the place of blessing for the people of God. We can either choose to live under it or choose to live outside of it. God wants to bless our lives. Unfortunately, we often choose to live in a way that makes it impossible for God to bless. Wouldn't it be nice to live in a way that keeps me under here?

*Deut. 28:1-2 “If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully keep all his commands that I am giving you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the world. You will experience all these blessings if you obey the LORD your God...” (NLT)*

*Deut. 28:8-9 “The LORD will guarantee a blessing... If you obey the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways, the LORD will establish you as his holy people as he swore he would do. Then all the nations of the world will see that you are a people claimed by the LORD, and they will stand in awe of you.*

- These blessings from the Lord are a witness to the world. This was God's plan for the nation of Israel. They were His witnesses. In the NT, the witness to the world is no longer the nation of Israel, it is the Church. You and Me!!!
- God's blessings upon our lives are a witness to the world too! Not that God is going to remove every negative circumstance from our lives (not reality...Jesus promised troubles) It's an umbrella not a protective bubble. Blessing you is His plan!
- Because this is His plan, God wants us to be able to recognize when we've moved away from His place of blessing.

*Haggai 1:5-7 “Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.” This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways. (NIV)*

- When God says, “Give careful thought to your ways”, basically He is saying look at your life and ask...”How's That Workin' For You?” Is this really how you want your life to be? Are these the results you want to live with? If the answer is no...then let's change!
- We are going to spend the next 6 weeks learning to re-position our lives back in the place of blessing where God wants us. We're going to discover how to make decisions that God will bless. Today we're going to understand “why isn't my life working so well?”
- I want to give you 3 truths from God's word so you answer this question.

## **I. Life Isn't Working Because of the Circumstances**

- If you are having continual negative circumstances plaguing your life it is time to look at your negative circumstances differently. How so?

#### A. God uses circumstances to get our attention

1. Not every negative thing that happens to us comes from God. Please don't have this perspective of God. He's not an angry, vengeful God out to punish you as soon as you mess up. Many of my negative circumstances come from my own poor choices / natural events in a fallen world / even from my spiritual enemy.
2. BUT, some circumstances are created / orchestrated by God. All negative experiences God uses in our lives to get our attention. He does this because He loves us not because He enjoys seeing us in pain.
3. As a parent, there were times I had to orchestrate some negative circumstances in the lives of my children growing up. There were times I needed to get their attention and correct a path they were on. God does exactly the same thing with us.

*Heb. 12:10-11 "For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way." (NLT)*

4. You're wondering, how do you tell the difference between the natural negative events of life and God wanting our attention...or His discipline? When negative events and circumstances come into my life, my basic rule is to just always give God your full and undivided attention.
  - If it's correction He wants to bring then He will show you. Give Him your attention.
  - If it's maturity He wants to bring; (always the case) give Him your attention
  - If it's endurance you need for either... Either way, give Him your attention.
    - If we don't...

#### B. Circumstances will get progressively worse

1. What? Are you kidding me? As a parent, what do you do if your child continues to ignore you; continues to be unresponsive to your attention getting circumstances? You increase the consequences...the pressure...the heat.
2. Here's what I see as a Pastor all the time. I see people in pain from their own choices / from the negative consequences of their decisions / even God's hand of correction on them / and they ignore it all. They continue living life exactly the same, thinking it will just one day get better! That's insanity! It's just a string of bad luck.
3. Pain is a great motivator to change. When you put your hand on a hot stove you immediately pull it back because there is pain. Pain causes us to change behavior.
4. If we continue on our course ignoring God the pain in our life will only get worse. Often, God doesn't have to create the pain. Our decisions do!
5. When we ignore God in the pain we cut ourselves off from all His resources to help

us go through the difficulties; therefore the pain gets worse. On top of this, many people start making very bad decisions in the midst of pain only making it worse.

- This is the time many people start blaming God for their situation in life
- C. Circumstances are proof your plan doesn't work
1. If your plan for living life is so great, then how come it's not working? It just amazes me how many years of pain we have to experience before we draw the conclusion that our way of life doesn't work.
  2. This is why God says to us; "Consider your ways." How's that workin' for you? Your struggling in your marriage / your relationships / emotionally / financially / the stress is affecting you physically / you feel you have no purpose / no joy
  3. It's time to draw the correct conclusion. Don't start thinking that God doesn't love you because life hurts. Satan would love for you to draw that conclusion. Satan would love for you to blame God somehow. STOP!
  4. The right conclusion is simply this: These circumstances in your life are proof your way doesn't work! These circumstances are robbing you of life. God loves you deeply and has more for you to discover.
- Think correctly regarding your circumstances.
  - Yet, there is another realization we must embrace.

## II. Life Isn't Working Because We've Left God Out of It

*II Chron. 7:13-15 "At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or command grasshoppers to devour your crops, or send plagues among you. Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place." (NLT)*

- Readjust our lives in God's direction. How? These verses tell us how to do this.

### A. Readjust with humility

*"Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves..."*

1. It takes humility to admit life doesn't work. It takes humility to admit you can't make it work. It takes humility to admit only God can make it work. It takes humility for to go to only God so that life can work.
2. It takes humility to admit you have the life you've chosen. We must get beyond blaming our past / other people / maybe even bad luck for how our lives are. It takes humility to look yourself in the mirror and say; "I have chosen the life I have".
3. This is why humility is so important. We don't change anything in our life without it. It is also the one key quality that unleashes God's power to change your life. Humility is one of the most essential qualities to experience God.
4. Humility is foundational to live change. Nothing changes without it. So many people want God's help without humility. "I want God to help me while I do my

own thing.” Doesn’t work this way. “God helps those who help themselves”. How wrong! Pride...I’ve earned God’s help!

5. TRUTH: God helps those who admit they are helpless! Are you ready to readjust with humility?

## B. Readjust by seeking after God

*“...and pray and seek my face...”*

1. Are we willing to seek after God for who He is not just for what He can do for me? Are we willing to seek after a person we can relate to not just the benefits we hope to gain from Him?
  2. The term “seek my face” implies intimacy. We are seeking God for the purpose of intimacy with Him...closeness with Him...connecting with Him heart to heart.
  3. If I am seeking His face I am wanting to see Him...see Him in my life / my circumstances / see Him in my daily routines. To seek after the face of God is to seek after experiencing Him.
- I remember when this began to change for me. Tired of the religious thing -
    4. God is a relational God who desires to be experienced. God doesn’t want us just to talk about Him, He wants us to talk with Him. (Tuesday nights – explain)
    5. This is a choice to begin readjusting your life learning how to pray and interact with God on a daily basis. This is a choice to bring God into every piece and part of my life. I choose to talk to God about my marriage / my kids / my work / my emotions / my future / my fears / failures /
    6. I learn how to chase after God and depend on Him every day.

## C. Readjust by turning away from your old life to God’s new life

*“...turn from their wicked ways...”*

1. Turning away from something requires an act of your will. It requires a conscious choice to do the right thing regardless of your feelings. It’s not always easy turning away from something you’ve been doing for years...even if it’s destroying you.
2. Turning away from wrong to follow what is right is what the word “repent” means. This word confuses many people. Our lives can’t change without repenting. This word doesn’t mean to grovel believing your lower than a worm. It simply means changing directions.
3. We have come to realize that it is our old direction that is robbing us of the blessing of God upon our lives. If we don’t move away from these old behaviors / attitudes / lifestyles / we never move our lives under God’s umbrella of blessing.  
*Jer. 5:25 “Your sin has deprived you of these wonderful blessings. Your sin has robbed you of all these good things.” (NLT)*
4. We need to see these things that are robbing us of good and move away from them. God is waiting to bless us! He is waiting for us to realign our lives back on His course where the blessings exist.

Ps. 119:59 *“I pondered the direction of my life, and I turned to follow your laws.” (NLT)*

5. This is the essence of this message series. We’re going to learn how to do this. We are going to do some pondering and then TURN (repent) to follow what God’s word says.

- If you’ve been leaving God out of your life...or maybe you have been leaving Him out of parts of your life...Can you see this is the reason life isn’t working.

If we are willing to do this... (humility / seek after God / readjust your life)

### III. Life Can Work As God’s Blessings Are Restored

Ps. 1:1-3 *“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.” (NIV)*

- Deschutes River in Maupin: The barren landscape – trees along the river - explain

#### A. Blessing is the result of restored fellowship

1. When we walk in fellowship with God there are just benefits that come with this connection. It’s like the trees that live right next to the stream. They just have that life giving flow that is part of their daily existence. Walking with God...so do we!

Ps. 16:11 *“You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.” (NLT)*

Ps. 37:4 *“Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart’s desires.” (NLT)*

2. The byproduct of fellowship with God is joy / pleasure / fulfill the desires of your heart / satisfaction / That’s not a bad deal.
3. Even as a parent, it plays out this way with our kids. When you’re connected with your kids – and they with you – you just want to bless them!

#### B. Blessing is the result of the removal of consequences

*“...and restore their land*

1. God loves to restore. He loves to take what life has broken and destroyed and do the miraculous with it. Some of you need to see this today. WHY? Because you think there are things broken beyond repair in your life / your circumstances / relationships / emotions / Not True!
2. God is the great restorer. You will be amazed at what He can restore when we give Him the broken and scared pieces of our lives. We just have to give these areas to Him. What He will do is slowly and methodically begin to remove what life has stolen and broken and replace it with His new work.

#### C. Blessing is the result of God’s promises being fulfilled

1. Now that our lives are back where they belong, the promises of God in His word start

becoming a reality. They start playing themselves out in your life and circumstances. Once, they were only something you read about or heard the pastor talk about. NOW, they are becoming yours!

2. This is where we are going on this journey for the next 6 weeks. Making decisions that actually usher in the blessings of God rather than hinder them.

- How is life workin' for you? Are you living under the umbrella of God's blessing or are you living outside of it? God's already made His choice where He wants you to live. What will your choice be?
- As we sing this song, I invite you to come up front and pray and make a decision that God will bless. Making a choice to bring your life back where it belongs. Humbling yourself / seeking His face / choosing to turn away and turn to Him.