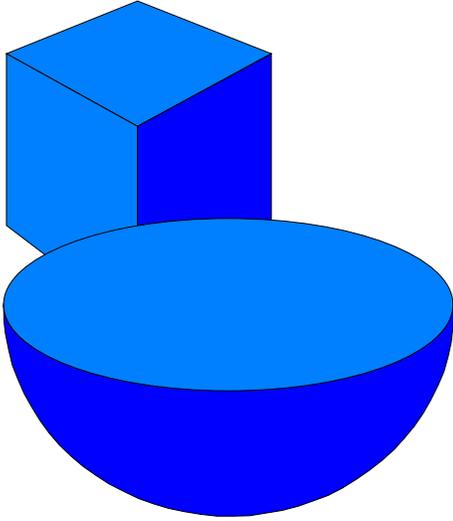


God's Way & God's Will



The Potter & Clay

ISA 45:9 "Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, What are you making? 'Does your work say, He has no hands'?"

JER 18:4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

JER 18:6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.

ROM 9:21 Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

Views on The Existence of Pain, Struggles and Forgiveness

- **Charles Stanley : *Advancing Through Adversity***

0 The questions we should always ask in the presence of adversity is :

- (a) Why this specific trial in our life ? Which goes to nature and content; and
- (b) Why at this time ? Which goes to Life Stage and the sequence and stages of development.

0 The Bible Teaches that God does allow adversity – within certain parameters –for a reason related to our development (character development and perfecting)

0 God may not be the origin of the adversity, but He will allow it and use it, to help perfect us.

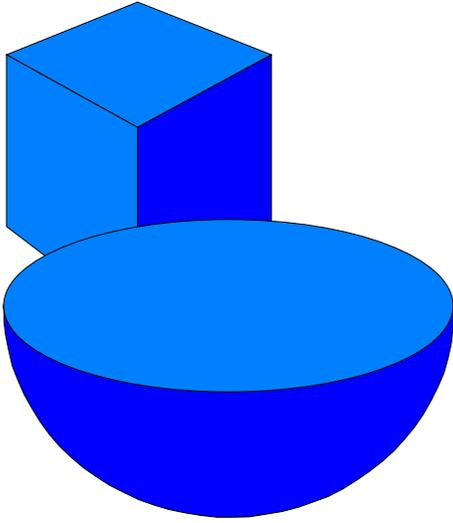
- **Francis Frangipane : *The Three Battlegrounds***

0 The areas we hide in darkness are the areas that Satan can use against us for our future defeat.

0 Our greatest defense is to maintain an honest heart before God.

0 Satan will not continue to assault you if the circumstances he designed to destroy you are now working to perfect you.

0 **Bitterness** is a classic symptom of “cold love”.



0 Painful experiences involving painful love, broken promises and broken relationships teach us the meaning of “Love your enemies”. Bitterness arises from unforgiveness, symptomatic of not learning the lesson in full.

0 The essence of who we are is made up of events and how we responded to those events.

0 That which we call “memory” is actually our spirit gazing at the substance of our soul; and

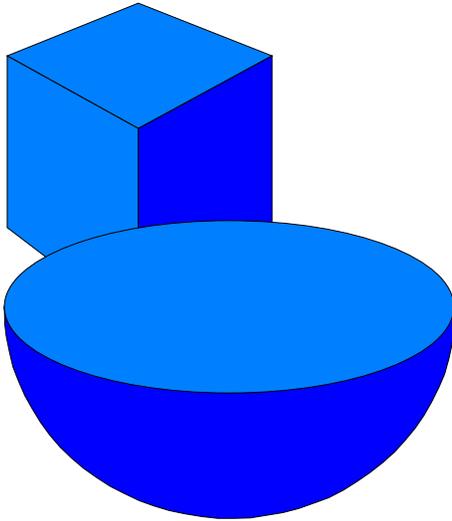
0 Those events we remember most are the ones that shaped us.

- **C.S. Lewis : *The Problem of Pain***

0 God’s Omnipotence, Mankind’s Free Will, & The Existence of Evil

- ❖ **Omnipotence** means the “power to do all, or everything”.
- ❖ We are taught in Scripture that God has such power.
- ❖ But God uses such power within limits for He cannot and will not do anything that is not consistent with His character or that will violate our free will.
- ❖ God could –if he wished – turn a wooden club into a blade of grass in order to prevent someone from being harmed. But to do so would mean that the laws of nature (chemistry and physics) would have to be suspended – or at least altered for time. God on occasion has done so and we call those occasions “miracles” However, if God were to do this as regular occurrence to protect those who are His, then Nature would become unpredictable. The Laws of Science would no longer apply; moreover disasters could even result (*suppose, as an example, that you are in an underground parking garage. You stumble and fall toward a steel beam holding up the building. You pray and God turns the beam into rubber so it will not harm you. Now, think for a moment, just how is a rubber beam suppose support a multistoried building. And moreover, imagine the chaos if He did this type of thing for everyone of the 2 Billion or so Christians in the world.*)(*scenario in italics added by this editor*)
- ❖ Even in a perfect world, free from sin, we would still have things with the potential to harm us. Electricity that causes shocks but is essential to running our modern world, fire that heats our homes but can also burn us, rivers that carry life giving water yet can flood on occasion, these are all things that serve mankind well and likely to be needed even in a perfect world, yet they can also do great harm. Natural disasters and man’s own mistakes are not likely to be absent in even the so-called perfect world.
- ❖ Freedom – the existence of our free will - must mean freedom to choose: this implies then that there is the existence of things to choose between.
- ❖ A world in which wrong actions were impossible, or where we could be sheltered from our wrong actions (*ergo, the Parking Garage scenario*) would thus, in effect, void freedom of will. (For there is neither a real choice nor a consequence).

0 God’s Love for His Creation



- ❖ There is kindness in Love; but
- ❖ Love and kindness are not coterminous (1: having the same or coincident boundaries; 2. Coextensive in scope or duration).
- ❖ Kindness frequently means that we fail to confront wrong behavior. Hence Love build solely on kindness can become aloof, detached, and indifferent
- ❖ God is Love but He is also more than just kind. He is involved in correcting and shaping.
- ❖ And, because He is wiser than you or I, what seems good to us (or for us), may not be good in His eyes, and what seems evil to us, may not necessarily be evil.

- **On Forgiveness** - David W. Augsburg: *Helping People Forgive*

- 0 Positive forgiveness is READMISSION to COMMUNITY
- 0 It is return to a MORAL COMMUNITY
- 0 It is RENEWAL OF RELATIONSHIP
- 0 It is RESUMING Relationships
- 0 It is the capacity - the ability - to show mercy
- 0 It is an INTERPERSONAL BRIDGE REQUIRING ADULT SKILLS to build and execute.
- 0 It directs anger into something constructive, with benefits to the entire community.

- **The Bible**

- 0 **God's Fairness**

ROM 9:15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." {Exodus 33:19}
(In other words, there will be those upon whom He will not have mercy)

MAT 26:11 The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. *(Jesus did not come to take away poverty, and it seems that He has no intention of ever doing so as long as this current world order exists)*

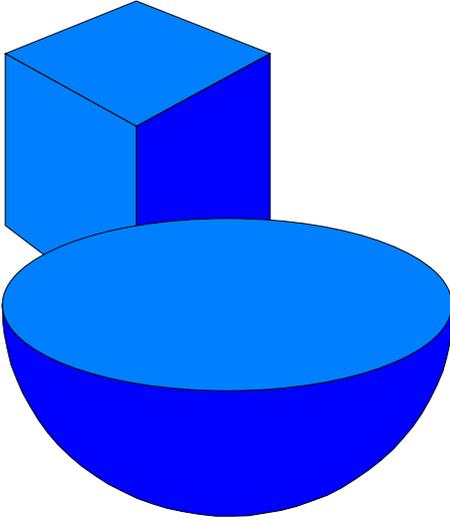
- 0 **God's Correcting Process**

HEB 12:5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,

HEB 12:6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son. " {Prov. 3:11,12}

HEB 12:7 ¶ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

HEB 12:8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.



ROM 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

ROM 5:3 Not only so, but we {Or <let us>} also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

ROM 5:4 perseverance, character; and character, hope.

ROM 5:5 And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

ROM 5:6 ¶ You see, at just the right time, when

we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

0 On Forgiveness

MAT 6:14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

MAT 18:21 ¶ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

MAT 18:22 ¶ Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. {Or <seventy times seven>}

JOH 20:23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven. "

COL 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

1JO 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

==== oOo ==