

Cycles Pt. 1

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, September 26, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! Whether you are here in person or watching via the livestream, you are most welcome. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes. We have much to cover in a relatively short amount of time.

SETTING THE STAGE

I want to take the time today to establish a broad foundation for a new multi-part series on the topic of cycles. In a spirit of full disclosure, this opening installment will be a bit different than the usual fare (i.e., in that I will offer what will effectively be an extended introduction to our topic). Thus said...

KEY 1 – Life is highly CYCLICAL in nature...

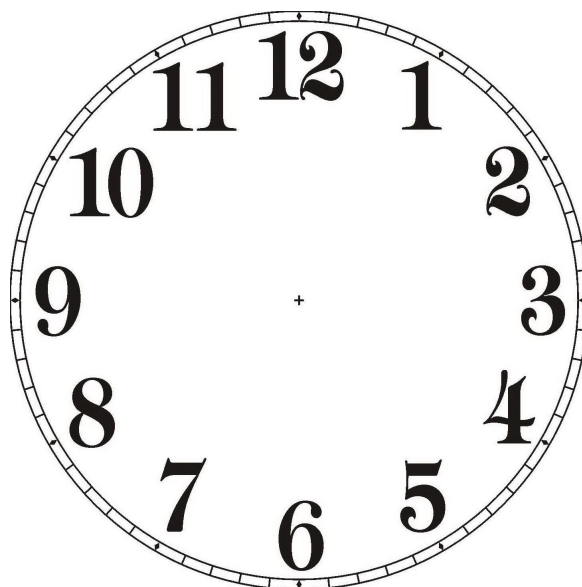
Repeated and/or repeating patterns are both embedded and apparent within the Creation. In your own time, feel free to research acknowledged patterns across all fields of study. You will find cycles in the realms of planetary movement and astronomical phenomena, climate and weather, agriculture, biology, mathematics, business, music and the arts, culture and society, warfare and military conquest, international relations, etc. Nearly every expertise recognizes identifiable patterns of cyclical relationship...

KEY 2 – Let us explore a series of select examples (familiar v. unfamiliar)...

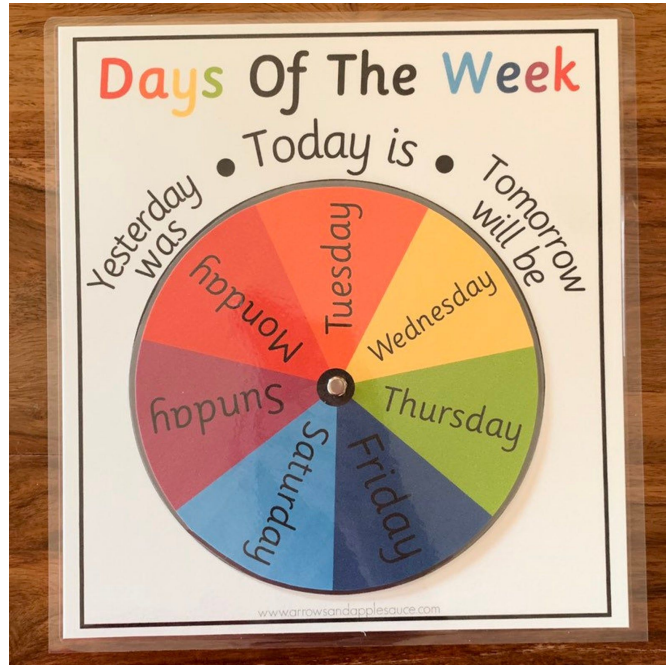
EXAMPLES RE: TIME

To begin, there are some cycles concerning the passage of time—cycles we are quite familiar with...

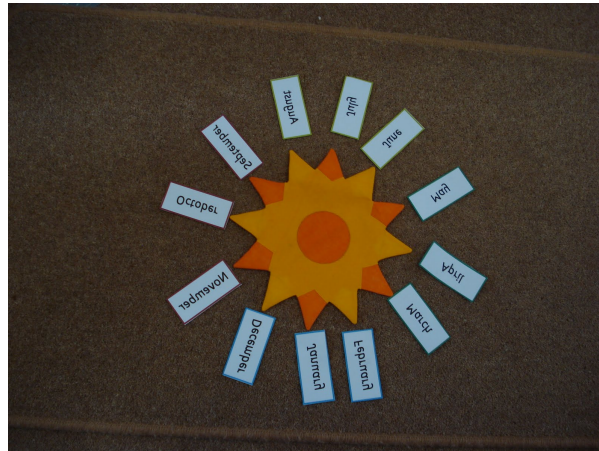
ILL 1 – CLOCKFACE (A Cycle of 24 Hours Comprising 1 Day)



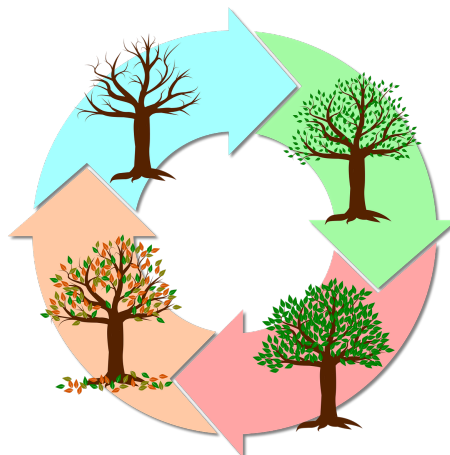
ILL 2 – DAYS OF THE WEEK (A Cycle of 7 Days Comprising 1 Week)



ILL 3 – MONTHS OF THE YEAR (A Cycle of 12 Months for 1 Year)



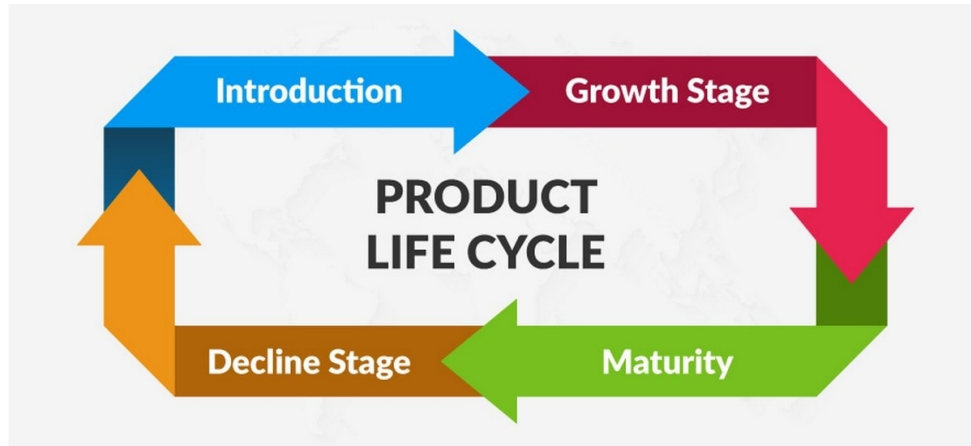
ILL 4 – CHANGING SEASONS (An Ever-Changing Series of 4 Seasons)



EXAMPLE RE: ECONOMICS

Moreover, there are cycles pertaining to economic matters and the operation of the marketplace...

ILL – PRODUCT LIFE CYCLE (I→G→M→D)



EXAMPLES RE: NATIONAL & SOCIAL CONCERNS

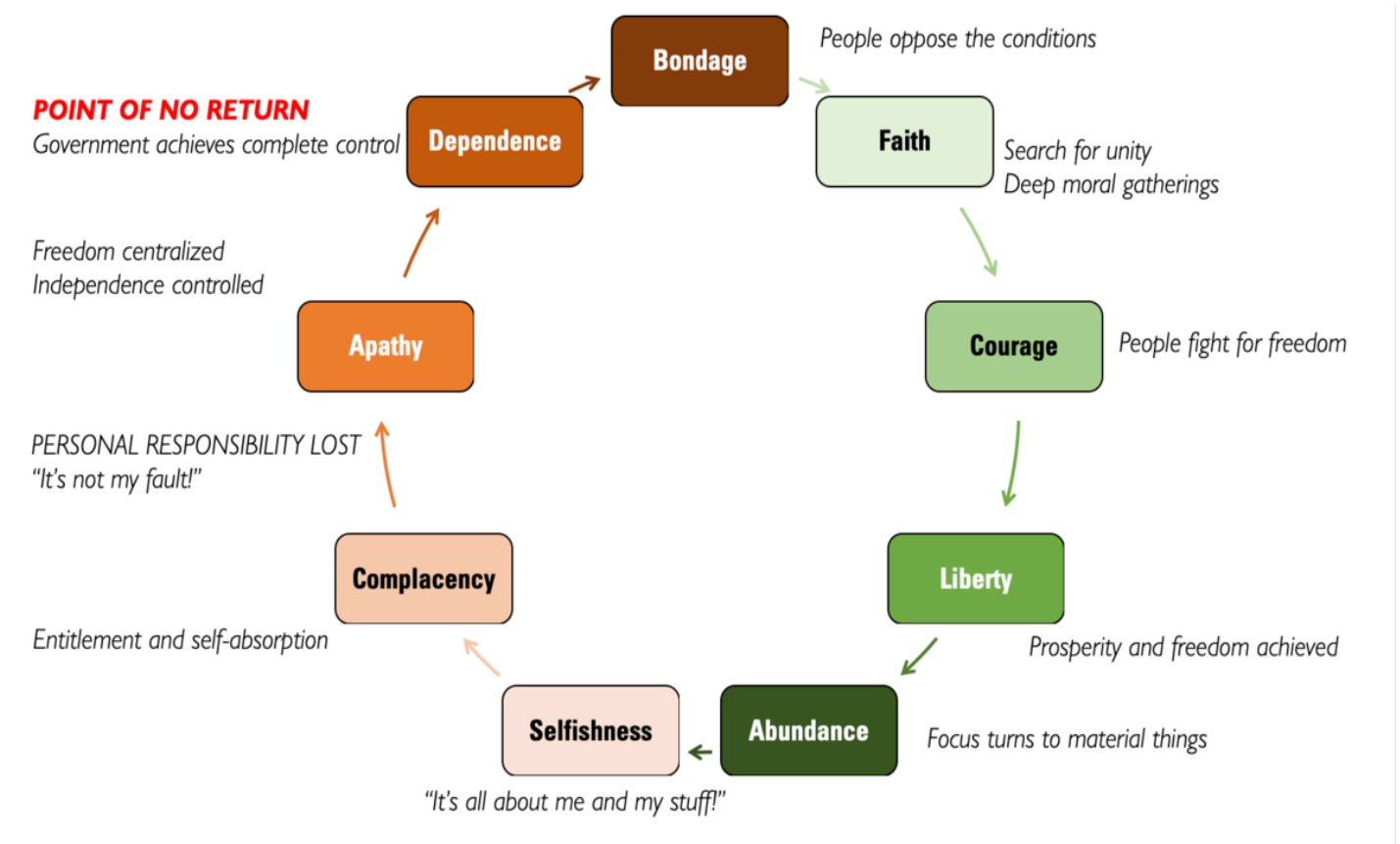
There are also cycles pertaining to the movements of society and civilization(s)...

ILL 1 – MEN & THE TIMES WE MAKE



ILL 2 – STAGES OF DEMOCRACY

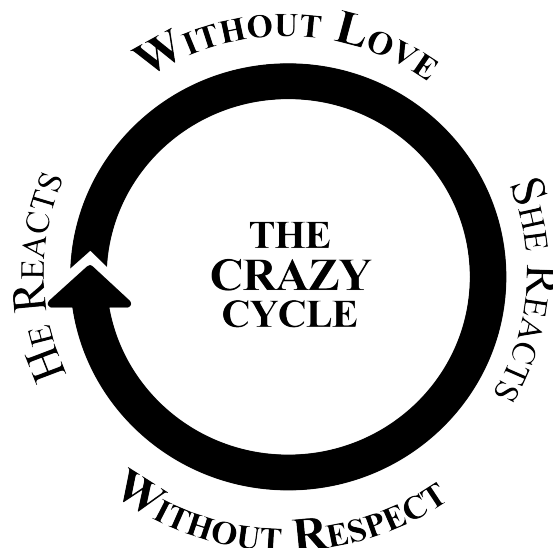
Lord Alexander Tytler (Scottish judge, historian and writer) posited that democracies tend to last for app. 200-years, adhering to the following pattern of rise and subsequent decline. Consider Lord Tytler's "Eight Stages of Democracy"...



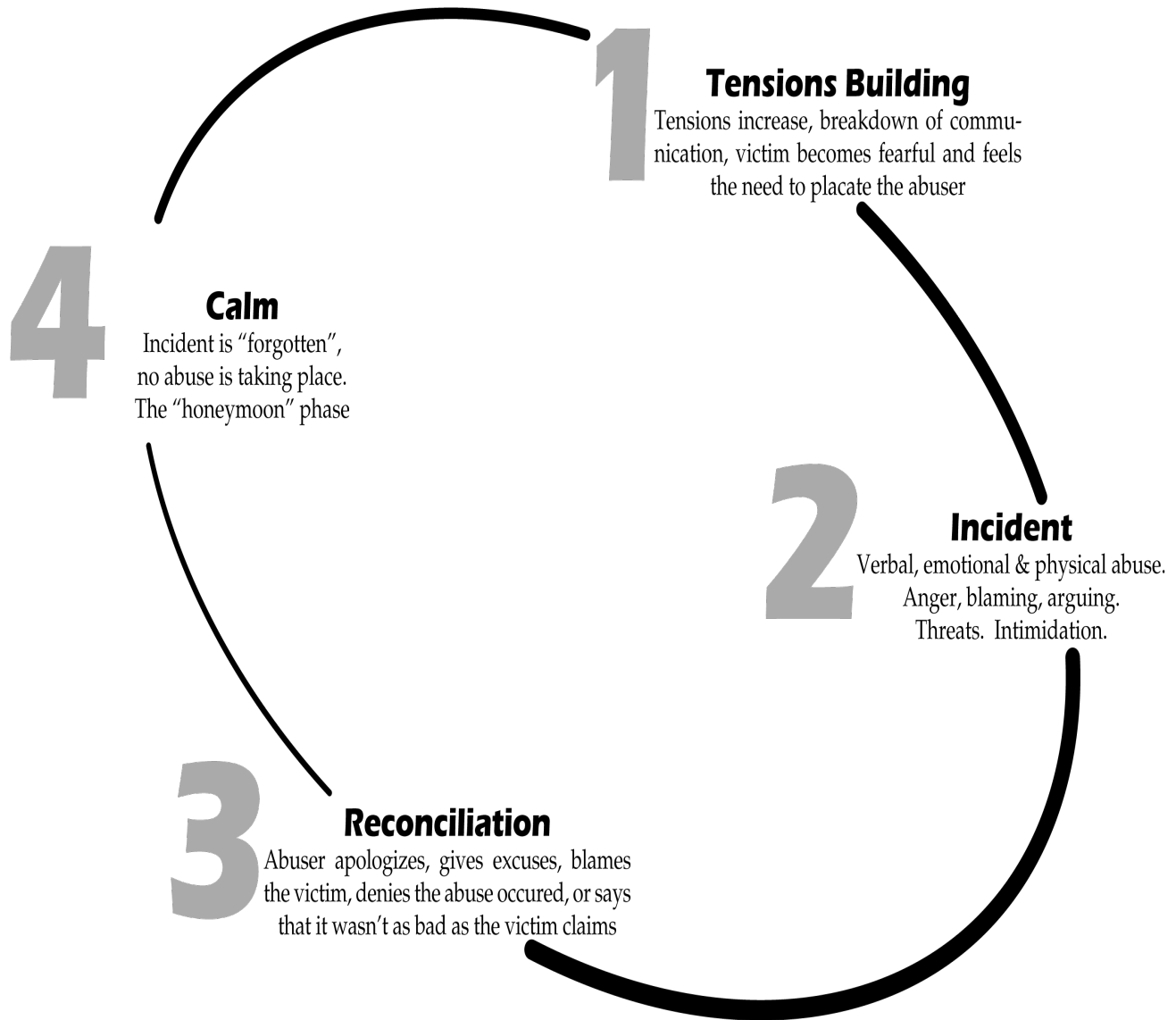
EXAMPLES RE: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP(S)

There are also cycles pertaining to interpersonal relationships(s) (e.g., marriage, friendship, etc.)...

ILL 1 – The Crazy Cycle (He Acts Unloving; She Feels Unloved; She Acts Disrespectfully; He Feels Disrespected)



Cycle of Abuse



EXAMPLE RE: PERSONAL LIFE & LIVING

Lastly, there are cycles pertaining to life and living...

ILL – CYCLE OF ADDICTION (e.g., Gambling, Pornography, Alcohol, Drugs, etc.)



KEY – This cycle accurately represents the battle we often wage against our sinful appetites!

Q & A

Q. Why does this matter? Why pay attention to such patterns and cycles?

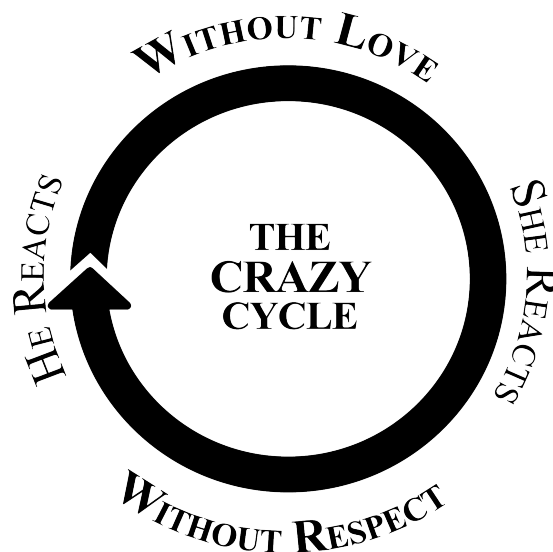
A1. It is always beneficial to contemplate and/or reflect upon the nature of the world and how things operate. We do well to consider the unique relationships and inter-connections that exist in this Creation of the Lord. The “teacher” in the Book of Ecclesiastes evidenced a heart attuned to the movements and seasons of living (i.e., borne of careful consideration, introspection and inspiration)...

Ecclesiastes 3 (NIV)

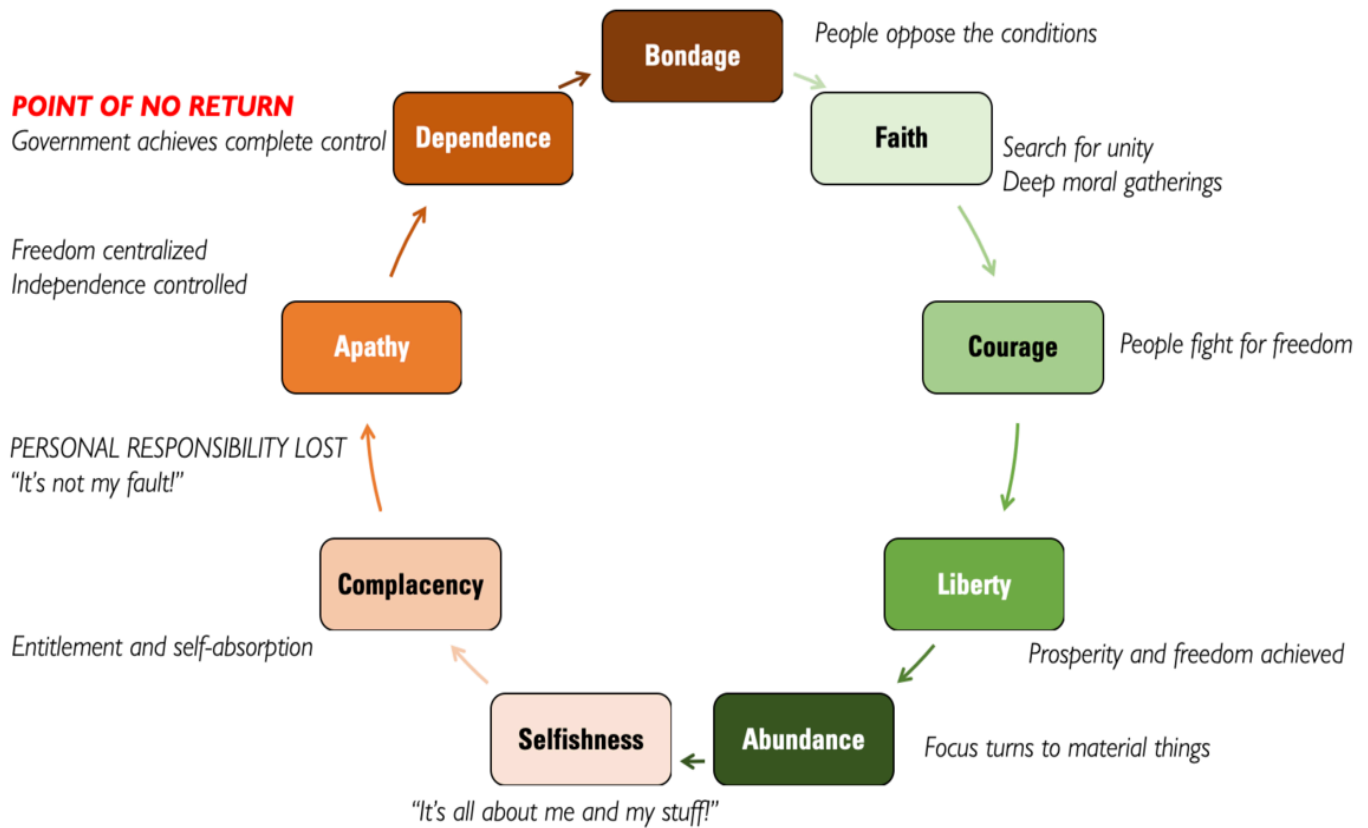
- 1 There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
- 2 a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- 3 a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
- 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
- 6 a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- 7 a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- 8 a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

A2. You can only contend with or “break” dysfunctional cycles once they are rightly assessed and understood. In the words of my late father, “Solving problems are easy—properly identifying problems is the hard part.” Let us take some time to consider and correct a series of cycles...

NOTE 1 – CRAZY CYCLE



NOTE 2 – STAGES OF DEMOCRACY



NOTE 3 – CYCLE OF ADDICTION



A3. I posit the study of cycles (i.e., particularly those related to human function and interaction) is crucial because it reaffirms biblical teaching concerning the depravity of man and our need for a Savior. Consider that the cycles we presented concerning humanity (e.g., Crazy Cycle, Stages of Democracy, Cycle of Abuse, etc.) demonstrate a downward spiral of dysfunction and deterioration...

KEY 1 – Health and function are not our default positions! Rather, it is brokenness due to sin...

Romans 3:10–18, 23

10 . . . “There is no one righteous, not even one;

11 there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.

12 All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.”

13 “Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practice deceit.”

“The poison of vipers is on their lips.”

14 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 ruin and misery mark their ways,

17 and the way of peace they do not know.”

18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

KEY 2 – It is only in Christ Jesus that we can find release, renewal and transformation...

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

17 . . . If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

LASTLY...

A4. I posit that the study of cycles matters because Scripture itself takes the time to identify and explore them. In the weeks ahead, I would like to take several weeks to explore a selection of cycles that are evident within both the Old and New Testaments. Some are destructive, yet not all. Since “all Scripture” is inspired and profitable for our Christian development, it will be my pleasure to lead you through them systematically! We have much to cover in the days ahead...

HOMEWORK – JUDGES 2

Thus said, I am going to give you some homework...

NOTE 1 – Firstly, I would like you to read the whole of Judges 2.

NOTE 2 – Secondly, I would like you to identify the cycle within.

KEY 1 – Pay special attention to Judges 2:6–19 (which we shall now read)...

Judges 2:6–19 (NIV)

6 After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to their own inheritance. 7 The people served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the Lord had done for Israel.

8 Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. 9 And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. 11 Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. 12 They forsook the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the Lord's anger 13 because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. 14 In his anger against Israel the Lord gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. 15 Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the Lord was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.

16 Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They quickly turned from the ways of their ancestors, who had been obedient to the Lord's commands. 18 Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the Lord relented because of their groaning under those who oppressed and afflicted them. 19 But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

KEY 2 – May the Lord bless you as you consider and contemplate His Holy Word! Enjoy...

CONCLUSIONS

NOTE 1 – Those who wish to give online may do so at www.NewLifeBarre.org. Those who wish to give in person can utilize the offering boxes located throughout the church facility. Thank you for your faithfulness in supporting the work of the Lord!

NOTE 2 – Sunday School each week at 9:15am; Thursday Bible Study at 6:30pm; WM 2nd Tuesday; MM & CYC...

NOTE 3 – Reminder that Potluck Supper is taking after this morning service. May the Lord bless our fellowship!

NOTE 4 – Those who wish to linger in this sanctuary may feel free to do so. This is to be a house of prayer, so those who feel the need to pray may do so as they please. Moreover, I would be more than happy to pray with those who have need(s).

Numbers 6:24–26

24 The Lord bless you

and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you

and give you peace.