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The Beginning

There are stories told that can change lives and bring about new beginnings—this is one of those stories.

In the east, long, long ago there was a time of desperate need and a time of desperate men....

When the hot sun dominates a barren land, life can be hard and cruel, but it wasn't always this way. There was a time when God had quenched the thirst of this desperate place with enough rain to turn the village of Betheden into an oasis, rich with fruit, shade, and water. The land was abundant then and the lives of the people were blessed—at least that's what the elders have said.

But the land became as corrupt as the people who dwelt in it and the souls of men were dying along with the parched earth.

All night long, the young man of Betheden had walked in the hills overlooking his village. His fear of scorpions, snakes and all that lurked in the desert night gave way to his desperate need for answers. He wandered the night with one thought in his mind:

God could not have meant for it to be this way. There has to be an answer, but what is it?

The day was dawning. The dark and lonely sky was giving way to the morning light. But the young man of Betheden was still lost in his troubled thoughts and almost passed the only soul he'd seen since yesterday morning.

The sound of the stranger's voice startled the young man, "It's dangerous not to notice where you are going, my friend," said the stranger.

"I'm lost anyway," replied the young man without even thinking. "So what difference does it make?"

"Well, why don't you sit a while and we'll talk, maybe I've been where you need to go."

The two men sat together for a while and the young man began to tell the stranger about how both the land and the soul of his people were dying. He knew that it wasn't what God wanted, but he didn't know how to change things.

The stranger listened quietly and when the young man finished, he said slowly, "What happens to the desert when the waters come?"

The young man thought for a moment before answering, "It turns green and blooms—life returns."

The stranger smiled, "The same thing happens to the mind when it receives the right knowledge, my young friend. You see, just as a tree cannot bear fruit until it's nourished within, a man cannot bear good fruit until he changes on the inside. Acquire a prosperous mind first, and then you will have a prosperous life and a prosperous land."

These words flowed straight into the soul of the young man of Betheden. He felt his mind had cleared. He asked the stranger eagerly, "Do you have this knowledge?"

The stranger reached into his pack and pulled out seven scrolls with symbols on them that the young man did not recognize.

"I am not here by accident, and I didn't just arrive today. I was sent here with a mission to accomplish and I have been waiting; watching, to find someone worthy to receive the message.

You see, it does no good to pour water on rocky ground that is not ready to receive it. The water will just roll off and be wasted and I wasn't sent here to waste this knowledge."

The stranger paused for a moment and then continued, "It's said among our people that many years ago, a man came from these lands and traveled to the Far East bringing us ***The Way of Prosperity***, and now I have been sent to return the gift. However, this knowledge can only be given to a thirsty mind—a mind so thirsty that it will drink every drop and still want more. Do you have such a mind?"

The young man nodded enthusiastically, "Yes, yes I do,"

The stranger placed his hand on the young man's shoulder, "Well, we will see my young friend, we will see...."

And thus began the education of the Master of Betheden."

Finding the Master of Betheden

Many years later, in a different village another young man walked in the hills with a troubling thought:

God didn't mean for my life to be this way. It shouldn't be such a struggle for my family and me. There has to be another way, but what is it?

After returning home, he shared his thoughts with his wife, Rebecca, "There has to be more to life than just watching the desert and our lives dry up. Why would God allow such a disaster?"

Rebecca gave her husband a look of concern, "Jason, my love, why are you always so restless?"

Jason's voice cracked with the weight of his desperation, "It is the curse of this barren land, isn't God supposed to take care of these things?"

"Do you really think God has deserted us?" Rebecca said softly. "Perhaps things are the way they are, because you **think** they are that way. We've had drought before and somehow we made it though. Maybe the change we need rests in you."

He didn't like hearing that he might be responsible, but it was hard to be upset with her because of her gentle way. But that didn't stop him from protesting.

"Nothing can grow here, not even me. I am a failure to myself and my family. Why did you ever marry me?"

"You silly man, I married you because you are my love and because I saw great promise in your eyes. Even if you don't believe in yourself, I believe in you and I know you will figure it out."

"Having promise simply means that I possess talents or abilities, but does that feed my family? Does promise buy the things we need?"

Now, Rebecca was a wise woman -- wise enough to know that her husband was wrestling with something that she couldn't help him with. This something was a task he must do on his own. She knew he needed someone else to guide him and show him the way to get his answers. Although she would never consider him a failure of any kind, she suggested that he go back to her village of Betheden and talk to a friend of her father's. Everyone

called this man the Master of Betheden, not only because he was the wealthiest man in the region, but also because he was one of the wisest Elders of that city.

Rebecca looked deep into her husband's eyes, "Very few great men have ever made it on their own; seek support from those whose talents exceed yours." She then kissed his forehead and left the room.

The following morning, Jason mounted his camel and set out for his wife's village of Betheden. It took him a day and a half through hard terrain before he reached the village, but this gave him time to think. During the long ride, he rehearsed what he would say when he saw his father-in-law, Nahum, who was a practical and prosperous man. Jason believed that Nahum would be proud to learn that his daughter's husband was so determined to create a prosperous life for his family.

Rebecca had grown up in this well-populated village of Betheden with rich, well-cultivated soil and prosperous merchants. The secrets that the Master of Betheden had learned many years ago had caused good fortune to smile upon the entire town. From his camel, Jason looked around with thoughts of envy, but he let them go long enough to find his father-in-law.

After asking a few of the villagers, he found Nahum in the market, selling his goatskins. Nahum was pleased to see his son-in-law and when Jason told the older man of his plans, he was even more pleased. Nahum scratched his beard and said, "Yes, what my daughter says is true. I know the Master. He is the wisest elder in the land and advises us all. I will write a letter of introduction for you, but you must agree to do everything he says. Good advice should never be wasted."

Jason nodded in agreement with his father-in-law's condition. "I am willing to do whatever is required of me."

With the letter of introduction in hand, Jason set out to visit the wealthiest man in the land. When he reached the gate of the Master's home, a young servant greeted him, then ushered him into a lush garden, and motioned for him to sit on a nearby bench. While waiting for his meeting, Jason rehearsed all he would say and how he would present himself, but it was hard to keep his mind on these things with such beauty and abundance all around him. He felt confident that the Master would take pity on him and grant his request.

The Teacher walked into the garden and stood before the young man. After rising to greet him properly, Jason was struck by the Master's incredible stature. His confidence and personal presence demanded respect and yet, Jason felt safe and welcomed standing there before him.

Looking down into the eyes of the young man, the Master said, "I've read your letter. Now tell me why you are here." This man's voice was deep and melodious, like the sound of a flute carved from the strongest tree.

Forgetting everything he had planned, Jason nervously stammered, "My wife thought that I should come and talk to you about how I can create a prosperous life..."

But before he could say any more, the rich man raised his hand to stop the young man, "No. I'm not interested in helping you." And with that he turned and re-entered his house.

Shocked and embarrassed, Jason returned home. With a broken spirit, he told his wife what had happened. She listened and then said, "Why don't you think about your answer and try again. I know this man. He is a fair man; and I think if you had a better answer to his question, he might be willing to help you. If he receives you when you go to talk to him, then fine. If he turns you away, you haven't lost anything."

Reluctantly, a few days later, the young man made the long trip back to his wife's village. He didn't want to see his father-in-law because he was ashamed, so he went straight to the Master's house. He was once again ushered into the lush garden, where he sat on the same bench and waited for the rich man to arrive.

The beauty of the garden no longer distracted him; he had much bigger things on his mind. Finally, he heard the sound of the door to the Master's house opening and watched the man cross his garden and greet him once more.

"Now, tell me," he said in a stern voice. "Why you are here?"

"I need to provide for my family so I need to know..."

Again, before he could continue any further, the rich man told him to stop, turned his back on him and said, "I'm not interested in helping you" and walked off.

Dejected and hurt so much more than the first time, Jason returned to his wife. Wisely, Rebecca encouraged him to keep trying. "You have not sufficiently answered his question, my love, that's all. Think not about what you will say, but what he has asked. Try again, my dear, I know you will figure it out."

Once more, shy and embarrassed, Jason returned to the town of the rich man, thinking that this time he might have a more suitable presentation. He was ushered into the garden and asked to wait for the nobleman.

The Master walked over and stood before him and, looking into his eyes, said, "Now, tell me why you are here."

"I want to be wealthy and respected, a business man, like you."

And once again before he could go any further, the rich man said, "I'm not interested in helping you" and left.

Jason no longer felt helpless or dejected, this time he was angry. He felt he had done everything. He didn't talk to his wife when he returned home. Rebecca waited patiently for him to talk to her and finally, after several days, he told her what had happened. She knew his pride was damaged, but she also knew that he had to get over it. She comforted him and then lovingly reminded him that the rich man had not told him to leave or that he could never return, and maybe that meant that there was still a chance he could talk with him again.

For the next few days Jason frequently went to sit under his favorite oak tree where he would go to find wisdom when he needed it. He searched his heart in every manner he could for the correct answer. When he grew tired of brooding, he told Rebecca his plan, "Alright, I will try once more, but this is the last time. My camel is tired and so am I."

He rode to the village of the wealthy man and again was ushered into the lush garden. He sat in his special seat, until the nobleman stood across from him and said, "Now, tell me why you are here."

With confidence and strength in his voice, he looked straight into the nobleman's eyes, "I want to reach my full potential in every area of my life, and I've come to ask you for guidance."

The rich man stared back into Jason's eyes for several moments in silence. Then he said the words Jason so desperately wanted to hear, "Good. It sounds like you might be ready."

The Master sat down on the bench beside him. "I'll help you now, because I can see in your eyes that you finally understand."

Although Jason was relieved, he was also confused. His confusion must have showed on his face because the Master then explained to him, "When you first came here, you said that your wife had asked you to come. That wasn't enough. The decision to find out about yourself has to be your own idea, not from someone else."

The older man's tone softened as he continued, "Then, the next time you came, you said that you wanted to be able to provide for and protect your family. Once again, that's not enough. It may seem noble, but it's something you wanted for others and not for yourself. Next you said you wanted to make money and you wanted to be respected. Still, your search was based upon opinions and recognition of and by others and that will never be enough. But this time when you said you wanted to do it for yourself, that is something I can work with, that is the passion that you need if you really want to learn. You can't help others until you have something to give to them. Your desire, your passion, your purpose must be your own and not belong to another. You have finally discovered this I think, and that is why I will now help you." He stood up and summoned his servant. "Please come into the house. I will make you some tea, and we will begin."

Jason followed the Master into his home. Thus, began his training. He would now become the apprentice.

Stage 1: Recognition

The Art of Observing

Jason followed the Master through a long hallway and into a kitchen which was the size of his entire house. Surrounding the room were wooden tables covered by steaming pots and piles of herbs. *He must have found his fortune selling secret herbs*, thought Jason as his eyes scanned each pile before him. The room was rich with the scent of flowers and spices.

A servant, whom Jason had not seen before, silently appeared, holding a silver tray with two cups. The Master took both cups and offered one to his new apprentice.

“Sip from this cup and tell me what you taste,”

Obediently, the young apprentice sipped the hot liquid. As he paused to consider the correct answer, the Master instructed, “Don’t think. The mind does not have a tongue. Right now, tell me what you taste.”

“Sweetness, Master. And flowers. A light, delicate taste.”

The Master handed Jason an empty basket. “Good, you are correct. Now, that door on your left leads to another garden. Take this basket and find the ingredients that will make another pot of the tea you just tasted. When you believe you have done so, come back to the kitchen and show me what you have picked.”

Jason looked doubtfully at the basket, “But Master, I am not schooled in such plantings. I don’t know what the herbs look like. How will I find them?”

But the Master never answered, he just turned and left the room.

With basket in hand, Jason passed through the doorway to the garden. Once there, he saw before him hundreds of different plantings, each appeared very similar in size and type upon first inspection.

How will I ever recognize light, flowery ingredients? He asked himself impatiently. *Is the purpose of this task to make me fail? Haven’t I done that enough in my life?*

After pausing to remind himself of his purpose, Jason looked around and noticed that the rows of flowers and herbs appeared to be planted in certain patterns, with the lighter blossoms surrounding the darker ones. After touching the lightly colored flowers with his fingertips, he bent to smell each one.

Ah, he thought, the tea I just drank had the same scent as this third flower. Gently, he pulled three blossoms from their stems and placed them in the basket. He then returned to the kitchen with his findings.

Just as he placed the basket on the table, the Master appeared. He inspected each plant carefully, although he already knew the answer. .

“So,” he questioned in his melodious voice, “you have found the proper blossoms?”

“Yes, Master. I have done what you have asked.

The Master handed him some dried flowers, “Well, here are the blossoms you chose that have already been dried out. Brew them with this black tea and let’s see if you are right.”

The young man did as he was told and started to smile as the fragrance of the tea he was making matched the one the Master had given him. The liquid released its familiar fragrance from the dark mysterious brew in his cup.”

“The Master tasted the tea and smiled, “You made the correct choice.”

The young man felt a surge of confidence. “So, I have completed your first assignment.”

The Master chuckled, “No, young man, you have simply made tea. Now, I will give you your assignment.” The Master nodded to his servant and the young man brought out a tray with several items on it.

“Finish what is in your cup; I have some instructions for you.”

Jason finished the tea quickly and put the cup down.

The Master of Betheden handed Jason a small scroll with a strange symbol on it that he did not recognize. “This symbol represents the first stage of the prosperous mind which is RECOGNITION. Place this in your house where you can see it every day and be reminded of your mission. Then take this parchment, pen and ink—you’ll need them for your assignment. Finally, here is more of this black tea with the Hibiscus and Rosehips you picked. This is what I want you to do; each morning you will rise early and brew the tea. Then you will sit quietly while you drink it and focus on the symbol while thinking only about what it takes to be able to see the world around you. Think about how to recognize what God has given you and what is all around you. Then go out

into your village, look at your surroundings, and write down everything that you see. The tea will allow you to see your surroundings in a new light.”

Eager to please his new master, Jason gathered the scroll, the paper, pen and ink and the tea and left his Master’s home. He then eagerly returned to his village and told Rebecca everything that had happened. The next morning Jason rose very early and brewed his tea. He then sat quietly sipping his tea and observing the symbol while reviewing all the things the Master had told him to do. Then finally, he gathered his parchment, pen and ink and headed outside to his village.

As he walked into the village, he noticed that he felt more content inside—it was as if the tea’s dark brew had given him strength. For the next several hours, he looked at every part of the village and wrote down what he saw – each goat, small building and person he encountered was added to his list. He recorded each tree, bird and flower, as well as the dry hills of the landscape.

Every day for the next week, Jason drank his tea, meditated in the morning and then went to the village and wrote what he observed. Finally, when he was satisfied that he’d completed his task; he made the trip back to Betheden and returned to his Master’s kitchen.

As if he knew his apprentice’s every move, the Master greeted him within seconds of his arrival. After a moment, the Master asked Jason, “What did you see?”

Excitedly, Jason began to race through his list, as if he were describing a painting in every detail—or so he thought.

“I saw three olive trees, a black dog, lots and lots of rocks...”

The Master put up his hand, “Slowly boy, you go too fast.”

“Yes, Master.”

“Continue.”

“An old man selling fish at the market . . . a young boy . . . five buildings, one made of wood, one of stone, one a mud...”

The Master raised his hand, once more cutting off the young man, “How did you see?”

Jason looked up from his list. “With my eyes, Master,” he prayed that the man would not think him impudent. He knew of no other answer.

“Yes, of course, but how? A man can look at a tree, but if so, where on that tree does he focus his attention? Is it on the leaves, the trunk, the space around the trunk or the space between the leaves? The earth contains more than objects, it has colors textures and movement. It is not enough to see, you must learn *how* you see.”

Jason lowered his head in shame and frustration. “I am sorry to have failed you, Master.”

The Master laughed, “Failed? Are you ready to quit?”

“No” replied the young lad.

“Well, then you did not fail me, boy. You didn’t even fail yourself. You never fail until you stop trying—you don’t fail until you quit. Tell me, when you were in the garden looking for the ingredients last week, how did you find the correct flowers for the tea?”

“I noticed that there was a pattern to the garden. And then I recognized the different scents of each blossom.”

“So, first you saw a garden, then you saw a separation of flowers and herbs, then you saw a pattern within the flowers and then you narrowed it down to the only choice possible, right?”

“Yes, master.”

“That’s part of the process of recognition—look at everything until you find the detail that gives you the answer. God has placed the answers everywhere around us, but we must recognize them before they can be turned into treasures.”

“Yes, Master.”

The Master smiled. “Go out and try again, but first drink twice as much tea as you did the last time. Perhaps you did not make it strong enough.”

Then next morning, Jason drank twice as much of the tea as he had the times before. With his paper in hand, he walked once more to the village. This time, he spent time gazing at every person and object as if each were its own room to explore. He noticed the deep redness of the pomegranates at the market stall, and how they seemed to brighten against the darkness of the merchant’s hand. He saw the way the twigs of one specific branch upon one particular olive tree bent inwardly against each other, as if conspiring against all the other branches. He saw an old woman and noticed how the weight of the packages she held seemed to curve her back into the shape of a cashew. Even the hills, which only hours before seemed dry and empty to him, now glowed as the sun

poured out its light on the different rock formations. And those rocks, they too had individual shapes and textures. Some were smooth from the surrender of gravity, while others were as cracked as an old man's face.

Jason was so taken with what he saw that he almost forgot to write it all down on the parchment. When he did, it was done so with more care than pride. There was a mysterious beauty in everything he saw before him. *That tea was strong indeed! He thought.*

When Jason returned to the Master's house, he was already in the kitchen waiting for him. It was late in the day and the light drifted through the kitchen windows and landed across the Master's face in leaf-like patterns of shadow. These shadows, along with the Master's impressive height and stillness, gave him a tree-like presence.

"What did you see?" The Master asked.

This time, Jason didn't need his parchment. He remembered everything he saw, down to the tiniest pebble. He spoke passionately about each sight and when he was done, the Master's voice was full of pride, "Good. You have completed your first task."

Jason blushed, "Thank you, Master. I think I now understand what you wanted of me, although I'm still unsure of its greater meaning."

The Master explained, "Before you can expand your life, you must recognize every part of it. Recognize the blessings from God, recognize God's desire to have you prosper and be in health, recognize the prosperity that God has designed for you in a limitless universe—this is the key.

"You must understand that what you focus on expands, whether good or bad. The good is always there, but you must look for it, see it, find what you most desire and then focus on it. See what others overlook in their rush or lack of focus."

The young man was quiet and thoughtful for a moment and the Master asked, "What's on your mind? Do you still have something you didn't tell me?"

Jason's voice was thoughtful, "I didn't think it was important, but I did notice that the merchants had a lot of waste. The butcher would cut up the meat he sold and then toss away the parts that people didn't want. The fruit sellers did the same; they would pull out the old fruit and toss it aside. So, I asked all of them if I could take their waste and they were happy to give it to me. Then I went home and planted it in the soil by our house where we want a garden. When it decays it will make the soil rich."

“Excellent, excellent!” The Master shouted with pride. “You recognized what others did not see. The first stage of the prosperous mind is to recognize God’s abundance around us, focus on what we desire so it can expand and see what others don’t see.

“Now, I want you to rest here tonight, it’s too late for your journey home. We will begin a new lesson tomorrow and you will need your strength for it.”

Jason bowed his head in respect. “Yes Master.” When he raised it again, the Master was gone and he was alone in the kitchen. The servant took him to a room where he could sleep for the night.

I hope that tomorrow’s tea is as strong as the first tea was, he thought. As he lay in bed, he began to recognize that God’s blessings were even in the parched land in which he lived—there was life everywhere to be found, if he only took the time to recognize it.

Stage 2: Gratitude

Giving Thanks to God for Harvest and Health

Jason rose early the next morning from a restful night’s sleep. The Master’s house was very peaceful and inviting. As Jason walked around looking at the Master’s home, he noticed a change taking place in his heart. When he had first arrived at Betheden there was a sense of jealousy and envy in his thoughts.

Why do they have all of this and I have so little, was what ran through his mind. But now, after being in this beautiful home and getting to know the man who owned it, his thoughts had started to change.

I can live like this, Jason thought. *I can be a prosperous man and provide for my family like this. I just need to find out how to do it.*

Now jealousy and discouragement were replaced with hope and excitement. Jason was finding his answers and he knew that someday, someday soon, he would know exactly what to do.

As he continued to practice his thought process of recognition, he noticed that even though the things in the Master’s house were very nice; they all had purpose and meaning. They were not cheap things, but everything was useful and needed in its place.

The Master found him in a hallway lost in his thoughts. “And what’s on your mind so early in the morning?”

Startled at first, the young man gathered his thoughts and replied, "I guess I thought that wealthy people just bought whatever they wanted just because they could afford to do so. But when I look around your home I see very nice things, but each one has a purpose and function."

The Master laughed, "You have a lot to learn about being wealthy, my son. Yes, it's true that some people who have riches waste it on useless things, but they don't keep their wealth long and they are not prosperous people. But you will learn that soon enough. Now, let's eat something."

With that, the two moved on to the garden where a table was set with beautiful fruit, bread and of course, more tea.

"Did you sleep well last night," the Master asked as they sat together after breakfast.

"Yes, Master, except for one part of the night when I woke up and my mind started to worry if this was going to work for me". Jason was ashamed to admit this, but was trying to be as truthful as possible.

The wise man placed his hand on Jason's shoulder, "Don't worry my young friend; this happens when you are trying to build a new mind. The old thoughts are fighting to stay alive, they don't want to leave. But you simply tell them they must go and replace them with new thoughts. So what did you do when you woke up thinking this way?"

"I told myself not to worry about it right now and went back to sleep."

The elder man looked thoughtful, "That's a start, but it's not enough to ignore your thoughts or push them down, because they will always return. You must let them go, but we are getting ahead of ourselves. That's one of the reasons we look at the symbol on the scrolls, it keeps us focused on the thoughts that we desire to have in our minds. Now, let me ask you a different question. Would you consider yourself a happy man?"

Jason was surprised to hear the question. "Happy?" He knew it was unseemly to complain, especially when he'd been given such blessings and was now being trained by a Master, and yet he also knew there was a part of him that cried out for something unknown. He went on slowly, "There are times when I am unhappy, but I don't know why."

"Unhappy, hum, in that case, I think I know just the tea for you. Today, I'd like you to make a pot of Assam tea. It's a rich, dark tea with a lightly-spiced taste. I believe you need to add spice to this current life of yours."

"Yes, Master. Spice is good for the soul."

“This tea requires a special way of brewing. It has been passed down to the present day from the emperor of an ancient, foreign land. The full aroma and spice of the tea can only be brought out when using a small teapot to steep the leaves. My servant will give you the correct pot to use and he will give you the second scroll with another symbol. Then you will go home, put the symbol up where you can see it along with the first and then brew the tea in your own kitchen. After you drink it and think about this stage of the prosperous mind which is gratitude, you will find your heart more open to happiness.”

The Master waited for Jason to obey, but instead, he remained seated with a dark look in his eyes.

“Why do you hesitate, son?” he gently asked his apprentice.

The young man bowed his head, “Master, I don’t mean to be disrespectful but . . .”

“Yes?” The Master was already well aware of the problem.

“Well, what if the tea makes me soft?”

“Soft?”

Jason blushed, “Soft, like a woman.”

“Do you mean to say that only women can be content?”

The young man looked at his Master with determination. “No, but I don’t want to lose my ambition. My discontentment is what makes me work hard. It’s what brought me here to you.”

The Master smiled and promised his apprentice that he would still be very much a man after he found out what it meant to be happy, and that it would actually energize his quest rather than take from it.

Jason retrieved the teapot from the servant along with the scroll. When he returned, the Master gave him further instructions, “After you drink the tea, go out into the desert alone. Go to a place far away from any noise and sit quietly for the rest of the day. You must be alone for the tea to take effect. I want you to sit there, in your quiet place and talk to God. I want you to tell Him that you’re unhappy and you want to find out why.”

When Jason returned home Rebecca was very happy to see him and wanted to find out what had happened with the Master, but she could see the determination on her husband’s face and that he needed to do his assignment right away.

He had greeted her and kissed her, but was focused on the task at hand. He put the symbol up next to the first and prepared the tea according to the Master’s instructions as Rebecca stood by to observe. When it was

ready, she left him alone to drink it. Jason drank the entire contents of the small pot and then set out to the quietest place he knew. Nothing grew there. It was a barren landscape with parched soil. There was only one tree to offer some shade and that is where he would go.

Once seated on a large rock under the tree, he tried to be patient as he waited for the tea to take effect. For several hours, he gazed at the desert before him: the dead soil, the missing herds of sheep and felt as if he were observing corpses. Finally, an intense sadness overcame him.

Perhaps I made the tea incorrectly. My mood is growing darker when it was supposed to do the opposite. I must have failed this lesson. I am able to recognize my blessings, but I don't feel any happiness? What kind of man am I?

As he could hold back his emotions no longer, Jason began to weep. First, it was only tears, but then began a tremendous sobbing, as if his soul were in anguish.

I feel so lonely right now, he thought.

The loneliness was cutting deep, and so, with no one else around for conversation, he turned to God as the Master had instructed. He told God of his loneliness. He told God how much he loved his wife, how grateful he was for the life they shared together and how much he wished she were there with him this very moment. He realized that no riches on earth could ever replace the love that she willingly gave to him daily and how much she meant to his life. Then he started to think about his family and friends, the opportunity now before him and how God had guided his life to this moment.

Then, when he said all he could think of to say, he realized that he was no longer crying. The thoughts about the barren land before him and about the wealth he lacked at that moment no longer haunted him. Instead, this time he cried from the immeasurable force of love and thankfulness that he felt inside. He realized how much he truly had at that moment that he had not seen before and it was overwhelming.

The sun was close to the horizon and the daylight was fading by the time he composed himself enough to return home. When he arrived it was very late, but Rebecca was waiting for him and they sat down to talk.

He began slowly, not sure what she would think of him. "Today was a very hard day for me. After I drank the tea, I sat alone in the desert to ask God why I wasn't happy. The more I thought, the lonelier I felt. You see, all I was looking at was what I didn't have, all the things around me that weren't working, and all of the deadness that I saw. The Master taught me that what you focus on expands and that is what was happening."

Rebecca listened to every word that he said and reached for his hand, "My love, did you spend the whole day like that?"

“No, thankfully in my most desperate time, my thoughts shifted to you and everything started to change.” He brought her hand up to his lips and kissed it. “When I thought about how much you mean to me and how much you love me, all of my sadness went away. There are no treasures on earth that could replace you, and if I had nothing else but you, I would be the richest man alive.”

Rebecca’s eyes filled with tears to hear these precious words from this man that she loved so much.

He continued, “I cried, Rebecca. I cried like an old woman. At first from overwhelming sadness, but then when my thoughts changed, I couldn’t hold back the joy I felt and I continued to cry.”

Rebecca didn’t know what to say. This man that she had known from a boy and whom she had always loved had never sounded so wise, so tender and yet so strong. “You will always have my love,” she said as she caressed his face. “You are the most wonderful man I’ve ever known, and yet you still amaze me every day. Did it bother you that you cried and were so emotional?”

“Yes, it did” he admitted “and I don’t understand it yet. I need to talk to the Master about it, but I don’t think it was a bad thing.”

They sat together and talked some more and then they prayed to God, thanking him for all their blessings, both large and small, and then they went to bed for the night.

The next day very early, Jason set out on his journey back to see the Master. He rode very hard so he could get there in the same day. It was dark by the time he arrived, but he found the Elder still seated in his garden. The gentle man was looking up at the starry sky.

“Do you feel happy?” He asked, without turning from his gaze.

“I don’t know, Master. At first, I was miserable and the longer I was alone, the lonelier I felt and the lonelier I felt, the more I missed Rebecca. I’ve never felt so grateful for her in my entire life. Then I remembered my family and friends and all that God has done for me. My mind was flooded with all of the blessings I have, one after another.”

The young man then lowered his head and softly spoke, “But I was crying and couldn’t stop. Am I soft, Master? I sat there and cried like an old woman.”

The Master laughed and then put his hand on the young man’s shoulder.

“Who made your body, my son?”

Jason looked up, “God did.”

“Yes, and He gave the same emotions and the same feelings to a man that He did to a woman. Culture says the man must be strong and there is a time for that, but the feelings you experienced are good—they tell you what’s going on inside. They are not there to control you, but you will do well to listen to them. Your gratitude was full and rich, that’s all. It was too much for you to hold at the moment, so you released it to the desert. It’s like the tea you drank, when the hot water hits it, it has no choice but to release its flavor, strong and rich, adding spice to your taste. And, like the tea, which gradually started to change your mood, gratitude will change your life. It may not happen today, but it will come as you practice it. Being thankful and having appreciation for all that is around you is a habit and you must train your mind to think this way.”

The Master motioned for Jason to sit on the bench beside him. “Drink more tea tomorrow and try again. You have learned the first key to gratitude and its that you must actively give thanks for the big and the small. The more you give thanks for something, and the more you focus on it, the quicker it expands. What you focus on really doesn’t matter, one sheep or a flock of sheep. The more you give thanks for it, the quicker it expands. So, actively give thanks for everything you recognize as God’s blessing, wealth and prosperity. Now, get some rest and leave at daylight. Go home and actively give thanks to God, and watch what expands.”

For the next week, Jason practiced his first two lessons of recognizing all that God had given him and his wife, and being very grateful for all of it. Each day there seemed to be more to be thankful for, it was just like the Master said. What he focused on and was grateful for, expanded before his very eyes.

Stage 3: Blessings

Prayer

When Jason felt like he was ready to move on to the next stage he once again made the trip to see the Master.

“Here I am,” the Master’s voice chimed from behind a fruit tree. Jason made his way along the garden path to find the Master kneeling before a row of darkly colored plants surrounding the tree.

“Good day, Master.”

The Master silently moved his lips as he placed his hands over each flower. When he was finished, he stood and brushed soil from his knees.

“Do you know what I was doing, Jason?”

“Were you praying, Master?”

“Correct.”

“What were you praying for?”

“For? I wasn’t praying FOR anything. I was blessing my plants.”

“But Master, I thought that only people could be blessed.”

The Master smiled and led Jason back to their bench. The sun was getting hot on this spring day and much of the region was suffering; but Betheden was a blessed town, and the Master’s garden seemed to be the most blessed place of all. It was filled with plants of all sizes and shapes. Bright shades of red, yellow and green competed for the eye’s attention.

The wise man waved his hand over some flowers that were just beginning to bud. “At this time of year, when Betheden is so full with beauty, it is especially important to stop and give thanks for the glory of all God’s creation. We are surrounded with colorful blossoms: this tree’s pink blush; that plant’s pink and white blooms, and this flower, studded with lavender blossoms. We should always take a moment to leave the confines of our homes, make our way to our gardens and fields, drink in this beauty, give thanks and bless all that we have. Therefore, I bless these plants. And I don’t stop there. I bless my home, my horses, my helpers—I bless everything that God has given me and ask Him to prosper it. What do you bless, Jason?”

“There are no plants or healthy trees by our home for me to bless Master. This drought has killed everything.”

“Everything?” the Master challenged with a sly smile. “That’s too bad! Perhaps whatever is left needs the blessing more than these beautiful plants.”

“But what is there to bless in a parched piece of earth?”

“Now that is an interesting question, my young man. It is logical to think that way, but it is not the thinking of ***The Way of Prosperity***. You asked the question because all you see is parched ground that seems worthless, so you think, ‘Why bless it?’”

Jason listened intently.

“***The Way of Prosperity*** always looks for what can be, more than what is. Even when things are great, they can always be greater—with God, there is no end to the blessings, there is no limit. I think we should bless the parched earth even more often than we bless the beautiful plants. Just picture what it would look like if the rains

were abundant and the land was filled with life. This lush land was not always what you see today, but I saw this long before it existed. Well, anyway, I suppose you have come for your next assignment.”

Jason nodded eagerly, “Yes, I have Master. I am ready for the next stage.”

The Master smiled, “Ah, always so eager. It is a welcoming trait you have.”

“Thank you, Master. I am eager to learn from you.”

“Well, the next tea I want you to make will help you understand the meaning of blessing all that is yours. I will tell you about the tea first.”

The Master opened his large hand and revealed five darkly colored sprigs, “These are black spearmint sprigs. In the kitchen, you will find a small, silver teapot. Bring the water to a boil; when it is boiling drop in the spearmint.”

The Master opened his other hand and gave Jason what appeared to be small crystal rocks.

“What are they Master?”

“When my teacher came from the east he brought a plant which he said was, ‘The reed that gives honey without bees’. We only grow it here, and no one knows about it except our town. We boil it and make syrup that dries into these rocks—it makes it sweet. When you boil the leaves, put these in with it and you will find that it makes a wonderful tea. After you drink the tea, return here.”

Jason took the sprigs and crystal rocks from the Master’s hand and entered the kitchen. There he saw the silver teapot and he followed the Master’s instructions. The strong spearmint scent wafted powerfully through his nostrils. After it had cooled enough to drink, he swallowed it quickly, enjoying the sweet, mint filled taste. Then he returned to the garden.

“So,” the Master continued. “You don’t believe there is a garden on your land for you to bless?”

Jason shook his head, “No, Master, not that I have found.”

“The tea you just drank is a blessing tea. It will open your eyes to the things alive around you that you’ve overlooked in the past. Go back home and walk along your land. Find something that you own that’s alive. When you find it, you must bless it. In ***The Way of Prosperity***, we consciously bless what we have. It is a practice that we carry out, but it is also a mindset that we maintain. If you want to lay your hands on it, do so if that’s meaningful to you. If you want to do the blessing physically or mentally, go ahead, bless it and pray for it in a way that moves your heart. Do you understand your instructions?”

The young man nodded, "I understand, Master. I hope the tea will work. There is nothing I'd like more than to see our area prosper."

"Allow the tea to help you and take the third scroll with you as a reminder."

After Jason made his way back to his home, he searched the land outside of Betheden for something still growing in the dead soil.

What could possibly grow here? He bent over and picked up some of the dirt that surrounded him for miles. *Nothing can grow without water! This is impossible!*

He continued these thoughts until he reached his own land. Once there, he felt something within him soften, as if the hand of God had touched his shoulder to remind him of what he owned.

This is my land, he thought. It is not giving anything right now, but what have I given to it? How have I ever nurtured it? Did I give up on it too easily? My Grandfather left this house and farm to me because he loved me. He loved this land and this farm. His love for it is what made things grow. His love was like water.

As he walked through the rough terrain, Jason recalled the walks he had taken with his Grandfather when he was alive. They would finish their dinner and walk for hours throughout the farm's boundaries. In those days, crops still grew to their full potential and sheep scattered the landscape like small, wooly dots. His Grandfather would stop at empty spaces in the soil and tell him the names of the plants still growing beneath the ground, just waiting for the correct season to appear. Jason's own father had not lived long enough to keep it going, and so it had passed to him.

This was my Grandfather's land and without it, I would never have had those walks. Jason sat on the ground and allowed the memories to flood through his mind. As he did, his hands grazed against the earth, and made it into loose piles beside him. He closed his eyes and pictured the way it used to be filled with abundance. Then he opened his eyes and tried to see it once again even with all the dry land in front of him.

This is an important tea. It has helped me to remember.

Suddenly, he stood up, as if awoken from a deep sleep. *But where is the live thing for me to bless? I love my land and thank God for it, but how will I complete my assignment?*

He felt a tinge of pressure within him. Determined not to fail, he continued to survey every part of the farm, in the same manner he'd seen his Grandfather do so many times before. Still, nothing was there.

And then, just as he was about to give up, he looked toward his house and saw a hand in the window. It was Rebecca's hand and it seemed to be pushing something down beneath the sill.

Curiously, he went to the window. When Rebecca saw him, she smiled warmly, "Good you are back."

Jason gasped.

He saw what she had been doing. There, just below the windowsill was a small bean plant in a pot of wet dirt. Rebecca laughed and said, "You act as if you've never seen a plant before. Some farmer you are."

Jason reached across the open window and grabbed his wife's hand that he then kissed repeatedly, stopping only after Rebecca squealed in protest.

"Stop!" She giggled. "You're tickling me."

"Where did you find this?"

"I found it growing in the shade next to the house this morning. Strange, I didn't see it yesterday. What luck!"

"We must bless this plant, Rebecca. When it's large enough, we will plant it in the ground. But for now, let's bless it as it is."

He entered the house and explained the lesson that the Master had taught him and took the plant from the windowsill. Placing it on the floor, he sat in front of it and said, "God, thank you for the gift of this plant that grew from this barren ground. Thank you for showing me there is still life here and that things can change."

Jason and Rebecca spent the next week adding the blessing to the other two lessons. They drank their tea in the mornings and thought about the lessons as they looked at the scroll and then went about their day. They started with blessing everything in their humble home—they recognized its existence, were thankful for it and actively blessed it so it could grow and prosper. Then they went outside and blessed all that they saw, especially the things that were dry and unhealthy. Although it didn't happen overnight, things started to change.

The earth looked softer, and there was even some dampness in the early morning air. There were tiny spouts of grass that started to spring up, they were fragile and scarce, but they were there—life was returning. Like the early morning sun that brings hope of a new day, this new life brought joy to the young couple. As they increased their practice of blessing everything they had and their lives started to change.

Stage 4: Expansion

Growing

One day, while standing in the Master's kitchen and reviewing all that had happened so far, the Master said to his pupil, "Jason, I want you to return to your farm. Go home for a few weeks, when you think you have learned the lesson you can come back."

This concerned the young man who feared that he may have offended the Master in some way or, even worse, had not progressed fast enough. "But Master," he said, revealing his worry, "I am ready to learn now. I want to move forward. Please let me continue my lessons."

"Ah," the Master said with a mischievous grin, "I did not say that you wouldn't have a lesson. But this particular lesson will require more time from you than the others. You will spend the next few weeks working on this assignment. It will take much work. At first, you will find it frustrating, next to impossible. Then, as the time passes, it will become easier to grasp."

This was an exciting challenge to Jason, who was already aware of some mysterious change within him. He was not yet sure what it was – it did not seem to be prosperity as he knew it – but it did seem to be something of value. Perhaps it was an ability to recognize value in things that he'd previously dismissed.

The Master pointed to a nearby wall, "Do you see the wall where all of our symbols are hanging?"

"Yes, Master."

"Go over there and stand in front of the fourth symbol."

Jason did as he was told and made his way to the wall of symbols and found the fourth one. Standing in front of them he could see the artistic skill it took to draw each symbol and the beauty of the paper it was on. The ones the Master had given him were copies and even though they had their own beauty and meaning, these originals were amazing.

"This fourth symbol is expansion and that is the next stage of the prosperous mind. Now go through the wall just under the symbol."

Jason looked confused, "But Master there is no door, no opening."

"What do you mean?" asked the elder.

“It’s a solid wall; there is no way for me to go through it.”

The Master walked over and stood by the young man, “I see what you mean; it does appear to be a solid wall with no opening.”

Jason agreed quickly. “Yes, Master”

“But have you tried it? Do you think I would ask you to do something that wasn’t possible to do?”

I’m not stupid Jason thought to himself. *I know a wall when I see one. But maybe it’s a trick, maybe...* As he ran those thoughts through his head, he reached out to feel the wall. It was solid when he first touched it, but as he continued to feel, he noticed that there was a spot where the wall gave way a little. He put both hands on the spot and a section just below the fourth symbol slid back.

He turned to look at the Master in amazement and the older man nodded, “Go on in, I’ll follow.”

Jason went through the opening and found himself in another storage room filled with teas and spices; rack after rack, all lined up on another wall.

The teacher came in behind him, “This lesson is about expansion. You saw the wall and thought it was an obstacle, you must realize that God designed us to expand and everything we are involved with can expand and therefore all obstacles are illusions. Never let anything stop you from trying, we are designed to grow and grow we must.”

The Master went over to one of the bins on the wall and brought back a new tea. “The teas in this room are very rare. This is a green tea called Dragonwell, it was brought to me from the Far East. It will give you the energy you need to understand this stage of expansion. Take this tea home with the fourth symbol that I will give to you and make the tea every morning for the next two weeks as you’ve done before. This tea will help you to expand your mind and open it to new possibilities. It’s these possibilities that will lead to your prosperity.”

Jason looked at the tea, “I’m not quite sure what you mean by ‘expand.’”

“The great law of the universe is expansion. Every seed is designed by God to reach its full potential. If it’s not expanding, it’s contracting and dying. Expansion is life. Contraction is death. In that expansion, we grow. We nurture seeds so that they expand, grow and increase production, bearing the fruit of their design. We do the same with our minds to expand our thinking and see all possibilities.”

“But what specifically do I need to expand?”

“That, Jason, is what you will spend the next two weeks trying to discover. Now take the tea and the symbol and be on your way. I’ll see you again when you think you’ve learned the lesson.”

Jason returned to his home and told Rebecca about his next challenge. She was, of course, thrilled to have him home for such an extended length of time. She thanked God for the opportunity to be with her husband and quickly prepared a delicious meal for them to share.

Although it was night time, the full moon illuminated the landscape, the night air was warm. Jason decided to take an evening walk in hope that he might find the thing that needed to expand. As he left the house, he noticed that the bean plant had grown into a strong, multi-layered vine.

Well, this seems to have expanded from our attention upon it, he thought. Thank God, but it will take a while for it to produce anything of value.

He looked over his land from a hill close by his house but he didn’t see anything of potential. Even though some change had started, all he could see right now was the same dry soil looking like a sea of black water beneath the moonlight. Jason sighed and returned home to go to bed.

He repeated this exercise throughout the next week. Sometimes he’d walk in the morning, other times he walked after his evening meal. Regardless of the time, he always returned home defeated. “Perhaps it’s not outside, but inside,” he said to Rebecca. He spent several days searching his home for anything with potential. By now, he had become so distracted that Rebecca began to prepare the tea for him.

Each morning she would prepare it for him and drink it with him, hoping that by the two of them doing this together Jason would find his answer.

On the last night of his two week adventure, Jason left the house in a panic. *This is it! This is where I will fail. I have gotten so close, and yet, I cannot seem to get any closer.*

This time, he walked without any plan or pattern. He wandered aimlessly with a feeling lost. It seemed the night was darker than ever before as he walked further and further away from his house and into this empty land. He walked in circles for hours, until the sun finally began to appear on the horizon. As he looked out into the pale, morning light, he noticed three shadowy figures in the distance. At first, he thought them to be very tall men but as he approached, he saw something different.

There, in the morning light, at the very edge of his property where he rarely went, stood three healthy, beautiful fig trees, each bearing perfect fruit. They were his trees, yet he had known nothing of them until he made his way to the most remote part of his land where nothing had ever grown.

With a new found energy, Jason rushed home to tell Rebecca of their new fortune. Bursting into the house, he yelled, “Rebecca, you’ll never guess what has happened!”

Rebecca was standing in the doorway of the kitchen. She wore a beautiful smile as always and her face glowed.

He hugged his wife and danced around the room. “We have fig trees, Rebecca. Treasures that I never knew we had. They were back in an area where nothing has ever grown. They are healthy and full of fruit. We can expand it to a full garden of figs and I will sell our figs and bring prosperity to our family. Isn’t that wonderful?”

Rebecca continued to smile, “Yes, my love that is wonderful. But you have even more treasures in store for you, because your family is now going to expand—you are a going to be a father.”

Jason approached his wife and gently placed his hand upon her stomach. They had tried for some time now to have a family but nothing had worked. The harder they tried the more frustrated they became. Since Jason had decided to see the Master of Betheden, they had stopped thinking about anything else other than learning the lessons. And now everything was falling into place. They held each other and thanked God for helping them to expand their lives in every way.

Stage 5: Utilization

Lever

Jason was eager to share his good news with the Master. The journey to Betheden didn’t seem as long this time—hope is a much lighter load than worry and doubt.

The Master will be so proud of me, he thought as he rode along. I have practiced all that he said and now it is working out, I have my prosperous life!

Since he had started out before dawn and rode hard all day, Jason arrived just as the sun was going down. As usual the Master was waiting for him—*How does he always know when I am going to arrive?*

The Master could see that Jason was eager to tell of his good fortune so he let him share all of it. The young man’s enthusiasm was refreshing and indeed quite a change from his first visit.

“I’m so happy for you Jason. This is all wonderful news, especially the news about your new family.”

“Yes Master, all of your teaching has paid off, I finally see it now.”

The Master was quiet for a moment and then said, “My son, don’t confuse your new treasure with a prosperous life or a prosperous mind. All you have at this moment is a start. Don’t assume that you have reached the end; never assume that you’ve reached the end. The journey of ***The Way of Prosperity*** is just that, a journey—it never ends. You’ll grow more prosperous along the way, but never assume that you have arrived.”

Jason was speechless, he thought he had done so well and accomplished so much, why wasn’t the Master rewarding him, why wasn’t he proud of him?

Seeing the troubled look on the young man’s face the Master asked, “How do you plan to make your fortune with the figs?”

“I’m going to sell them” Jason replied somewhat defiantly.

The Master’s voice was patient, “Okay”. “You said you have three trees. How many figs are on each tree? How many times in a year do your trees yield fruit? What is the price of figs in the market?”

Jason had no answers for these questions and just like that with three simple questions his bright future was shattered.

The elder man saw the dejected look on the young man’s face, “Never make the mistake of confusing hope with prosperity, my son. Hope is a good thing, but understand that hope is a seed it must be nurtured and allowed to grow and bear fruit. Don’t let go of your hope. I will show you in your next lesson how to turn your hope into reality. But it’s late now so get some rest and we’ll talk in the morning.”

The servant showed Jason to his room once again, but it was hard to sleep. What had just happened? He thought it was all worked out and that his life had changed. Confused, frustrated and somewhat unsure, he gave up and tried to sleep, but it did little good. He finally just got out of bed. It was a few hours before sunrise and even though the days were warm, the desert nights can put a chill in the air. He took a blanket and wrapped it around him because he wanted to go outside, walk in the garden and just think.

Even in the moon light the plants, herbs and flowers were beautiful. He walked through the rows and wandered the paths. The dark thoughts left his mind gradually and the peace of this wonderful place settled in his heart. With the sigh of the unburdened, he started to relax and sat on the bench where he had first met the Master. Looking up to the heavens, he spoke out loud, “God, I will have a place like this someday. If you can do it for the Master, you can do it for me. Help me learn what I need to learn and help me understand your ways.”

Jason continued to pour his heart out to God and unloaded years of old ways of thinking that he now knew were not right. As he finished, the early dawn was approaching. He looked around and then up on the second floor to an open porch where he saw the Master standing. *How long has he been there? How long has he been*

watching me? Does he think I'm mad walking around in the garden so early? But then he grabbed his mind and stopped these troubling thoughts. He then felt protected as if the Master was standing up there just to watch over him.

It was another hour or so before the servant came out to the garden to get Jason for breakfast. "Did you work out your thoughts in the garden" the Master asked cheerfully.

Jason was somewhat embarrassed, "Yes, I think so."

The Master nodded, "I often do the same thing, you know. The garden is a wonderful place to let go of troubled thoughts and to renew yourself."

"You have troubled thoughts?" Jason looked at him with amazement.

"No one is immune from attacks, my son, and don't ever think that someday your life will be without challenges. But we build the fortress of our minds so we can withstand the attacks and we learn how to quickly unburden our minds of troubled thoughts should they ever get in."

These were comforting words to Jason, now he didn't have to be perfect—he just had to keep growing.

The Master rose and motioned for the young man to do the same. "Follow me to the kitchen. I want to talk about your next assignment."

Jason followed the Master back to the hidden room where the special teas were kept.

"I have another special tea for you today," the wise man said as he gathered the proper container. "It's a very ancient green tea called the Emerald Lily. It's another tea brought to me from the Far East. It's clear and light and will help lighten your mind for your next task."

The two men went into the kitchen and brewed the tea and continued to talk as they drank it together. "This is the next symbol you will study" the Master said as he handed Jason the scroll. "It means utilization or taking what you have and getting more out of it. Let me show you."

The Master led Jason back to the garden. "Do you see this large rock, Jason?" The young man nodded. "I want you to pick it up and move it over here."

"But it's too big Master, I could never lift that."

"So are you going to quit? Is that it? Haven't I taught you that obstacles are only illusions? What abilities do you have that you can utilize to move the rock?"

“Well, I have my arms and my strength but that’s not enough.”

“So what else can you do with your arms and your strength?” the Master questioned.

“I could wedge a stick under the rock and pry it out.”

“Excellent, a lever takes your strength and multiplies it—what else?”

“Since it’s on a hill I could use the lever to get it started, roll it into a small wagon, then have one of the animals pull the wagon to this spot and unload the rock.”

The Master clapped his hands together, “Now are you starting to see what utilization means? It’s the process of taking what you have and exploring all the options to make it increase in many ways. Let me show you something else.” The two men walked further into the garden and against the back wall where the Master showed Jason a flower.

“This is a beautiful flower is it not?”

“Yes, Master it is. I don’t think I’ve seen anything like it.”

“Now, some men may look at this flower and want to sell it just to place in someone’s garden or on someone’s table and that would be the end of it as it would eventually die. But the prosperous mind would realize that there is more than one use of this plant, so it would ask, ***What else can be done?***”

“Let me tell you what I’ve discovered. This flower and its leaves make an excellent tea not only for drinking but for health. The oil from this plant is very healing and will resolve many physical problems. If I mix this flower and plant with another, it will also heal unhealthy water and make it pure again. So while one man would sell this flower for its beauty, I have looked deeper to see other ways it can be utilized and can sell it to be used for numerous purposes and most of them would be for a much higher price than that of beauty alone. I don’t believe that God designed anything for just one purpose. Everything in His creation has multiple uses but we must discover them.”

Jason began to understand and took his tea and symbol and returned home. He had now made it a practice to share his knowledge with Rebecca so they could work together on building a prosperous mind and she was very excited about this new concept and all the possibilities.

They would drink their tea in the morning and focus on the concept of utilization then talk about their ideas concerning their new found treasure of the figs. They could obviously eat some of the figs for their own food. They could sell the figs for others to eat. They could always use the seeds from those trees to plant more trees and

perhaps even sell the seeds themselves. They could take the money and buy different plants they needed to start their own garden. They could trade the figs as well for things they needed and maybe even get more than they would by selling them. And they could also trade for future crops of figs and get what they needed right away.

One day Rebecca remembered that when she was young her mother gave her a mixture made from figs to cure her stomach. This was another way they could use their new treasure.

For weeks Jason continued to ask himself how they could get more from this gift that had been given to them. One day while sitting by his fig trees he noticed how they looked a little different than all of the other figs he had seen. They were richer in colour, fatter and sweeter in taste. What could produce such wonderful fruit and why here in this desolate land?

Water! he thought. *Where are they getting the water? It has to come from somewhere.* Jason looked at the hillside above the trees and at the rock formations. It was different, unusual and the colour didn't exactly match the rest of the hillside. He started to move some of the rocks and to his amazement the soil was damp. He ran back home as quickly as he could to get some tools and asked Rebecca to come with him. They returned to the spot where he had found the moisture and he began digging. The more he dug the damper the soil became until water started to bubble up.

As the weeks passed, Jason discovered that right there on his property all along, even in the most desperate of times; there had been a river of life-giving water flowing beneath him. He began to devise ways to water his fields and bring life back to the land. But he didn't stop there, he kept looking and asking and found that his waters had healing properties, rich with every thing the body needs to prosper—that's why the figs and everything the water fed were so good.

Every two weeks Jason would go back to the Master and tell him what he had done and how things were growing and the wise man guided him and gave him sound wisdom on the commerce of his newly found treasure.

"You have done well, my son," the Master said during one of their visits. "But I have two more lessons to teach you so that you can keep what you have now produced."

Jason was very eager to continue to learn what the Master had to teach him and especially to find out how to keep what he had gained and to continue to make it grow.

Stage 6: Enjoyment

To Receive Joy and Pleasure

Every visit with the Master now was filled with talk of what to do with his new situation. Jason's mind was always working and he couldn't turn it off; he didn't want to turn it off. His prosperous mind continually reviewed all the stages and they were ingrained in him now.

"You have come a long way, my son" the Master said as they sat on the bench in the garden. "And I want you to know that I'm very proud of you. When you came to me the final time, you told me that you wanted to learn how to reach your full potential, and now you are doing just that. I have had people come to me before who have said the same thing, but never finished, they never stayed long enough to see it work—but you have and that's rare.

But now I must teach you two more very important lessons. Without these all that you now have could be gone in a short time. Without these you will never be able to hold your prosperity without struggle and even then it is unsure."

By this time the Master had young Jason's attention. It had been a long and tiring journey just to get to the Master and now that his life was so abundant he never wanted to lose it. The thought of going back to those dark days of doubt and worry was too much to consider.

"Teach me Master, I want to know. I have a family now and I need to know everything. I can't go back to where I was."

"This is a good thing to remember, Jason. You see some men let their abundance and prosperity blind them. They think once it starts to flow that it will flow forever without any effort on their part. So they stop doing all the things that brought them to that place and they never get to the last two lessons I need to teach you. Some men that I have taught thought that the next lesson I will teach you was too simple so they ignored it—and they suffered because of it.

And as for the last lesson, some men just could not understand it, mainly because they didn't want to, and that brought it all tumbling down for them. You see it's easy to start the flow of prosperity, but how do you keep it going?

But I'm getting ahead of myself, so let's just do one at a time." With that the Master stood up and headed for the kitchen and Jason followed.

Once inside the hidden room the Master started going through his bins of tea. "Ah, here it is!" he announced. "This is the one for you today. It's another product from the Far East, a white tea flavor with Jasmine and Peach—a light, bright tea that brings joy to the heart."

The Master brewed a pot of the tea and the two sat down to drink while the Master explained the lesson. “This next stage is Enjoyment. It’s time to enjoy all of your blessings and prosperity. This sounds like a simple stage, even insignificant, but don’t ignore it. You see, men become so thrilled with doing things that produce great abundance that they become seduced. Their work gives them a feeling of accomplishment, success and pride. Now there’s nothing wrong with that, but don’t let that be your enjoyment.”

The Master could tell from Jason’s expression that he wasn’t quite sure he understood. “Think of it this way, my son. A farmer’s work is to plant his trees and crops in order to produce food. He works hard preparing the ground for the crops and nurturing the trees so that they will produce and then the fruits of his labor begin to show. Now it’s fine for him to look at all he’s done and be proud, but if he only gets his satisfaction from producing and not taking part of what he produces, he’s deceived. He must make time to enjoy his fruits, to eat them and let them nourish his body. He must take joy from WHAT he produces and not just HOW he produced it—this correct enjoyment will sustain him and keep him going when pressure against him comes as it always will.”

“I think I see the difference Master. My mind can’t always be on the production, Rebecca and I need to take time to enjoy and appreciate what we have.”

“That’s it, my son, but there’s one more thing you must enjoy and that’s to look upon all that you have and all that has been brought to you as a witness of God’s care for you. All of it, from the smallest piece to the biggest load is a sign of the hand of God on your life. This is very important to remember. Life is a partnership with God and the laws that He has set up in this universe. Many men start out in this partnership and everything flows. But at some point they think it is all because of them and they want to try to do it alone, no longer acknowledging God as their partner or obeying the laws He has instituted. Those that are seduced by this thought will at some point fail. All God’s wants is for us to work in harmony with Him. So enjoy His blessings and realize what He does for you and be thankful.”

Jason gathered his tea and the next symbol that the Master had prepared for him and thought long and hard about these things as he traveled home. Even though it was late when he arrived home, he wanted to talk it over with his loving wife. It was easy for her to understand, her loving heart was always in tune with God and this all seemed to be a natural way to live life.

For the next month Jason took the time each morning as he drank his tea and in the evening before bed, to think about all that had happened and enjoying all the blessings of God on his life. He spent more time preparing for their baby and getting Rebecca what she needed. He had a different view on all that was now starting to grow and prosper around him. Rather than look at all of his new found abundance as profit and what it could bring, he saw it as the blessing of God on his life, he saw it as God’s lovingkindness and care manifested on his life.

One day a man from Jason’s village came out to see him. “You are certainly an amazing man and a lucky one too. Finding that water on your land has given you everything. You have risen above all of us even at your

young age. We want you to come and sit with the elders to talk about your wisdom and skills. We need a man like you. None of us have been able to do what you have done.”

The two men were sitting by the fig trees and drinking some of the cool water that bubbled up from the earth. Jason pulled a few seeds out of his pocket and held them out to the man.

“I keep these seeds in my pocket with me wherever I go, do you know why?”

His neighbor shook his head.

“I keep them to remind me of something. You see I can plant this seed and I can water this seed, but I can’t make this seed grow. God designed this seed to grow and to reach its full potential, so without God’s design; all of my efforts are simply useless. Without God’s design all of the water in the world is useless. Nothing will make this single seed become a great tree except with God’s design—we are partners, I have done nothing by myself. Even the very mind I use to come up with new ideas and different ways to prosper was given to me by God and He has given you and everyone in this village the same thing.

Don’t look at me as special; God has given the same opportunity to us all. I just took what God gave me and added the water to it. I will be happy to share what I have learned, but you must take the action to plant and water and become partners with God.”

Stage 7: Flow—Letting it Go

Flow

“I need to return for my final lesson,” Jason told Rebecca as they ate their evening meal. “I want to leave early in the morning so I can get there before dark.”

“You’ve worked so hard, my love. Are you sure you need to go right now? Can’t you rest a few days or wait and go later?”

Jason shook his head, “The Master said this was a very important lesson so that I can learn to keep all that we have and do things the right way. I must finish this as he has set it up; it’s for all of us.” With that said he reached out to touched Rebecca’s stomach which was quite large at this point. “I will hurry back, don’t worry.”

She smiled at him and was comforted by his strength and conviction.

The Master was standing on the upper balcony when Jason arrived. They ate an evening meal together and Jason talked about all the changes that had taken place and how they were moving ahead.

“I am very proud of you my son, you have done very well.”

Just hearing those words from the Master made all of Jason’s hard work and lonely nights worth it. No money in the world could purchase a feeling like that.

“Tomorrow, I have one final lesson for you, so get a good night’s rest and we’ll start in the morning.”

Jason lay in his bed wondering what this final lesson could possibly be. He reviewed all that he had been taught and everything seem to fit just like it was, besides his prosperity was flowing now, how could he need anything else?

The servant knocked on Jason’s door early and said, “The Master is waiting for you in the hidden room.”

Jason quickly dressed and made his way to the special tea room. “I’m sorry I wasn’t up earlier, Master. It’s just so peaceful here; I must have gone into a deeper sleep than I thought.”

“Don’t worry, my son, I had things to do anyway and it’s still early. Today I have a very special tea for you. It is another white tea called Silver Needle Tea. It’s extremely rare and can only be picked for two days each year when everything is ready and it’s at its peak.”

“Master, how do you know all of these things about the tea?”

“Many years ago, a man taught me as I’m teaching you. He taught me ***The Way of Prosperity*** and the prosperous mind. But he also taught me many other things as well about life and all of God’s creation. For instance, water is the essence of life, not only here in the desert but all over the world. We drink it and it nourishes every cell in our bodies. But we drink it out of necessity, not enjoyment.

Some men take water and use it to make wine or other strong drinks, but this process changes the water. Others take the water and brew coffee and while it is good, it over takes the water and dominates it. But the tea reveres the water by simply adding color, delicate flavors, and stimulation or calmness whatever your choice while feeding and nourishing the body.

The tea receives from the earth and sky all that it needs to grow, then it holds all of its flavor and benefits until it’s joined with the water and then it releases all that it has.

This is the cycle of all things, receive, retain and release—it’s part of the true circle of life. And that brings us to your lesson today, but before we start let’s make our tea and have something to eat.”

They sat together in the garden where it all began and they ate from the fruit of the garden while enjoying their tea.

“This is truly a rare and priceless tea just like this final lesson for you. Now that you’ve learned how to bring abundance to your life and your treasures are building up, you must complete this most important final stage.” The Master paused and looked deep into Jason’s eyes even into his soul and quietly said, “You must let it go.”

“What!” Jason shouted immediately. “Let it go? I just got it. I have a baby coming. I can’t go back to the way it was before, I can’t let it go.”

The elder man smiled, “Everything you have just said are the very reasons that you must let it go. Sit here, finish your tea and think about this for a moment, I need to go get something.”

As the Master walked away Jason’s mind raced, *What does he mean by letting it go? He can’t want me to give it away, I just got it! For the first time in my life I don’t have pressure, burdens or fear—I will not give this up!*

The Master returned and placed a bag of gold coins on the table. “Inside this bag is more gold than you’ve ever made in your lifetime and it’s yours, a gift to you. Open it up and look at it.”

Jason opened the bag and couldn’t believe his eyes. There, inside the single bag was a small fortune. He’d never had very much, so it didn’t take a lot to equal his life’s income, but here, all at once, was more money that he thought he would ever see at one time—and it was his.

“Tell me what you’ll do with this money, Jason. What will you spend it on?”

Jason’s mind raced as he thought about a better home, finally giving Rebecca her heart’s desires, expanding his farm, becoming a truly wealthy man. He shared all of these and more with the Master.

After listening to the young man’s dreams, the Master said, “Those are all very good things and it would make a good life for you, but I want you to listen to me. This bag of gold is yours to do with as you please, you may leave now and do all the things you just told me or you can do what I recommend which is to go into Betheden today and seek out people who have need of this bounty as well, and give it away, every single coin and then return to me this evening and tell me what you’ve done.”

Jason was torn within himself. He’d just purchased so many things in his mind. It was as though he already had them and now he was being asked to give it all up—it wasn’t fair.

“But Master, this could mean so much to me and Rebecca. How can you put me in such a position?”

“The gold is yours Jason, do as you like, I will think no less of you regardless of the choice you make.” The Master made sure that the two men had eye contact when he made his last statement so that Jason knew the choice really was his and the Master would not judge his decision—and then the wise man walked away.

Jason could hardly carry the heavy bag to his camel, but the weight of the bag was not nearly as heavy as the weight of the decision he had to make. *I've never had this much before, when would I ever have all of this at once again. We could have such a wonderful start with this. Isn't this why I came to see him in the first place? I have my treasure now. I will at least go home to talk with Rebecca about it. I'm sure when she sees this treasure she will agree with me that I did the right things. Maybe the Master is testing me. Maybe he really wants to see if I'm a good steward of a treasure like this and how much I can make of it. If I give it away, I'll have nothing. If I keep it, I can make more. That's it. That's what I'll do.*”

Having talked himself into keeping it, Jason started to leave Betheden. At the edge of town he saw a woman gathering sticks by the edge of the woods. She had three young children with her and they were doing the same. He thought that she was probably a widow and was trying to get by so he said to himself, *I can do at least a little of what the Master suggested and give some to her, then if he asks me I can tell him that I both gave and made this treasure work for me.*

“Do you need some help?” Jason called out as he got off his camel.

The woman looked up from her pile of wood, “That’s kind of you sir, but we can manage.”

“Please, let me help,” Jason said once more. “I have something for you. Today God has blessed me with a great gift I want to share some of it with you.” He then reached out his hand filled with coins he had pulled from his bag and offered them to the widow.

She saw the gold coins fall into her open hands and then she fell to her knees. “Thank you, God, thank you,” she began to sob.

Jason was puzzled by her response, but said nothing.

The woman through her tears said, “We’re not from this village. We walked all night to come here where no one knows us so that we could gather wood with the hope of selling it to buy food to eat and pay the taxes on our home which is being taken from us.

This morning when we first got here, I prayed to God for his help, I didn’t know how He would provide or what would happen and now your gift, which God surely inspired you to give has saved our lives.”

Jason didn't know what to say so he just nodded and walked back to his camel. The feeling of giving to this woman and her children was so rewarding that the things he wanted to buy no longer seemed as urgent. He went back into the town and sat down in a shady area at the center of town to think about all that happened. Perhaps he could give some more away and still have plenty to buy what his family needed.

He remembered that when he was young he'd heard men speak of giving a tenth of all they had, but no one had spoken of this for a long time. *If I give a tenth I will still have plenty left over*, he thought to himself.

So he took his bag and found a private place and figured out what a tenth of all he had would be. Then he put in a few more to make up for what he had already given the woman. However, when he added up how much it was, he had second thoughts. He thought how this could buy so much for him and his family—but then his thoughts turned to the woman he had helped and he decided to give the tithe anyway.

There was a place in Betheden where families gathered to worship God, so Jason put the tenth of all he had in another smaller bag and went to find the place. He waited until no one was around and then quietly went in a side entrance and placed his bag in the front where it could be easily found—then he left very quickly. He felt a wonderful joy in his heart to let go of this gold so that he could help others and to honor God as the elders had talked about years ago.

A young girl walked up to him as he was leaving and handed him a beautiful flower, smiled and then walked away. Could this be a gift from God, a sign, a thank you for the giving of the tenth? He didn't know, but in his heart he thought so.

This giving and letting go gave Jason a feeling of confidence and joy that once again turned his mind to doing more. But he was determined to keep enough back to at least add on the things that he and Rebecca needed for their home. But with the rest, he was content now to let it go.

For the rest of the day he gave away large and small amounts to those in need and to others just for the fun of it. It was a wonderful day and the more he gave, the less he thought about what he had wanted to buy for himself.

He still had the gold left to add on to his home and now felt that he had given away enough that he could go back and tell the Master all that he had done. Even though he still had some left, he felt the Master would understand because it was for a good cause. As he headed to the edge of town where the Master had his garden, he passed the gate of the city where the debt list was posted.

In those days any man who was in debt to another and could not pay, would have his sins revealed to all. The man's name and the amount that he owed were posted for all to see. He and his family would live in shame until it was all paid. Then the note would be doubled over and marked paid in full.

Jason was drawn to this gate and read the list. He didn't know the families but he felt their pain. He had been very close to this himself and if he had not met the Master of Betheden, his name could have been on the gate at his city.

He added up the total and it was more than what he had left in his bag of gold coins. Some of the elders were sitting by the gate and Jason approached them.

"Sirs, I'm not a relative of any of the men on the list and I don't know any of them personally, but I have been given a gift and now I would like to help others and pay their debt. I don't have enough to pay them all right now, but I will give you what I have now."

One of the elders spoke up, "That is very generous of you young man, but the debts must be paid in full whether by coin or in trade."

"Wait, I have something."

Jason went to his camel and pulled out a basket of his figs which he was going to take to the market in Betheden, but had forgotten all about them when he received the gold. So he laid out the gold coins and his basket of figs.

"These are the most unusual figs I've ever seen," said one man. The elders met and decided to accept Jason's offer and doubled every note on the wall and marked all the men "PAID IN FULL".

He had done it. He had given everything he had and more away. Even though it seemed as if all of his dreams were now gone, it didn't matter. He was starting to understand why the Master really wanted him to let this money go. He wanted to think about his day and remember all of the events before going to see the Master and so he did.

Jason arrived at the Master's home just as the sun was setting and he thought it odd that his teacher was not waiting for him as he always had been before. The servant took Jason to the familiar garden seat and before too long the Master did finally appear.

"So how was your day?" he asked with a smile.

"I did it Master, I gave it all away." He explained that it didn't start out that way but step by step everything seemed to lead him to the right place and then he would make another decision until it was all gone.

"And do you regret not having the gold to buy all of the things you thought about?"

“No, Master, I don’t. I thought I might, but I don’t. I know what I did was the right thing to do and my prosperity will continue even if it takes a little longer.”

The Master was very pleased to see his young apprentice with such sound thinking.

“This perhaps is one of the greatest lessons you will learn, my son. I want to show you something that I think will help you to understand this even more. Come with me.” The Master led the young man to the far side of the garden where a stream was flowing through the property.

“Do you see how this stream flows?”

“Yes, Master.”

“It’s a constant flow that keeps moving. It is the same with God’s blessings and our prosperity; it’s always flowing around us. All we have to do is get in the flow and become part of it. As long as we stand on the bank of the stream we can see the flow but we’re not in it. This is what so many people do, they sit on the side and complain about not having this or not having that when it is right there flowing all around them if they would just get in the flow.

Now, I want you to go stand in the stream.” Jason carefully walked out into the stream until he was in the middle of it and about waist deep in the water.

“Can you feel the flow of the water?”

“Yes, Master.”

“You don’t have to do anything really, except be in the flow. If I gave you a cup you could turn and face the flow and fill your cup easily. If I gave you a bucket, it would take no more effort to fill the bucket than it did the cup because you are in the flow. Remember God’s blessing and prosperity is flowing all around you, all you need to do is take what you will. Now come and sit with me.”

Jason made his way back to the bank and sat next to his teacher.

“Your first reaction to my request to give and let go of your abundance was negative. You didn’t want to do it or even consider it. Do you know why?”

“I just thought about how long I had waited to get anything and now that I had it, I didn’t want to let it go,” Jason answered.

“What does this type of thinking represent?”

Jason thought for a moment and replied, "I guess I was afraid that it would be hard to get it back again or that it would take so much time."

"Yes, and do you see how pinched that thinking was? Instead of having your mind enlarged to see and claim the blessings of God your mind was shutting down, and refusing to see.

Look at the flow in the stream again. Now if I asked you to gather a bucket of water from the flow, it would be easy—right?"

"Yes," Jason was now seeing the process in his mind.

"Then while you were there in the flow and I asked you to dump the water out would you really be that concerned about filling it up again or gathering as much as you wanted?"

Jason smiled and started to nod his head. "I see Master, as long as I am in the flow I can let go of as much as I want because there is always more flowing my way."

"That's it. Now let's go back to the garden. Someone wants to meet you."

The two men walked back to the Master's garden and one of the elders was standing there by the seat.

"When you returned this afternoon I didn't meet you because Joseph had come to see me to ask about you. He is one of the elders at the gate of our village and he wanted to talk to you."

"What you did today, young man, was quite impressive," Joseph said. "We've never seen anyone pay the debts of another if he wasn't a family member or business partner. And then when you showed us your figs, once again I was very impressed. I need a partner in my business. I am getting old and I have no heir to take it over, but I would rather see my business die than have the wrong person run it. I have caravans that deliver goods and fruit like your figs all over the east and you have shown me the type of character that I want for the man that will take over someday.

I was a student of the Master as well many years ago and I trust his word and he has told me that you would be a good man to be in business with. Talk to your wife and to the Master and come see me next week with your decision."

When he finished, Joseph said good-bye to Jason and embraced the Master with the hug of an old friend and then left.

"Master, I don't know what to say. Thank you."

“I did nothing my son. It was your action and your decisions that brought this blessing to your door today. I simply agreed with his assessment of you. You were in the flow, where all of prosperity comes to you. Now go home and talk to your wife, I think you have a lot to share with her.”

The Story Goes On...

Jason returned home with his final symbol and the precious tea given to him for this last stage and started to practice the process of the Flow. It was about this time that their first born came—a boy that they named Joshua. This showed them both that abundance was truly flowing all around them.

The young couple took time every morning to talk about what they were learning and how to keep this prosperity flowing in their lives.

“I’m so proud of you, my husband,” Rebecca said one morning as they talked. “I never doubted you and I always knew that someday you would become all that you are today, but I never thought it would happen so fast. You have done so much for us and our village. Now the people have hope again and you have shown them what is possible.

You know, my parents agreed to our marriage after they met you. They told me that your name, Jason, meant “one who heals” and they felt that you lived up to that name. And now look what you have done for all of us—you have healed this land and healed our lives.”

Jason only smiled as he listened to his loving wife and then said, “I have only started this, my love, and we need to keep growing and pass on this knowledge—especially to our children. It will start with our son Joshua and then the rest as they come along. His name means “savior” and if we can pass this on to him and the others, they can truly bring life back to this place.”

“How will we teach them?” Rebecca asked. “The Master of Betheden is getting very old now and by the time our children grow up I don’t know if he will still be with us.”

Jason had not thought of this, but she was right. He had the symbols and could probably copy them, but he didn’t have the tea and how would he get it, how would he get this knowledge to his children and the people of his village?

“I need to go see the Master and ask him what we can do.”

The next morning Jason left with one thing on his mind. The more he thought about how to pass the information on the more uneasy he felt. *I know the Master will have an answer. He must know what to do. He has helped his village, how did he do that?* These questions plagued him all the way to Betheden.

When he arrived, he went straight to the garden and there he found his teacher. “Master, I need your help.”

“What’s wrong my son, you looked troubled. Is everything alright with your family?”

“Yes, Master, we are all fine. But I need to talk to you about my future and the future of my family.”

“Okay, let’s go inside and have some tea.”

“Tea, yes, we must talk about the tea.” Jason followed the wise man back to his kitchen where they had been many times before. The teacher brewed a pot of black tea accented with fruit and flowers that filled the senses. As Jason drank it, he started to calm down and just knew the Master would have an answer.

“So my friend, what’s troubling you so?” The strength in his voice gave Jason even more confidence.

“We are doing so well,” the young man began. “Our business is growing, our family is growing and the people in the village come to me for help and advice. Rebecca and I were talking yesterday morning about how to help those around us and especially how to help our children as the years go by.

We know that you will not be able to teach our whole village, as the years go by, and we want to do all we can to pass on ***The Way of Prosperity***. I have the symbols which I can copy and share and I know how to at least begin to teach the principles, but I don’t have any tea and I don’t know enough about the teas to know which would be the right ones for each lesson. They have helped me so much to get where I am, but I don’t have any left except for a little from the last one you gave me. What can I do?”

The Master listened and smiled as Jason talked. He drank his tea as they sat together and when they young man finished he put his cup down and paused a moment.

“Jason, the tea had absolutely nothing to do with your success.”

“What?!?”

“Tea is just tea. Yes it may have a calming effect or a stimulating effect and it does have properties that are healthy for the body, but that’s not why you succeeded.”

“How can that be? You told me that the tea was an important part of helping me change.”

“For you it was. All the tea did was give you a focal point in the morning, as did the symbols. There is no magic in the tea or the symbols. All the power is in the mind—changing from a poverty mind to a prosperous mind.

Making the tea made you stop, focus and think about your day. This made you think about the lesson. Looking at the symbols sharpened your focus and clarified your thoughts—that’s all.

The mind is the key—it's the key to everything. Change your thoughts and you'll change your world. Be master of your thoughts and you will be master of your world. It was my job to train your mind, to bring you from pinched, poverty, fearful thinking to a prosperous mind—open, alive, accepting all possibilities. Then to teach you to choose the best and believe in yourself knowing that God blesses us in all that we do.”

Jason was stunned, he was sure the tea had opened up things for him and helped him. He couldn't have done all this on his own. Surely the Master was wrong.

Seeing the young man still struggling with this new information the teacher softly spoke, “My son, think about it for a moment. What if something happened to the teas and I wasn't able to get any more? If my prosperity were based on tea, I would be in trouble. God will not leave me to such chance. I may not always have access to tea but I will always have access to my mind and to God, and He has given me free will to think whatever I choose to think and to bring into my life whatever I desire. That is where the power lies, not in the tea.

Sleep on it tonight and tomorrow, we'll talk some more.”

Jason went to his room considering all he was just told and finally just decided to go to sleep and get some rest. *I'll think more about it tomorrow; this is too much for me right now.*

When Jason awoke there was a tray of fresh fruit in his room and a pot of steaming tea. He got up and ate some of the fruit, but the tea brought back a feeling of loss and disappointment. However, he decided to pour a cup and taste it anyway.

It was clear with a slight green color and a touch of pink and the flavor did seem to lighten his mood, so he was glad to drink it. But this was unusual at the Master's home, they had always had breakfast together, why was this time different.

As he left his room, he met the servant who told him that the Master was out in the village and that he would meet Jason on the upper balcony at mid-morning. Jason wandered through the garden, getting lost in its beauty and fragrances. As the sun rose in the sky, he decided to go to the balcony and wait for his teacher.

From this level, the young man could look over the land surrounding the Master's home and see into the village of Betheden. As far as the eye could see there was life and beauty. He pictured his own village being this way someday.

Jason was startled by the Master's voice as he joined him on the balcony, “It's quite a sight isn't it?”

He turned to greet the elder man and saw five other men with him including Joseph, the man that asked Jason to work with him. They all sat down together and the Master said, “I wanted you to meet these men and hear their stories, I think they will help you.”

The first man nodded his head, “My name is Asa, the Master asked us to come here this morning and tell you what we have gone through and a little bit about our lives.”

“We are all very successful men, but it wasn’t always that way. Each of us came to the Master at different times and for different reasons. I saw what was going on here at his home because I am from this village and we were all dying until we started to see life coming from this place. I was mad at God and told the Master the first time we talked. I was mad because I thought God had brought all this destruction on us and that He had walked away leaving us to fight for ourselves. But the Master showed me I was wrong and helped me see the abundance of God that was ours if we simply opened our eyes and received all that He wanted to give. He helped to me change my mind and to see things the way they should be seen.”

Asa paused for a moment and then went on, “You see, in those days, he didn’t have tea, so he used walks as a focal point. Every morning we would walk to the place up in those hills where he first met the man from the East and we would sit there and focus on the scrolls.”

“I too was upset when I learned that the walks were just walks and the fact that the place up there in the hills was no more important than my own garden, but it all helped me obtain the prosperous mind, so it really didn’t matter. Now my business and more importantly my life prospers daily and my relationship with God is the best it has ever been.”

The second man nodded his head, “Jason, my name is Elon. I also grew up in this town and I knew Asa. And even though the Master was older than I was, I knew who he was too. When I started to see the changes in their lives I was very curious. I wanted what they had but I just didn’t believe it was for me.”

“You see I grew up in a family that for many, many generations had been poor. We would help people take care of their animals and I guess we saw ourselves as no better than the animals we cared for. Even though we knew how to care for and manage large numbers of animals, we never believed we could have any of our own. Therefore we stayed poor.”

He nodded towards Asa, “Because he is my friend, Asa would talk to me and tell me some of what he was learning, but he knew he could not teach it all—at least not then, now he is a wonderful teacher. But back then he told me that I needed to go to the Master to get the prosperous mind.”

“For months my shame and my fears kept me from going. I would volunteer to watch sheep at night because I couldn’t sleep anyway and I would talk to God; I would cry to God all night. Finally, Asa convinced me that nothing was going to change until I did something about my situation and so I came to talk to the Master.”

He smiled at the Master, “The first thing he did was give me hope—hope that I wasn’t really destined to be poor, that even *I* could prosper.”

“I didn’t know about Asa’s walks and the Master didn’t have his tea yet so he taught me exercises that he had learned from the man of the East. It was perfect for me; because I had been a physically strong man my whole life so this helped me to focus. Every morning I would rise and do my ritual exercises. It cleared my mind and helped me focus. I thought they were magical, wonderful exercises and wanted the Master to write them down for me at the end. But just like you and Asa, there came a time when I realized that it’s not what I *did* to focus on the prosperous mind but the focus itself that caused the transformation.”

Elon’s smile lit up his entire face, “Now I have more animals than I could ever wish for. I keep them in different places throughout the region just to feed and graze them. And if I pick a new place to graze my animals, the land is blessed and it prospers along with me.”

Micah was the next to speak and as the others he started off by introducing himself to Jason, “Unlike the others here, my family had money. So my problem was not having wealth, my problem was the fact that I was afraid of losing it all.”

“Even with all the money my family and I had, I was a miserable man. I took every coin I had and held on to it tightly. I had not known Asa or Micah since our families did not mix, but I did notice them as they started to prosper. This made me even more nervous because if they started to become wealthy I feared that my wealth would diminish.”

Micah’s voice became passionate as he spoke, “As I watched them closely, more out of fear than interest to learn, I saw them do the most amazing thing. I saw them give away their hard earned money!

And every time they gave it away more came back to them. **How could this be?** I would ask myself. It nearly drove me mad.”

“Then one day in the market the Master came to me and all he said was, ‘Micah, your mind is pinched’ and he tapped me with his finger on the forehead as he said it.”

This brought laughter to everyone sitting there that morning because they had felt that finger tapping on them as well.

After the laughter died down, Micah continued, “Then he said, ‘If you don’t learn the prosperous mind you’re going to lose all that you have.’ And then he walked away. He knew my family and we knew him and at that moment I knew I had to change.”

“Maybe it was because we were a highly educated family and were skilled in writing and art as well as many other matters, but what the Master had me do in order to focus was to trace the symbols and write out their meanings. Every morning I would draw and write over and over and it did just what he said it would do which was to clear my mind and help me focus. For me, the symbols became almost mystical, almost as though I couldn’t live without them. That’s when he taught me that it was not the symbols but the mind that was the key. He did this one morning by coming in and burning all my symbols. I was in shock. But then he said, ‘Now the symbols are gone, but do you still have the thoughts in your mind?’ I told him I did. And then he said, ‘Things like symbols can always be taken away from you, but no one can take away your mind.’ That’s when I understood. I have to admit that I still draw the symbols, but now I do it just for fun.”

Asa chimed in, “And I still take my walks.” That brought another round of laughter from the men.

The next man smiled at Jason, “I guess it’s my turn now. My name is Hur. My story is a little different. I came from a very religious family whose focus was more on spiritual matters than on wealth. I think it made us feel superior to others and it definitely gave us an excuse not to prosper. But through the years it seemed like every one who was wealthy was also corrupt, so that’s what we believed—until we met the Master.”

“We had never seen a more ethical, moral and spiritual man in our lives and yet he prospered. As his wealth grew so did his kindness and his integrity. So I came to him for understanding. At first he refused me and I immediately thought that he must be hiding something. Maybe it’s not as good as it looks from the outside.”

He paused and looked Jason square in the eyes, “But see, the real problem was with me. I really didn’t want to learn at that time, I was just curious and he didn’t have time for curiosity. It was at this time that our family suffered a big setback and we needed money desperately. It may have been easy to think that we were spiritual people and didn’t need wealth but hunger is hunger and only food will relieve it.”

“The next time I came to the Master I was more honest with him and he accepted me. What he did for me was a little different. Every morning he had me read the holy books that I had read for years, but this time he said, ‘Read these books every morning for one hour and open your eyes this time. Look only for the goodness of God and for His desire to bless and give.’ So that’s what I did and what I realized was how blind I had been. I had been blinded by my own beliefs that wealth corrupts and that I didn’t need it or want it.

I had read these books my whole life, so the information I took in wasn’t new. But I had never let myself see or allowed my mind to consider God’s desire to have me prosper. That all changed when I changed my way of thinking to a prosperous mind.”

The last to speak was Joseph. “Jason, you already know who I am, but what you don’t know is that I was the last of these men to come to the Master mainly because of my own pride.”

“I saw these men work with him and rather than be thankful that they were prospering and that our whole village was becoming blessed, I was envious, and I was jealous. I knew that I needed what they had, but I would never admit it. What that did to me was to start my life on a very destructive course. I started to look at everything around me as being unfair. How could these men who were no smarter than me, prosper? It wasn’t fair! Why would I have to go to the Master to learn, he is no better than I am? It wasn’t fair!”

Joseph’s face softened, “I admit now that sadly I even did things to attack these men and their character. Because of my family ties and education, I was one of the youngest men admitted to the elders of the city. I used that position to speak against these men. Today I regret that, but it was also a good lesson for me because no matter how much I did to them, they always prospered. Nothing I would do stopped them. In fact, it seemed that the more I worked against them, the more they prospered. And what was even more remarkable, was that they never attacked me back—they just kept growing.”

“I finally came to the Master and confessed what I had done and remarkably, he accepted me with open arms.”

“He did have me drink the tea and study the symbols just like you in order to help me focus, but now we enjoy our tea just as a drink and toast to our health and prosperous mind.”

“I offered you that partnership because of what I saw in you and because the Master said you were ready. Together our prosperous minds will bring wealth to our families and prosperity to all who deal with us. And just as we men have done, you will take on apprentices who will learn and grow and teach others until all of God’s creation has the prosperous mind.”

For the rest of the day the men shared stories of their growing pains and victories and the journey that they had taken. They all said it started when they met the Master and the Master said it started for him when he met the man from the Far East. But it really started when God put it first into the mind of mankind. It started in the beginning when He blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

God is the One Who gave the first prosperous mind. Over the years we lost it, but now it is time to get it back.

There are still places where the souls of men are dying along with the parched earth around them, but not in the region of Betheden. Just as life returns to the land when it receives the water; life returns to the soul of mankind when the right knowledge is received.

A prosperous mind bears life giving fruit—do you have this mind?

The End...or is it the beginning?

Summary of the Prosperous Mind

Stage 1: Recognition

The Art of Observation

The first step of recognition is simply observation. But what are you looking for? You are looking for the many things in your life that God has given you starting with simple things like vision, hearing, being able to breathe, walk, talk and share your life with friends. Then extend it out to other areas of your life and the world around you. Make it a practice to observe everything around you. Once your mind is actively looking at all around you, start to think about the things that others don't see. Could something be done better? Could something be done differently? Could something be done with less cost? What do people want that no one else is giving them?

As the Master taught:

“Before you can expand your life, you must recognize every part of it. Recognize the blessings from God, recognize God's desire to have you prosper and be in health, recognize the prosperity that God has designed for you in a limitless universe—this is the key.”

“You must understand that what you focus on expands, whether good or bad. The good is always there but you must look for it, see it, find what you most desire and focus on it. See what others overlook in their rush or lack of focus.”

Stage 2: Gratitude

Giving Thanks to God for Harvest and Health

The simplest way to look at this is being thankful, but it goes much deeper than just mentally being thankful. It means to look into the depth of what has been received and think about all that went into it, all that is behind it and all that it represents.

Being grateful is more than just saying “thanks”. Saying “thanks” is just an acknowledgement, but being grateful has feeling to it. Why is that important? It’s important because feelings attract more feelings of the same kind and give us the results that we desire. So when we take the time to be grateful or have gratitude, that feeling will expand and our mental state will began to change to a state of gratitude and expect more wonderful things to happen.

Stage 3: Blessing

Prayer

God Almighty, the great power of the Universe, is our partner in life. Blessing represents our working together with our partner, asking Him to touch and prosper all that we have and all that we do. Again it is a mental state of asking for the blessing and seeing it transform into something greater than its present state.

Being able to see what does not yet exist is the foundational power of transformation.

As the Master taught:

“The Way of Prosperity always looks for what can be, more than what is. Even when things are great, they can always be greater—with God, there is no end to the blessings, there is no limit. I think we should bless the parched earth even more often than the beautiful plants. Just picture what it would look like if the rains were abundant and the land was filled with life. This land was not always what you see today, but I saw this long before it existed.”

Stage 4: Expansion

Growing

Expansion is a natural process but we must pay attention to it so it can happen more effectively.

As the Master taught:

“This lesson is about expansion,” his teacher began. “You saw the wall and thought it was an obstacle, you must realize that God designed us to expand and everything we are involved with can expand therefore all obstacles are illusions. Never let anything stop you from trying, we are designed to grow and grow we must.

The great law of the universe is expansion. Every seed is designed by God to reach its full potential. If it’s not expanding, it’s contracting and dying. Expansion is life. Contraction is death. In that expansion, we grow. We nurture seeds so that they expand and grow. The godly design is to increase production and bear fruit. We do the same with our minds to expand our thinking and see all the possibilities.”

Stage 5: Utilization

A Lever

On the surface this looks like the same concept as expansion, but it is very different. Expansion is tied to the Law of Seed Nature which means every seed has the potential to reach its maximum growth. It is expansion from within.

Utilization is taking what you have and using leverage to produce more. It’s growth on the outside. Expansion would be helping a plant reach its full potential in growth while utilization would be seeing how many uses of that plant you can come up with.

The symbol for utilization is a lever exerting force on an object to move it and that’s what we want. Using our minds to see how we can move something to a higher level. Most people are content just to be as they are and leave the world around them the same way. The prosperous mind looks for ways to find more use of all that God has given us.

George Washington Carver found numerous ways to use the peanut and in doing so saved the economy of the southeastern United States and received world wide recognition.

Stage 6: Enjoyment

To Receive Joy and Pleasure

Here the Master taught:

“This next stage is Enjoyment. It is time to enjoy all of your blessings and prosperity. This sounds like a simple stage, even insignificant but don't ignore it. You see men become so thrilled with doing things that produce great abundance that they get seduced. Their work gives them a feeling of accomplishment, success and pride. Now there is nothing wrong with that but don't let that be your enjoyment.”

This is a very important stage of the prosperous mind. We must take time to reward ourselves by enjoying what we have. This does not mean that we stop working or producing but that we simply take the time to enjoy this life we are producing.

Some parents work so hard at providing for the family and raising a family that they never take time to enjoy the simple pleasure of their family. It's the same with marriages and businesses, they work so hard at it that they never really enjoy it.

Take time to reward yourself and feel good about all that you have accomplished—it will add strength to your endeavors and long life to your work.

Stage 7: Flow—Letting it God

Flow

Of all the stages, this is the most important as well as the most elusive for people to learn. It cannot be reached until the others have been practiced, but if this one is neglected or not understood everything will crumble.

First we must realize that God's abundance and prosperity is always flowing around us, it is not turned on and off because of our goodness or works, it is not just poured out for special people, it is available to all at all times.

Next, we must understand the flow and learn to work with it. We get in the flow, just as Jason got into the stream by practicing all the stages of the prosperous mind. Then we must understand it, which means since it is always flowing and always a supply I don't need to hold on to every thing I have as if that's all there is—I can let go. The Law of the Tithe or giving 10% has been part of this flow since the beginning of time. It shows that the person understands that God, the power of the Universe will restore all that I let go and more. The amount that I receive is only limited to how much I choose to gather at any given time.

The last part is to learn to work with the flow. This means that since abundance is always flowing around me I don't need to chase after it. I do what I need to do to attract it and I do this with my prosperous mind and taking appropriate actions, but then I let it come to me. This is one of the hardest lessons because we are so impatient, but it is the only way to have long lasting prosperity. Jason went to the Master to learn what was missing in his life and this is one step where you may need a teacher to help you fully understand and apply it in your life.