

### Lesson 3: Dying in Repentance

In our last session, we looked more specifically at what a love J-Curve is. In this session, I'd like to focus on the Repentance J-Curve, but before I do, I wanted to clarify the four broader J-Curves. You're probably thinking that there are J's everywhere, and in some ways, after you see it, they actually seem to be everywhere in Scripture. Now, in this slide, there is a broader summary of the J-Curves. You can see here on the left. There is the original J-Curve, the gospel J-Curve. In 1 Corinthians 15:3. The Apostle Paul summarises the gospel in this way: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received." He says, "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures. He was buried and was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." So, there's a sense that when Paul describes the gospel, he describes the story of the life, the death, and the Resurrection of Jesus. We are connected to Jesus' J-Curve by a Faith J-Curve. We see that in Romans 6, more specifically in verse 4. "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." By faith, we're connected to Jesus, our sins were put to death on the cross, and we were raised with him to a new life.

So, this one again is a Faith J-Curve. The everyday J-Curve, we have seen in Philippians 3:9-10, that we share in the fellowship of suffering with Christ, as well as his resurrection. So, the Faith J-Curve and the everyday J-Curve are our current present J-Curve that we do experience. Now, at this point, I want to clarify that there is a distinction between our present J-Curve and the past one of Jesus, the gospel, as well as a future one. And more particularly, I want to zoom in on the present J-Curve with this chart. We see here on the bottom, we know Jesus by faith. And we see in Philippians 3:9, this comes as a righteousness not of my own, but that comes through faith in Christ. Jesus died for me on this cross, and positionally we are in Christ. Jesus is on the cross, and we are joined to him by faith.

Based on that foundation, we also see in Philippians 3:10, in some ways, we know Jesus by love. In that J-Curve, I die for you, I participate in Christ, I am on a cross joined to Christ by love. And so, in some ways, at the risk of oversimplification, at the bottom of this is justification. And upon the foundation of that justification, here is our sanctification. And so, we know Jesus by Faith and we know Jesus by love. Justification is the base for our sanctification to grow and to thrive. They cannot be interchanged, nor can they be separated. And so, that's just kind of a zoom in on our present J-Curve. The final J-Curve here on the right is a future one that has yet to happen. Romans 6:5 says that we have been united with him in death like his, we certainly will be united with him in a resurrection like his. And that's the final resurrection of our bodies.

Now, out of the three, we sometimes tend to ignore the reality and significance of this one, the everyday J-Curve. We believe the gospel and by faith trust Jesus, and then wait for him to come back someday. And in the meantime, it's almost like we just have to hold our breath and hope we don't mess up. Now, look at how all these four J-Curves show up in the writing of the Apostle Paul in Colossians 3:1-4. Now, if you take a quick look at these, you're probably thinking that it looks like a bag of Skittles or M&M's. Let me just explain. We look here, the Apostle Paul says,

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“If then you have been raised with Christ,” there at the base of it is a Faith J-Curve. We've been attached to Jesus, and we've been raised with him in newness of life.

“seeking the things that are above.” That's a present J-Curve.

“where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father.” That's the original [J-Curve].

“We set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are present.” The present J-Curve.

“For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Faith J-Curve.

So that “when Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” That's the final or the future J-Curve.

Now, with the J-Curve frame in mind, Paul then begins in Colossians to zoom in on how dying repentance works. And so, in verse 5-8, he continues and he says, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.”

When we put to death a sin in us, we're following the path of Jesus into his death. Now, we got to be clear, Jesus can't model this particular J-Curve for us because he has no sin, but the general movement down is the same. Dying and repentance can take many forms. It's asking for forgiveness, it's choosing not to give in to temptation, going in the opposite direction, doing different. And resurrection might take the form of breaking a lifelong habit. Greater joy, freedom, love experienced.

But more specifically, how do you put sin to death? Romans 8: 12-13 says, “So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” The secret to killing our flesh is the Spirit. The same Spirit that transformed Jesus' body wants to also kill our flesh. The Spirit has a kill function.

And so, let's return to Pastor Alisha's story. After the elders left with half of the people and half the assets of the church, and started a new church down the road. I asked Pastor Alisha, ‘What happened next?’ and he said, ‘Well, I was sad, I was angry, I was fighting bitterness, and God was seemingly silent in my life. All I could do is pray, I lamented, and this went on for weeks and weeks and weeks. Then one day, while I was praying,’ Alisha said, ‘I realised while the elders sinned greatly against me, I too was not perfect. And the Spirit began to convict me of logs in my own eyes. And Alicia asked for forgiveness. As time went on, he not only asked for forgiveness, but he forgave the elders. So much so that he went personally to them and said, ‘Take anything you want, it's all the Lord's,’ and he began to experience joy.

## J-Curve – Dying and Rising with Jesus in Everyday Life



And so, if we chart Alisha's repentance on a J-Curve, we see that there was anger, he's fighting bitterness and sadness. There's silence. And at the bottom of the J, he discovers the log in his own eye and puts it to death in repentance, and the Spirit comes and brings conviction, and out of that conviction, it brings renewal. And so we see that frees him then to forgive the elders, release everything unto the Lord, and then there is joy.

If we were to track Alisha, again on this chart, we see that Alisha started in a love J-Curve, intending to serve the church that he was called to. This leads him to suffering and paying the price for that love. And in his suffering and in his lament, God brings the conviction of His Spirit, which leads him to the repentance of the log in his own eye. And in many senses, that frees him up once again to love in a greater way as he forgives and releases everything.

So, that's it for today. Whatever may be going on in your own life, I hope and pray that God, in his Spirit, is doing a work of not only great conviction but also of great joy and hope as you submit yourself in that conviction in repentance.

In the next section, we will look more specifically at what we typically do if we choose to avoid the J-Curve. See you next time.