



IDENTITY

The Crucible

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Definition of crucible:

- A ceramic or metal container in which metals or other substances may be melted or subjected to very high temperatures.
- A situation of severe trial, or in which different elements interact, leading to the creation of something new.

Most of us have no idea all that we have within ourselves. One of our goals should be to know God and be transformed by Him to become more and more like Jesus. God sees who you are to become. He knows the things He wants to add and remove in your life. He knows the things you will do and all that you will experience.

The Crucible is a concentrated season where God uses time to do a very intentional work within your life.

Sometimes life creates the crucible:

- loss of a job
- business goes under
- promotion goes to someone else
- prolonged sickness or illness
- financial frustrations
- consequences from an unwise decision
- sinful choices and their effects
- loss of a loved one
- mistreatment, slander, ostracized or betrayed

You find yourself asking "God, WHERE ARE YOU?"

Sometimes God creates the crucible:

- Fears or unmet expectations of God or ourselves
- Bitterness, anger, lust, etc

- Feelings of lost connection with God
- Going through the motions of reading the Bible, church attendance, praying
- The joy of following God seems to have dimmed
- The things you counted on spiritually are not “working” the way they used to (practices, principles in the Word but stopped seeking God’s presence)
- Your sinful desires may feel stronger than the desire to serve God

In the church world we may say:

- Winter seasons: feels like your desire and passion are dying
- Dry seasons: you are doing the right things but it is not “life giving”
- For leaders, being put on the shelf and God uses the time to remind them they are not what they do
- It feels like the dark night of the soul
- You may be revisiting something that is incomplete

Deuteronomy 8:2 “Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.”

In many ways, we find out what is in our hearts during these seasons. When we are squeezed, what we think about God, ourselves and others comes out.

- They are essential to establish our identity in God alone.
- The law of requisite variety: when an ecosystem reaches a place of stasis or static, it becomes stagnant and begins to die. When things are easy, we get comfortable so we stop pressing in, we stop pursuing, we stop showing up and seeking like we once did.
- Crucible seasons are different than inconveniences.
- Crucible seasons in our Christian walk are not meant to harm us, though it may be painful. They are meant to purge, remove, add, edify and strengthen.

This season is an important part of establishing *our identity in God* because there are things we can only discover *about Him and ourselves through the testing and the pressure of a crucible.*

Psalm 34:18 “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Remember- you are not a pawn in God’s game. God does not just use us and He wastes nothing. **A Crucible season produces a deep transformational work in us.**

- *What have you found comes out of your heart when you are squeezed or pressured?*
- *Have you experienced a Crucible season? If so, what made you push through and not give up?*

Moses illustrates what it is like to live through a crucible season.

Often the crucible season is the way that transformation comes.

- Moses is one of the most highly revered characters in the Old Testament
- Moses is a great study for future leaders, exemplifying obedience and sacrifice

Acts 7:20-34

At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family. When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son.

7:22 "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action."

- He was raised in the inner circle of a superpower. He would have been trained in mathematics, sciences, trade, leadership, and war.
- He was on the fast track to power.
- He was groomed as nobility and royalty.
- He was powerful in speech and in action.

There is nothing wrong with education and using skill, talent and giftings, but often God wants to remind us that these are not our source, He is!

7:23 When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense.

- He is caught between two worlds- His position and power or his people. We may find ourselves in the same situation where we are compromising faith to be successful.
- Moses is having an identity crisis. He is raised in prestige, power, authority but he now is confronted with a reality he can't ignore.
- Moses is beginning to separate from his position of authority to spiritual recognition of truth.

This is the essence of a crucible season.

7:24-29 "He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?' But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and

judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday? When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons."

- Moses was born to be a deliverer, but when he killed the man that was not God's desire or design
- This is what happens when we try to do God's will our way
- **This is WHY the crucible season must happen**
- God IS speaking to Moses, but Moses is going about it the wrong way
- This is the essence of the Crucible- He tests our hearts, He tests our motivations, He tests if we are willing to trust and obey even if we don't understand

Proverbs 17:3 "The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart."

7:30 "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. "

- There is often a timeframe associated with God's work in us
- Don't get discouraged by long periods of time
- Moses needs every bit of that time to be transformed.

7:30-34 "When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to get a closer look, he heard the Lord say: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look. Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.'"

- Ultimately, God wants Moses to rely on Him. He is his reward, His source, His ways are the right ways.
- You cannot get away from God's refinement. What He desires is for us to trust Him as He does His work refining us, healing us, freeing us, and revealing Himself to us. **And then He sends us.**

- He sends a deliverer to those in oppression.
- He sends a teacher to those who need education.
- He sends those who have accepted Christ as global workers to those who need the gospel.
- He sends the financially literate to free those under financial bondage.
- He may send the former addict to those in addiction.
- He sends those who have been comforted by God to those who have experienced loss.

Why? **Because God is the great Redeemer.**

- What has God redeemed in your life through a Crucible season?

Hebrews 11:24-26 "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward."

The crucible refines and recalibrates our hearts and lives towards God.

When the Crucible season ends, people will say they have a better understanding and trust of God and greater clarity of decisions they will make moving forward in their life.

Romans 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

How to navigate Crucible seasons:

Engage the Lord:

- Ask God what He wants to reveal to you in this season of difficulty.
- Ask God who He wants to be to you in this moment.

Position yourself:

- Walk in trust. Declare God's truth. Pray the word back to God. Trust God's character.
- Surround yourself with a community of believers who have been through situations similar to encourage, uplift and pray with and for you.

Practice hope:

Psalm 42:5 Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

- Often, we have misplaced hope.
- Make a decision daily to place your trust in God.

- Are you in a Crucible season? Have you declared to the Lord that you will not quit?

- Are you afraid of what the Lord might reveal to you? What call has He placed on your life that you are running from? (Jonah)

Research articles:

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Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archeology:

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Harvard Divinity Bulletin:

<https://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/pinpointing-the-exodus-from-egypt/>