

# The Doctrine of Interaction

## Lesson 8

*The Issue:* To live the life of faith as described in the Scriptures, one must of necessity learn to be dependent upon the character of God Himself. David has decided to interact with the world of matter and energy based on the firm foundation of God's love for him. So David's faith is an expression of his confidence in the higher character of God.

*Underlying Assumptions as Expressed in Everyday Terms:*

- 1) Character has nothing to do with the material world in which we live --at least character has no effect on the physical forces of cause and effect with which we must contend.
- 2) The most dominant and causative aspects of the world of matter and energy are all physical.
- 3) The concept of character has to do with the moral decisions that come up in everyday life.

*The Generalization:* The believer is expected to interact with the world of matter and energy on the basis of God's personal expression of His own character.

*The Scripture Passage:* Psalm 25: 6, 7

*The Lesson:*

- 1) As David faces the tough world of the material and all that goes with it, he determines to rely on the expression of a certain kind of character. It is the revealed character of God.
- 2) David is cognizant of the fact that he is a sinner. At the very least, by comparison the character of the Lord is on a different and higher plane than that of David. In verse 7 he writes, "Remember not the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways." This tells us that he is fully aware of his imperfections and is repentant.
- 3) David's own sinful character, though a present factor with which he must daily contend, is not the kind of character with which he *wants* to interact with the material world.
- 4) This forces a conclusion of sorts: It must be that higher character, one superior to man's own character. is essential to rightly interact with matter and energy.

- 5) If faith is an interaction with matter and energy, by the same measure, then so is sin! Sin is a way of interacting with the material world, at least in part.
- 6) David is going to be reliant on the higher character of God which is expressed as “love,” “mercy,” and “goodness.” Verse 6: “Remember, O Lord your great mercy and love for they are from of old,” and verse 7: “According to your love remember me for you are good, O Lord.”
- 7) David decides to interact with the temporal order on the firm foundation of God’s love, mercy and goodness. Love wants the best for others; and love seeks the elevated, not the carnal, sensual and earthy.
- 8) Here is a good question: What has this got to do with the external world? It turns out that the most proximate thing to the material order is the character of God! This means that the supposed “laws of nature” are not the most proximate. After all, the material world exists because of the character of God and it is furthermore constantly maintained solely by the character of the Lord.
- 9) This is an all-important point. The closest force in contact with the world of matter and energy is the character of the Almighty! His character is the engine that drives the material order and therefore controls it. David believes this, and is content to rely on the Lord getting him through.
- 10) The goodness, mercy and love of God are expressions of a higher character. This is one without malevolence. So, something splendid, pure and good stands behind David’s interaction with the world. That is the character of God. In other words, David is not alone with all that he faces!
- 11) Faith relies on the character of God and not on the material dynamics of the universe!
- 12) It is most important that we realize that the character of God is **THE PRIMARY DYNAMIC IN THE UNIVERSE!** The Lord’s character **IS** an aspect of the material universe. The writer of this Psalm believes that it is real, active and dominant. The character of God will dominate anything that it is around. The world of matter and energy will be forced into the mold of the will of such a dominant character.
- 13) As a consequence, any analysis of the universe as a whole or any situation in particular that leaves out the character of God is an incomplete analysis and therefore errant.

### *Discussion Questions*

- 1) Given what you know about the life of David, of what physical resources could he have availed himself, in order to handle the trouble he was in?

- 2) Within this psalm, what indications do you have that David made a conscious decision to reject the possibility of using his own available resources, in favor of depending upon what others would regard as intangibles?
- 3) If David's thinking is a model, how should we mentally deal with our past sins?
- 4) List the elements in this psalm that describe the character of God.
- 5) Jesus was the physical manifestation of God on earth. Look at Colossians 1:13-18, giving special attention to verse 17 (look at other translations of the Bible, if possible, or a word study resource.) What do these verses add to your understanding of the assertion that "the material world exists because of the character of God and it is furthermore constantly maintained solely by the character of the Lord"?
- 6) Think back over both Old Testament and New Testament accounts of miracles and extraordinary deeds of God. Choose one. How does it manifest His character?
- 7) Using the event that you considered in question 6, list any human resources that God used to solve a problem. Were these resources essential to the final outcome?
- 8) In what way could it be said that God's character is the "final word" in a situation?
- 9) Think of a situation you are currently facing. What have you learned about the power of the character of God over material circumstances? How does this apply to your situation?