



WHAT IS THE RAPHA JOURNEY?

Introduction

The Rapha Journey is an "in-depth" discipleship model: a journey where everyone can find greater wholeness. The resulting fruit is visible in:

- Deeper intimacy with Christ
- More authentic relationships
- A consistent life of anointing, including the Fruit of the Spirit and spiritual gifting.

In one sense the Rapha Journey is indescribable, because it is a unique journey for every one of us. But its primary task is to remove the obstacles in our lives that God says are in His way. Legend has it that when Michelangelo finished the statute of David, a local patron of the arts was awestruck by the work and asked him how he had done it. The artist responded simply, 'David was always there in the marble. I just took away everything that was not David'. In just the same way, during the Rapha Journey each person lets go of what does not belong to who they are created to be, and in doing so they embrace greater Christ-likeness.

The Biblical Idea Of Rapha

In its Semitic root the Hebrew Jehovah ROPE/RAPHA – Jehovah Rapha – is one of the names of God. The Biblical commentators of the Old Testament have traditionally translated the word Rapha 'to heal' (Ex 15:26). But this is problematic when applied to Bible references like 'undrinkable salt water' (2Kg 2:22) and a 'broken potter's wheel' (Jer 19:11).

If we look again at the original root of the Hebrew word and instead of the simple 'heal', we translate it as rapa 'to restore, to make whole', we find a much better understanding. This definition - 'the mender: one who sews together, to repair a piece of torn cloth' - fits far more comfortably with the original intended meaning.

Christ wants to 'heal' a sick body (2Kg 20:5), but also 'repair' a broken altar (1Kg 18:30), 'restore' a drought-stricken and locust-infested land (2Chron 7:14), 'make whole' undrinkable bitter water (2Kg 2:21-22), 'mend' the earth's fissures (Ps 60:4), 'repair' smashed pieces of pottery (Jer 19:11), and 'renovate' a mildew-infected house (Lev 14:48). All these use the Hebrew word rapa or rep.

This is the idea behind Exodus 15:26 'I am the Lord your restorer, the One who makes you whole' (Num 21:4-9, Dt 7:15 and Ps 103:3). Such a meaning takes the promise of God beyond the simple mending of physically broken diseased bodies, into the whole of human personhood, the physical and the spiritual. It promises all of us greater wholeness in every area of our life; to be repaired and cleansed, to have the bitter places of our life become sweet, etc.

However, Ex 15:26 does not suggest that this promise of being 'mended' is without conditions. God's preconditions for giving us such wholeness are that we listen to His voice, do what is right from His perspective, live in obedience to His Law (submitting to it) and keep the spirit of the Law as we learn it.

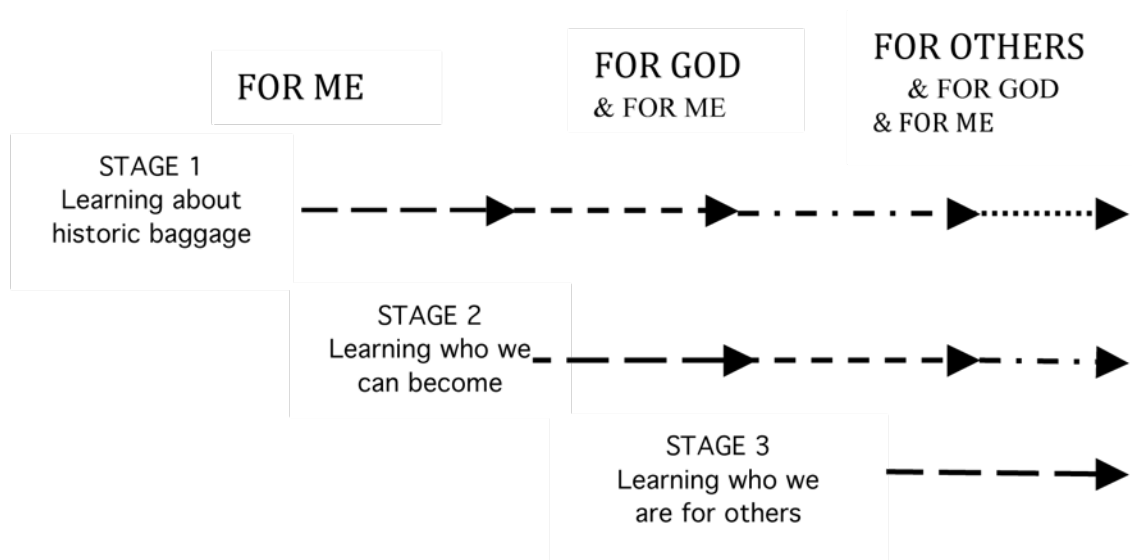
This is a discipleship model of wholeness that requires we do our part, so that God can fulfill His promise.

From God's perspective this gift of greater wholeness is accomplished by our being 'stitched together', not merely as one piece of still-worn out old cloth, but by our also being 'sewn into Jehovah'. The clear implication of this Rapha aspect of God's nature is that it is only as we are 'sewn back' into relationship with God that it becomes possible for us to find personal, true wholeness. Likewise as we seek to deepen our relationship with Christ God expects that we find wholeness in our personality, our relationships, and with Him. Only our Creator can offer us such healing. This is truly being 'born again'.

What does this journey look like?

We are at a disadvantage of course. We may think we know what wholeness is, but we know little of the person God created us to be. Our perspective has been clouded by sin. So just when we think we have sufficient wholeness, God begins to show us the less-visible obstacles in our life that get in His way. Our discipleship journey moves into a depth that allows us to experience the righteous brokenness that is part of being 'healed' God's way!

The model looks like this:



It has three stages.

- The first is my working with the Lord to clean up the darkness and sin in my past, usually starting with the damage I already know about.
- The second is for the Lord and me, addressing the damage He can see that I have simply accepted as part of me. This is also when I begin to learn who I really am in Christ, e.g. all the spiritual gifting and anointing He has given me.
- The third is front-line service for Christ where I can live in growing wholeness and gifting, and stand against the Enemy without being easily taken out.

What Stops Us Gaining Greater Wholeness In Our lives?

Scripture teaches that we are all fragmented (Rom 7:15, 25), full of contrary 'drives' that prevent us from possessing the full potential of our own personhood. The primary reason is that we are all victims of a disease called sin. Sin stops us from becoming the person we were created to be. As Aquinas said, none of us are fully masters in our own house.

Most of us are damaged because of 3 areas in our lives:

- Our own sinful nature and past behavior (Is 59:2, Ezk 18:19-20, Gal 6:7, 1Chron 21:4-8)
- The sin of others, especially those standing against us, laying things on us, either deliberately or unintentionally (Matt 10:26-27, Col 3:9, Titus 1:1, Ps 42:10)
- The often-hidden sin of our parents and forbears (Ex 20:5, Ex 34:6-7, Lam 5:7, Ezk 20:4-5).

We describe these areas as 'baggage' - those encumbrances, hindrances or burdens that prevent us from fulfilling our human potential. Sometimes we know about this baggage, but often we are unaware of it. We may see its symptoms from time to time, but we will often excuse or ignore them and accidentally resist God's mending process.

We all have a spiritual dimension to our nature that is frequently 'below the waterline' of our consciousness. It touches every area of our existence and has the ability to stand in the way of our discipleship journey. The roots, primary drives and causes of our baggage can be hidden by our physical sicknesses and our lack of knowledge about the damage we carry in our spirit. God can see this damage and will tell us about it, when we are willing to 'listen to His voice' and do what He requires.

Our sinful self distances us from God and from our potential (Eph 6:12, Rom 7:18). We must strive for our inner unity, if we are to be more whole. God intended us to be able to love Him with all our heart, with all our mind and all our strength, but this wholeness does not automatically come to us as a gift when we surrender to Christ. Instead, the journey to this unity is something we have to do with Christ. In Scripture it is called our sanctification (Rom 6:19).

Removing our baggage requires we encounter our spiritual nature and the damage hidden in it. Invariably this will be the key to our greater wholeness (2Cor 11:27ff, Rom 7:15,25, Jam 3:14ff. etc). The Rapha Journey is a step-by-step process of sanctification, offering systematic release from this baggage. It leads to an experience of genuine supernatural wholeness, as we discover the person we are created to be in Christ. Then we can love and serve Him the way He intended.

Defining Baggage as Sin and Disorder

Sin in Scripture is described as guilt and it's evil. The sin we carry separates us from intimacy with Christ, from ourselves, and from those around us (Rom 3:23ff, Rom 6:11ff, Gal 5:16ff). All of us have

such sin and its baggage to varying degrees. At the cross Christ defeated its power and rescued us from its condemnation. But the choice to separate ourselves from it is a journey we must walk.

Let us look at some typical baggage:

- Unrighteous hate, self-hate (Lev 19:17, Prov 15:32, 1Jn 3:15)
- Some types of fear, and worry (1Sam 15:24, 2Tim 1:7, 1Jn 4:18, Ps 27:1, 46:1,10)
- Emotional slavery, trauma (2Pet 2:19, Rom 7:14, 6:17)
- Revenge (Mat 6:14-15, Jn 20:23, Luk 5:21-24, 6:37)
- Guilt and shame (Ps 44:13,15, 71:24, 89:45)
- Verbal, sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse and its consequences
- Forbears' (e.g. parents and before) sin and disorder
- Pride (Ps 5:5, 94:4, Prov 8:13, 16:18ff, Hos 13:6, Luk 1:11, Jam 4:16, 1Jn 2:16)
- Control, manipulation
- Damaged emotion (Ps 55:4-5, Pro 18:14)
- Hatred or despising of manhood and womanhood
- Spiritual deceit (Pro 15:4, 2Thes 2:9,10, Heb 3:13)
- Unrighteous jealousy (Acts 7:9, Jam 3:16, Pro 14:30, Gal 5:26)
- Occult, words and curses (Deut 18:10-14, 20-22, Mk 14:71, Gal 3:10, Rev 16:9)
- Pietism, religion and Pharisaism (Acts 5:3, Gal 2:13, 2Tim 3:5, Rev 12:9, 20:10)

How Do We Get Free?

With each area of sin and disorder in our lives the Holy Spirit will require we be very specific. However, typically we will need to take 3 simple steps to be free from each area of sin, its baggage and its disorder:

- Seeing Our Sin And Its Darkness: We must be willing to see and feel the sin and the disorder that we are carrying 'below the waterline', from God's perspective. This can take time, cannot be rushed and is essential as a precursor to the wholeness we seek. God is more eager to talk to us about what He sees in us (Ex 15:26) than we are willing to listen.
- Repenting: We must be willing to repent, allowing the Holy Spirit to show us the extent of our sin and the impact of others' sin in our lives. Such repentance brings the knowledge (2Tim 2:26) of what He requires we specifically do to be free from the damage in every part of our being..
- Possessing Healing Restoration: We must be prepared to let God restore us, redeeming all that was stolen by our sin and its disorder. We must grow more of who we are created to be, increasing in Christ-likeness in each area of our life. This greater wholeness not only restores us to ourselves and to Him, but it brings greater wholeness in all our other relationships.

The place of the Bible in the Rapha Journey

The Bible has a central place in the Rapha Journey. Its unique anointing and guidance is the principal tool in shaping this discipleship journey.

The concept of a journey itself comes from Scripture. For instance the journey into greater sanctification is our becoming more and more holy in our life and values, and must extend to every area of our life (Rom 6:13, 1Cor 6:19, 2Cor 4:6, Col 3:10, 1Jn 4:7 etc.). It is the special office of the Holy Spirit in the plan of Redemption to carry on this work in every believer's life (1Cor 6:11, 2Thess 2:13 etc.), as laid out

in Scripture. Also, it was Yahweh's personal invitation to every person in Israel for them to allow Him to talk to them about His perspective on their lives (Ex 15:26).

In the detailed resources that we have made available to support this journey, we have many Bible notes that provide background and enable further personal exploration of God's perspective on how to grow in greater Christ-likeness. These include such topics as hearing God's voice, a meditation on the place of human spirit in Scripture, fasting, forgiveness, laying down revenge and meeting Jehovah Rapha, etc. The Biblical framework is also laid out in our various books and CDs and academic research.

Some of those who explore this journey have little Christian background. Others are looking for new encounters with Christ after many years of faith. For these reasons we seek to avoid much traditional religious terminology and do not refer extensively to Scripture as we teach live in workshops. Much of the Rapha teaching is in the language of psychology and sociology, together with practical/clinical theology. Using modern language makes ancient Biblical truth more accessible to modern people.

A Journey toward greater Christ-likeness

It should be our life work to both be and become more sanctified - that is, to be whole, mature and worthy of our calling in Christ (Job 32:8, Ps 56:8, Heb 4:15, Rev 21:4). The Rapha Journey is a discipleship journey that begins with our admitting to specific areas of damage in our lives, but continues into ever-greater Christ-likeness. Once the damage is no longer bringing fragmentation to us, the Fruit of the Spirit and the exercising of spiritual gifting is an inevitable consequence.

May we all know Jehovah Rapha in our lives.