

Study - Birth, Growth, Multiplication, Death

Over the years of traveling and working with leaders from a variety of cultures and countries, I have come to see almost everyone going through certain recurring life experiences. I have called this the "circle of life".

Life begins with birth and ends with physical death. This is a fact that everyone experiences whether you believe it or not. In nature we see this pattern in many ways. In plants and trees we see that a seed falls into the ground and the outside of the seed dies deep in the ground.

A sunflower seed, for example, falls to the ground and enters the soil. The kernel develops on the inside and a new sunflower emerges above the ground. The sunflower contains new seeds. The circle can start again from these pips.

In the animal world, the circle of life is also visible.

The principle that we see in nature can be divided into four phases: birth, growth, multiplication and death. *In the spiritual realm this circle of life has also become clear to me. I see this circle of life both in my own life and in the lives of the leaders I was allowed to train.*

By living the circle of life repeatedly, *I am* developing into the person the Father intended for me at my birth.

In order to understand how I am being formed more powerfully, I want to begin to delve deeper into the circle of life.

Abraham

In the OT we see this circle of life with Abraham. He lived with his family where God called him to leave his homeland. I see this as a *birth*, a new time. Eventually Abraham obeyed and grew in his walk with God as his Master. Abraham *grows* as he learns to walk as a disciple in the new revelation that he received from God. Then comes the promise of a son which is *multiplication*. Unfortunately, this does not work and Sara comes up with another plan. The slave may be able to have their child. And that indeed happens just as Abraham and Sarah had planned. Yet God asks Abraham to send this child away. I see this as a kind of *dying*.

The circle is round. Abraham had heard a word from God. A promise of a successor! This is exactly what God intended. Everything that contains life can multiply, but God the Father did not want Abraham to fulfill God's promise in his own strength. He had to die to his own efforts so that what God wanted to do deep inside him could happen. Namely receiving a promised son, without this being possible from a human point of view. Abraham had to learn that he and God could bring forth life together. God with His Spirit, Abraham with his faith in what God wanted to do.

Again God comes and speaks the promise of a son to Sarah and Abraham. Abraham believes again, now without trying to make it happen by his own initiative. In his spirit he receives the words and promise of God the Father. His spirit and God's Spirit together bring the promise to life. The inner person of Abraham connects with God's word. Thus a new life arises, a *new birth*. This is the beginning of the circle of life. We next see the second part of the circle of life. This time Abram is the *I am* who trusts God and God the *I Am* gives Abram a new name. Abraham *grows* in confidence to walk with God and makes a covenant.



Indeed, in the *third phase of the circle of life, multiplication*, we see that Abraham and Sarah have a child. They call him Isaac. And just like Ishmael who was sent away, God asks for a sacrifice. Here too Abraham obeys. But what a difficult step this must have been for Abraham. He lost Ishmael. He was sent away, and never seen again. Now Abraham had to "*die*" again. This time, God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, literally. Despite his previous experience, Abraham believed that God could do a miracle. In obedience he did what God asked of him and God indeed did a miracle. Now we see an exponential *growth* and *multiplication*. A growth that we can still admire today. The nation of Israel came from Isaac. Ishmael also became a great nation known as the Arabs.

Joseph

Joseph is the second example I want to share. In this case, it is not about a son, but about his calling as a leader to liberate his people and provide food in times of famine.

Joseph was born. His mother was Jacob's beloved wife Rachel. Jacob was the third generation of fathers all described as liars. Jacob himself was cheated by his father-in-law. On the first wedding night, it was not Rachel that was given to him in marriage, but Leah. Even though Jacob had worked years for Rachel as his dowry for her. Rachel did not conceive until God answered the prayers of Jacob and Rachel. They received Joseph as their son and he became the beloved child. The other 10 brothers hated Joseph. God begins to speak to Joseph. The dreams he receives *give birth* to the calling upon his life. Father Jacob also goes a step further and gives Joseph a very special mantle. In the Bible, a mantle often symbolizes the anointing that rests on a person's life. Joseph has entered a new time spiritually through the dreams. He *grows* in his walk with God. He is different from the others.

The brothers are always looking for a way to get rid of him. One day they capture him and sell Joseph as a slave. Here Joseph's dreams *die*. He becomes a slave in the house of Potiphar, a rich and powerful Egyptian lord. Joseph quickly learns in this situation and sticks to the principles he learned at home. He continues to trust God. The calling in his life is recognized by Potiphar and Potiphar appoints Joseph as leader over the other slaves. This is the *multiplication* that God gives through the confidence that Joseph continues to have in God. Joseph even becomes responsible for the court while Potiphar is away.

So far it is going well, but Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph. He remains strong and does not respond to the temptation. Because of this, Joseph is falsely accused and thus ends up in prison without any guilt. His own power is now broken a second time and again *he dies* to the calling upon his life. But God's plan for Joseph's life continues. Leadership is in his DNA.

In prison we see that Joseph soon learns to be a servant and that gives him the opportunity to serve others. Joseph's gifts come in handy. And in prison we see that Joseph becomes fruitful and can explain people's dreams with great accuracy. Joseph thinks that this allows him to plead his innocence. Yet Joseph has to go through the dust again. He is forgotten by the king's cupbearer. Again Joseph must *die* to himself and trust God.

His call to lead his people unexpectedly springs back to life, a *new birth* begins. He himself is called by the king. What a sudden change. Joseph quickly emerges as the right hand of the king. From that position Joseph sees all his brothers before him and thus saves and guides them. Joseph *begins to grow and multiply*.

Jesus, Circle of Life in the NT

Of course, Jesus Himself is the great example of the circle of life. He is conceived in a special way. God's Spirit ensures that Mary becomes pregnant. I think it is a clear example of how God (I AM) works with Mary as a human being (I am). God the Father speaks through an angel to Mary; she believes and trusts that what the angel says will happen. She doesn't understand, but she accepts the word spoken to her.

Jesus was thus conceived and one disaster scenario after another soon happens. First His earthly father, Joseph, wants to leave Mary. He is guided by the word of God and decides to stay despite the bizarre situation that he is not the real father of Jesus.

Hearing that a new king has been born, Herod the king decides to murder all boys under the age of two in Bethlehem. Partly because of God's warning, Joseph and Mary leave for Egypt immediately. After the birth, *the second phase* of the circle of life begins with Jesus, namely a *period of growth* in knowing the Father. Jesus is taught by Joseph and Mary, also with the scribes, about who God the Father is and who Jesus Himself is. In the natural, He learns to become a woodworker and, like His earthly father, becomes a carpenter.

At the age of 30, Jesus leaves behind his old life as a carpenter and is filled with the Spirit of God. A *new birth* begins: the calling placed upon his life as the Son of God and as King of the Heavenly Kingdom. In the *growth phase*, we see that Jesus in the desert uses the word He knew from His Father and He uses the words directly against satan. After forty days, Jesus conquers satan and the fruitful period of *multiplication* begins. He gathers students and begins to speak about the Kingdom. He works many miracles.

In the final phase, Jesus *dies*. This dying has a greater impact than anything Jesus ever had on earth. He opens the door for all who believe in Him and come to faith in the Heavenly Father. The door to salvation, forgiveness, deliverance and healing for all then and now. The disciples who followed Him do not actually get up until Jesus has left their lives. They are going to follow their Master and do the same things that they have seen and heard of Him. Now the real *multiplication* begins.

EXERCISE:

Do you see recurring experiences in your life? Experiences that really suit you, things that you really enjoy doing and want to achieve. Yet it does not seem like you break through and you have to start again.

You see recurring problems, weaknesses and obstacles so that you have not yet reached the dream.

Are there deep desires and dreams that have not yet been fulfilled, but you would like to be involved in this?

What must you die to, to fulfill your destiny of God in your life? Why?

PRINCIPLE 1

God makes everything to grow and multiply. This is a process where you also have to die of your own strength to come into God's full power. Where your I am and God's I Am meet, you come to the destiny that God has woven into your DNA.