

Discipleship: How to Face Life-Changing Moments Part 5

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I. Introduction

Ever notice the thoughts that go through your mind when a critical moment happens, moments that trigger emotions like anger, anxiety, ecstasy, panic, stress, envy, jealousy, etc? Ever analyze how those moments make you react? Ever ask yourself, “Why did I react that way?” God wants to tell you why so that you won’t keep making the same mistakes.

II. Discipleship: *REFLECT, What Does it Mean?*

The goal with every life-changing event is to answer two questions: “What did God say to me?” (Repent) and “What am I going to do about it?” (Believe). To REPENT, we Observe, Reflect, and Discuss. When you Observe, you’re asking yourself, “What is God doing?” That is, how does God see this life-changing event vs. How do I and Satan see it (Satan’s always helping you see things, especially your nakedness Genesis 3:11)? When you Observe, you note what your reaction was to the critical event. Once you know what your reaction was, you then need to Reflect on it so that you can know why you reacted that way and it’s usually due to a lie you believe about yourself, your life, and/or God.

Reflect, what does it mean? Observation always leads to Reflection: we do this all the time from the moment we’re able to understand our surroundings until the day we die—at home, at work, during social events and non-events. We see something and immediately we begin defining it. It starts with our basic needs: when a baby is hungry he goes through this process in seconds. He observes his hunger, then he gives it meaning by screaming at the top of his lungs to get more food. When it comes to more serious matters, we do the same thing, except Satan infiltrates the process with his lies. We simultaneously ask who, what, where, when, how, and why. We take all that information and come to our conclusion, our reflection, our reaction as we answer the question, “What does this mean?” We see this play out when a giant named Goliath steps onto a valley to taunt Israel’s army (1 Samuel 17).

How did Israel’s army react (reflect) and why? Observe: what’s the life-changing event and Israel’s reaction? A giant by the name of Goliath stepped onto the battlefield and challenged them to a one-on-one death match (1 Samuel 17:8-10). Their reaction: as they simultaneously processed who, what, where, when, how, and why, they ran away terrified (17:11, 24—and these are valiant men, 14:52, cf. 9:2; 11:1-15). Why was this their reaction (reflection)? Because they believed Satan’s lie. But wasn’t Goliath a mammoth warrior? Yes, he was: he was 9’ 9” tall, probably over 500 lbs., his body armor weighed about 150 lbs., and his iron spearhead about 20 lbs. But all these things are true, so where’s the lie? The lie was that God was not big enough to defeat Goliath through one of them, which is why none of them would step forward to fight him. When we react (reflect), we’re giving the event its meaning. What does this life-changing event mean to every soldier in Israel, including its king? That God is too small to defeat Goliath, therefore, anyone who stepped forward was stepping into certain death. It’s not God’s voice leading them; it’s Satan’s. They’re not hearing God now and they’re not hearing His voice from the past: they’ve completely forgotten the power of God’s might, how He once used an 85 year old man to defeat Goliath’s distant giant cousins (Joshua 14, cf. Numbers 13:33). Don’t forget the voice of His Word which speaks loudly today about your problems.

How did David react (reflect) and why? David sees the same exact facts; he sees the same terrifying giant warrior who's killed countless men, but David's answer to "What does this mean?" comes from God not Satan; he sees what God sees. So David's reflection (reaction) comes from God. Therefore, what David sees is not certain death; he sees certain victory! Why? Because this uncircumcised Philistine has defied the living God of Israel, i.e., Goliath could weigh 500,000 lbs. and he still wouldn't be able to defeat God! Do you understand that this is the battlefield? The battle is not between you and your problems; it's between God and your problems! The God who promised Joshua to never leave him nor forsake him and guaranteed him victory over the Canaanites, including the giants was alive and well (Joshua 1:3 and 5). All He needed was someone, anyone in Israel's army to recognize that. Neither is David dissuaded when his older brother derides, belittles, and accuses him of wickedness nor when king Saul tells him that he's too young and inexperienced (Goliath's been killing people since he was kid, so David, a kid, is no match for him) nor finally when Goliath himself tries to terrify David with intimidation. David looked right at Goliath and essentially said, "No amount of weapons are going to save you today. You made the GINORMOUS mistake of defying the God of Israel. He has given your life to me and I'm going to cut your head off and there's not a damn thing you're gonna be able to do about it!" When did God tell David that he could defeat a giant like Goliath? Long ago when He first promised Abraham the Promise Land (Genesis 12:7) and again when He guaranteed it to Joshua (Joshua 1:3) and most recently when David slaughtered the lion and bear (1 Samuel 17:34-37). When has God spoken to you about your problems? Did you hear His voice? Have you forgotten?

A man feels devalued and forgotten by God, there was a company meeting and several individuals got stock options except him. He and his wife were trying to start a family and he'd been praying and praying for God's financial help. How did he reflect on this moment; what did it mean? Sure, God had taken him from an individual who lost everything, including his six-figure income, and almost ended up homeless to a brand new life with a brand new wife and another six-figure income. But where was God now?!!

How did Satan want him to react (reflect) and why? Exactly the way he did: he thought to himself, "I've worked so hard all these years, why didn't I get the stock options? Is this how they value me after all I've done? And where's God?! Here I am trying to start a family and I've been praying and praying and this was a perfect opportunity for Him come through. But instead, my prayers go unanswered." He felt angry, upset, and forgotten by God. Prior to this life-changing event, he saw his job as a career but now it was another miserable job where the company doesn't care about you....and I guess, neither does God. Satan's trying to destroy him as he did before and is once again blinding him to God's truth.

How did the Lord want him to react (reflect) and why? He wanted him to trust Him as he did before when God restored everything he lost. Why? Because God hasn't gone anywhere; He never changes nor does He ever forsake us (Hebrews 13:5; James 1:17). The same voice that guided him before, was right there in the midst of the stock options and financial worries about starting a family. He needed to seek the Lord's voice instead of listening to Satan's.

We must be honest with ourselves as we Reflect on our critical moments. Is it God's voice or ours + Satan's? What's the Voice in His Word say about it? What's He saying about it now?

III. Conclusion

Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."