

Discipleship: How to Face Life-Changing Moments Part 6

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I. Introduction

We have conversations with ourselves all the time. The problem is, it's never by ourselves; Satan's always there, whispering in our ear. What if we discussed things with God instead? God's always seeking an audience with us; it's key to our relationship with Him, especially when we're struggling. We have access to every answer we need, but do we fail to ask Him?

II. Discipleship: *DISCUSS, Time with God*

During life-changing moments we need to hear God's voice. To hear it, we need to Repent and the third step in Repent is Discuss. Why do we need to discuss? Because discussion is intrinsic to any relationship, especially our relationship with the Lord. Over and over the Lord invites us to talk with Him, to lean not on our own understanding, but instead seek His voice so that He can direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5-6). The Lord beckons, "Come now, and let us reason together," (Isaiah 1:18). So in order to hear His voice, we need a dialogue, a dialogue with God directly and indirectly through our fellow Christians who will help us hear His voice. After all, what is the Bible? God seeking an audience with us and those close to us (family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc.) to discuss our life and how it's going. What's Christian counseling, i.e., discipleship? A discussion between God, the counselor, and the counselee. What are the epistles in the New Testament? A discussion between God, the author, and God's children whether a church or individual. God wants to talk with us about our hopes, our dreams, and our troubling situations.

Discuss, time with God, discussion is time with God where we seek clarity on a matter. Why? Because when we're clear on what God thinks, it gives us absolute confidence to face the task/problem regardless of its difficulty. Imagine your confidence if you could ask the world's foremost and supreme expert....on EVERYTHING! Discussion is also key to applying God's Word, i.e., weekly sermons and daily prayers are most often one-way communications. Unless we engage with God in dialogue, we will not know how to respond to life-challenging situations. You can tell God all your problems, but unless you hear the answer from Him, it's useless. Jesus didn't just preach sermons at His disciples; He engaged them in dialogue and then they got clarity on what to do (Matthew 5-10; Mark 6:7-13, 30). Discussion is also a crucial part of doing church, i.e., of being a church. What's the church? A family that does everything together and discussion is key (Acts 2:37-47). What's a family like when there's no communication between the parents and children or between the siblings? Tremendous trouble. Isolation is Satan's way to do church; community is God's. Thus, our time with God must be interactive: are your prayers with God one-way and repetitive or are you actually having a discussion with Him? Do we ask questions and listen for His voice? Is it an actual dialogue...and are we including the rest of the family God has provided us?

When we discuss things together, we show people how to hear His voice. We ask, "What's Satan telling you?" "What's the Lord telling you?" We enter into discussion with the Lord via His Word and our fellow brothers/sisters. There has to be a discussion between us and God on what the event means and what to do about it so we can change our actions, so we can do something different and not keep going down the same path.

God seeks a discussion with those being persecuted and tempted to go back, when we're in trouble or need help, God reaches out to us in dialogue: in Hebrews 2, God urges a troubled audience to listen to His voice instead of Satan's. They're in dire need of His truth in order to avoid going back to a sacrificial system that Jesus Christ has replaced. To return there is suicide (2:2-3; 10:26-31). But how can this audience withstand the persecution they're facing? God speaks and brings clarity to this struggling audience, He says to them, "My Son, the Ruler of the universe, died for you in order to perfect and sanctify you. He's your Brother which means that you are My child too. He's rendered Satan powerless, He's released you from Satan's power, and He will help you overcome your temptations, like your temptation to go back to the Levitical system," (2:5-8, 9-11, 11-13, 14, 15, 18).

A woman is completely frustrated with her marriage, her upbringing left her with very low self-esteem. She constantly criticized herself as a wife, mother, even as a friend. She was constantly concerned about people's opinion, about her appearance, her status, her marriage, her husband's status, her kids' performance, her house, etc. Because of her upbringing and her sex life as a young adult, she had a very twisted view of sex. Her marriage has been very, very rocky for years; they contemplated divorced several times. He moved out but now he'd moved back. However, he stayed in the extra bedroom and wanted nothing to do with his wife, no intimacy, no real relationship. They were more like roommates, bad roommates. But slowly things began to change. Why? Because she started listening to the Lord's voice. Instead of being combative and letting everything he did wrong get to her, she kept a quiet and gentle spirit (1 Peter 3:4). Things still got to her, but she wouldn't blow up like before, instead, she kept submitting even though her husband was not listening to God (1 Peter 3:1). Eventually, he became affectionate, even saying "I love you." Eventually they went away for a weekend and she imagined that now after years of no sex, he was finally going to be intimate with her. The weekend started off well, but it derailed. They fought and she said some things that she shouldn't have and what she wanted most never happened. So it left her furious, hopeless, she was done. If that's how he's going to treat her, then let him leave and never come back.

What did Satan say in his discussion with her? Satan has been trying to destroy this family for years and knowing her weaknesses, he pounced. Knowing that she was desperate for sex, he said, "I can't believe how he's using sex as a weapon against you," "You've been working out and you look so good in that negligée; what's wrong with him?!" "He's not attracted to you; you're probably too fat." Knowing that she's sick of waiting for him to lead their family, he said, "When is he going to grow up and be a man?!" "You don't need another child to raise!" "You put up with too much from this SOB; leave him; he's not worth all this aggravation!!"

What was God saying to her in His discussion with her? She let her frustrations get to her, so she never heard His voice. But He was speaking: "Forget about sex right now; help him see where he's failing and making excuses. Sex is not more important than your marriage. Yes, he shouldn't deprive you; but he's incapable of sex right now. Do what I'm asking and he will be. Don't say it that way; it's only going to make things worse. Go back to your calm and submissive demeanor and you will see how I turn him around as I did before."

III. Conclusion

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.