

## Discipleship: How to Face Life-Changing Moments Part 7

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### I. Introduction

Ever notice how quickly we act during a critical moment? Something happens, our mind races to make sense of it and before we know it, we make take action but it doesn't make things better. In fact, it seems more hopeless now. Then we make another decision and now our frustration and anger turns to God, "Why would you do this to me?!"

### II. Discipleship: *PLAN, Time to Act*

Repent = "What is God saying to me?" Believe = "What am I going to do about it?" Repent shows you the problem, i.e., through Observe, Reflect, and Discuss, God tells you that you're headed in the wrong direction, that you need to change course. And now that you heard from Him it's time to Believe, i.e., to act on what He said. Therefore, we need a plan, someone to hold us accountable to that plan, and we need to execute that plan: Plan, Account, and Act.

**Plan, time to act**, when the Lord speaks to you, He expects you to follow what He said, e.g., after addressing various problems (murder, forgiveness, adultery, divorce, how to deal with enemies, money, worry, etc.) Jesus then urges His audience to do what He said (Matthew 5-7; 7:24-27). Thus, if the Lord shows you that the giants in the Land are no match for you, He expects you to take the Promise Land without fear (Numbers 13-14). So once He shows you the problem, it's time to act. But you don't want to act without a plan. You want to make sure you consider any obstacles, that your plan is well thought-out (Proverbs 21:5). Before the Lord sent Israel to battle the giants in the Promise Land, He told them to do a reconnaissance.

*Planning is part of everyday life*: planning is not some complicated task out of our reach; we make plans all the time (when taking the kids to school, running errands, going on vacation, etc.). Some plans are short and sweet others are longer and more thought-out. Doesn't it make sense that we stop and make plans during life-changing moments? If we have plans for getting kids ready for school, shouldn't we have plans for more serious matters? Before sending His Son to battle Satan, Sin, and death God the Father had a plan to prepare His Son for His mission (Matthew 3:13-4:11).

*Questions/Things to consider when formulating your plan*, there are several things you should consider and ask yourself as you draft your plan:

**Faith**: everyone applies faith, from the Christian to the atheist. Everyone's actions stem from what they believe. Well, as Christians, we don't live in a world without God (neither does the atheist btw, Romans 1:18-32). Our world and everything in it is governed by God (Colossians 1:15-17). Thus, when our life, marriage, job etc., takes a wrong turn, we need to open our eyes of faith and see the One who's there waiting to help us (Hebrews 4:16).

**What are your priorities**: God→Spouse/Family→Ministry/Job: first in life is God, then your spouse/family, then your ministry/job. Your plan must not violate these priorities. Yes, you must support your family, but your job is not more important than your family and neither is more important than God. When you put God first, you're able to do the other two.

**What biblical principles apply:** has God given advice in His Word on your situation?

**What's the goal of your plan:** more time with your spouse or kids, overcome addiction, anxiety, or depression, overcome an abusive past, whatever the goal is state it clearly.

**What specific and practical steps will you take:** what practical and concrete steps will you take to fulfill your plan, e.g., cut back hours at work, have a date night once a week, talk with the person who hurt you, seek the Lord's voice when you get anxious?

**What's the timeline:** when will you execute the plan? Tomorrow, next week, whatever the timeline, make sure you put a deadline on your plan. You can adjust it, but the point is to do the plan not simply write a plan.

**What obstacles do you need help with:** if there are things you can't move, ask God to move them. Don't let the insurmountable stop your plan; that's what the Lord's there for.

**Will others involved follow the plan:** do you need to modify it so that they will follow it?

**Pray every step of the way:** ask the Father about every aspect of your plan. Run every question by Him so He can correct/refine your plan (Proverbs 19:21).

**Involve your brothers and sisters:** you'll first plan on your own in conversation with God, but then with your brothers and sisters and God (Proverbs 15:22; 20:18; Acts 13:1-3).

Whose plan are you following: Jonah, Jonah faced a *Repent and Believe* moment. His life-changing event was going to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria—a brutal people whom Amos already predicted would destroy Jonah's homeland, the northern kingdom of Israel (Amos 3:11-15; 5:27, cf. 2 Kings 17:5-6). God wants him to go preach to them so they'll repent. Jonah believes that this plan is WRONG, so wrong he runs away from God. Having tossed God's plan aside, Jonah came up with his own. In the process, he almost killed a bunch of sailors, he died, had to be resuscitated, and when God gave him another chance, Jonah was angry, bitter, and so depressed he wanted to die (1:4, 2:1-7, 10; 4:1-11). Who defined Jonah's situation and his subsequent plan, God or Satan? Who gave us the plan we're following Satan or the Lord (Isaiah 30:1)? What makes us follow Satan's directions instead of the Lord's?

**A man struggles with his wife and kids**, as life hits us, Satan often steps in and before we know it, we're following his plans of destruction (John 10:10). This man's father was a gambler who constantly threatened the family's security. Both his parents made him feel like a born loser. Fear of financial instability, abandonment, and ending up a loser were his constant companions. His life seemed to confirm his depressed outlook. Two marriages later he was in a relationship with a difficult wife (who kicked him out) and even more difficult kids; he'd reached his breaking point. But then he called on God and He gave him a plan. Soon his wife asked him to move back in and he found peace. But now the problems were back; there was constant stress at work and at home. He'd reached his breaking point again. God gave him another plan and he found peace again. But the problems with his wife and kids persisted and he felt alone and abandoned by God. Had God abandoned him or did he simply not see Him?

### III. Conclusion

*Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.*