

Discipleship: How to Face Life-Changing Moments Part 10

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I. Introduction

What these 10 sermons come down to is this: Analyze and Act, in other words, seek God's voice and obey it. During every critical moment we analyze and act. That's how God built us. But something happened as we grew into adulthood. Instead of analyzing our circumstances and doing something about it with God by our side, someone else has been guiding us.

II. Discipleship: Seek God's Voice and Obey It

Analyze and Act, we've had 9 sermons on how to handle life-changing moments. In those 9 sermons we learned: there are two kingdoms: Jesus' Kingdom of Truth and Satan's kingdom of lies and during every life-changing moment we live in one or the other, during life-changing moments we have to Repent (i.e., listen to God regarding our wrong direction) and Believe (i.e., go in the direction God said), to Repent is to ask "What is God saying to me?"; to answer this we need to Observe, Reflect, and Discuss (i.e., observe, analyze, and discuss our reaction with trusted friends), to Believe is to ask "What am I going to do about what God said?"; to answer this we need to Plan, Account, and Act (i.e., with the help of God and trusted friends we'll create a plan to do what God said), we Repent and Believe all the time except it's often Satan's voice guiding us not God's (e.g., the Ten Spies in Numbers 13-14), to Observe is to see life the way God sees it and it's the opposite of how Satan sees it, to Reflect is to understand how and why you reacted to a critical event (e.g., David's vs. Israel's army's reaction to Goliath, 1 Samuel 17), to Discuss is to seek God's voice on a matter through dialogue with Him and His children, to Plan is to create a blueprint with the help of God and trusted friends that we'll follow in order to do what God said, to Account is to invite a trusted friend to cheer and challenge us in order to fulfill our plan, finally, to Act is to do what we believe God said and we must not let Satan's voice deceive us and stop us from obeying God.

But who can remember ten "how to" sermons and the many issues and steps involved (I don't and I preached them!)? How will you ever be able to handle life's critical moments? After all, when something critical happens, we don't stop and say, "Now, where are those 6 steps on handling critical moments?" Nor do we have time to look up all our notes on a 10-sermon series. We need to act and act now! But what if it was just two easy steps: Analyze and Act? You might say, "That's still two steps I have to remember and I hate memorizing." I have great news: you already know these two steps, in fact, you're an expert at them! How do I know you know? Because you use them all the time, so do I, so does everyone. Every time something critical happens, we think about it and come to a conclusion (i.e., Analyze), and then we do something about it (i.e., Act). Think about everyday events: why does a child cry when the other kids call him "ugly"? Because he analyzed it ("them calling me 'ugly' means I'm ugly"), and then acted (he wept). Why does a gunman target and kill Mexicans at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas? Because he analyzed it and came to his conclusion ("America is being overrun by Mexicans, so Mexicans have to be eliminated"), and then he acted (he killed many Mexicans). We analyze and act all the time; it's part and parcel of being human. God made us to define our surroundings and then to take action. The problem is that we often do this with Satan by our side (e.g., Adam and Eve in the Garden). God wants us to analyze and act but with Him and our church family by our side; He wants us to seek and obey His voice.

Joshua has to take over for Moses, this is a critical, life-changing moment. How will he handle it? Joshua has to answer two questions, “What is God saying to me?” and “What am I going to do about it?” i.e., He has to seek God’s voice and obey it (Analyze and Act). What’s the Lord say to Joshua as he assumes this monumental task (Joshua 1)?

“The Promise Land is yours, go take it.” 1:2

“Everywhere your foot lands in the Promise Land is yours as I promised Moses.” 1:3

“Every square inch of the Promise Land is and will be yours.” 1:4

“You’ll never be defeated in battle.” 1:5

“You’ll be bulletproof in battle for the rest of your life.” 1:5

“I will be right by your side.” 1:5

“I will be with you 24/7/365.” 1:5

“You can be strong and courageous because of My Word.” 1:6

“You’ll give each tribe their Promise Land as I promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” 1:6

“I keep My promises.” 1:6

“You can be strong and courageous because of My Word.” 1:7

“If you obey My Word, everything you do will prosper.” 1:7 (Joshua 7-8)

“If you meditate on and obey My Word 24/7, then you will succeed and prosper.” 1:8

“You can be strong and courageous because of My Word.” 1:9

“You don’t have to be afraid of anything because I’ll be with you every second.” 1:9

“My leaders can be strong and courageous because I’m there to back them up.” 1:16-18

When did Joshua hear such words from the Lord before? What’s the Lord been saying to him ever since Egypt? What did Joshua hear when he saw the ten plagues (Exodus 7-12), “What I say happens and nothing can stop Me,” “I stand by My people and leaders,” “Those who obey My Word succeed,” “You can be strong and courageous because of My Word.” What did he hear when he fought Amalek (Exodus 17:8-14), “I can guarantee your safety and victory in battle.” What did he hear when he saw the Golden Calf incident (Exodus 32), “I back up my leaders and I’m a forgiving God [Joshua 7-8].” What did he hear when he spied out the Promise Land (Numbers 13-14), “I keep My promises,” “You can be strong and courageous because of My Word,” “I can guarantee victory, even over giants.” What did he hear when they defeated the two kings Sihon and Og (Numbers 21:21-35), “You can be strong and courageous because if I decide to give you victory and land, it’s yours.” What did he hear when God inaugurated him (Deuteronomy 31), “You can be strong and courageous because I will be with you 24/7/365,” “You will conquer the Promise Land and give it Israel.”

Seek God’s voice and obey it (Analyze and Act), when Joshua gets to Ai, they are soundly defeated (Joshua 7-8). What?! I thought God said that he would never lose in battle?! Can we trust God’s Word? What’s Satan want Joshua to think and do (analyze and act)? What does Joshua think and why? If you analyze your events with God by your side, you’ll know exactly what to do. If you seek God’s voice and obey it, you won’t fall for Satan’s lies and trap.

III. Conclusion

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying: "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them -- the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you."