

**“Soul Searching”
Coaching Spiritual Formation**



May 14, 2017 - August 20, 2017

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“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

PART ONE- Defining Spiritual Formation “The painful labor of forming Christ in the soul”

May 14, 2017

The Greatest Need in the Church is the spiritual formation of the soul.

In the book, “Lost in America” by Tom Clegg and Warren Bird, pgs. 25-46, it states...

Fact #1: The percentage of adults in America who attend church is decreasing.

Fact #2: Half of all churches in America did not add one new person through conversion growth.

Fact #3: It takes 85 Christians one year to produce one convert

Fact #4: More churches are closing than opening.

Fact #5: Conversions to other religions and dropouts from Christianity are escalating.

Fact #6: The decline in American Christianity has been going on for nearly 50 years.

Fact #7: Many church people believe and behave identically to their unchurched counterparts.

Fact #7 hit me hard. But the next study hit harder. Four hundred born again Christians were asked, “What are your personal spiritual goals?” Only twenty-six percent said “to grow spiritually.” (Growing True Disciples by George Barna, 2000) As if that wasn’t bad enough, not one of those who did respond had any idea how they would go about making those goals a reality.

This course is about changing those facts. It is about meeting the need to grow deeper and more fully into Christ-likeness. We are calling it Spiritual Formation. This course is also about mentoring and coaching those who wish to be spiritually formed into Christ-likeness and who wish to coach others. Hopefully out of this course will come spiritual mentors and mentees who will be used by God to bring about a revival in our area.

1. Let’s open our Bibles and discover what spiritual formation is. Scripture defines it in the following ways.

1) To fully become like Jesus (Gal. 4:19; Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:28)-
“Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I’m going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives.”
“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

2) To consistently think and choose what Jesus wills (Romans 12:2)- *“And do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is.”*

3) To know and experience the emotional energy and passion of Jesus- (Philipp. 3:10,11) *“I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.”*

4) To love God and others with all the members of the inward self. (Mark 12:30) *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself”*

5) To be filled with all the fullness of God throughout our being. (Eph. 3:19) Paul prays that they may have power....*“to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”*

2. Discipleship and Spiritual Mentoring help to produce spiritual formation. Both Discipleship and Spiritual mentoring are concerned with the spiritual formation of the soul/spirit as described in Gal. 4:19 where Paul is the mentor who painfully labors with those who need to grow in spiritual formation. In fact, some books on the subject equate discipleship with spiritual mentoring (Jim Grassi, “The Spiritual Mentor”). I see similarities but I also see differences.

1) Discipleship is best accomplished as a group.

a. Discipleship in contrast to mentoring is the mission of the whole church. It is defined in Matt. 28:18-20 as *“going (evangelism), baptizing (inducting into the universal Church fellowship), and teaching to obey (practice) all that Christ has commanded.”* As the whole church demonstrates Christ’s love for one another with its various fruit and gifts, new disciples are drawn by this redeemed group of people who love each other. Jesus described the “body life” approach when He said, *“Everyone will know you are my disciples if you have love for one another.”* (Jn. 13:35) Discipleship is a group activity and mission that occurs in local church worship gatherings, medium size classes and small groups who gather regularly for fellowship and mission.

A good example would be found in 1 Cor. 14:23-25 which describes the whole church coming together to edify one another with their gifts. If an unbeliever comes in and sees prophesying and other gifts being used, he will be convinced by all....So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming *“God is really among you.”*

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

b. Secondly, discipleship in contrast to mentoring is narrower in subject matter in that it is limited to learning and obeying all that Christ commanded. This is accomplished primarily through the vertical exercises of Study and Prayer, and the horizontal exercises of Fellowship and Witness.

2) A spiritual mentor on the other hand reproduces one's own successful study and ministry skill(s) in someone else who wants to succeed and develop those skills in that area as well. It involves finding a believer who is attracted to your skill(s), creating the right environment to thrive and grow, and understanding how to get started and end. Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction.

a. Spiritual mentoring deals with methods to enhance spiritual success in a specific area and then partnering with less informed or younger mentees to help them achieve success. To put it another way, discipleship is learning to obey from your soul what Christ commands while spiritual mentoring is passing on practical skills that enhance the soul.

b. A good example of mentoring would be John Mark. He didn't have the skills to respond well to Paul, the mentor, and his training methods. So Barnabas took over the mentoring. The result was that John Mark learned successful missionary skills under his mentor, Barnabas. Later, Paul saw the improvement and saw that John Mark was profitable for ministry. The evidence is that he wrote the Gospel of Mark.

Let's say a mentee has musical skills and wants to join the worship team. A worship leader in the role of mentor, could teach this believer that worship teams are not performers but prompters. He would model the principles of leading worship. These are methods but not strictly commands of Christ for that skill. By contrast, the whole church should disciple him to obey Jesus' command to worship in spirit and truth. (Jn. 4:23-24) While mentoring is more focused on a skill, discipleship in most cases has many people's gifts in the church feeding into a disciple's overall growth.

But again, discipleship and spiritual mentoring share the same objective...to form Christ within the heart and soul, which in turn outwardly transforms our thoughts, emotions, and behavior to be Christ-like. Spiritual formation happens in the soul (*psyche*) and/or spirit (*pneuma*).

Discussion:

May 21, 2017

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

So today, we must do some surgery on the soul, to discover what it is and how it functions in our bodies.

If the soul is that entity within us where Christ is formed and developed, then we need to know what it is and how it functions. Identifying the soul is necessary if we are going to disciple and mentor undeveloped disciples.

1. So we turn to Genesis 2:7 which states that when God made the first humans, he breathed into their nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul. Two words are used to describe the soul. The Hebrew word “nephesh,” or God’s breath of life, is that which is intuitively connected to God. The “ruach” or soul or “psyche” in the Greek, is comprised of the human dimensions of thought, feeling, and will. Sometimes the word “heart” is used to describe the human dimensions because it has desires and motivations to follow after earthly or heavenly treasures. So we conclude that the soul is the immaterial breath of physical and spiritual life connecting us to God and it is given by God to everyone at conception. It animates our physical bodies and is acted upon by the bodily drives throughout our lives and at death it returns to the God who gave it.

2. And in its original form the soul/spirit is conscious of and intuitively knows about the God who gave it. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, “...*He has set eternity in the hearts (souls) of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*” Romans 1:21 says that “*For although mankind **knew** God, they neither glorified Him as God, nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile...*” Every person’s soul tells a person that there is a God because we hunger to know who gave us life and where our life comes from. It needs love, and it also needs to find a sense of significance and purpose in life.

3. It will outlast and survive the death of the physical body. In Ecc. 12:7 it says that the human body returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit (breath) returns to the God who gave it, which might sound nice but in the case of unbelievers, that soul will be judged.

4. There are some other faculties in the soul described as “members” in Rom. 7:23. These members are found in the psyche alongside this immaterial breath of God within us. There is a mind to think God’s thoughts, emotions to feel God’s desires and passion, and a will to choose God’s ways. Romans 2:15 says that the heart or soul also has a window (clear or clouded) to the outside world called conscience through which it can evaluate **ethical** values and follow after treasures.

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

All these faculties were designed to love God. Mark 12:30 commands us to use these members of the soul to express our love for God. “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength.*” Strength could mean desires, or temperament, skills or gifts. These are all members of the soul to be used to know God intimately and love God exclusively. Together, all these members comprise the essence of our being.

5. Jesus has a human soul. On earth, His soul functioned perfectly in 5 ways.

- 1) His soul glorified the Father & knew Him in intimate knowledge (Jn. 17:1-5)
- 2) His mind was immersed in God’s Scriptural thoughts (Matt. 4:4)
- 3) His will, operating out of conscience, chose a holy life that overcame the temptation to sin. (Matt. 4:1-11)
- 4) His affections, motivations and desires toward people were governed by divine love.
- 5) His ministry to serve was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

6. But sin entered our souls. God-love turned into self-love. Our thinking faculties became futile. Our heart changed the price tags on the treasures we value and follow. We turned away from seeking God’s glory. We ceased to give thanks, (Rom. 1:21). Our emotional affections turned to sinful desires, (v. 24). Our wills chose wicked deeds, (v. 29). Our consciences became seared, losing a sense of real guilt, (1 Tim.4:2). This leaves us with a soul/spirit in need of regeneration for although it still functions, it has become dead to God though still alive physically, (Ez.18:20). It still guides the activities that the body performs, the treasures it follows, the thoughts it thinks and the choices that it wills. But it is going in the wrong direction away from the knowledge of God. Now it is incapable of knowing God apart from God’s grace.

7. The human soul has needs...the need for...

- 1) **Transcendence**- Searching for a Divine Relationship,
- 2) **Significance**-Searching for a Purpose, and
- 3) **Community**- Searching for loving relationships. The Gospel meets those three needs as we observe in Acts 2:42-47. They worshipped God (the need for transcendence), they helped others (the need for purpose), and they formed a loving community (the need for relationships). The unregenerate soul seeks to meet these needs elsewhere and in other ways such as false religions, vocational achievement, or one-night-stands. But they fail.

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

Paul prayed for the needs of the soul, (Eph. 3:14-19). It needs to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit (14-16), to trust in Christ in order to be obedient to Christ (17a), to be rooted in brotherly love (17b), to grasp the love of Christ (18-19), and to be filled with the fullness of God (19).

8. So what happens to the soul when we become believers? By God's grace through personal faith in Christ, the soul is regenerated and brought to life. This new self (Eph. 4:24) craves an intimate knowledge and worship of God. The mind is renewed to think God's Scriptural thoughts. (Rom. 12:2) It sets its affections on things above, (Col. 3:1-2). Its relationship to others takes on the characteristics of love as set forth in 1 Cor. 13:4-7. And its ministry is empowered by the filling of the Holy Spirit, (Romans 8:1-5). We become more like Christ because Christ is being formed in the soul. This spiritual formation does not happen automatically. It is a process over a period of time that includes struggle because it is still influenced by the world system, the “flesh” in which it lives, and the old habits of certain members in the soul called the sinful nature in Romans 7:18; 8:5-13 and Gal. 5:16-26.

9. So let me make an analogy of the soul by picturing a leaking sailboat sitting dead in the water. The soul is like the immaterial space inside the hull of that sailboat. The hull was meant to float on the water as it makes its way to its destination. We liken the space within the hull of that sailboat to the immaterial soul seeking its destination on the shores of heaven and the complete formation of Christ in us. The sin in this world, causing the soul's death, is like the water filling the hull of that leaky boat. The unregenerate soul has no ability to remove the sin and stay afloat. It has no ability to seek the shore of heaven. The mind, will, emotion and conscience within the soul are like the sail, the rudder, and the keel which are extensions within the hull but they need a pilot and power to steer them. Otherwise they are led by the 3 currents of sin, 1) the world, 2) the flesh and 3) the devil himself, all of which are represented by the intruding water.

The pilot is Jesus who is invited to dwell in the soul. Like a captain stepping into the hull, Jesus removes the water (sin's penalty) and repairs the leaks (the new nature). But just like waves spilling over and into the hull, sin's power can still creep into the soul while on earth. The power to move the soul toward spiritual formation is the Holy Spirit who is like the wind in the analogy. Jesus comes in to regenerate the soul, renew the mind to think new thoughts, set new direction, and stay on course so as not to be pulled by the currents of sin. We are given new passions and power. We might liken our new desires and

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

affections to letting Jesus turn the rudder toward a new destination. The choice and strength of will to stay on course might be likened to dropping the keel deep into God’s Word. Trusting the Holy Spirit to fill us might be likened to raising the sail to catch His invisible power.

Where does it leave you and me? Our role is faith...faith to invite Jesus in the boat, faith to let him steer the boat...and faith to turn the sail in the direction of the invisible wind, which is the filling of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18) There are still currents and waves that pull the soul. There are also obstacles and trials like rocks hidden under the water that could damage our lives. These all need to be overcome. But we would have died if it weren’t for Jesus in the boat.

Jesus placed himself into that sea of death. Inviting Jesus into the boat is our step of faith into Christ. We entrust ourselves to his strength. He holds us up and gives us life. When we stop treading water in self-effort and take the step of faith into Christ who died for our sin, we are justified and free from the penalty of death. We need to know this and yield our bodies to Him as a way to overcome the currents of sin left behind from the old life.

Now that Jesus is in the boat with us, the boat is equipped to move toward its destination. The rudder turns the boat and it represents our new nature that desires to head into God’s will. We received this nature when we were raised with Christ. It contains the mind, the will, the emotions and the cleansed conscience of the new person we have become. It is the ability we now have to turn in God’s direction. It steers the new life though it has no power of its own. It needs power or else the currents of sin will continue to pull the boat away. We have a conscience that excuses us or accuses us. It acts like a compass when we move off course away from our destination.

We need to understand two more features for living the new life - the Law and the Spirit. (Romans 7-8) We will liken the Law to a keel on the sailboat. The keel is that long board under the sailboat. It reaches down below the surface and stabilizes the boat. It keeps the boat from drifting off course like the railroad tracks are to a train. Without the keel the boat drifts and turns over from the force of the waves and wind. It cuts a straight path. It has no power to hold us up. It has no power to go forward. It stabilizes the boat and points us in a straight direction. The law (God’s command) stabilizes us and keeps us on track. It has no power of its own to save. But it points the way. “*Thy Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*” (Ps. 119:105)

Discussion:

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

PART TWO: The Stages of Spiritual Formation

May 28, 2017

Today we want to examine Romans 8:1-13 which teaches the stages that the soul undergoes when it is formed into Christlikeness. Theologians call this “sanctification.”

Romans 7:24 says, “*What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?*” Then he answers it in v. 25. “*Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!*” He is certain of his future deliverance from his own sinful self. But how? I am going to give you a quick outline summarizing the stages of spiritual formation in Romans 8. It explains the progression of our salvation in vss. 1-13, or how we grow more like Jesus and less like we were before Christ. This is how we grow more Christ-like.

1. First trust God for WHO WE ARE. You are not to consider yourself a sinner who can’t stop sinning. You are a saint who can sin but who doesn’t have to sin. We are no longer slaves to sin. Look at Romans 8:1-4a. You are now no longer condemned by your sin. You are free from your sinful self to love because you have the Spirit who empowers your new spiritual nature inside. You are like a butterfly that just came out of the cocoon with these weird appendages on your back called wings. You are the same being. But you have changed. Now you can choose by faith to let go of the branch, spread your new wings and trust that invisible wind to take you to new heights. Or you can still believe that you are a caterpillar because you were. If you do, then you will crawl on the ground for the rest of your life. Likewise, you must trust God for who you are and trust the Holy Spirit whom you can’t see? The wing we extend is a new nature that trusts in the Spirit. By contrast, unbelievers are like caterpillars who don’t have wings. But believers may choose to walk or fly. Spiritual formation is choosing to trust and fly.

2. Secondly, who we are leads to HOW WE THINK. (Rom. 8:5-8) Notice the word “*mind*” in vss. 5-8. The sinful nature has its mind (thoughts) set on what it desires in v. 5. But the believer who trusts the Spirit, has his mind (thoughts) set on the things that the Spirit desires. This is how our new spiritual nature thinks. Love starts with a loving thought that my new nature desires to do. But if our thoughts and desires are on the comforts of this world only, we won’t trust the Spirit to take us higher any more than a butterfly won’t try its wings if its desire is for the cocoon. We are meant to fly. We have to set our minds on flying to loving heights instead of crawling in self-effort on the ground.

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

3. Thirdly, how we think leads to WHAT WE DO. (Rom. 8:4b-5, 9, 12-13) Notice the word “*live*” in v.4 and again in v. 5. Living is the way you repeatedly act. It’s a repeated lifestyle of behavior which Dallas Willard calls “character.” He defines character as the internal structure of the self from which outer long-run patterns of behavior arise. By repeating a choice over and over, you form a pattern. Spiritual formation of the soul only comes by repeating those actions over again. Prov. 23:7 says, “*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.*”

Over 45 years of seeking Christ-likeness, I developed new patterns of loving people. For example, I didn’t like visiting people in the hospital. It was awkward at first. But now it comes more naturally (though imperfectly) through practice. Eph. 4:24-32 teaches us to put off old sinful habits by putting on new godly habits. I encourage you to try the 4 week “put off/put on” principle for growing a godly loving habit.

4. Finally, what we do leads to WHERE WE FINISH. (Rom. 8:12-13) Out of the two patterns come two results in v.6. The mind of the sinful nature that repeats that lifestyle results in death or an inability to respond to God’s grace. Call it “*addiction*.” The mind of the Spirit that repeats that lifestyle of love grows more responsive to God’s grace described as life and peace. This is how the soul is formed to be like Christ.

Discussion:

PART THREE: The Process of Mentoring Spiritual Formation

June 4, 2017

Developing a Friendship- Now that we examined the definition of spiritual formation, and then examined the soul where spiritual formation occurs in its stages, we can move on to spiritual mentoring. The spiritual mentor should spend time building relationships while ministering to people. Out of that comes a relationship of trust and friendship with a potential mentee. The mentee sees something that he or she desires to be and do. This begins the relationship that goes through 4 levels of friendship. The last two levels are important to experience when mentoring.

1. The levels of friendship

1) Acquaintance- These are daily or weekly contacts, unplanned encounters. They may number up to a hundred or more. Jesus had the crowds. Be alert to each new person. Have a smile. Try to learn the name. Be a good listener and ask appropriate questions like

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

“Where did you grow up, “What are fond memories,” “What are your hobbies,” etc.

2) Casual- Jesus had 70 with whom he spent time training and deploying. Discover more about the person. The relationship is based on a common interest like sports, hobbies, jobs, church, and children. Allow more freedom to ask questions pertaining to ideas like “Who do you most want to be like,” “What makes you angry or sad,” “When was the happiest time in your life and why,” “What accomplishment has given you the greatest satisfaction?”

3) Close- Jesus had his 12 disciples. Close disciples share common life goals, and common convictions. There is a freedom to suggest mutual projects. They see potential achievement in each other’s gifts and talents. They probe each other’s hearts to discover what is important in life and what one wants to do in life. They explore the difficulties or obstacles together and develop ways to overcome the obstacles. They make greater sacrifices for each other. There is a greater freedom to ask the difficult questions. They ask, “How can I help you accomplish your goals?”

4) Intimate- Jesus had his three closest disciples. He took them with him to the Mt. of Transfiguration where he unveiled himself for them to see his true glory. He took them into his confidence in a way that few people knew about. On this level, we allow someone we trust to explore our soul. We give them freedom to examine the flaws in our character and then to correct us and wound us. *“Better the wounds of a friend than the kisses of an enemy.”* They hear about our personal moral struggles, our failed tests, and the adversity that enters our lives. They assume personal responsibility for helping find the causes of character deficiency and search the Scripture together for the cure. They are free to ask questions like, “What do you fear?” “What would you change if you could?” “How do you overcome temptation?” “What are the most important priorities in life where we can help each other?”

2. The Example of Friendship (I Sam. 18-20) David and Jonathan

1) Soul union- 1 Sam 18:1 *“Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” NKJV*

2) Promise-making- 1 Sam 18:3 *“Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.” NKJV*

3) Upholding- 1 Sam 20:4 *“So Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you.” NKJV*

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

4) Truth-telling- 1 Sam 20:8 *“Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself,” NKJV*

5) Stretcher-bearing- 1 Sam 23:16 *“Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God.” NKJV*

6) Vision-casting- 1 Sam 23:17 *“You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you.”*

Discussion:

June 11, 2017

A mentor should discuss a mentee's goals. Spiritually, what would the mentee like to become? Here are five Goals of Spiritual Formation...becoming like Jesus.

1. Knowing the Father the way Jesus glorified His Father...knowing God and making Him known. Jesus said in John 17:1,3,4, *“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”* *“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”* Just like Jesus, I want to know the Father in worship so that I can make Him known. Believers who know God begin to change as Packer says in his book, *“Knowing God.”* When you know God, you can smile at the displeasures you have, and not miss the pleasures you don't have. You have great energy for God. You have great thoughts of God. You have great boldness on behalf of God. You have great contentment in God.

2. Believing the way Jesus believed (Matt. 4:4) *“Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”* Jn. 14:26 *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”* John 17:17 says, *“Sanctify them by the truth. Your Word is truth.”* Just like Jesus, I want to know what I believe from hearing, reading, studying, memorizing and meditating on God's Word.

3. Living the way Jesus lived. Matt. 5:48 says, *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* Just like Jesus, I want to live what I believe. I want to live a life of imputed and imparted holiness and moral purity. That simply means that I have Christ's righteousness placed on me but I am in the process of carrying out that holiness in my thoughts, words and actions.

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

4. Loving the Way Jesus Loved (Jn. 13:34 & 1 Jn. 3:16) *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”* Just like Jesus I want the world to know I am Christ’s disciple by my love for His people and all people.

5. Ministering the way Jesus ministered. John 14:12 says, *“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”* Just like Jesus, I want to serve in ministry with the spiritual gifts God has given me.

Discussion:

June 18, 2017

A Spiritual Mentor should help to Identify Spiritual Core Values such as...

1. Identity- Here are some features we should know about our identity. How does God perceive me to be? Who am I in Christ? Evaluate my capabilities...strengths and weaknesses, (1 Cor. 12:1). What kind of temperament and gifts do I have? Where do I fit in society? (Matt. 5:13-14) How do I measure my worth? Whose approval am I seeking? In whom is my confidence placed? On what do I depend for meaning?

2. Integrity- Integrity is consistency between inner values and outward words and actions. In 2 Cor. 2:17, it says, *“Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.”*

3. Intimacy- Intimacy is an ability to develop close relationships with key people. Leaders who fail at close relationships don’t last. Listen to the way Jesus describes the relationship between him and his disciples. John 15:15 says, *“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”*

4. Intensity- Intensity is a devotion and consecration to kingdom building. In spite of flaws, God chose David because David had a whole heart for God. Jesus said, *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...”* Paul said, *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* (Philipp. 1:21)

Other Core Spiritual Values could be added like establishing a strong home, committing to a healthy church, identifying a prejudice in my

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

heart, influencing my world for Christ, living one day at a time in the power of the risen Christ.

Discussion:

June 25, 2017

Today we look at Biblical Examples of Mentoring...

1. A Relative- Abraham and Lot had a “Hands Off” approach. (Gen. 13:5-13) Abraham let Lot make the decision to take land that pointed in the direction of Sodom’s wickedness. We should discuss the wisdom of a coach who lets the consequences run their course as a way of coaching.

2. A Son- Abraham and Isaac had a “Hands On” approach, (Gen. 24)...as well as Hannah and her son, Samuel (1 Sam. 1-2). In both examples, the coaches made the decision on behalf of their children. When is it wisest to make the decision for the people we mentor?

3. A Manager- Moses and Jethro (Ex. 18)/ Joshua (Deut. 31,34), Discuss the way Jethro, the coach, handled his advice to Moses about managing his people in vss. 14-22.

4. A Minister- Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 19, 2 Kings 2). In this example of ministry, the anointing of the Spirit was what Elisha wished to receive from Elijah. We need to discuss how Elijah handled it as a coach.

5. An Office holder- Eli and Samuel (1 Samuel 3) We know Eli was not the best father. But he was chosen to coach Samuel. Notice the advice Eli gave Samuel in 1 Sam. 3:9. How would you grade Eli in this case? How about Samuel, the mentee, and his response to Eli’s request to know what God said. (1 Sam. 3:18)

6. A Daughter- Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 1-4), Here is an example of mentoring a daughter-in-law in the ways to court a husband according to local custom.

7. A Leader- King David & his mentors- Samuel, Jonathan and Nathan, were his coaches.(1 Samuel 16, 18-23, 2 Samuel 12). Those who lead must learn to be led.

8. A Younger Woman- Elizabeth and Mary (Lk. 1), Notice how Elizabeth encouraged Mary during a difficult time in her life.

9. A Disciple- Jesus imparted knowledge and values through His words and actions. He showed his disciples the values of the kingdom of God how he prepared them for the response they would receive. (Luke 10)

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

10. A Missionary- Barnabas and Saul (Acts 4:36-37; 9,11), Barnabas became an advocate to confirm a calling in Paul's life. He was Paul's encourager.

11. A Pastor- Paul and Timothy (1 Cor. 4:16-17, Philipp. 1) Here we see the combination of relationship and subject matter when mentoring.

Discussion:

July 2, 2017

I won't be here. I would like whoever teaches to discuss the spiritual disciplines.

PART FOUR: The Keys to Leadership in a Mentoring Relationship- The Life of Moses

July 9, 2017

“The Need for Leaders” Exodus 1:5-14

Intro: In track and field, if the baton is dropped when passed, it can cost the team the whole race in those few moments. So they practice hours in passing the baton. ***In this section***, we're going to study the reasons why there is always a continuous need to develop leaders and pass the baton. Listen to Paul in 2 Tim. 2:2. *“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

Everyone has heard of Dwight L. Moody, the great evangelist. But who has heard of Edward Kimble. Edward Kimble was the Sunday School teacher that led Dwight L. Moody to Christ. Mentors may be passing on the baton to another Dwight L. Moody.

The aim in this study of Moses is not to cover all the features of Moses life, but rather to focus on how some others passed the baton to this developing leader...how he was molded by God's mentoring process. God used circumstances to test him, people who risked their lives for him, God's Word to form him into being a person of influence.

God wants to develop you in the same way. There may be an atheist in your life who may want to hear the evidence for the existence of God? There may be an honest seeker who isn't making sense out of life and now hungers for more. Perhaps a person you know has learned about who he/she is in Christ, but has no understanding about his/her mission in life. Perhaps you sit here having learned to serve but you have no idea about leading someone else to faith in Christ. The biggest room in the Church is the room for improvement. Why is there always a

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

continuous need for rising leadership in the church? The first reason is that...

1. Christians Without Leaders Grow Up in the Wrong Places. Ex. 1:1-7. As this book of Exodus opens, we find Jacob’s family settling in Egypt after being united with their long lost brother, Joseph. Forced there because of famine, they left behind the Promised Land and opted for the food in Egypt. However, things changed. That generation who knew Joseph died. But before Joseph died, he gave his children a strange request to keep his bones accessible. He was being a leader even in death. He knew that he didn’t belong there so he instructed them to take his bones with them when they returned to the Promised Land. And yet, 350 years flew by and this small family grew into a nation of 2 million. But they were still in the wrong place. Verse 7 says that the land was filled with them. The children must have wondered why Joseph’s casket was always above ground but they just didn’t ask.

Groups tend to slow down progress. Just like water, they seek the lowest place, and then they sit there and grow algae. Somebody has to come along, grab Joseph’s bones and say, “We’re too big for Egypt.” Egypt is always a type of the world. Why settle for leeks and onions when you can have milk and honey?

2. Without Leadership The World’s Opposition Will Enslave Us. Ex. 1:8-14

Verse 8 describes the rise of a ruthless Egyptian king who didn’t know Joseph. He was a poor example of a leader. He had great power but poor character and wisdom. In the Israelites he saw great talent and many resources. But instead of empowering them, he was threatened by them because of his own emotional deficits. He had poor mentors and poor advisors. He enslaved the Israelites with heavy taxation and kept them afflicted with heavy labor.

That sounds like the way Satan attacks Christians. He tries to keep us impoverished. Our Father is rich and our inheritance is immense. “*My God shall supply all of your needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus.*” But Satan tries to prevent us from knowing it. Then he afflicts us with the burden of busy...ness. “Pastor, you’re vision is to make disciples but that takes too much of my time. I’d like to grow more like Christ but I’m too busy.” “Pray for the lost? I come home too tired.” We become slaves to things, to credit card debt, to habits, to schedules. We have settled for Egypt. Are you dissatisfied with Egypt? Where are the leaders who will show us the way out of our oppression? Step forward. I’m ready for a deliverer. Get me out of here.

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3. Without Leadership the World Will Kill Our Hope Exodus 1:15-22

Who changed the course of history? Was it the famous ones or the common ordinary folks like you and me. Pharaoh was intent upon killing all hope for a future by killing the male children. But two women named Shiphrah and Puah feared God and refused to obey. Little did they know that their brave decision helped to spare the life of Moses, Israel's ordained deliverer. They risked it all and God showed them kindness by blessing them with families of their own. They were the first champions of the pro-life movement.

The exodus didn't start with Moses. It started with Shiphrah and Puah. They were the first leaders. They saved Moses from being killed. They were his early advocates. They came alongside these little babies. Who is going to come along side our baby Christians, our little children, our teens? Who will say, “We are here to give you hope for a future.” Satan is intent on killing our hope. He'll throw threats of suffering and death at us thinking that we'll give up this idea that we can make a difference in this world. Satan wants to kill our hope by removing any vestige of religious life in America. He would love to hear you say, “I quit.” What we need is Shiphrah and Puah to risk life and limb to give us back our hope.

I love v. 12. The more they were oppressed, the more they grew. It happened in the early Church. It is happening in China. Satan can't kill our hope so long as leaders like Shiphrah and Puah step forward.

Concl. People are growing up in the wrong place. They are becoming slaves to the wrong masters. They are becoming hopeless listening to the wrong voices. And those are the reasons we need mentors and leaders?

Discussion:

July 16, 2017

“The Shaping of the Leader” Exodus 2:1-8

Sometime in our lives, we are modeling or mentoring directly or indirectly the lives of those who watch us. This lesson is for spiritual mentors and mentees. We are forced to step into a leadership role in a household, a youth group, a Sunday School class, a discipleship group, a project leader, or a young believer etc.

In preparation for that role, God develops leaders. Moses was one such reluctant leader who needed development. You remember his classic response at the burning bush. “Here am I. Send Aaron!” You also remember his failure when he murdered an Egyptian and nobody

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followed him. Even though he was born for the task, like all of us, he needed to be shaped.

The big idea today is this. Let God shape you into a leader by submitting yourself to the tools He uses to accomplish the task. By being shaped, I mean that all of us need to be developed for the task of leading others to spiritual maturity. It is God’s skillful hands that shape us. But God uses instruments, tools, chisels, through which his hands shape us. Today, in chapter two of Exodus, we’re going to examine those tools that God uses to chip away at your life. The first instrument God uses is...

1. The Sponsor (Ex. 2:1-5)

Let’s look at Moses’ sponsors in the first couple of verses of Exodus 2:1-2. “Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, [2] and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. [4] His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.”

Moses is literally in the infant stage as a developing leader. His parents are his sponsors. Sponsor is another word for mentor and every developing leader needs one. Esther had Mordecai. Paul had Barnabas. Timothy had Paul. Elisha had Elijah. David had Samuel. Samuel had Eli. Joshua had Moses and Moses had his parents.

Verse 2 says that when his mother saw that he was a fine child, she hid him. Now, I know this sounds like a typical mother. “He’s such a fine boy, don’t you think?” But I don’t think that is what it means. She was given a vision into his future and she believed in him so much that she was willing to invest even at the risk of life. In Gordon MacDonald’s book, “Restoring Your Spiritual Passion,” he says that a mentor or a sponsor is a very resourceful person who ushers us into opportunity and possibility. He says that they pour energy into us rather than draining it away. He lists 5 kinds of people who affect our spiritual passion....1. The resourceful people who ignite our passion, 2. The important people who share our passion, 3. The trainable people who catch our passion, 4. The nice people who enjoy our passion, 5. The draining people who sap our passion. You need someone in your life who exhibits the qualities of Moses’ parents and there are three of them.

1) The first quality is faith. It wasn’t fear that motivated them to hide Moses. It was faith. How do we know? Hebrews 11:23 says, “*By faith, Moses, when he was born was hidden for three months by his*

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

parents.” It was not Moses faith but his parents’ faith that launched him into opportunity.

2) The second quality was courage, for in Heb. 11:23, it says that they weren’t afraid of the king’s edict.

3) The third quality was Resourcefulness. Mom was a creative resourceful person. She had a plan. God was obviously in this and He made his presence known even by providing the bull-rushes to catch the basket.

One of my early sponsors was my mom’s best friend, Elta Syverson. When I was 19 years old, she launched me into a summer camping ministry when I didn’t even believe in myself. Three summers later, I was going to seminary. Do you have a sponsor? The second instrument God uses to shape a leader is ...

2. God’s Providence Ex. 2:5-10

Exodus 2:5-10 reads, “Then Pharaoh’s daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. There was no way Moses’ parents could have pulled this off without the hand of God on each and every circumstance of Moses’ young life. His hand was on the current, the timing, the compassion of Pharaoh’s daughter, the placing of Miriam, the princess’s request to go to Miriam and ask. God ordered all the circumstances and events to bring Moses to the place where he wanted Him to be...growing up in Pharaoh’s court with his own mother.

Acts 7:22 gives some insight as to why God placed him in the middle of Pharaoh’s court. Let’s read it. It says, “*Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and actions.*” God placed him in an unknown environment to get a seminary education in how to be a leader. Little did he know that someday he would be the crafter of the greatest textbook of laws that the world has ever known. God’s providence was shaping him into a leader who would someday be the president, the chief of police, the Supreme Court judge, the director of water and sewerage, and the chief medical officer for 2 million people.

You might think that God has made a terrible mistake by placing you with the parents you have, or by placing you with the boss you now have, or by placing you in the geographical location where you now live. But God doesn’t make mistakes. It’s called providence. He shapes his leaders through the sticky circumstances into which he places you so long as you learn from your critics. Dwight L. Moody said of this period in Moses life that “Moses spent the first 40 years of his life learning that

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

he was “a somebody,” the next 40 years of his life learning that he was “a nobody,” and the last 40 years of his life learning what God could do with “a somebody” who was “a nobody.” You will not rise as a leader until you break under God’s providence. For those of you who think that it’s too late to lead, remember that Moses was 80 years old before he even started on his mission in life. God was shaping his leader. The third instrument God uses to shape a leader is...

3. The Vision (Ex. 2:11-12)

Exodus 2:11-12 says, *“One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. [12] Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.”*

Heb. 11:24-27 is a good peek inside the heart of Moses who was being shaped by God. Let’s look at it. *“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. [25] He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. [26] He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. [27] By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.”* There are two words to remember when God shapes a leader by giving him a vision.

1) The first key to vision is Identification. Look around at the needs of believers. One day the text says in Ex. 2:11, he went out to where his people were. He looked at their hard labor from dawn to dusk with no reward for their labor, only open wounds on their backs from the beatings of their oppressors. His heart said, “This isn’t right. These are my people. Something must be done.” Hebrews 11:25 sees into his heart. *“He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God.”* Unless you identify with the heartfelt need of people, you won’t succeed as a leader. You must come down and be with the people. Jesus was a great leader because he came down from heaven to the cross to be with us and to die for us. People will ask you to lead if you listen to them.

2) The second key to following the vision is Renunciation. In Heb. 11:24, Moses refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. It cost him the throne with all of its wealth, power and honor. To elect suffering, to prefer hardship to comfort, shame over fame, a wilderness to a court, is only possible when you get a vision for what God intends to do. He had his eyes on the invisible. He was occupied with the future. He saw the vision. Identification says, “What are the

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

needs.” Renunciation says, “What will it cost.” There was only one more instrument God used to shape this leader and that was...

4. Failure (Ex. 2:12-15)

Exodus 2:13-15 “The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, *“Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?”* [14] *The man said, “Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?”* Then Moses was afraid and thought, *“What I did must have become known.”* He failed because of the first three words he said to himself in v. 14. *“What I did...”* God’s will must be carried out God’s way. In human strength, it must fail. God sent him into the back side of the desert to tend sheep for 40 years. The desert was his classroom. Every spiritual leader must die to his own strength before he can be used by God. Zech. 4:6 said, *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord.”*

Conclusion:

Don’t get ahead of God, he may not follow. Before you can lead people out of Egypt, God has to get Egypt out of you. God will develop you through his sponsors, his providence, his vision, and your failures.

Discussion:

July 23, 2017

“The Call to Leadership” Exodus 3:1-21

Something happened to Moses. In Exodus 3:14a, he was a courageous warrior having killed an Egyptian. In verse 14b, he was a fearful refugee escaping the king. In verse 14a he was mighty in speech says Acts 7:22. But in v.14b he could only speak to himself. In 14a, he was a powerful prince, confident and self-assured. In verse 14b, he could only tend sheep. What changed?

Moses went from “driven” to “broken,” to “called.” Driven leaders have self-assurance. Called leaders have God-assurance. Driven leaders burn out in the face of opposition. Called leaders are proven in the face of opposition. Driven leaders look impressive on the outside but weak on the inside. Called leaders look unimpressive on the outside but strong on the inside. Today you are going to see how God changed Moses from a driven leader, led him through the desert of brokenness to become a called leader. It’s a process that all growing Christians must undergo.

As we came to chapter 3, Moses had all the qualities of a great leader. He identified with his people under the oppression of slavery. He

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

had a spirit of renunciation. He counted the cost and gave up all the pleasures of Egypt. He lacked one quality- the Call from God. When I say the call of God, I refer to one of two calls.

1) The first call from God is to come out of the world. 1 Peter 2:9 “...that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” This is **the call to salvation**. The key word in this call is “Come.” God calls the sinner, the lost, the dying, the oppressed, the prisoner. He is calling every one of you today, “Come.”

2) The second call of God is to go back into the world. John 15:16 “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit...*” This is **the call of service**. The key word here is “Go.” In between the two calls is the pruning process where he strips away the self-directed life and prepares you for the second call. The call from God to Moses is the second call to serve God’s purposes on this earth. Have you encountered God’s second call? Let’s look at the features of this call.

1. The Call of God is an Encounter with God’s Being Ex. 3:1-7

Moses found himself in the backside of the desert at the base of Mt. Sinai when he encountered a burning bush. Acts 7:30 says that when Moses saw this burning bush he was amazed. Why? Because, there he encountered 4 attributes of God’s being that separated Him from all the Egyptian gods in Moses’ past.

For example, Moses encountered God **standing beyond** everything. God appeared as a fire in an ordinary thorny bush, very common in the desert. But the fire did not depend on the bush for fuel. The fire was beyond the bush. The fire was self-sufficient. God is beyond all things. He doesn’t need the bush. He chooses to speak out of the bush.

Moses encountered God **standing apart** from the world in vss. 5-6. He was told to take off his shoes because the ground on which he stood was holy, separated from the world around him.

Moses encountered God **standing before** his ancestors in v. 6. “*I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*” He learned that God was the one who went before him with his ancestor Abraham.

Moses encountered God **standing with** his people in v. 7. “*I have seen the misery of my people. I have heard their cries for help.*”

Let’s apply that. The call of God is an encounter with God in all of His being. We are like the ordinary thorny bush. He doesn’t depend on us for his existence. But He changes us from something ordinary to

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

extraordinary. The world stands amazed. The call of God separates us. Anything God touches becomes holy. Any place where God stands is holy ground. The call of God is a responsibility always accompanied by a promise. Open your eyes with Moses and see God standing above, apart, before and with. Now get ready to go wherever He sends you.

2. The Call of God is an Encounter with God’s Purposes Ex. 3:8

In Exodus 3:8 we read, *“So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.”* Notice the clear purpose he gives Moses. God is going to deliver his people out of bondage. There were no words like “perhaps,” but rather a clear declaration. He comes down now as he would in a greater sense 1500 years later when Jesus is born. He comes to rescue. He comes to liberate. This is the God you meet in the call, a God of purpose. He comes with a goal, a destination. He is going to bring His people into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey. He invites you.

The average life span is 25,550 days. Don’t waste another day wandering without a purpose. Let’s not waste another day being driven by our own guilt, by our fears, our own anger, our own materialistic toys, or the approval of others. You can change from being driven to being called. Hear the call of God upon your life. It will give you meaning. The call will simplify your life, focus your life, motivate your life, and prepare you for your eternal life. Discover why you are here on this planet. Everything begins with God’s purpose. You were born and born again for His purpose. Giving attention to God at the burning bush will lead you out into the open, into a spacious land, free from oppression and slavery.

3. The Call of God is an Encounter with Our Own Reluctance. Ex. 3:9-22

God says in Exodus 3:9, *“And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.”* And I can hear Moses thinking, “I’ve heard this before.” Suddenly, his painful past surfaces as he remembers how his own people rejected him 40 years ago. So when he hears God’s words in verse 10, *“I am sending you to the Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt,”* he gives four excuses. I am nothing (3:11) I know nothing (3:13) My people will believe nothing (4:1) I can speak nothing (4:10)

What was God’s answer? If I could summarize God’s answer, it would be this. “It’s not about who you are, but about who I AM.” God identifies himself to Moses as the great “I AM.” If you need bread, I AM

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

the Bread of Life. If you need guidance, I AM the Good Shepherd. If you need an entrance, I AM the Door. If you need a way to conquer death, I AM the Resurrection. Moses is about to discover that the fire didn't need the bush. Can He not create something out of you? He loves to make something out of nothing. Throw down your rod, and God will make it a serpent. Pour water in the Nile. God will make it blood. Put your hand in your tunic. God will turn it leprous. Put it in again. God makes it whole.

That's what the call is all about. It's about an encounter with God's being, with God's purpose, with our own reluctance. When you are ready to follow the call, you're almost ready to lead.

Discussion:

July 30, 2017

“The Coaching of Leaders” Exodus 4:1-14

One of the early elders in Fellowship Church where I served used to say, “Everyone needs a daddy.” He was speaking about those people in our lives who are sent along by God to develop us into mature followers of Jesus Christ. I loved this elder because he followed his own advice. He kept contact with the man in California who mentored him into a mature disciple of Jesus Christ. He believed that if you are going to give direction, learn to take direction. Don't trust anyone who doesn't know how to first trust God. Don't listen to anyone who listens to no one.

I had an opportunity to talk with Dr. Gene Getz about a church he had led for over 20 years. It began over 300 churches around the country. I asked about his core value. He replied, “Coaching.” Each week they ask all leaders, “Who are you developing? When will they be ready to do what you are doing?” Today I want to teach you about coaching and being coached. Who is developing you into a follower of Jesus Christ and who are you developing?

Last week, we left Moses at the burning bush where he learned to see God's being, listen to God's purposes, and overcome his own reluctance.

Therefore as we come to Exodus 3:16 – 4:31, rather than send Moses directly to Pharaoh in a flurry of excitement and zeal, he sends him to three groups of people that I'd like to call his coaches. Their role was to develop and direct Moses' zeal into productive ends. My prayer is that following this message, God would send you to coaches who would develop you into a Great Commission Christian.

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

1. The First Group of Coaches God sent to develop Moses is made up of the Elders in Ex. 3:16-21

These were older men who were chosen because of their many years of experience, and because they had knowledge of God and His Word. Why would God send Moses to the elders in verse 16 instead of sending him directly to Pharaoh? There could be a number of reasons.

Moses had a reputation for blind zeal that led to violent rage. Moses had a clear vision but an unclear action plan. Moses was insecure and showed reluctance about following through. Moses lacked managerial skills.

Therefore he needed to develop in two areas. He needed self-control and he needed an action plan—a way to accomplish the goal of delivering his people. So in wisdom, they decided upon an action plan to break the news slowly giving Pharaoh a chance to show kindness. As a result, Pharaoh showed his true side but the Egyptian neighbors showed kindness in return and gave the Israelites materials and valuables to help them.

So you see, God gave Moses these coaches to help curb that angry streak and replace it with kindness and respect.

2. The Second Group of Coaches God sent to Moses was his Family in Ex. 4:14, 25-27

Back in chapter one, you remember that Moses' parents were his first sponsors who by faith, courage and resourcefulness launched Moses into his purpose on earth. Now, in Ex. 4:14, we discover that Moses has a brother named Aaron the Levite who happens to be a great speaker and speech writer. He became available to Moses who had developed a stuttering problem in the desert over the years. Later, in Ex. 4:25-27, we come across Zipporah, Moses wife, a Midianite girl, who wasn't too thrilled about the practice of circumcision on her boys. But she came alongside Moses reluctantly and reminded him of his responsibility. She discerned that Moses' near-death experience was caused by his refusal to circumcise his own son. She challenged him to keep his promises and obey God even though she didn't like it.

These two family members would help to develop Moses by pointing out that his weaknesses won't prevent God from using him. Aaron was a coach to help communicate God's will to His people. Zipporah was a coach to remind Moses that if you are going to proclaim God's will, you better obey God's will.

Family members aren't usually the first ones to get on the bandwagon and recognize God's call. Even Jesus' own family wasn't very supportive at first. But God uses them because when they finally

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

do discover that God is the great motivator, they will love you to the end but they won't sacrifice telling you the truth about yourself.

Nobody, in my family encouraged me to go into ministry except my mother-in-law. They figured I must have made some mistake. But once they saw the passion and the focus in my life, they abandoned themselves to the call and became my best coaches because they knew me so well and could tell me the truth, and yet they still loved me no matter what.

3. The Third Group of Coaches God sent to Moses' was the Workplace in Ex. 4:18

Now this is an interesting encounter. There we read that Moses went to his father-in-law and boss named Jethro, and asked permission to go back to Egypt. Exodus 4:18 says, *"Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me go back to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are still alive." Jethro said, "Go, and I wish you well."*

Jethro blessed an insecure Moses. Notice that Moses said nothing about God appearing to him, or about the true purpose for his going, or about the assurance that God was going to rescue his people. Moses was still struggling with confidence and assurance. Jethro came into his life with a blessing that pictured a successful future. We need people who manage us to bless us.

Jethro managed Moses for 40 years. As a manager and boss, Moses looked to him as the model of a manager. There he learned from Jethro the management skills he needed. Jethro saw that Moses had the stuff to manage and lead sheep. He trusted Moses with his investments. So he encourages him to go back without knowing the full story. Later he would see a flaw in Moses managerial skills and his inability to train and delegate to faithful people. Jethro would become one of his closest coaches, giving him the help he needed to manage 2 million people.

In conclusion, Coaches are sent into your life to develop you in four areas...

1) Character--The elders in Moses' story represent those who develop the heart where your passion for Jesus Christ finds productive expression. Who is checking your zeal? We need advisers who help guide and direct our passion for Jesus down the right paths.

2) Communication--Aaron represents those who develop the intellect that can put the passion into words. We need help in getting the word out to those who need to be delivered from sin and bondage. Men like Bill Bright and Bill Hybels have coached millions of believers in how

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

to communicate their faith in Jesus Christ, although coaching on this level lacks interaction on the personal level.

3) Commitment--Zipporah represents those who help develop our will to obey what we proclaim. We all need accountability partners who make sure that we are practicing what we preach. Do you have someone who asks you the tough questions every week? How's your home life? How much time do you spend with God? What are you doing to find God's will? Have you just told me the truth?

4) Community--Jethro represents those who develop the skills to handle the people we'll be helping. We all need coaching when it comes to dealing with relationships. Am I training someone to step into my place if the Lord should take me home? Can I identify that person?

Discussion:

August 6, 2017

“The Strategy of the Leader” Exodus 6:1-11

Four hundred born again Christians were asked, “What are your personal spiritual goals?” Only twenty-six percent said “to grow spiritually.” (Growing True Disciples by George Barna, 2000) Not one of those who did respond had any idea how they would go about reaching that goal. The result is talk without action...sentiment without substance. When another group of 450 born again believers were asked, “What is the single most important thing you would like to accomplish in your life,” only 2 out of 10 said a strong faith, going to heaven, doing God's will or raising my kids to be Christians. One out of ten put nothing. They don't know what they want to accomplish.

You aren't going to grow spiritually unless you plan to grow spiritually. And you won't plan to grow spiritually unless you hunger for it. If you come out of this message with a strategy, I'll be happy. Grow spiritually to a point where you can lead another, a child, a fellow worker or a group.

Moses is still a developing leader. His personality is burdened with weakness and insecurity. He has a huge challenge before him to shake up the Egyptian empire and release God's people from bondage. But the strategy is a simple one found in Exodus 6:1. I call it the “I Will See What God Will Do” strategy for overcoming the enemies of spiritual growth. “Then the Lord said to Moses, *“Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country.”*

The first step in the strategy is...

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

I. When Afraid of the Future, Rehearse the Past (Ex. 6:2-5)

“God also said to Moses, *“I am the Lord. [3] I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name, the Lord, I did not make myself known to them. [4] I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. [5] Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.”* God took him for a look at the past at the people he helped and the promise he made.

1) Remember the people God helped. Every time Abraham, Isaac and Jacob stepped out by faith, God stepped in. Abraham left Ur says Heb. 11:8 even though he didn’t know where he was going. He simply said, “I will see what God will do.” God brought them to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Isaac laid himself down on the altar while his father Abraham raised the knife to sacrifice his own son. But they both said, “I will see what God will do.” God provided a ram in the thicket. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff. Hebrews 11:21. Jacob said, *“Here is the future I see for my children. I will see what God will do.”* God pulled through and gave each of his sons a portion of land promised to them by God. When Moses lacked assurance about the future God rehearsed the past. If they said, “I will see what God will do,” God stepped in and accomplished the impossible.

2) Remember the promise God fulfilled. God calls it a covenant in v. 5 which laid out God’s plan. It required faith in action. Jesus told us the same thing when he gathered the disciples around the Last Supper. Do this in Remembrance of me. Go back and rehearse what God did. Then step forward and put your faith into action.

Illustration: I remember a time when God put this to the test in my own spiritual development. I was directing Camp Orchard Hill at the time and we had a huge Men’s Retreat coming on the weekend. But the well was running dry and we knew it wasn’t going to last. I said, “God, what will I do?” when I should have said, “I will see what God will do!” Sure enough the water turned brown that weekend. Instead of disaster, some of the men got up in front of the group on Sunday morning and said, the camp has a need for a new well. It would probably cost about \$8,000 for the well and the pump. They took an offering and \$3,000 came in that weekend. It was a great experience as man after man stepped forward to make a contribution. We counted \$3000 and thanked them before they left. Just then, a man stood up and said, I have a brand new pump worth \$5000 that I’ll give the camp. The whole

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

place cheered. The total cost of the project was \$8000, precisely the amount needed to continue the ministry. Stuck in a hard place, we waited to “see what God will do.” God did it. Well, that became the rally cry for a number of other needs in the camp. “Remember the pump.” Think back to a time when you stepped out in faith and saw what God did. Stepping out in faith is always God’s strategy. So God gave Moses assurance for the future by rehearsing the past. The second step in the strategy is

2. Focus on God’s “I Will’s” of the future not the mistakes of the past. Ex. 6:6-8

A strategy answers the question, “How will we accomplish our objectives?” In vss. 6-8 God announces the seven “I Will’s” that trace a clear progression from the yoke of Egypt to the dwelling in Canaan.

1) God will bring them out from under the yoke of bondage. The yoke will fall off as Pharaoh finally says they are free to go.

2) God will free them from being slaves. So long as they obey, God will always keep them free from slavery to other nations.

3) God will redeem them or purchase them with an outstretched arm and mighty acts of judgment. The sacrificial lamb with its blood on the doorposts was the redemption price. This was followed by the mighty act of judgment in opening the Red Sea and destroying the Egyptian army.

4) God will take them as His own people. This refers to the making of the Mosaic covenant at the foot of Mt. Sinai which starts with the words, “I am the Lord your God.”

5) God will be their God so that they will know Him as the Lord. As they journey through the desert with manna from the sky and water from the rock, they will come to know Him, not through a bunch of laws but through the daily provision and protection in the wilderness.

6) God will bring them into the land He swore, a reference to the conquest of Canaan.

7) God will give the land to them as a possession referring to their settlement in the Promised Land.

What does God repeat over and over again seven times? What is the strategy? “I Will!” Discover the “I wills” of God. God will put you at the hand of an oppressor like Pharaoh, and then he will do the impossible. God will put you on the shore of the Red Sea and then He’ll open it. God will send you to Sinai and then He’ll write on your hearts his will. God will send you into a desert and then He’ll send manna and bring

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

water out of a rock. You will have no way out and then you will see what God will do. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Rehearse God's powerful hand on your past, and Trust God's will for the future.

Conclusion:

Now listen closely as I suggest a strategy for developing into a mature believer who can lead others. If you are going to develop you must plan to develop. Take this down. This strategy comes from Charles Hummel's article called the “Tyranny of the Urgent.”

We live in a constant tension between the urgent and the important. Urgent tasks call for instant action while important tasks have no short deadline. Sadly, the important gets put off in favor of the urgent. How do we get to the important things in life such as time with God, prayer, study and reflection, helping Christian friends who develop us and witnessing to our pre-Christian friends?

Wait for instructions. Depend on the Word of God which makes us free. Evaluate. One minute spent in planning saves 4 minutes in execution.

Discussion:

August 13, 2017

“Overcoming the Frustrations of Leadership” Numbers 11:1-17

There's something frustrating and painful about setting a goal only to have someone step in and prevent you from accomplishing your goal. This is true especially when you entrust people to carry out the plan and they don't follow instructions. A man looking for a job knocked on the door of an expensive home. The owner of the home said, “Sure, go around back and paint my porch using the green paint in the garage. The man returned in a few hours covered with green paint ready to receive his pay. As he put the \$50 in his pocket, he turned to the owner and said, “By the way, that Porsche you wanted me to paint. That isn't a Porsche. It's a Ferrari.” Is your frustration level running high when people don't follow instructions?

We're looking at the life of Moses and today we're looking at the frustrations of a growing leader in Numbers 11.

Israel is camped at the foot of Mt. Sinai for a year. God has performed the great deliverance through the Red Sea. They experienced the great provision of water and manna. They won the great victory over the Amalikes through prayer. Moses received the great commandments. Moses had a great talk with God in the tent. And he had a great meeting

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

with Jethro on delegating management into the hands of young leadership. Everything was great. Moses is psyched in Numbers 10:35. *“Rise up O Lord, May your enemies be scattered.”* But then Chapter 11 opens with...

1. The Cause of a Leader’s Frustration (Num. 11:1-10)

“Now the people complained about their hardships.” Three days after breaking camp, they complain. Three days after the Red Sea opened, they complained. Nothing discourages a leader more than complaining over hardship. They were discontent with where God put his people. They saw miracles. They had the Law. They had water and manna. But it wasn’t enough. When they were in Egypt, they complained about the hardship. When they were out of Egypt, they complained about the hardship.

Complaining is a common problem. In Matt. 20, the wage earners in the parable complain against the householder who showed generosity. In Luke 5:30 the Pharisees complain against Jesus disciples because they ate with tax collectors. The Corinthians complained at the Lord’s Supper and numerous other things. Paul has to tell the Philippians in 2:14, *“Do all things without complaining and arguing.”* But nobody complained like the Israelites.

Complainers are troubled people. They expect a perfect world. But one thing many complainers don’t realize is that they are dissatisfied with God’s rule. It’s a slap in the face of God. It is rebellion in the heart of man. In 1 Cor. 10:10, we read, *“And do not grumble, as some of them did--and were killed by the destroying angel.”* Ingratitude is accusing God of not knowing what He’s doing.

We can understand the complaints under Pharaoh. He tried to crush them and oppress them. But Moses was empowering them and leading them into God’s will. He was trying to bring order out of chaos. But the complainers were bringing chaos out of order. Let’s apply this thought. Look at...

2. The Effects of a Leader’s Frustration (11:11-15)

1) Leaders are human. When frustrated they get ugly. Moses throws his frustration at God in v. 11. We know and Moses knew that God didn’t cause this to happen as a punishment. But he’s frustrated and now his fellowship with God is questionable.

2) A second effect is that Moses took their complaints as a personal defect in himself. Look at v. 11. *“What have I done to displease You.”* He questions his own leadership.

3) A third effect is that Moses turns his mission into a burden and not a privilege. In v. 11 & 12 he calls the people a burden that God

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

placed on him. “*Did I give them birth?*” Then why do I have to nurse them, burp them, change their diapers. That’s a free translation.

4) A fourth effect is that Moses lost his vision temporarily. Where are the 7 “I wills” of God in verses 14 & 15. Listen! I don’t hear them. “*Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me.*” His language is filled with ego. He lost sight of God’s promises. He lost sight of God power. He lost sight of God’s strategy. But most dangerous of all, he lost sight of hope in 11:15. “*If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now--if I have found favor in your eyes--and do not let me face my own ruin.*” Grumbling takes its toll on leaders. That is why the writer of Hebrews says, “*Obey your leaders so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*” He speaks about the complaints arising from rebellion in the heart.

There were times in my life as a pastor that I wanted to give up not because of constructive criticism from people who want to see the church grow, but because of obstinate disobedience in the hearts of stubborn people. I’m seeing the Promised Land. But they don’t see God’s goals...only their own selfish independence. In times like that I confess that I want to go to Disney World to escape. But when I do, I know that I’ve chosen the pattern of Moses and I know it’s a distortion of reality. But it’s very real. Is there a cure? What is the cure?

3. The Cure of a Leader’s Frustration (Num. 11:16-33)

God met Moses at his point of need. Good coaches learn this.

1) Empower your people. (disciples and mentees) Don’t Control your People. God comes to Moses in v. 16 and says, “*Bring me 70 elders known to you as leaders among the people. I will take the Spirit that is on you and I will put it on them.*” Help them to see the vision and to own it. Give them a responsibility to lead someone else. I say this to Moms and Dads. It isn’t just your family. It’s the whole family. It’s the family’s house, the family’s lawn, the family’s garage, on loan to us from God. Turn over a responsibility over to one of the children. Buy a small pet for your children to feed and clean up after so they can serve the needs of those they lead. Give your small group a responsibility and praise the Lord when the Spirit falls on them. Give a teen a leadership role and pray for the Spirit to descend on them. Don’t micro-manage everyone’s affairs. Ask the Lord to give them the Spirit to manage the vision.

2) Let God Discipline. Don’t step in. If they refuse to learn by telling them, let them learn by suffering the consequences. In v. 18, it’s

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

almost humorous. God steps in and says this to complainers who want more meat. *“You want meat? I’ll give you meat for the whole month until it comes out your nostrils because you rejected me.”* He sent quail piled up 3 ft. high and six miles wide. Sometimes as leaders, we step in to rescue our children or our followers too soon. They never learn. Now, I know that we can’t be careless. Wisdom is needed to know when to step in. But practice the principle of releasing them to God. You can restrain them, rebuke them, instruct them or feed them, but only God can change them. Follow the cloud and leave the consequences to God.

Conclusion: All the people are unhappy sometimes and some people are unhappy all the time. Don’t personalize the complaint. Release them to God’s Hand. The more complaints God hears, the more discipline He sends their way. Keep loving those who criticize you. Pray for them. Jesus said, *“Bless those who persecute you.”* Don’t keep an eye on the clock. Keep an eye on the cloud by day and the fire by night. Don’t lose sight of the vision. When God moves, you move. Kids, employees, citizens, mentees... if you are unhappy with your leaders or mentors, check your heart before checking theirs. Is it a problem of surrendering to God’s will? The coach can’t personalize everything, or become bitter, or lose sight of God’s promises and power. Leaders must cope with the frustrations of leadership until the Chief Shepherd returns for his own on that great and glorious day.

Discussion:

August 20, 2017

“The Power Source for the Leader” Exodus 33:7-11

I want to ask you if you regularly experience the very presence of God. I had a neighbor named George. George was a retired man who drove a truck for the Red Cross for over 30 years. Just about every morning at 8 AM, he would leave his house and walk down the street to the Town House Restaurant where he met with his old friends over a cup of coffee. Hardly ever did he miss a day. I was curious so one day I asked him, “George, what do you talk about.” “Oh, we just talk about everything. It doesn’t matter what we talk about. We just enjoy being together.”

As we come to our text today in Ex. 32-34, Moses has led the people of Israel to the foot of Mt. Sinai. Moses made a total of 5 ascents onto the mountain. He brought no food, no water for he just believed that being in the presence of God would sustain him.

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

1. Moses learns about God’s holiness. He ascends the mountain and stayed 40 days in the presence of the Lord. God writes his holy law into existence and Moses is in awe of God’s purity. No other gods beyond me, no graven images in place of me, no use of my name in disrespect of me, a day separate from all the other days to worship me. Those were the laws Moses received in the presence of God. And those that worship God must be pure and separate from the world.

I challenge you to walk up the mountain and prayerfully stand in God’s presence with Moses. Guard against being too familiar with God. Acknowledge His “otherness.” Don’t drag your leftovers onto this holy ground nor place your lame offerings in the plate. Don’t bring your defiled bodies and offer the crumbs to a holy God who deserves the pure heart of a worshipper, for being in the presence of God will stir a passion for holiness. His holiness will rub off on you or it will kill you.

Then it happened. While Moses bathed in God’s holiness, the people bathed in sin at the base of the mountain and made themselves a golden calf. In the presence of God Moses began to hate his own sin and the sin of his own people. How could Israel ever survive their blasphemous ramblings? If something doesn’t happen, they will be blown away with the desert sands.

2. So Moses dares to move closer to God’s heart of compassion.

He dares to challenge those wishes for he knows what God really wants. God brought them out of Egypt to be a people unto himself. *“You don’t want to leave them in the desert after performing such miracles. You don’t want them to be the laughing stock of the world. Turn from your fierce wrath and repent of this evil against your own people.”* Had the mountain changed him? Was there something intoxicating about Sinai that made Moses lose his senses or is that what happens when we go deeper as we stand in the presence of God? Moses is oblivious to his own danger. One thing matters to him: that Israel be delivered from the consuming fire of God’s wrath. Do we to pray like that? Do we dare to get dangerously close to God? Or do we straddle the fence of prayer unconcerned about the judgment of God that begins in the house of God? Does the prospect of Divine judgment strike us as remote? Have you been to Sinai? The church of Thyatira went there. His answer to their blatant immorality was *“I will throw her on a sickbed and I will strike her children dead.”* Yet Moses is not satisfied. He came down to confront the sin.

3. Then he returns to the mountain and learns God’s forgiveness

as he confronts His God. His last words to the Israelites were, *“Perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”* But a sacrificial lamb is noticeably

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

absent from his shoulders. Moses has made his decision. He will be the sacrifice. He will stand or fall with his own people. They may be fickle. They may be feeble. But they are his people. He will live to lead them or he will die with them in the desert. He meets God on the mountain. He probes dangerously close to the heart of God's mercy. He says, *“Alas, your people have sinned a great sin. Forgive their sin. But if you don't, blot my name out of the book you have written.”* Moses is a true intercessor for he willingly stands between God and a sinful people in need of grace just as Jesus would do centuries later. The people remove their ornaments in repentance and beg for mercy. God strikes dead the ringleaders while sparing the majority. But He refuses to go with them into the Promised Land.

4. Moses gets closer to God's heart and learns of His guiding presence. He enters the tent of meeting over which the cloud of God's glory rests. He speaks with God. He has an audience with the King. The people wait outside with faces to the ground. God forgives. Moses wants more than God's holiness. Moses wants more than God's mercy. Moses wants God's presence to go ahead of them or else he will not go. He has entered the inner sanctum. He stands within God's own heart. Their spirits are knit. He says in summary, *“It is nice that I enjoy your favor. But what is the point if you are not present with us. What difference will there be between us and the other nations if your presence is not among us. Go with us or we won't go.”* Oh, that we would pray like that. What good is beautiful music, flashy printed bulletins, organized programs, ornate buildings or outreach events, if your presence is not among us? We are dead without you. Eternal life springs forth from walking in your presence and knowing you. There is no greater thrill. God longs to hear you pray like that. As Moses lingers in God's presence, he is struck by the realization that he has only scratched the surface of God's presence.

5. So he asks for more...to see God's glory. Could there be more than experiencing God's holiness and hatred of sin? Could there be more than testing God's mercy by sticking his own head in the mouth of the lion of Judah? Could there be more than coveting God's presence to go with him? Hunger for more. Draw closer to God. Come! Come and draw close and see. Moses asks in Exodus 33:18-22, *“Now show me your glory.”* [19] *And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. [20] But,” he said, “You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.” [21] Then the Lord said, “There*

“Soul Searching” - Coaching Spiritual Formation

is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. [22] When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.”

The hope and prayer of this course has been to catch a greater glimpse of God’s glory that nourishes the soul. Only then will our souls, our thoughts, passions and behavior be transformed into Christ-likeness. The highest pinnacle is to see God’s glory. Moses has grown in God’s presence. God was pleased to call Moses friend because he knew what God wanted and he pursued God until God gave him what he wanted. He gave him what he wanted because what he wanted was to see His glory. If you have been with Jesus, everyone will see it in your life. Go forth and reflect His glory.

Discussion: