

## Lessons From Prison Pt.2

August 23, 2020

### Godly Discernment Of Circumstances And People Is Vital

Philippians 1:9 ESV

9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,  
10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,  
11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

- *How desperately we need God's wisdom to accurately apply His Truth to the present circumstances and people!*
- *God's Word and Spirit will always break through the fog and the darkness to illuminate.*

Hebrews 5:13-14 ESV

13 *for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.*  
14 *But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

James 1:5 ESV

5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

- *Knowledge is the accumulation of information; wisdom is making life choices by applying God's Truth.*

*"What else do we know about this population, 18-24? They are stupid. That is why we put them in dormitories and they have a resident assistant. They make really bad decisions."*

—Kamala Harris, Aug 12, 2015

Proverbs 4:4-9 ESV

4 *he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live.*  
5 *Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.*  
6 *Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.*  
7 *The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.*  
8 *Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.*  
9 *She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown."*

Isaiah 30:20-22 ESV

20 *And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teacher will not hide himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher.*  
21 *And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.*

22 Then you will defile your carved idols overlaid with silver and your gold-plated metal images. You will scatter them as unclean things. You will say to them, "Be gone!"

Acts 16:16-23 ESV

16 As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.

17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."

18 And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

19 But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

20 And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city.

21 They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice."

22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods.

23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely.

## What Man Calls Defeat And Failure, Is Victory And Success With God

Philippians 1:12-14 ESV

12 I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel,

13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

14 And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

- ***The greatest of all works among mankind, the advent of Jesus Christ, was deemed a failure by men.***

Isaiah 53:2-3 ESV

2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

John 1:45-46 ESV

45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

- **Whenever the success or failure of a ministry is judged by human or worldly criteria:**

- the spiritual discernment of verses 9, 10 is not present and working.

*Philippians 1:9 ESV*

9 And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment,

10 so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

- the ministry is not pure, but corrupted by worldly business models, marketing strategies and metrics-driven standards. (Only in the U.S. are there so many pastors who are multi-millionaire celebrities.)

*2 Corinthians 10:12 ESV*

12 Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.

*measure (metreō) to judge according to a rule or standard, to mete out with a measurer's reed or rule*

*2 Samuel 24:9-13 ESV*

9 And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000.

10 But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

11 And when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

12 "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"

13 So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me."

- **With God, there is one and only one standard of success: faithfulness to what God has appointed to you.**

*1 Corinthians 4:1-5 ESV*

1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself [by human, worldly criteria].

4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 ESV

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Isaiah 55:8-9 ESV

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

- **How do you judge your personal life:**

- by worldly standards of "success?"
- by faithfulness to what God has appointed for you?

Matthew 25:14-30 ESV

14 For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability (dynamis - strength, power, might, ability). Then he went away.

- The person assigned 5 talents is not superior to the person with 2 talents.
- God specializes in "load-balancing;" ability vs. load.

1 Corinthians 3:5-7 ESV

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each.

6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV

13 No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

"When we truly live in 'the secret place,' it becomes impossible for us to doubt God. We become more sure of Him than of anyone or anything else. Enter into 'the secret place,'

*and you will find that God was right in the middle of your everyday circumstances all the time. Get into the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless you learn to open the door of your life completely and let God in from your first waking moment of each new day, you will be working on the wrong level throughout the day. But if you will swing the door of your life fully open and 'pray to your Father who is in the secret place,' every public thing in your life will be marked with the lasting imprint of the presence of God."*

—Oswald Chambers, "Prayer, Battle in The Secret Place" My Upmost For His Highest, August 23

*Matthew 25:14-30 ESV*

*16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.*

*17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.*

*18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.*

*19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.*

- *Your eternal judgment will never be based upon, "Why didn't you bear witness to 200 more people in your life?" or "Why didn't you produce 5 more miracles in your life?" or "You should have cast out 43 more demons!"*
- *Your eternal judgment will be based upon, "Were you faithful to what God appointed in your life?"*

*Matthew 25:14-30 ESV*

*20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.'*

*21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*

*22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.'*

*23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*

*24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,*

*25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.'*

*26 But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew [?] that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?*

*27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.*

*28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.*

*29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.*

*30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

*James 2:17 ESV*

*17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

*James 2:24 ESV*

*24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.*