

Standing in the Gap

'This is what we speak... explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.'

(1 Corinthians 2:13)

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***I dedicate this book to the believer standing
in a gap.***

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Introduction

I was at a gas station sharing verse cards and booklets with people. It was a windy day but the rain was holding off. The gas station owner told me I was doing 'something good' and let me base there for a few hours. This was a hot spot for drug addicts, drug dealers, gang members and the homeless.

A guy that looked homeless to me went into the station, bought a cup of coffee, and came back outside and stood next to me. His name was Tim. Turns out he was not homeless, and he was, in fact, quite wealthy. He loved Jesus. He spoke to me in very simple, spiritual terms. One thing he said to me, which was profound in many ways, was this:

'Before you were born, Jesus said what you would do, and who you would be!'

Two key things that Tim put down here in faith for me, for you:

1. Your God-Given Path:

God has a path for you to walk. He's gifted you (1 Corinthians 12:7), and he leads you in investing this gift. (Luke 19:11-27)

2. Your God-Given Identity:

God has 'named' you. Not only does God have things for you to do – and anointing and authority to do it – but he has given you a unique

cut in his own image. A name. Even a secret name that no man can speak or undermine. (Revelation 2:17)

In this short book we will consider your unique call, your unique identity, and what it looks and feels like, '*standing in the gap*' for others.

My personal pursuit in this book is freedom in Jesus. True freedom. Spiritual release and quiet confidence, as we live. I say pursuit because I also need more of this – more clarity on it, and more faith to receive it.

Paul spoke of his calling in Christ, and said, '***Not that I have already achieved all this... but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me... forgetting what is behind, and straining towards what is ahead.***' (Philippians 3:12-14)

In writing this, sharing this with you, I am in pursuit of it myself as much as I long to impart it. So if I refer to 'you' in this book, it is for ease of communicating, but I am very much including myself in the challenge.

Let's get stuck in...

1. Just Take Another Road

When Jesus was towards the end of his ministry, he was headed back to Jerusalem. His disciples were with him, and his powerful reputation was known.

They came to a village, wanting to pass through. The village was Samaritan, and they did not get along with the Jews, so they said they could not pass through. The disciples of Jesus were so offended at this, that they wanted to call down fire from heaven and destroy the village.

Here is how it ended:

‘Jesus rebuked his disciples. They went through another village.’ (Luke 9:55-56)

I can get insecure about my own identity – who I am in Jesus. Am I important? Do I have authority? What if people don’t see it or recognize it – recognize me?

Do I need to prove my importance to them? Do I need to call down fire from heaven, or just start mentioning spiritual things that make me look experienced or knowledgeable?

Why do I feel small in these moments? Why insecure or tempted to prove myself?

Why were the disciples so angry at the disrespect and Jesus was not?

I think I misunderstand true identity in Christ. I confuse it with worldly identity, importance among people.

Jesus did say there is a system that is of the kingdom of this world, and a system that is of the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 20:25-26) They are different. Jesus said in his kingdom the greatest was the servant – the one not seen, not served, not recognized. The server.

I need to grow in this. I need more faith. I need the Spirit of God to soak through me so that I can be secure in my identity in Jesus, knowing he holds my identity. I don't even need to be able to define what my true identity in Jesus is, exactly. Rather I need to grow in my assurance that *Jesus* holds my true identity, and it isn't lost in the face of someone else not seeing it. The authority to be true, merciful, prophetic, does not disappear based on people's recognition or you, or lack of recognition.

Paul said to the church in Corinth (to believers that were doubting him): ***'I care very little if I am judged by you or by any secular court. Indeed I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not mean I'm innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.'***
(1 Corinthians 4:3-4)

When Jesus admonished his disciples to just go another road, through a different village, I think his heart and mind had to be set on his goal

only. He was not distracted by resistance or lack of honor along the way. As long as he had another route to take, so he could keep in step with the Spirit and continue in his calling, he just kept going. He was goal-oriented, not honor-hungry or needy.

As he said to his disciples at another time, ***'I have food you know nothing about... My food is to do the will of my Father and to finish his work.'*** (John 4:32-34)

Jesus knew who he was, and stayed his course of purpose. He did not need man's recognition of who he was, in order to stay his course. As long as the way of God was open before him – people cheering or not cheering – he was good to go. He kept going.

Paul admonishes Timothy to have this same laser focus in the face of resistance and even when surrounded by ***'false teachers'***:

'But as for you, keep your head. Endure hardship. Do the work of an evangelist. Discharge all the duties of your ministry.'
(2 Timothy 4:5)

Earlier Paul admonishes Timothy to serve God in his calling like a soldier serves a commanding officer – not getting distracted or entangled in ***'civilian affairs'***. Paul says a number of times in his letters to avoid foolish talk, and to not be distracted by ***'fine-sounding arguments'*** or

supposedly 'deep' philosophies that steer away from the foundation of the gospel. Paul also admonishes Timothy to not let people look down on him because he is young.¹

Such focus! This kind of focus does not take striving or intensity. On the contrary. It is the easy yoke that Jesus talks about in Matthew 11:28-30. This focus comes with humility and letting go, not grasping with white-knuckle tenacity. Just let go of your pride, and listen to the whisper and call of Jesus. Have the humility and the child-like faith to know the true path before you, and just walk on, speak on, be kind.

'And anyone who speaks, should speak as one speaking the very words of God.'
(1 Peter 4:11)

Simple authority in what you know is true.
Simple faith. Follow Jesus as he leads you.

¹ 1 Timothy 4:12; Colossians 2:3-4,8-9

2. At Your Doorpost

'I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.' (Psalm 84:10)

When I go out on the street to share verse cards (tracts) and speak with people about Jesus, one of the key motivators for me is that if I do it, others won't have to do it. Let me explain...

You see, it's not easy for me to hit the streets and do outreach. But I *can* do it. I'm equipped to do it. I've seen my father do it, and others, all my life, and I've been given the tools, and the anointing of the Lord to do it. It's a tough job, but if I do it, other brothers and sisters in the Lord won't have to carry that burden or do that job. I am motivated by the idea of helping my family of believers in this way.

Again, take a soldier who goes to war to defend his people. He may fear it. But he looks at his little sister, his mother, and others, and realizes that if he goes to the trenches, he will keep the enemy away from *them*. He goes to serve them. He goes to fight, so they don't have to.

Another angle of this that motivates me is as follows. My kids are in public school. They encounter many issues of sin and pressure each day, which are sometimes pushed by other kids, sometimes pushed by teachers. Our children need support in the battle. Sometimes I think of

myself, when out on the street sharing cards, that maybe I'll put in the hand of a teacher, one of these verse cards, and it may help to turn their hearts and minds to Jesus. Maybe when I am out in the field, I will be 'back-up' support for other people trying to hold and advance the faith in their work, in their schools. A backdoor moment, so to speak, depositing a seed with people.

I worked at a company for a couple years, then left and worked elsewhere for ten years. Then I applied for a job and came back to the first company. When I came back, the lady who interviewed me and hired me – and became my supervisor – remembered me from previously, but also had this to tell me after hiring me: *'I became a Christian, Peter, a few years after you left.'* She went on to tell me about a babysitter who had introduced her two kids to church, and invited her also, and the Lord called her heart to faith.

Now, this same supervisor, that someone else shared with and led to Jesus, was a key spiritual cover and protection for me in work. I have seen how she has protected me at times in my witness with other colleagues, and protected my reputation behind the scenes, etc. I think of the knock-on of blessing. Someone else was faithful in their position, at their doorpost, to witness to this woman. And she now is using her faith to protect my testimony, my witness.

Who am I protecting in the family of believers?
What doorpost am I standing at, so that others
don't have to?

'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.'
(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

All Christians are called to share Christ. But we do this as a body. We don't all have to share Christ in the same way. We aren't called to do that.

I like 'evangelism', sharing literature with people, speaking with people about faith. But I am super conscious of many things while doing what I do. First, many people I meet have already had a lot of spiritual investment in their lives by other Christians they have known – people who prayed for them, who shared with them, forgave them, all in the name of Jesus. This groundwork opens a part of their heart to the gospel message I may speak to them, discuss with them. Without the groundwork, without the sacrifice and faith actions of other Christians, many people who are open to me, would not be.

Secondly, I need what others do as a complement to what I do. I don't need them to do

what I do, but to be faithful in what *they* do. Let me explain.

Often when I share the gospel with someone, they may ask about going to church. Or I may be the one asking if they would consider going to a church to grow in faith. Now, what if people who are called to volunteer and serve in a local church, were not faithful to do that? Well, I would not be able to point these people to that support, that experience, that protection. I depend on other Christians doing what they are called to do, to support and deepen the work I am called to do.

We all have different doorposts, through which we are all working together to lead people to Jesus.

What's your doorpost?

Some manifest as practical – e.g. serving, giving, helping – and others as spiritual – e.g. wisdom, faith, mercy. But regardless of how these gifts manifest, they are all of the same Spirit of God.

Here below are 2 passages that speak to gifts and modes of service. These are worth reading, pondering. You will see they are not exhaustive lists by any means, nor do they claim to be. What they do, however, is show us that there is one Spirit moving in many different Christians, all

with the one mission to know Christ, and make him known:

‘To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.’ (1 Corinthians 12:8-11)

‘Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.’ (1 Peter 4:8-11)

3. Mission Headquarters

'He lay a table before me, in the presence of my enemies.' (Psalm 23:5)

When I was a kid I went to some Christian conferences. My parents were missionaries, and every couple of years our family would go meet with other people from this same organization at a week-long conference.

These experiences were unique in that everyone involved in everything, was part of the family of Christ. It was like being in a Christian village, or a Christian mini-world or dome. Everyone had the same belief, the same king, the same Spirit. No explanations needed. It was a rest from the battlefield, from the world, so to speak.

Now it was interesting, kinda lonely, saying goodbye to these people and driving away, sometimes to another country. It did feel like stepping back into the battle. Outside the 'revelation' of Jesus Christ, well, we live in a world that mostly does not see him or walk with him. Jesus himself said this:

'The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them... [If they would] see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, I would heal them.' ***But blessed are your eyes***

because they see, and your ears because they hear. (Matthew 13:11-16)

God wants people to know the truth about Jesus. But he has told us that ***'wide is the path that leads to destruction, and many take it.'*** (Matthew 7:13-14) So those of us that do know Jesus, we are a minority in the world, and it is lonely, hard, to soldier on in faith and testimony.

What we experience in Jesus is this: We come into a kingdom where we can rest, and we fight for this kingdom to advance it. Rest and War. War and Rest.

There is a time for everything, and this is also true of resting. Even when surrounded by enemies, i.e. ***'in the presence of your enemies'***, God will, at times, lay a table before you. He will call you to sit, to pause, to eat, to replenish. You are safe in his kingdom. Time to rest.

Then there is a time to battle. Jesus will call you to a doorpost, to stand true, firm, faithful, blessing other believers (***'each equipped for the common good.'***), and reaching the lost. When you are faithful at your doorpost, other believers are kept safe by you. You've got it covered. You are advancing the ***'kingdom of light'***¹ in that place. Thank you!

¹ Colossians 1:12

'If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me.' (Philippians 1:22)

'I have fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith.' (2 Timothy 4:7)

Mission HQ is a place of meeting, preparing, resting – for the purpose of *'mission'*. Rest. Go. Fight. Rest. Peace. Battle...

When we are called into the ***'kingdom of light'***, the family of Jesus, we are indeed called into a place of rest, a kingdom. But this kingdom is our *'Mission Headquarters'* - because we have an enemy, and a call to advance this kingdom, and defeat another ***'kingdom of darkness'***.¹ We have a mission to bring more people into this kingdom of God.

So again, we have entered a kingdom and can rest. It is home. But we have a battle to engage, and each has a doorpost – or a number of doorposts – to tend to, until this battle is finally over.

¹ Colossians 1:13

4. One Mind

I grew up on ships for four years, from the age of four to eight. These ships were part of the mission that my parents served with. The express purpose of this mission, and these ships, was to make known the gospel of Jesus to all nations.

My father was a street preacher. That was his role, and how he served on these ships. When we would come to a port, a country, he would go to the streets and share the message of Jesus with people. Most times he needed a translator.

To get these ships to nations, and to get someone like my dad on the street of these nations to share the 'good news', well, it took an army of people with different callings and skills – engineers, electricians, a sea captain and officers, nurses, cooks, school teachers, cleaners, translators, and many, many people giving money to support these workers.

'Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body... If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the

body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.' (1 Corinthians 12:12-20)

The actual street preaching, in many ways, was a speartip of the purpose of this mission. But what is a speartip without the spear? Without the arm to throw it? Without the prophetic vision of where to throw it? Without the faith?

When it comes to the mission of Jesus it is one – to know God and make him known. To share the ***'gospel of peace'***,¹ the message of repentance of sin and faith in Jesus, with the nations, as the Spirit leads. We who are saved and safe within this kingdom, live to enjoy it, rest in it, and bring people into it. This is our one mission as a family of God.

'Jesus said, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'" (Mark 16:15)

But like the one destination of a ship on a voyage, it takes many people doing many different things to get to that one destination. We are a body of Christ. We live to know God and make him known. We work together, in our different callings, to accomplish this mission.

What's your part in the mission? At what doorposts do you serve, to point people through the 'door' of Christ?

¹ Ephesians 6:15

Are you active in a local church, and its reach to the lost?

(For more on your calling in the body of Christ, please do check out a short book called, **'PURPOSE'**, available free on the website and the APP. Look under the BOOKS tab at www.1peter1three.weebly.com)

5. Another Brick in the Wall

'It was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from your empty way of life... but with the precious blood of Christ.' (1 Peter 1:18-19)

At times I get overwhelmed at the battle we are in to make Jesus known. If I'm honest, I sometimes feel it is so much work – too much work - to gain even one step with a person.

I feel like year after year, people I know don't seem to change, or come into a 'revelation' of Jesus Christ. No matter how much people love on them, pray, witness... it can sometimes feel like nothing changes.

Do you ever feel this? I do quite often!

Now, the truth *is* different. The truth is that much is changing. I just don't really perceive it. I'm looking for a crossing of a line that I define. I'm looking for a clear profession of faith, *'I was blind but now I see!'* It is OK to want this, but I do need to mature in 'seeing' change.

The Scripture above – 1 Peter 1:18-19 – is good for me, sobering for me. This battle we're in is a deep and dark battle. The treasure – the vision of Christ as God and Savior – was a hard-won treasure. It drips with blood. People see this vision of truth – you and me – because our eyes are ***'blessed'***:

'Blessed are your eyes because they see...'
(Matthew 13:16)

'The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you.'
(vs.11)

What we see is not easy to see. It takes a miracle of God for the eyes of our hearts to be open. It takes the testimony of both the Holy Spirit and of people like you and me:

'The Holy Spirit will testify to me, and you also must testify...' (John 15:26-27)

It takes prayer for people – that mysterious relationship and speaking with God on behalf of people he loves. Jesus prays for you. The Holy Spirit prays for you. And we are called to pray for others.

'The Spirit intercedes for us... Christ Jesus is also interceding for us.' (Romans 8:26,34)

Sometimes when I go to bed, and feel like I want to do more, reach further, for the kingdom, I remember that on my bed, with the energy I have left, I can think and pray for people. I can pray on my bed and change the world, change history.

'On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.'
(Psalm 63:6)

People have shared with me moments in their lives that have cracked open their hearts to faith. They are not there yet, but some light has broken in. One guy, an agnostic and long-time friend, found himself at his son's bedside in hospital. While sitting there, his child asleep, he picked up and read a Christian essay, written for the unbeliever. At the end of the essay it encouraged the reader to pray to Jesus. It said that this would help, and that the reader would feel the presence of Jesus. My friend said he did this and cannot deny that he felt a peace come over him, that he felt *'better'*. He told me that if he is honest with himself, he just cannot deny this experience, and has to add it to his reckonings of 'truth' as he continues to search.

So what we see here is a moment where God knocked a brick out of his wall of resistance, wall of darkness, and one ray of light shines through. Brick by brick a wall goes up, and brick by brick a wall can come down. We need to heed the lead of the Spirit in our lives – to pray, to share, to give, to believe – and the Lord will use our faith and action to dismantle darkness in people's lives, brick by brick. We may not be present when the wall actually falls, and a person comes to full revelation of Jesus Christ, but we can be part of demolishing darkness in their life, brick by brick, or building truth in their life, brick by brick.

'We do not wage war the way the world does. Our weapons are not of this world. We have

devine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive thoughts and make them subject to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Remember, friends, our truth is one of revelation, not reason. We most often demolish a stronghold in a person by love, and not answers, by kindness and not trivia. Jesus said his words were ***‘spirit and life’***. (John 6:63) His revelation – the truth of Jesus Christ as Lord – can be offensive to those who seek answers, who ask for proof to the human mind.

‘We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to people who look for intelligent reasoning and others who look for signs. But for us, people who are being saved, this revelation of Jesus is God’s reasoning, is God’s sign!’ (1 Corinthians 1:22-24)¹

When speaking with people, dealing with people, use the language of God, which is not always words. It might be, led by the Spirit, letting them have the last word and not saying any more. This silence could be the space the Holy Spirit uses to speak to their hearts, the ‘word’ that actually cracks a stronghold in their heart.²

¹ Here I have interpreted these 2 verses, rather than directly quoted from a translation. See Nehemiah 8:8.

² At times God leads us to not speak, as part of his plan for ultimate reach. See Acts 16:6 and Matthew 16:20.

I've experienced promptings from the Holy Spirit to not speak, or not debate something, more as a way to give *my* heart and mind some rest in the battle, '**laying a table before me in the presence of my enemies.**' (Psalm 23:5; Isaiah 30:15)

I remember when I was in my final year of high school in Ireland, around 1992-3. I had just started following the Lord, shared this with those around me, and as a result lost pretty much my whole group of friends.¹ I remember one day eating lunch on my own, and a guy I had known for six years, one of the group I was now distanced from, came and sat by me and said, '*You know, when I was about twelve years old I went on a Christian camp.*'

This led us to discuss the Lord, and he ended up coming to some Bible studies at our church, and some Sunday morning services. What struck me about this experience is that I had never known this about this guy, until I had started following Jesus. When I identified with the Lord, and engaged the battle, so to speak, it is *then* the Lord allowed me to access some of the spiritual things going on in those around me. And why would they have shared this with me when I was not living for the Lord? And why would the Lord have shared this with me when I was not doing his work?

¹ A little more on my personal story in '**Alone With God**', under the BOOKS tab at 1peter1three.weebly.com

But when we do engage the battle of living for the Lord and living to advance his kingdom (***'Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'***¹) we are very much part of laying bricks of truth, and knocking out bricks of falsehood, in people's spiritual lives and journey.

I was recently in a café waiting in line to order. I shared a verse card with a guy standing behind me, *'Hey! Here's a little card of encouragement I like to share with people!'* He took it, and we chatted briefly. The guy behind him approached me as I left the café, and said he wanted to share something with me, as he had seen me share my card in the line.

This guy said he had recently been at a 20-year high school reunion. A girl from his class approached him, and said, *'Hey, aren't you Daniel?'* He said yes. She said, *'Let me share something with you quickly. I remember you used to sit alone at lunch but you would be reading your Bible. Well, after graduating high school, my dad left my mom and me. It was a tough time for us. I mentioned to my mom one day that I used to see a guy at school read his Bible at lunch. I told my mom that if reading the Bible helped him, it might help us, too. So she and I started to read the Bible, which led us to go to a local church. Not long after we became Christians.'*

¹ Matthew 6:9-13

This story impacted me so much. It impacted Daniel, also, and he felt led to share this with me at the café – and which I'm now sharing with you. He had seen that I was sowing seed, and he wanted to let me know that you just never do know where and how that seed might take root and grow.

I love this picture, this short parable, of Jesus:

'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.' (Mark 4:26-29)

Let me finish this section with one more story, an experience my father had about a year ago. My father now lives in Ireland, but in the early 1970s he and my mother were serving on missions in Beirut, Lebanon. That is, in fact, where my older brother and sister were born.

While living there, my father would sometimes hand out tracts at the local bus station. Fast forward to 2020 and my dad receives a call from a man in Ireland, looking to meet up for coffee. My dad meets with this man, and he shares with my father that he had received an Arabic tract from him at that bus station fifty years earlier,

and when he read it on the bus it began his journey of seeking and finding Jesus Christ. He became a Christian, and now shares his story with many. He said he had always wondered if he might track down my dad who first gave him that piece of literature about Jesus.

'Without faith it is impossible to please God.'
(Hebrews 11:6) We are called to live by faith and not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7) We walk with Jesus by faith, and by the lead of the Spirit we minister Jesus through love, action and testimony about him. (Romans 10:9,14-15,17)

Every seed you sow, in faith and in action and in word, is seen by God and will be rewarded by God. Every seed you sow is part of the construction of the eternal kingdom, the one that will be revealed one day, and the only one that will be left standing.¹

'No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light.'
(1 Corinthians 3:11-13)

'Here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.'
(Hebrews 13:14)

¹ Hebrews 12:28

6. The Unseen

Jesus told us that the greatest in his kingdom was the servant of all. (Matthew 23:11)

Servants in his day were truly 'unseen' peoples. That is why his miracle of turning water to wine, only seen by the kitchen servants, is an amazing thing.¹ Jesus esteemed the servants' esteem. He valued their approval and acceptance, so to speak. And then he went on to say so powerfully:

'I have come not to be served, but to serve.'
(Matthew 20:28)

And as noted above, ***'The greatest among you is the servant of all.'*** (Matthew 23:11)

Three times in Matthew chapter six, Jesus says that our Father in heaven, who is unseen, sees what you and I do ***'in secret'***, and will reward us. (Matthew 6:4,6,18)

God has put eternity in our hearts – which is far more vast than the time or expanse we have here on earth. And God tells us that it is the heart – not the appearance – that he is concerned with.² In a sense, what goes on in our hearts and minds, in spirit and in secret, is a much greater universe of reality than what goes on in the visible, physical realm.

¹ John 2:1-12

² Ecclesiastes 3:11; 1 Samuel 16:7

We live most of our lives alone. Well, alone with God. And God is most concerned with the integrity of this quiet place, this 'alone' space, than with what we 'do' or show in practical ways. He values what happens in the heart, what comes from there.

This is why Jesus taught us that murder and calling someone a 'fool' are in the same realm of judgment, because words and actions flow from the heart. A hateful heart is the source of both the curse, '*Fool!*' and the blow that kills.¹ God meets us in our hearts, and tells us to guard it above all things. (Proverbs 4:23)

Walking with God and honoring God are the same. Most of our 'walk' with God is in secret, and most of our honoring God is in secret – *guarding our hearts, turning our eyes away from sin, thinking on truth and not lies, praying, pondering.* This spirit outworking of a true faith is far more invested, time wise, when we are alone, not out on mission.

Yes, mission matters! Witnessing matters. I am a 'mission man', so to speak. This is why I have had to learn the hard way. I have put much value on words spoken for Jesus, things done for Jesus – all of which is true. But I have overlooked things that my eyes can't see. I have, as it were, lived by sight and not faith, when it

¹ Matthew 5:21-22

comes to judging my self and others. God does not work like this.

I have also experienced the 'judgment' of other 'mission men'. It is a cold and discouraging experience. On this note, if a person of 'outreach' makes you feel like you are not doing enough, or radical enough, don't heed them. They are immature in their understanding of God's ways and how the body of Christ works. (1 Corinthians 12) Don't let the enemy discourage you.

We looked at this Scripture in chapter 1, but let's look at it again. Paul is being 'judged' by Christians, and undermined in his own call and gifting. Rather than busying himself with trying to get their 'approval' (which is what I'm tempted to do when I feel people looking down on me, or judging me), Paul says:

'I care very little if I am judged by you [Christians] or by any secular court. Indeed I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not mean I'm innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.'

(1 Corinthians 4:3-4)

Paul gets his eyes off people here, and raises the bar for all of us. He almost creates a whole new sphere of 'judgment', saying that he doesn't even judge himself! He simply states that he is at peace in his understanding of his walk and work in Jesus, and he will answer to the Lord for it.

Not to you, not to me, but to the Lord.

I think we can all find this platform – the one Paul is standing on here – if we are sincere in pursuing Christ in our lives. Christ will lead us and give us discernment. There will be believers we feel give us good counsel and guidance. But there may be others we feel are legalistic, heavy, a little ‘judgey’. We are called to **‘practice discerning good and evil.’** (Hebrews 5:14) So as you read the Scriptures, worship the Lord with the saints, and seek his way and will in your life, use the spiritual discernment that God is awakening in your soul. God speaks to you through people, but he also speaks directly to you.

‘Jesus said, ‘My sheep know my voice.’
(John 10:27)

‘Jesus said, ‘The Holy Spirit will teach you all things, and call to your mind things I have taught.’ (John 14:26)

You will grow in this as you spend more time walking with Jesus – like we all grow in any relationship. We get to know a person better, their ‘word’ better, their ways better, and so we have better discernment on their ‘voice’.

I want to end this section – and this short book – just encouraging you that God sees you in the ‘secret place’. He is honored by that deep love you have of Jesus, and your sincere

commitment to him. This is everything! This is why he died, to give you that light in your soul. As God leads and opens doors for you to pray for people, to share with people, to smile and encourage people, he sees and he will reward. Your part in the body is as important as that of a prophet!

‘Jesus said, ‘Among those born of women, there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.’

(Matthew 11:11)

Your quiet prayers and faith move mountains. You may not see them move now, but you will see what you moved then! (1 Corinthians 3:13)

So together as a body we work for the mission of Jesus – to love him and make him known. We work together. No one more important than another. And yet the greatest of us? The least known, the least seen. (Matthew 23:11)

‘The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’... On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor... God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part

suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.'

(1 Corinthians 12:21-27)

'I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.'

(Ezekiel 22:30)

Thank you for taking time to read this book. I hope it encouraged you!

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