

The Sin of Presumption

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Genesis 12:6-20

God had instructed Abraham to step out in faith and journey to a land that He would show him. God expected Him to keep walking until He told Him to stop. God would tell him when he arrived at the place that He had appointed for Abraham to be. In Genesis 12:7, God removes all doubt and confusion for Abraham by telling him, *“This is the land!”* Recorded in Genesis 12:8, is Abraham’s response to God’s announcement: first, he begins to settle in and set up his home; second, he builds an altar and worships God, *“He called on the Name of the Lord.”* As a result of Abraham’s obedience, his knowledge of God and his fellowship with God began to increase.

However, Abraham made a profound mistake between the altars of Genesis 12:8 and Genesis 13:4. He reacted to the famine that had swept through the land and decided to travel south to Egypt to find provision. Abraham decided to try to solve his problem of acquiring provisions on his own terms; and in doing so, he found far more than provision ... he found trouble.

Learning to Wait on God

In Genesis 12:9, we read of Abraham’s restlessness. He decided to move ahead instead of standing still in the will of God and trusting God to provide for him. He chose to leave the place where God had appointed him to be. He kept drifting south, towards Egypt, until he had drifted completely out of the will of God.

What a dramatic contrast between Abraham and Moses in their reactions to adversity. After being set free from Egypt, Moses found himself facing the Red Sea with the Egyptians rapidly closing in behind him. Moses chose to stand still and wait on God to deliver him in Exodus 14:13-14, *And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”* In other words, Moses was saying to the Israelites, *“Quit whining and watch God work!”*

The problem with us is that we don’t do the “waiting on God” thing very well. There are times that we can’t see any evidence that God is addressing our needs; therefore, we assume that God has failed us, that He has abandoned us, or that He simply doesn’t care enough to help us. How very wrong we are for assuming such things! The Word states something all together different when it comes to the Lord’s compassion and faithfulness towards us. We need to stand still in our faith and wait on God. The Psalmist very simply declares in Psalm 46:10, *“Be still and know that I am God.”*

In order for us to stand firm in our faith, we must make a non-negotiable decision regarding the integrity of God’s Word and the faithfulness of God in keeping His Word. We need to make a decision ... either the promises of God are true and apply to us today, or they are nothing more than enticing lies.

If He didn't mean what He said in Hebrews 13:5,
"I will never leave you nor forsake you,"
then what did He mean?

If He didn't mean what He said in Matthew 28:20,
"I am with you always,"
then what did He mean?

If He didn't mean what He said in Philippians 4:19,
"My God shall supply all of your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus,"
then what did He mean?

If He didn't mean what He said in Isaiah 43:2,
"When you walk through the fire (adversity), you shall not be burned (harmed or destroyed),"
then what did He mean?

We need to decide what we really believe about God and His Word. Once our decision is made, then we must stand in faith while we wait on God to address our situation.

Don't Assume You Have All the Answers

If we choose not to wait on God and take matters into our own hands to solve our problems, we will more often than not, commit a sin of presumption. There is a dramatic example of the sin of presumption found in the story of the battle at a little town called Ai. When conquering the city of Jericho, Joshua followed the instructions given to him by the Lord as to how the battle was to be fought. There had never been a battle plan like this one, and there hasn't been one like it since. The Lord told Joshua and the Israelites to walk in silence around the walls of the city once a day, for seven days. Then on the seventh day, they were to march around the walls seven times. They were then told to face the wall and shout at the end of the seventh lap! History records the great victory won that day at Jericho.

After Jericho was conquered, the Israelites moved on to take the little town of Ai. When the dust settled from this battle, Israel, not Ai, had been defeated! Joshua was stunned by the defeat and asked God why they had lost the battle at Ai. God told him they had lost the battle because the people had not done what He had told them. They had sinned against Him by taking the spoils of the city for themselves and assuming that there would be no penalty for their disobedience. Compounding their transgression was the fact that, when the spies returned with their report and suggestions for how to defeat the people of Ai, Joshua issued his battle commands. The problem with Joshua's commands was that he had failed to ask God for His plans. Joshua tried to fight today's battle with yesterday's battle plans. Joshua learned the hard way that yesterday's instructions do not apply to today's battle.

We are quick to judge the Israelites, but we do the same thing. We see how God leads us to address a situation and then we assume that we are to address all similar situations in the future in the same way. God gives us a key to victory in a particular situation and we assume that we are now the "lord of the key ring." We become consumed by trying to make one key fit all problems. We further complicate our problems by assuming that the "key" God gave us to fix our problem, will automatically fix everyone else's problems as well. It is as if we are saying to

those in need of God's guidance: "This worked for me so follow my pattern if you want your problem fixed." Isn't this a strange reaction? This reaction would be like us being foolish enough to try to navigate around a strange city using a 40-year-old map.

You Will Never Outgrow Your Need for God

We will never outgrow our need to seek God for our daily guidance and provision. Even though we are maturing in the things of God, we will always be a "child" in need of God. Our God is a deliverer! However, don't make the mistake of assuming that He will use the same strategies that He may have used in the past to deliver us out of our problems. His desire is that we fully rely on Him each day, and in each circumstance, without making assumptions concerning His Divine guidance. The Psalmist David prayed constantly that the Lord would keep him from sins of presumption: "*Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer*" (Psalm 19:13-14).

Walking by faith, in the will of God, is a daily exercise that does not make room for our assumptions. We must daily seek the Lord for His wisdom. We must seek His opinion on all matters of our lives.

We need daily provision, so, let's ask the Lord to ...

"Give us this day our daily bread."

We need daily guidance, so, let's ask the Lord to direct us ...

"The steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord."

We need answers to our prayers, so, let's ask the Lord to speak to us ...

"Call to Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things that you do not know."

We need daily instruction, so, let's ask the Lord to teach us ...

"Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart."

TRUST GOD ...

Don't Forget You Are His Child!

WAIT ON GOD ...

Don't Try to Solve Your Problems On Your Own!

ASK GOD ...

Don't Assume You Know What to Do Next!

BELIEVE GOD ...

Don't Doubt His Word or His Faithfulness!