

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

What Does the Owner Want: "Getting Directions from the Owner" (Part 2)

In this lesson you will be challenged to look around to those other believers in your life as mouthpieces of the Owner guiding you and directing you on what He wants you to do with the property He has entrusted to you.

In part one of Getting Directions from the Owner, we considered how to get directions from God for how He to manage what He has entrusted to us – by getting regularly and deeply into His Word and getting His Word regularly into us. In this second lesson, we are going to unpack how God gets His directions to us through other people. This is a very powerful and effective way God directs us *if* we desire and expect to hear from Him through others. Let's consider three different groups of people who God regularly uses to give us His stewards directions.

We Need to be Hearing from Those Who are Over Us

(We all need to have at least one Paul in our life – someone who is a spiritual mentor to us.)

God has set spiritual leaders and authorities over all of us to protect and guide us in how to successfully live the life of a good and faithful steward. Your pastor, elders, your employer, the police and government officials – all have been placed over us for our benefit. God places these people in our lives to serve as “guardrails” to keep us from veering off course physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Here is the question I think we all need to ask, “Do I believe my Owner can speak to me through those He has placed in authority over me?” For example, when your minister or pastor teaches, do you take it as a word from the Owner? Or are you more like those James mentions in James 1:22-25, where he writes

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.”

Solomon observes in Proverbs 11:14, “Where no counsel is, the people fall: But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” God puts people over us to protect us and direct us.

Hebrews 13:17 adds, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.”

Are you allowing those who are over you to be the voice of God giving you directions?

We Need to be Hearing from Those Who are Beside Us

(We all need to have at least one Barnabas in our lives – someone who is our spiritual peer.)

The need for peer accountability in the Christian life is massive. I am convinced that a person without at least one Barnabas-like peer in his or her life is an accident waiting to happen.

Men, here is an important lesson that men only seem to be able to learn the hard way. Here is that lesson: If you are not listening to the counsel of your godly wife, you are likely not listening to the voice of God. (You see, it is a hard one!) Many older men have shared how many times over their married lives they have ignored their wife's counsel or concerns only to painfully realize later, to their dismay, she was right and they should have listened. And they end up with a mess on their hands they now have to clean up. One man told me, "I have finally come to the point that I don't even debate with my wife anymore. I simply gladly accept her counsel." Listen, "Happy is the man who hears the voice of God through his wife and doesn't proceed unless both of them are in agreement with the direction the Owner wants them to go."

One Christian leader shared, "I have a number of men in my life that I have given veto power over me. And I know that God has spoken to me through these men on many occasions and given me guidance and directions that I would not have, on my own, figured out or followed."

It takes most of us some time to finally realize that we have blind spots. And frequently, we have several major blind spots and there are some situations and perspectives that we simply cannot see no matter how hard we may try. So, to protect ourselves from hurting ourselves and hurting others we care about due to these blind spots, we need to surround ourselves with godly peers and trust God to use them to tell us His will and give us His directives. We can and will hear from God quite often through all these peer relationships if we are willing to listen.

So, here is the question. Who is the Barnabas, the peer in your life who you allow God to speak through to communicate to you and give you His directions? Who is standing beside you?

We Need to be Hearing from Those Who are Under Us

(We all need to have at least one Timothy in our lives – someone who we are mentoring.)

Do you have a Timothy in your life? Someone you are pouring your life and knowledge and wisdom into - trying to help them be good stewards of what the Lord has entrusted to them?

If you are a parent, you sure do, even if you are a parent of adult children. If you are a grandparent, you sure do. If you are an employer, you sure do. If you are a Sunday school teacher or small group leader, you sure do. If you are a pastor or elder, you sure do.

If you have anyone under your leadership or authority, you have probably already realized that God can and does communicate very clearly to us through those who are under us.

One mother shared this story of how she heard the voice of God coming out of the mouth of her child

“When our oldest daughter, Bethany, was very young. She had a terrible headache. Being such a compassionate person, I asked her if she wanted mommy to give her some Tylenol to make her headache go away. Bethany said softly as she laid in bed, “No mommy, just pray.” Humbled by her childlike faith, I prayed and in a matter of minutes Bethany was asleep. God through Bethany had reminded me to go to Him first.”

One father shared this memory:

“I remember when my second daughter was about to get engaged to a young man, who at the time I was not at all thrilled about. (I will tell you that I am now thrilled with him!) I remember as I was expressing my concerns about their potential engagement, Anna asked me, “Dad, did you raise me to make good decisions?” I said, “Yes, of course I did.” “Then”, she replied, “are you are going to trust me to make a good decision for a husband or not?” I heard the voice of God coming out of her mouth. She was definitely right and I was definitely wrong. She did make a great decision.”

Each of you likely has some stories of how God has spoken to you through those that are under you. Let’s remember what David said in Psalm 8:2 and Jesus later repeated, “*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.*” If we are not consciously expecting to hear the voice of God from those who are under us, we are going to miss a lot of God’s directions for us.

If we really want to get directions for our lives from our Owner, we need to be open and ready to hear from Him through from those who are over us, those who are beside us and those who are under us. You can be sure He is continuously talking to us through them. The question is, “Are we even listening?”

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. What is your initial reaction to the message of this lesson?
2. Read Proverbs 11:14 and Hebrews 13:17 and then discuss the idea that God puts people over us to protect us and direct us.
3. Share who are the people in your life who you are over you and through whom you allow God to communicate to you (give you directions). Share an example of how God used one of these authorities to tell you what you should do.
4. Is there anyone in your life for whom you have given “veto” power over you? Why or why not?
5. Share who are the peers in your life you have surrounded yourself with through whom you allow God to speak to you and hold you accountable.
6. Share one of your blind spots and an example of how God used one of your peers to help you see the matter or situation in a way that you were unable to see it. Share how this clearer insight/understanding from a peer allowed you to respond in a way that was different than you would have otherwise responded.
7. Share who are the people in your life who are under your spiritual oversight. What active spiritual role are you playing in their lives?
8. Share an example of how God has communicated to you through someone who you are over.
9. Why do you think we don't hear from God more often than we do through those in our lives who are over us, beside us and under us?
10. What is going to change in your life because of what you have learned in this lesson?