

RELEASING CONTROL

This is a tough one. You want to know when to let God take the reins. What does this mean or look like practically. This sermon didn't come together quickly. It's a serious question and I want to answer it truthfully and wisely (Lord helping). There are questions I know some of you have had: Should I take this job? Should we move? Should I marry this person? Do we have kids? What's going to happen on this phone call? Do I go with this or that doctor? Should I let my kid do this or that? On and on they go.

I'd like to walk you through my thought process this past week.

Here's my understanding:

- The Father exists and is worthy of our love.
- The Son is real and died/rose for us.
- The Spirit provides guidance.
 - The Bible gives examples for our instruction. It teaches general principles and proverbial. It's not that the Bible doesn't guide. We don't know what's going on behind the curtains like others in the past.
 - God doesn't speak to you like Moses, and Jesus won't tell you what's around the corner in your life.
- Our top priority should be to serve God and transform into the image of Christ.
- Material and physical success is fleeting. Money may come and go, but it won't go with you. We will all die, sooner or later.
- Then there's all the stuff in between :)
 - Should I take this job? Should we move? Should I marry this person? Do we have kids? Do I answer that call? Do I make that call? Do I go with this doctor or that doctor? Should I let my kid do this or that? Should I join this church or not? On and on they go.
 - We know that our relationship with God is, in all practical terms, a two-way street. We cannot bring to the table what He does, but . . .
 - God can be found, but you must seek.
 - He will knock. You must answer.
 - He will lead. You must follow.
 - He will renew. You must receive.
 - He will provide. But you must work.
 - And on it goes.

So, considering the "big picture," here are some thoughts:

- I. Act based on what's available to you through prayer, study, and counsel (James 1:5; 1 Cor. 2:16; Proverbs 15:22)
 - A. Perhaps ignorance is the issue. You'll find out you're trying to hold on to something you shouldn't because it doesn't please God.
 - B. Perhaps someone has been through it before. Perhaps God will even send them your way!
 - C. Pray for wisdom. Always give yourself the ability to reevaluate later.
 1. Example: For us, it may be something like homeschooling. There are pros and cons to it all. If we need to change course later on, that's fine. Keep a "Lord willing" mindset. You do not have control over tomorrow. You make plans, "Lord willing."

D. Control your attitude, effort, and focus. If you believe it's the best choice available, then execute. "Keep your eye on the ball," put in the work, and keep things in perspective.

1. Remember, if you have a part to play, do it now while you can. Some people foolishly give their control to others. Your kids, for example, may be at a public school or at home, but either way, put the work in. You can't just lay back and check out.
2. This is especially true in areas you know are big picture. You need to do your part regarding your spiritual well-being and your family. There may be multiple options, but keep sight of the goal. Like losing weight, for example, many of us need more time to become health experts. Figure out what you're gonna do and stick to it. The goal is to be healthy. We've talked about regret lately. Let's do our best to prevent decisions we regret later on. I prefer preventative over reactive healthcare, but I'll take reactive if needed. Know what I mean?
 - a) Remember, your kids are only young once. Your wife will enjoy looking back at the childbearing years and seeing your helping hands. Your aging parents can only be cared for for a season. As Jesus said, there was a time to walk while the light was among His disciples. Jesus told them to do so, "lest darkness overtake you." Do it while you can. There would be a time to mourn for Him, but it hadn't yet come for His disciples.

II. Trust that it will be okay (2 Cor. 12:9)

A. What if it doesn't work out the way you wanted it to?

1. God may open another door in His time.
2. God may allow something to have lasting consequences, but that doesn't mean your soul is in jeopardy.

III. Perspective (Matthew 6:25-34)

A. What are you most worried about?

1. Sometimes, you are controlling things that need to be let go because they're not a high priority.
 - a) If the stressor doesn't affect your walk with the Lord (or someone else's soul), you need to let it go. God has already promised to provide the basic needs as we seek His Kingdom first.
 - b) Even if the stress is over someone else's soul, we must remember that God does not force people into His kingdom. At the end of the day, your number one priority should be to serve the Lord and trust in Him. If others won't do so, that's on them. Like the prodigal father. What else is he supposed to do? Those are hard times that call for us to trust in God.
 - c) So, ask, "What am I struggling with releasing control of." You could focus on the wrong kingdom. Maybe you spend too much time and energy on the wrong thing, and it's time to release control. Do it now rather than later. Again, it would help if you didn't experience pain and regret. There is always a "yes" in Christ.

B. Would knowing the future guarantee success? (Luke 22:31-34)

1. Jesus told Peter what he'd do, but Peter still denied Him three times.
 - a) Even if you knew, you might still struggle with letting go. We want to make sure our hearts are ready for whatever may come.
2. What would you tell your younger self if you couldn't share what would come?
 - a) I'd tell myself to study, seek counsel, and be patient.
 - b) I'd tell myself that, ultimately, it would be okay as long as I kept the faith.