



DUNDEE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Building... Faith... Together

*"God,
What would You want
to do through me?"*



Devotional Journal

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horizons
STEWARDSHIP

DAY ONE

They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large.

Numbers 13:27-28

We're doing what? Haven't you read the headlines? Haven't you seen the news? How can we even think about having a stewardship campaign in this kind of an economy? You must be nuts. It doesn't require a great deal of imagination to think that some of the same comments were being made to Moses after the return of the spies from their visit to the Promised Land. Even without headlines screaming disaster and 24 hour news trumpeting crisis after crisis; one can almost imagine the people of Israel saying some of the very same things. You want us to do what? You expect us to go into that land with those giants and those walls and forts. You're crazy!

Then, as well as now, the issue is the same: Faith or Fear. There is the voice of the great tempter shouting to us words of fear; you can't, you mustn't, what if. But that is not the only voice. If we take the time to be quiet, to turn off the news, to put down the newspaper we will hear another voice, the voice of One who owns all of the cattle on the hillside; the voice of One who is the great I Am, not the small and insignificant what if.

The question, of course, becomes, which voice will we listen to? One wise pastor said that every church has two basic committees; a Back to Egypt committee ruled by fear and anxiety and an Into the Promised Land committee ruled by faith and hope. Which committee will you serve?

Remember, God isn't asking for a decision about giving today. He is only asking you to listen to His voice.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. When have I listened to the voice of fear over faith? What were the results?
2. When have I listened to the voice of faith over fear? What were the results?

PRAYER

Thank You, God, for Your calming voice of faith and hope in the midst of a world filled with fear and anxiety. Help me in the days that lie ahead to take time and listen for Your voice. Give me the courage to stand on the side of faith and hope rather than fear and doubt, Amen.

DAY TWO

Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and see this great sight and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

Exodus 3:3-4

A murderer, a runaway, a shepherd, yet called by God to be one of history's greatest leaders. As this stewardship adventure begins there may have been no burning bush or voice from God, unless you count the call from your pastor, one of the directors, or an invitation to a campaign event. And yet make no mistake, no matter your background; you have been called by God to be part of this exciting adventure of faith. Just as God chose Moses, you have been chosen. Can you imagine that possibility? Can you begin to even consider that your participation in this adventure is not simply random chance, not simply a last gasp attempt to raise money? Can you believe God chose you; God called you?

Her name was Brenda. She was not the first choice of anyone for her particular position on the campaign leadership team. By all accounts, except God's, Brenda was a "last resort." As the campaign developed Brenda became a driving force, not due to influence or power but simply due to her quiet willingness to listen to the voice of God. As Brenda listened and opened her heart to God she became a powerful witness to God's love and mercy. And, out of a profound sense of gratitude, Brenda made one of the lead gifts to her church's capital campaign.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Do I believe that God has called me to be part of this adventure?
2. Will I take the time to listen to the voice of God in the midst of this adventure?
3. Will I be willing to say yes to the call of God?

PRAYER

Thank You, Lord, for calling me to be a part of this adventure in faith. Help me to be open to Your voice, to listen to Your call and to finally discern Your will for my life. "Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee." I now pray for the rest of my church family, help us to be open to Your voice, to listen to Your call, to discern Your will for our lives. I pray in the name of Christ, Amen.

DAY THREE

But Moses said to the Lord, "Oh my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

Exodus 4:10

Even though called by God, even hearing the voice of God from the midst of a burning bush, Moses was filled with doubts and questions. In chapters three and four of Exodus, Moses offers to God no fewer than four questions or doubts: Who am I to go; who shall I say has sent me; what if they don't believe me; and finally, his slowness of speech. In each case, each question, each doubt, God provided the way. God provided the answer.

This same dynamic applies to our call to give. Everyone has a multitude of reasons to not give. There is no good time for a stewardship campaign. There is always something else, a new car, a re-modeled house, braces for the kids, college to save for, and retirement to worry about. And yet as God calls us to give, as God asks us to be generous, if we listen, if we are open, God also provides the way.

Terry wept at the possibility that she might not be able to give what she thought would be a generous gift. She was faced with braces, college and a cut in her husband's pay. As she prayed about how to respond to her church's campaign, she became aware of ways in which she could give with generosity and joy. Terry began with all the reasons she couldn't give but, through prayer, discovered the joy of generosity. She responded out of a sense of gratitude for God's generosity rather than her fear of scarcity. When God calls, God also provides.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What are my reasons or doubts for not fully participating in this stewardship campaign?
2. How has God provided for me in the past, even when I have had doubts?
3. Can I be open to God and trust that as He calls He also provides?

PRAYER

Oh God, You know the many reasons I have for not wanting to serve, for not wanting to be generous. Help me to know in my heart that You have brought me to this time and this place and You will provide what I need to accomplish Your task. Help me, Oh God, to have an open heart, open eyes and open hands. I pray through Christ, Amen.

DAY FOUR

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." . . . And Abram said, "O Lord God what will you give me, for I continue childless. . ." He (God) brought him (Abram) outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." And he believed the Lord...

Genesis 15:1, 3, 5, 6

As golden sunlight slowly fades into the grayness of twilight, so the promise made years ago seems faded and distant. Abram had believed, had given up his home and traveled to a distant, unknown land all because of a promise. Excitement and enthusiasm have been replaced by questions and doubt.

On this journey of faith there will be times when excitement and enthusiasm are long forgotten; times when faith seems overwhelmed by questions and doubt. How does God respond? What does He ask? "Go outside Abram, count the stars, remember the vision, remember the promise." Just as we affirmed yesterday that this campaign is God's campaign, so too, we affirm that the vision comes not as the result of a board vote but instead is rooted and grounded in the promise of God. In the midst of our doubts, in the midst of wondering, "Will this really happen?", God invites us to count the stars, to remember the faces of the children, young people, families and elderly that will be touched because of what we are doing. Remember what this campaign is about; not buildings or bricks, dollars and cents; we are fulfilling God's promise and vision for ministry and mission. Remember, count the stars!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Have I lost any of my original enthusiasm?
2. Do I believe in the vision?
3. What does God truly want from my church, this campaign and my life?

PRAYER

Dear God, I admit that sometimes I forget. Sometimes I get so caught up in the work that I forget the promise and the vision. Help me, Lord, to take the time to remember and like Abram to once again believe. In the name of Christ, Amen.

DAY FIVE

Then Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

Joshua 3:5

Finally, they were nearly there. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, after being so close and then being told they weren't ready, after so many false starts, and so many disappointments, they were on the verge of their heart's desire -- the Promised Land. And yet, even as they stood on the banks of the Jordan, gazing into the Promised Land, their hearts were undoubtedly filled with a mixture of joy, fear, excitement and anxiety. After all, the leader who had led them out of Egypt and through the wilderness; the leader who brought them God's word, the leader who time after time interceded with God on their behalf, their leader, Moses, was now dead. How could they do it? How would they manage? "Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

Perhaps some of the initial excitement of being a part of the campaign has evaporated. Perhaps, like the people of Israel, we wonder, "How can we do it? How will we manage?" Or perhaps the question is more personal, "How can I do my task? How can I give a generous and sacrificial gift?" God's response is the same. "Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders." To sanctify simply means to set apart for a holy purpose. We are called to set our lives, our church, this campaign and ourselves apart for God's use and God's purpose. Can we begin to set apart: our lives, our homes, our families, and our income, to be used by God and for God? If we can, then truly, "tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Am I beginning to experience any doubts or questions about our church, our campaign or my involvement?
2. Are there parts of my life that I am holding back from giving to God?
3. How can I intentionally set my life apart to be used by God?

PRAYER

Oh Lord, give me the courage and the faith to give my life and all I have, to be used by You. Show me ways, Oh Lord, that I can set myself and my life apart for You, Amen.