

## Are You Getting in God's Way?

Key Passages: Matthew 16:13-23, Isaiah 55:8-9

**Question 1: Has there ever been a time when you truly believed you were doing the right thing, only to discover that you were wrong?**

Maybe you took on a responsibility that God had not given you, or perhaps you tried to avoid a situation He wanted to use in your life to accomplish His purpose. Even when we sincerely desire to follow the Lord, we may unknowingly veer off course and become an obstacle to His purposes. That's why it's so important to seek the Lord's guidance before we try to maneuver our way out of a difficult situation or rush in to x a problem.

**Read Matthew 16:13-23 and identify the two important truths that Jesus wanted His disciples to know.**

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

<sup>14</sup> And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

<sup>15</sup> He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

<sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>18</sup> And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

<sup>19</sup> And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

<sup>20</sup> Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

<sup>21</sup> From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

<sup>22</sup> Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

<sup>23</sup> But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan:

Peter understood the first one when he boldly proclaimed, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v. 16), but he couldn’t comprehend the second truth because it didn’t fit within his preconceived plan. The disciples had left everything to follow Jesus, not to watch Him die.

At this pivotal point in Christ’s ministry, He began to show His disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem, experience great suffering, be killed, and be raised up on the third day (vv. 21-23). To Peter, this seemed like an impossibility so he pulled Jesus aside saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You” (v. 22). But what seemed so logical to Peter resulted in a severe rebuke from Jesus, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interest, but man’s” (v. 23). Peter was actually opposing the Lord’s redemptive plan with his human reasoning.

## Question 2: **Why do we get in God’s way?**

- **We don’t understand the whole story.** The Lord’s plan is so much greater than ours because it’s a heavenly one. Although it may include hurt and hardship, it’s always the best.
- **We fail to see the cause of hurt as God’s tool to accomplish something in our lives.** When our expectations of a comfortable life are not met, we may try to change God’s plan. But He’s the One orchestrating whatever’s going on in our lives. He alone knows what’s required to make us into the people He wants us to be and exactly what will equip us to serve Him in the manner He’s planned.
- **We are ignorant of His plan.** Instead of assuming that anything hard or painful could never be a part of God’s will, we must consider that we may be exactly where we should be. The apostle Paul experienced extreme suffering as he served Christ, and Joseph was unfairly treated by his brothers and the Egyptians, yet both these men were exactly where God wanted them.

- **We are ignorant of God's ways. Isaiah 55:8-9**

<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

His will does not always include happiness, health, good times, and prosperity. The Lord doesn't think or act like we do. Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us that His thoughts and ways are much higher than ours. If we don't understand what He's doing, we may wonder how a loving God could let us experience difficult or painful situations, yet oftentimes these are exactly what He uses to shape our character into Christ's image.

- **We are prompted by sincere devotion and loyalty to intervene when someone is hurting or suffering.** It's difficult to watch people suffer, especially loved ones. Our immediate desire is to fix the situation if we can. We want God to heal every physical or emotional ailment and meet every need, but that's not always how He operates. Our protective love may actually hinder what the Lord wants to do in the other person's life. This calls for discernment because Christians should help and care for one another, yet our priority is to follow God's will. We can't rescue everyone from trouble, but we can help them by seeking the Lord on their behalf.
- **We have a strong tendency to take up another's offense.** When we see someone being mistreated or misused, we may want to do whatever we can to right the wrong, but the Lord could be working in that person's life through the unfair situation. If we get between God and what He is doing in someone else, He then has to deal with us before He can achieve His purpose in the other person's life.
- **We interfere because of our selfishness.** When Peter denied Jesus three times, he was thinking about his own safety. Being in the center of God's will requires that we deny ourselves. We must be willing to let Him use painful and difficult situations to sift and sand us into Christ's likeness.

### **Personal Considerations**

Can you think of any ways you may have gotten in God's way? What happened as a result? What did you learn from these experiences?