

How You Can Hinder God

I was recently recalling an occasion in my life when I spent a lot of time and effort trying to fix a situation in my own strength. The outcome, as you can probably imagine, was a disaster. My ideas, my wisdom, my experience and my advice were so filled with my own fleshly desire to see quick resolution of conflict and peace prevail that, to my shame, I neglected the kingdom purposes of God ... and indeed, God Himself.

Dallas Willard has stated in *Hearing God*: "There is no avoiding the fact that we live at the mercy of our ideas. This is never more true than with our ideas about God. Meaning well is not enough. Those who operate on the wrong information are likely never to know the reality of God's presence in the decisions which shape their lives and will miss the constant divine companionship for which their souls were made."

These words brought up the memory above, and, although I made a mess of things with my efforts alone, I am more than thankful that God has forgiven my lack of pressing into Him for His counsel, peace and purposes for the situation I was attempting to fix. There have been not-so-nice consequences for my lack of listening to the voice of God, but over time, He has worked to bring healing and restoration into the situation.

Pondering all of this, I have to ask the question: "How can I resist the urge to live at the mercy of my own good ideas about situations, people and even God?" We are responsible to handle the Word of God with accuracy: "Study to show yourself approved by God, a workman who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). If we can hear through the Spirit the accurate way to move forward, or to even stay out of the way in places where the wisdom of God is clearly needed, it seems much conflict and stress could be

avoided or diffused in Christlike ways.

In seeking the Father for answers, there came some clarity. When I am tempted to insert my will and desires into the life of another person or into a situation:

- I should first prayerfully submit my will and my desires to God. As Jesus modeled, I must only say or do what I hear God telling me to say or do. His silence should always compel me to also be silent and/or to refrain from acting.
- I should ask: Father, where are You working in the midst of this person's life/this situation to gain His insight and perspective.
- I should pray for His presence and power to be inserted into the life/situation so that He will receive honor and glory in the midst of whatever result occurs.

Now, Father, give me the strength to follow the steps You have given me so that I will press into Your presence as Your Son, Jesus Christ, always did! May I never throw myself headlong into a situation where You belong and I do not. Give me the fruit of self-control to subdue my desires to fix people and situations, allowing You to move in power and enabling Your glory to be seen. Help me, in my everyday life, to seek first the "divine companionship for which my soul was made." It is only then that I will live and move and have my being (Acts 17:28) in You alone.

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