

This False Teaching Can Slip Easily Into Your Thoughts

I don't know about you, but I can get caught believing that grace paves our way to heaven, so we don't have to do anything.

Recently, God's been showing me just how much false teaching has been slipping into my thinking.

In studying Scripture, something I had never considered before was revealed to me: Jesus frequently asked people for things.

It was as though a light-bulb went off in my head, and I started making a connection.

- Jesus asked the woman at the well for water (John 4:7-10).
- Jesus asked for His cousin John to baptize Him (Matt. 3:13-17).
- Jesus asked for Zacchaeus to come down and invite Him to his house (Luke 19:1-10).
- Jesus asked the servants to fill the water pots with water, then to take the water to the head waiter (John 2:1-11).
- Jesus asked the disciples to feed the 5,000 (Matt 14:13-21).
- Jesus asked the blind man to go wash in the pool of Siloam (John 9:1-7).
- Jesus asked for the stone to be moved and for the unwrapping of Lazarus (John 11:1-45).
- Jesus asks for material possessions, to give what one has to the poor (Matt. 19:21).

And I realized that Jesus didn't just ask for tangible things; He also asked for our personal steps of faithfulness.

I mean, Jesus is God incarnate, right? He could have done every miracle apart from us, but instead, more often, He chooses to connect the natural with the supernatural, the flawed with the forces of heaven, the faith with the Faithful One, so He could be glorified through us.

Spiritual calls in Scripture include:

- Jesus asks us to stay awake (Luke 22:46, Matt 26:40).
- Jesus asks for our burning zeal to be seen by others (Mark 4:21).
- Jesus asks for fearlessness (Mark 4:40).
- Jesus asks for us to see Him as the God of abundance (Mark 8:19-20).
- Jesus asks for us to help our neighbor and to serve (Luke 10:36, 22:27).
- Jesus asks for us to go after the lost (Luke 15:4-8).
- Jesus asks for a heart of gratitude (Luke 17:17).
- Jesus asks for prayer for justice (Luke 18:7).
- Jesus asks for an unoffendable heart (John 6:61).
- Jesus asks for relationship with Him (John 21:17).

And although our salvation isn't conditioned on what we do for God, most of us can get deceived into thinking that we never need to sacrifice to experience the fullness of His kingdom.

When Jesus started His ministry, His first words were Him asking of two things from others, *"Repent and believe in the gospel"* (Mark 1:15).

The word "repent" means to turn from our sin and go in a different direction. To "believe" means "to lean your entire weight on Him."

He is trustworthy. He is capable. He is holy. He is God. And yet, as missional women, it can be easy to get caught up in this idea that God has to do it all and we get to do nothing. And I have to admit, it can be so easy to get

deceived into believing this deception—that when we seek to advance His kingdom, “if it’s difficult, something must not be from God, God must not be in it.”

Yet, Scripture teaches us to turn from our own self-reliance, repent and lean completely on Him. And I want to have a relationship in which there is mutual dialogue, two people talking, not some shallow relationship in which I get to make all the requests, and He gets to ask nothing.

As missional women, let’s turn from the wrong direction and lean solely on Him. Let’s go where He calls, listening when He speaks, and obeying whatever He asks, regardless of feelings or what we might want.

What might God be asking from you today? Will you listen and follow wherever He calls? {eoa}

*Reprinted with permission from Missional Women. Though born, raised and still living only miles from where she grew up, **Jen Avellenada**’s heart lies in the nations. Jen loves the beautiful tapestry found in the wide diversity of people, different cultures and all nations. Jen and her husband have been married 20 years, and have parented 15 kids and counting; 12 foster, one adopted and two bios. Her multiracial family reflects her passion for unity, desire for faith without walls and missional mindset to share both the gospel and the power of redemption to a world desperately needing the hope found in Jesus Christ. Jen and her husband have led in a variety of ministries, including prayer, small groups, children’s ministry and women’s ministry. Jen advocates for the orphan as a board member for the nonprofit A New Song and loves doing missions work internationally alongside her family. You can find Jen writing about faith while challenging her readers at her blog, *Rich Faith Rising*, as well as at tweeting faith-filled messages @Jen_Avellaneda. Jen is also on Facebook.*