

## PART 33 – DIFFICULT MOMENTS

### ❖ DIFFICULT MOMENTS

*Everyone will have those moments when they are confronted by someone or something that is very difficult in their life. It could be a spouse that is yelling at you or a rebellious child who is cursing you or a cranky boss who does not like you or a car accident in your brand new car that was not your fault. The possibilities for experiencing difficult moments are endless. So, what do you do? Where do you start? How do you respond?*

Well, part of the answer to these kinds of questions is really very simple. You have to **be prepared before these difficult moments ever happen**. You have to know beforehand how you will respond to them, and how you respond must be how God would want you to respond. Trust me, but “**the world, the flesh, and the devil**” do not have any good inputs for what you should do. Listen very carefully.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 113: GOD ALWAYS HAS A BETTER PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE THAN YOU DO.**

Drill that deep into your mind, into your thought life, into your way of thinking – “*God always has a better plan for my life than I do*”. Many Christians simply do not believe this, so hang on to it, strengthen it in your mind, make much of it, and do not let go of it.

**When confronted with something or someone difficult, discipline your mind NOT to think negative thoughts, but to simply reinforce in your thought life what would be most pleasing to God in that particular situation.**

I.e., is what I am thinking what God would want me to do in this situation – yes or no? Listen. This is simple. This is what you have to do in order to become successful when difficult moments happen in your life. Your very first thought should be “*What does God want me to do?*” Do not make this complex. If you will think this way and do this, you will begin to honor and glorify God in your life. I want to say this is an even stronger way. If you have no interest and no motivation to think this way and if you never implement this kind of mindset into your life, then you have no interest whatsoever in honoring God in your life. You may not even be saved, no matter what you think about your salvation.

**If you truly want God to honor you and your decisions, then you have to first honor God.**

Settle that in your mind today. Make that your primary functioning neural pathway for difficult moments and difficult people. It is always a mindset, a way of thinking that you have to develop in your mind before the difficult moment or person confronts you. Today, you already know what would be a very likely scenario for the kind of difficult moment you are most likely to experience. It could be something in your home or at your workplace. It could be something financially or morally. You already know what may be the problem, so it is critical that you prepare your heart and your mind for those difficult moments before they ever happen. If you choose to ignore what we are addressing, then you will default to your flesh and your own ideas, and all I can say about that is “*good luck*”. If you never think about how you are going to respond to something difficult, then your irritation and frustration level will prevail and before you know it, you will have done or said something that made everything even worse.

Now, on the positive side, I believe that many of you are already predisposed to be godly because you have focused on being godly for most of your Christian life. When you talk, you say godly things, and what you say indicates that you have already reflected on what is good and right. When confronted by difficult circumstances, you seem to respond in a godly way. So, just remember that your mind creates neural pathways for whatever it is that you focus on and whatever you think about. On the other hand, the brain will do the same for the person who spends no time in the Word of God and who always thinks about worldly and carnal pursuits and has no interest in honoring God with their life. What is the outcome of that kind of mindset? Well, by this point in the series, you should already know, but let me remind you.

1. They will lose interest in the things of God.
2. They will have no compulsion to obey God.
3. They will have no desire for a relationship with God.
4. They will build their life around that which is worldly, fleshly, and carnal.
5. They will be left with nothing but emptiness, frustration, anger, and loneliness.

Why is this what will happen in their life? It is because the neurons in their brain that govern and control their responses are neutral. Whatever you are inclined to do is the neural pathway that your brain is building day after day and day. That is why you are inclined to think a certain way.

*I love when God clearly reveals to me that I am not saying things properly or not handling certain situations how He would want me to handle them. I love the effort it takes to build a new neural pathway to replace the bad one that I have had. I look forward to it. It is fun to me, exciting.*

So, if you never build your mind and your life on what God wants you to build it on, then your brain just builds the neural pathways on what and how you currently think about something. Your brain does not say to you “Hey, if you leave God out of your thinking, life will not work out very well for you.” The Holy Spirit may remind you of that, your conscience may remind you of that, and your pastor or a friend may remind you of that, but until you begin to build into your mind the kind of thought life and mindset that God desires for your life, your brain just goes with what you put into it – which in this case is nothing spiritual or meaningful as far as God is concerned. Your brain is neutral, and that is what helps you to remain indifferent and unprepared for difficult moments. No spiritual preparation, no spiritual victory. No seeking God, no finding God.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 114: YOU ONLY GET OUT OF YOUR LIFE WHAT YOU PUT INTO YOUR LIFE.**

This is not complex, but is simply reaping what you sow. So, from a spiritual perspective, which is how we want to see all of this, the battle that you are in is clearly a spiritual battle against an enemy which you cannot see, and that reality is what makes the motivation to discipline your mind to think a certain way much more difficult. The average Christian probably has no idea and no discernment about what the “**father of lies**” and the one who makes himself to be “**an angel of light**” is actually doing in their life. For instance, the Scriptures are clear that the devil has “**schemes**”, or what [Ephesians 6:11](#) calls “**wiles**”.

**Eph 6:11 (NKJV) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

The Greek Interlinear actually translates it as “**schemes**” as does the NASB, ESV, and the NIV. Some of the translations use words like “**strategies, deceits**”, and “**tactics**”. All of those are really good terms to describe what Satan is doing in your life – strategizing, deceiving, scheming, and developing tactics to deceive you. However, what is really interesting about this Greek word is that it is “*methodeia*” from where we get our English word “method”. It means that the devil is working by specific methods that he has developed against you. He is very **METHODICAL** and **PATIENT** in pursuing his schemes and deceptions in your life.<sup>1</sup> He is working overtime to trick you into believing his lies. He lures you in and once you respond to his lies, he ensnares you, he “traps” and “ensnares” you in that lie.<sup>2</sup> You could actually call it his “craft”, or that one thing at which he is really good. He will get you so confused when you listen to him and when you start to believe his lies because that is his method. You must understand that lies are very powerful, and ultimately very destructive.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 115: IF YOU BELIEVE A LIE, IT BECOMES A TRUTH TO YOU.<sup>3</sup>**

Many Christians have believed the devil’s lies for so long that those lies have become an integral part of their life. They think it is okay with God to watch filth on television or to go to God dishonoring movies or to curse. They think it is okay because they enjoy it. Wrong answer. If what you are doing or watching or listening to or saying is dishonoring to Christ, then your life is headed in the wrong direction. If you can sit and watch some filthy, God dishonoring movie and it not bother you and trouble you, my friend, you have been spiritually deceived and you have believed a lie. You are being “played” by the devil and he is winning. Rather than honoring God with your life, you are actually giving honor to Satan. If you think that is okay and acceptable and overlooked by God, then you have some really bad neural pathways. If you believe Satan’s lies, you will become exactly what he wants you to become – someone who has no interest whatsoever in honoring God with your life. Then to make it worse, if you do not think this is serious, once again, I doubt that you are even close to being saved. You may have had some kind of “religious” experience in the past where someone said you were saved, but the reality of your life and the truth of God’s Word says otherwise. The devil has you exactly where he wants you – exactly where he wants you. You have been “played”.

Unfortunately, one of the most prevalent lies that Christians believe is that they cannot really trust God with certain areas of their life, and eventually that mindset becomes a neural pathway that becomes a major part of their life that they struggle to overcome. The weapon that you have been given to combat Satan’s lies is God’s Word, God’s truth. If you do not believe that all of God’s Word is both true and trustworthy, you have no chance. **You are actually telling Satan where to attack you!** You unravel Satan’s lies and deception with God’s truth.

**The devil will always attack you where you are the most ignorant and unbelieving relative to God’s Word.**

<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, *methodeia*, 954.

<sup>2</sup> Harris, *methodeia*, #3151, ep.

<sup>3</sup> Groeschel, *Winning*, 44.

You cannot be or become what God wants you to become apart from God's Word. It is spiritually impossible. The Word of God is integral to the life of God being developed in you. I have said it before and I will say it again, but if you are inclined to read God's Word without applying God's truth that you have read to your life, then you have been greatly deceived by the enemy. You have been played. Jesus was very clear when He said in [John 14:15](#),

**John 14:15 (NKJV) "If you love Me, keep My commandments.**

God did not say **"If you love Me, then just read more. That should be sufficient."** He said, **"If you really love Me, then obey what you read."** The more that you study the Word of God, the more weapons you have in your arsenal to defeat the lies of the devil. So, if you are not inclined to study the Word of God, then you will not have many weapons with which to fight.

If the enemy tries to discourage you or to get you to doubt God's Word, and he will, you have God's truth to replace those lies. **Christians who are weak in the Word will always be weak Christians.** The problem with that is simple - weak Christians will always be Satan's prime targets for believing his lies. A weak Christian is the devil's target.

1. Weak Christians will always be finding reasons and justifications why they are not willing to trust God.
2. Weak Christians will always be finding reasons and justifications why they are exempt from obeying God.
3. Weak Christians will always be finding reasons and justifications why they have little to no interest in the things of God.
4. Weak Christians will always be finding reasons and justifications why certain parts of the Bible cannot be believed. This has to be one of Satan's greatest deceptions. He just throws a party when this lie is believed. If you doubt one area of God's Word, then you have no reason to believe any part of it. Bad neural pathway.
5. Weak Christians will always be finding reasons and justifications why they are much more prone to do what they believe is best for them rather than what God says is best for them.

Why is this so true? It is because weak, indifferent Christians are not willing to invest their life into knowing and applying the Word of God to their life. They become spiritual midgets, Christian dwarfs, and maybe not a Christian at all. Everyone else is always wrong and they are always right, and when someone like me tells them that, the next thing you know is that that person is seen as being proud, critical, condemning, judgmental, callous, and uncaring. All of that is just another lie of the devil. Listen carefully and do not forget this reality.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 116: THE PERSON WHO PUSHES YOU TOWARD GODLINESS AND FAITH IS THE PERSON WHO CARES THE MOST ABOUT YOU.**

This is all a matter of trust, a matter of faith in the Word of God. [Proverbs 27:6](#) says,

**Prov 27:6 (NKJV) Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.**

[Proverbs 3:5-6](#) are two verses that we have hanging over one of the front doors of our home and they say,

Pr 3:5 (NKJV) **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;  
 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**

So, what is God's solution? Well, God's solution is what [Ephesians 6:16](#) says,

Eph 6:16 (NKJV) **above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.**

Paul says "above all". The ESV says "In all circumstances". The HCSB says "In every situation". Let me say this in a different way.

**You will never be able to overcome the devil's lies and strategies if you do not believe that God's Word is true FOR YOU PERSONALLY.**

The Word of God is written for YOU. Just think about this for a moment. The Word of God is so powerful that it literally transfers the lost person who is dead in their sins from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, into the kingdom of God's Son. [Colossians 1:13](#) says,

Col 1:13 (NKJV) **He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,**

The Word of God transfers you from eternal death into eternal life, from the power of darkness into the kingdom of light. It is that powerful. You have to see that. If it can do that, then you can trust it in the midst of your difficulties. That has to become your neural pathway for the rest of your life. It is more than powerful to give you all of the wisdom that you need for any circumstance of your life. The problem, however, is not what it can do, but what it does NOT DO because of your unbelief. [Hebrews 4:2](#) says,

Heb 4:2 (NKJV) **For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.**

The Word never profited these people because it was not united with faith. The Word of God will never benefit your life until you are convinced that it is the very instrument that God has created to help you. Listen carefully.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 117: YOU CAN NEVER BE HELPED BY SOMETHING OR SOMEONE YOU DO NOT ACTUALLY TRUST OR BELIEVE.**

The Word of God requires faith. This is not a blind faith, but a practical working faith based solely on the simple fact that God's Word is always true and always trustworthy.

One of our principles is that the battlefield is your mind. That is where this spiritual war is fought, it is where you win or lose. So, **what you think and how you think is your greatest asset or your greatest liability.** Think wrong, live wrong. Think right, live right. What you think and how you think always and profoundly **controls** what you do. Remember what we have taught previously.

**You are ALWAYS moving in the direction of what you are thinking.**

1. If you keep thinking about going somewhere, you will go there.
2. If you keep thinking about getting something, you will get it.

3. If you keep thinking about how much you do not like someone, you will never like them.
4. If you keep thinking about quitting, you will quit.

What you are thinking is always influencing and impacting every decision that you make – good or bad. What you are thinking is impacting how you live. What you are thinking is impacting how you treat people. What you are thinking is impacting what you say to people. Just consider this one area alone. You must control your tongue. You can say edifying words to people or you can quickly tear them down with your words. You can criticize someone or you can praise them. You can help someone or hurt someone with your words. [James 3](#) says that the tongue is an “**unruly evil, a fire, a world of iniquity**” and that “**it defiles the whole body**”. The neural pathway that you have to develop in your life is that you will only say that which edifies someone – NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCE MAY BE. You should repeat to yourself that “*I will not let my tongue hurt anyone. I will encourage people with my words. I will guard my tongue and my words with every ounce of strength that I have.*” That is your mindset, your way of thinking, your way of life, and the neural pathway that you want to develop in your brain. It is simple – “*I will not hurt people with my words!*”

I am personally convinced that if you will simply control what you say that you can control every other area of your life. Your tongue is either under control or out of control, and you have to choose. However, before you choose, let me say that there is only one choice that God gives to you – that of self-control, so make that your brain trench, your only way of thinking, your neural pathway. You should say and believe that “**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me**”. That is God’s truth for your life. Do not let the enemy convince you that it is okay to say ugly things, sarcastic things, vile things, short tempered things, or hurtful things to people. It is not okay. It is wrong before God and dishonors God every time that you do these kinds of things.

**KEY PRINCIPLE 118: IF YOUR TONGUE IS OUT OF CONTROL, YOUR LIFE IS OUT OF CONTROL.**

Thinking you have the right to talk ugly is a lie you have believed that only creates hurt, pain, and discouragement in your life and the lives of those who surround you. **Control your tongue, control your life.** Make that your mental pathway, your brain trench.

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