

TRANSITIONS: Living in the Almost... but not Yet!

Navigating Life's Defining Moments

[chapter twelve]

[voice recognition]

Living in the Almost but Not Yet is most about voice recognition.

God's "still small voice" is often sourced in (1) his Word, (2) in our life experiences of a Christ-follower's journey, and (2) in the people God brings along to shapes Christ-follower. More than not, God's voice can be heard through the discernment of lessons that come from the people, events, and circumstances of life. One of the most significant tools God uses to shape a Christ-follower is a transition. Patterns and themes begin to emerge. Consistent lessons reveal life messages.

Christ-followers need to learn to recognize his voice through:

> **people** – He speaks indirectly and directly. Indirectly, he is speaking in the day-to-day of life, using the relationships that are close to us to reveal what is, and sometimes, is not His will and design. He speaks directly through mentors and divine contacts He brings into our lives to speak into our growth and development.

For the life of David it was Jonathan, a trusted friend who could recognize David's heart and desires, and spoke courage into David's plans. Jonathan spoke truth to David. Jonathan was often used as the voice of God in David's life. And it was Jonathan who was willing to risk all to follow the leading of God, rather than the will of a father.

> **circumstances** – God allows some moments, and creates others, in order to speak His purposes to our lives. Whether where you were raised, the early incidents around your faith, the trauma in the loss of relationships, the training one has received, the unique lifecycle of an organization, all of these are circumstances in which God reveals himself. Sovereign circumstances that a follower begins to know and sense the actual voice of God, as he and she navigates life.

> **events**– Sovereign, shaping moments where a follower “knows that they know” that what was a well orchestrated audible from God, revealing God’s purposes and will.

Peter was sovereignly brought to the house of Cornelius in (Acts 10), and came to realize that the events of the past few days all led to the moment of hearing. In a new, fresh way, the voice of God spoke deeply into this converted Jewish follower. And at this moment, the voice of God was not just spoken in the midst of an event, but this revealed truth shaped the church until this day.

Peter declares that it is God who has spoken, as he stood before the Roman soldier and his family. “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men for every nation who fear him and do what is right.” (Acts 10:34)

Recognizing the voice of God, spoken through people, events and life circumstances helps to:

- guide a follower’s conduct and thinking in relational practice
- grant a follower’s greater understanding of key, life decisions
- build a follower’s faith and trust in the character of God
- reveal a follower’s unique, God-authored contribution to the His Kingdom, and
- focus a bring a follower’s life to the point of convergence and finishing well.

Learning to recognize God's voice requires practice. As His voice is recognized, and as a Christ-follower responds with a life of obedience, the more he or she is able to hear. God continues the shaping process, molding a life for an ultimate contribution. The more a follower hears and sees, the more they hear and see.

[**four looks**]

Transitions occur during times of uncertainty. There is really no set way to determine how God is using this period time in the life of a Christ-follower. But there are four postures or looks that help recognize God's intent and voice.

a look backwards

Emotional closure to a past situations serve to release a Christ-follower from the past events in order to move forward. An easily recognizable need in transitions is the healing that can arise out of negative events, but positive events should not be overlooked.

There are two kinds of closure that often need to occur; relational (with people and with God), and informational in terms of lessons and insights.

Have you learned what you should from the experience?

Have you committed to different behavior in the future?

Consequences of not looking back—Plateauing

End goal: Objectivity on past events

a look inward

Transitions are often most about the look inward. Transitions often shape convictions and life messages. Often, Christ-followers go through times of conflict and struggle. How an

individual interprets these events and circumstances, and what they learn about themselves and others is essential. In a transition, an individual will learn more about who he or she really is than hundreds of other moments. We are creatures of habit and we tend to get into patterns of how we related to God and how He meets us.

A look inward will often reveal things an individual may not like, and things he or she would rather not face. What is most important is the seeing yourself clearly and accepting yourself as God accepts you.

Consequences of not looking inward—immaturity

End goal: Objectivity on an individual's strengths and weaknesses.

a look upward

Transitions are about change. Patterns about our relationship with God can be disrupted because of patterns being altered.

- It may be a struggle to hear from God; there may be silence and struggle waiting for God to speak. EXAMPLE: Shelley's Isolation work
- We need to persevere through this—part of the lesson is to learn how to trust when we cannot, see, feel, hear or sense God.

2. Get in touch with God's challenge on the other side of the boundary: The fitting challenge of the forward look.

- As the boundary moves to a close, we should be moving on with an expectant and new attitude, renewal, hope and a knowledge that God is taking us on to a new level of potential
- EX--People who can't wait to get on with life after graduation from Fuller

There are four postures or looks to maintain take while going through a transition; a backward look, an inward look, an upward look and a forward look.

> Transitions provide a unique opportunity:

- to bring closure to recent experiences,
- to deepen ones relationship to God,
- to expand one's perspectives to see new things
- to bring emotional and spiritual release from one phase of development
- expand one's perspectives to see new things
- to make decisions which will launch one into a new phase of

> A sovereign mindset is a way of viewing life's activities so as to see and respond to accruing to God's purposes in them.

> Paul's sovereign mindset helped him to live according to God purposes, hear God's voice in difficult circumstances, and was one his secrets for finishing well.

Make it so Lord. For the glory of the King who has set us free to be who He has shaped us to be.
