

May 17, 2011

Dear Friends,

Six years ago, our counselor introduced us to *The Life Model: Living From The Heart Jesus Gave You* by Dr. Jim Wilder. That introduction was the beginning of many, many good things. The book itself is an amazing read and we continue to use it and point others to it. One of its many strengths is the way it puts growing our maturity in the terms of learning the maturity tasks of each stage of life. It is such a simple concept, yet it has amazingly significant ramifications. In my first reading of the book, I realized that one of the childhood tasks I had not learned very well was “asking for what you need.”

God pointed this out to me very clearly one day when I was actively thinking through a phone conversation I was about to have with a friend of mine. I was getting ready for an archery elk hunt where I would be stuck hunting from camp as the odd man out. My friend had an extra 4wheeler and we were going to be driving right by his place on our way. In my immaturity, I was planning to call him and talk about our upcoming hunts. (He had a tag in a different area that year so we wouldn't be hunting together but still talked often about our plans.) I was going to find a way to bring up my concern, and I knew him well enough to know he would chime in with a “Hey, you are welcome to borrow my 4wheeler.” Thus my “problem” would be solved. However, as I was thinking through the conversation in my head, I saw the words jump off the page: “Childhood task—ask for what you need.” I somewhat cringed and somewhat laughed out loud as I said, “OK God, are you calling me to just ask my friend out right?” No audible voice, but the answer was very clear.

That night, I called my friend, explained my need and asked him if I could borrow his 4wheeler. (Sounds simple but it was actually a very difficult thing for me to do.) He responded with an emphatic, “I'd love for you to use it.” He was genuinely excited about being able to bless me with something he owned. Now, you need to understand, my plan would have “worked” perfectly. My friend would have jumped in and offered it to me as soon as I hinted about my need. However, my plan was inherently manipulative and stemmed from a broken place in my heart. I've used his 4wheeler on many occasions over the years, however, I can honestly say, I have never had as much fun on it as I did that year. In fact, I can still vividly remember flying down the road one afternoon in the rain just laughing at how good it felt to experience the cleanness that comes from asking for what I needed instead of resorting to manipulation.

Yet in spite of that experience, in spite of the fact that I'm much better at it today than I was six years ago, I'm reminded that “asking for what I need” is still sometimes difficult and that my Heavenly Father wants me to continue practicing the skill. The most difficult place for me is honestly asking for what we need financially. At the end of last year, we had a couple large gifts come in to the ministry that gave us about six months where we didn't worry about finances. It was a wonderful reprieve from me having to work on my “asking for what you need” maturity task. Unfortunately, (or maybe in God's perfect plan for my continued maturity, fortunately) we are back to a place where we are behind and unable to pay salary.

Honestly, I must admit the financial place is part of why it has taken me so long to write another newsletter. For weeks, I've told myself I need to write a newsletter, but every time I've tried to write, I've dreaded knowing I would need to explain our financial situation and once again ask you to pray about how God wants to provide for us through you. I've learned to ask, but I still struggle feeling like I'm becoming one of those people you only hear from when they need money. Yet God seems to be calling me to ask again. I'm confident He will provide what we need. We have been in this place many times before and while we have fallen behind at times, He has always provided . . . eventually. The struggle is just a reminder that I need to continue to grow and mature.

My guess is that some of you reading this are experiencing the same feeling my friend did when I asked to borrow his 4wheeler. You value New Hope's ministry and consider it a privilege to give where you see God at work. So, I'm repenting by trying to ask boldly. We need your financial gifts. We need some large gifts to get us back in the black, and we need more individuals and families giving on a consistent basis. The large gifts are obviously incredibly helpful. However, what I'm asking you to do today is to pray about giving a set amount each month. If you attend our recovery groups or come for counseling, ask the Father if He wants you to give a

set amount each time you are here in a similar way you would pay if you were seeing a “professional” or attending a counselor led group. If you sense God’s calling to give regularly, consider the subscription donations on the website. You choose how much you want to give each month and it will be automatically charged to your checking account or credit card on the day of the month you choose. Just go to www.newhopelawrence.com and click on the “Donate” button. You can also simply mail your gifts or leave them when you come to New Hope. For those of you already giving consistently, please know what a blessing your gifts are to us.

In spite of the financial struggle, this spring has been especially encouraging. Power of Joy has been both a challenge and joy to teach. I have felt a real sense of clarity to what I have taught and believe that in addition to the benefit it has been for those who have attended that we have also created another very valuable resource. All of my teachings from the class are now on the website and available as free downloads. I truly believe they are the best teachings I have done to this point and I’m thrilled to see and hear from people who have listened to them on CD, on-line or in person. Just yesterday, I received an especially encouraging email from a counselor friend of mine who listened to Week 10 online and did the Immanuel exercise. Here is part of her email:

My experience was profoundly moving for me. During the interaction part of it, I LAUGHED OUT LOUD as I suddenly realized that the three appreciation stories clearly pertained to my future as represented by my grandchildren, my past as a parent to my children, and my present as represented by my counseling work. God used these to encourage me as to the ways He has been, and will always be, faithful in all three of those aspects of my life.

Sunday mornings have also been very encouraging as God has blessed us with a number of new people and especially children. Jenelle Prather, our children’s minister, has some exciting things she is doing and I’m thrilled at her ideas and plans as we move forward. If you live in the area, we would love for you to join us as we seek to establish a community of Grace.

I’ve also been very encouraged at some of the secondary effects of my Leadership article that was published in January. Last week, I received a request from Insight For Living, Charles Swindoll’s ministry, asking permission to use it for Swindoll’s pastors’ blog. Assuming Christianity Today grants them permission, it should go out to his readers as well. The article has also resulted in two new families plugging into our recovery ministry after reading the article as well as a significant uptake in traffic on our website.

Strangely enough, I was also encouraged this week because of an issue with our website. Apparently, someone hacked into the site and put a malware code on it. I don’t really even know what it did or what all it means, but thanks to an email from someone in Pennsylvania letting me know about it, we were able to find and solve the problem fairly quickly. How is that encouraging you ask? Because I had already thought about the fact that the enemy attacks in strategic ways when I received the following from the individual:

“It’s not too surprising to me that you’ve become a target for this type of thing. Because of God’s call on you for this ministry you are the biggest real threat to the porn industry that I know of. I believe God knows this and has given you His authority over your space on the Internet too. I encourage you to extend your prayer covering to include your space on the Internet. Your space is His space.”

I think he is exactly right about needing to pray for our Internet space. Traffic to the site continues to grow and God is using the content on the site to help many individuals, couples and families. Please pray against these attacks. Pray also that God would continue to open doors for more people to find the materials he has enabled us to create and make available to anyone, anywhere in the world for free.

As always, thank you for your prayerful support of this unique ministry. God blesses us on a regular basis when we hear of your prayers for us, when we receive your notes of encouragement, and when we receive your financial gifts. Thank you for joining us on the journey!

Because of the resurrection,



Darrell Brazell