

Study Notes: Session 3

“Problem Solving Tools: Delaying Gratification, Responsibility”

Key Concepts

- Ignorance
- Tools of discipline.
- Delaying Gratification (Verzögerung der Befriedigung)
- Disorders of Responsibility
- Love of God & Jesus Christ
- Truth
- Faith
- Repentance

Quotations

- ◆ If we know we are loved, we can delay gratification – M. Scott Peck
- ◆ For my father and my mother have forsaken me, But the LORD will take me up – King David (Psalm 27:10).
- ◆ And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me – says the Lord Almighty (2 Corinthians 6:18).
- ◆ I will not leave you as orphans;¹ I will come to you – Jesus Christ (John 14:18).
- ◆ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. You have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children – The Word of the Lord (Hosea 4:6).
- ◆ My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge – The Lord (Isaiah 5:13).

¹ Orphans: Gr. *Orphanos*: obscure, wandering around in obscurity and darkness; desolate, left alone— children bereaved of parents; disciples without a master. To feel forsaken by God is to lose sight of the eternal light in the human spirit. This imparts to our existence a sense of estrangement. To feel lost or neglected is to feel dead.

- ◆ So you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints; and are of God’s household – St Paul (Ephesians 2:19).
- ◆ Repent therefore and be converted (return), that your sins may be wiped (blotted) out, in order that times of refreshing may come from the Presence of the Lord and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you – St Peter (Acts 3:19-20).
- ◆ If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free – Jesus Christ (John 8:31-32).
- ◆ Within each person is the power to consent to health, sickness, riches, freedom, poverty, slavery. It is we that control these, not another – Unknown.

Your Scriptures to Read

- ⇒ Ignorance: Hosea 4:6; Isaiah 5:13; Ephesians 4:18.
- ⇒ God as Father: Psalm 27:10; John 14:18; 2 Corinthians 6:18.
- ⇒ The love of God: John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 3:16-20.
- ⇒ Truth: John 1:17; John 8:32.
- ⇒ Faith: Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 6:1; 11:1.
- ⇒ Repentance: Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; Acts 26:20; Hebrews 6:1; 2 Peter 3:9.
- ⇒ Perseverance/steadfastness: 1Timothy 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 3:10-17.

Other Suggested Reading

- ⇒ M. Scott Peck, MD, *The Road Less Traveled*, Section 1: Discipline, pgs. 18-32.
- ⇒ <https://judithdoctor.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Rebellion-vs-Acceptance.pdf>

Reflection Points

Reflect on the following:

In our journey to wholeness, not only is it vital to develop a relationship with a loving God and Jesus Christ, but it is also important to develop a good character. What good will it do us, if we have charismatic gifts, but we do not have a good character to sustain that gift?

This is why Scott Peck’s tools of discipline are important; they help us develop a Christ-like character. Think of his four tools of discipline as *practical measures*, i.e., habits in your daily routine.

The spiritual dynamics (prayer, Bible reading, fasting, church) applied to our daily life and the practical measures (the daily actions that we choose to take) must come together. However, developing good habits requires discipline!

Our spirit wants to pursue spiritual realities, but our flesh is weak and would rather be entertained, gossip, etc. (Matthew 26:40). This is why we need to develop life-giving habits and not become lazy. Actually Dr. Peck sees laziness as the root of our problems.

We don't want to do the work of solving life's problems; we would rather suffer from neurotic symptoms than to take responsibility to solve our problems.

Reflect on how the discipline of delaying gratification or taking responsibility could be helpful to you. How would they help you develop a Christ-like character?

Your Responses

1. Observe yourself and notice what choices you make every day.
2. What problems do you currently have?
3. What forces in the world make it hard for you to delay gratification?
4. Notice when you feel powerless/impotent/helpless. What is causing it?

Delaying gratification

- What was your childhood environment like? Chaotic, orderly, peaceful, quarrelsome?
- Who was there for you when you came home from school?
- Who listened to you?
- Who gave time to you?
- Who ignored you?
- How secure did you feel in your world?
- Who did you feel safe with?
- What negatives did you hear as a child?
- What wrong-doing were you disciplined for?
- What did they teach you verbally?
- What promises were made to you and unfulfilled?

Taking responsibility for problems

1. Who modeled responsibility for you? Example? How?
2. What were some of the words you heard most?
3. Who are you blaming for your problems?
4. What are some things you avoid responsibility for?
5. What recent problems have you faced and taken responsibility for?
6. How do you decide what is and isn't your responsibility?
7. In what areas do you abdicate your freedom of choice?

8. What are some things that you need to accept? Things you cannot change?

Suggested Creative Exercises

Find a picture of yourself as a child and bring it to group.

- Visualize yourself as a child and write down some of the things you learned to do as you grew.
- What do you recall about specific responsibilities that were given to you?
The Responsibility/Your Age/How You Were Prepared/How Rewarded

Drawing exercises

- Draw a picture of your world as you saw it around 8 years old.
- Draw the heart of the child within you. What is it longing for?
- Draw a treasure chest and fill it with positive memories from childhood.

Journaling Exercise

- Write for 10 minutes on a problem you find it difficult to delay gratification or to take responsibility for.
- Make a list of things you are responsible for.
- Journal about your feelings of powerlessness and helplessness.

Prayers

Memorize this prayer and pray it daily — Ephesians 3:14-20

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant me according to His riches in glory to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in my inner man; so that Christ might dwell in my heart through faith; and that I will be rooted and grounded in love, so I may be able to understand what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to (experientially) know the love of Christ; this is better than any intellectual understanding, so that I may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

“Now to Him who is able to exceeding abundantly beyond all that I ask or think, according to the power that works within me.”

The Serenity Prayer — Reinhold Niebuhr²

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

² Karl Paul Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) was an American Reformed theologian, ethicist, commentator on politics and public affairs, and professor at Union Theological Seminary for more than 30 years.