

## THE ONE THING

What is the one thing in every situation that keeps you from seeing things as they really are? (Repeat)

Story: Yesterday I met with 13 people. We gathered and broke up into teams of two people: FIVE teams that went out around the city to walk and pray! Three people met and prayed at in the prayer room. It was glorious! Sarah and I walked and prayed together... The weather was perfect for a brisk walk. Everyone enjoyed the day, contended in powerful prayer. Only one team got lost and everyone got a great workout.

- But I was frustrated...
  - o In the moments before we left I was almost depressed!
    - My thought was “I wish that we had more people!”
      - I thought about all the preparation that went into the event
        - o My frustration initially overtook my view of the goals
    - It was hard to pray at first – I wanted to complain
      - Driving out in the car the Lord – I was wrestling with God
      - Why didn’t more people come?
        - o Don’t people care about seeing revival in our city
    - The Lord broke through my disappointment
      - Let go of “pressure” and grab on to “pursuit”
      - Remember what this is about
        - o You are here to partner with Sarah and partner with me for what I want!
    - I simply said in my mind, “Oh Lord I’m so sorry! It’s all about you”
      - Then the suddenly – I was “engaged” in the pursuit of God
        - o I was on a glorious trail with a passion for prayer
        - o I enjoyed talking with Sarah – we had some powerful conversation
        - o I was able to speak prophetically to the city
        - o I SAW spiritual shifting as we walked and prayed
      - IT WAS A GLORIOUS DAY
        - o I went home ENTIRELY SATISFIED
          - No regrets
          - Spiritually full
          - Physically tired
          - Mentally upbeat
    - I felt the joy of OBEDIENCE to the Lord and SAW HIS PLEASURE
      - I was not wallowing in the discouragement that the Enemy was placing on me

As I was talking with Sarah, I realized that IN EVERY SITUATION

- THERE IS ALWAYS (at least) ONE THING THAT KEEPS US FROM SEEING THINGS AS THEY REALLY ARE
  - o WHAT IS THAT ONE THING FOR YOU?
- Sometimes there is a discrepancy between what we were expecting and where we find ourselves
  - o This discrepancy can cause us to replace His intention with things that were never on His heart
  - o We can feel disappointed and deflated causing
    - We can fill “times of waiting” with things that are not good for us
    - That actually take us away from the plan of God
    - That actually disable us from participating in His intentions for us
- IN THIS TIME
- God is preparing leaders who will be with Him and go where He goes

- And will wait when He waits
- And will **CONTEND WITH HIM** for what He has for them
  - They will refuse to be derailed by other pursuits that leave us distracted, discouraged and ineffective
- **We must learn to take off “pressure” and put on “pursuit”**
  - **We must forget about seeking Jesus FOR a reward INSTEAD We must seek Him AS the reward**
    - I never understood why Jesus commanded us NEVER TO WORRY
      - How can you NEVER WORRY...
    - Mat 6:31-34 (NIV) So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' [32] For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. [33] But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. [34] Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.
- **OK... So Being incapable is not the problem... it is the reality!**
  - **OUR CHOICE is not “being capable” or “not being capable”**
    - We are all NOT CAPABLE
      - There is no one here that is capable of doing what God
  - OUR CHOICE IS “walking in the Spirit” or walking in our own strength
    - Psa 127:1-2 (NIV) *“Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. [2] In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat— for he grants sleep to those he loves.”*
- The Lord spoke to me one time & said, “YOU MUST LEARN TO WALK WITH A LIMP...”
  - What does it mean to “walk with a limp”

#### JACOB - LEARNING TO WALK WITH A LIMP

Gen 32:22-32 (NIV) That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. [23] After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. [24] **So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak.** [25] When the man saw that he could not overpower him, **he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched** as he wrestled with the man. [26] Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." **But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."** [27] The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. [28] Then the man said, "**Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,** because you **have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.**" [29] Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there. [30] So **Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face,** and yet my life was spared." [31] The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and **he was limping because of his hip.** [32] Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

- Jacob was a schemer who is trying to get His brother to accept Him
  - His name means “SUPPLANTER” (heel grabber, tripper)
  - The brother whose birthright he stole before He left home
- Jacob sends all of his entourage ahead to meet Esau first
  - Maybe to impress Esau, or just to buffer Him against attack
- Jacob decides to spend the night alone
  - Maybe to ask for God’s Help
  - May be scheme against His brother
  - Or maybe just to allow His family to buffer Him against retaliation – WE DON’T KNOW
- Jacob is isolated and vulnerable

- He can't hide behind his wealth
- There are no distractions
- **Jacob is attacked by a man that attempts to "SUPPLANT" Him (get control over Him)**
  - Jacob fights with all His strength
    - Just when He is winning the opponent puts his hip out of joint – stops the fight
    - The fight ends in a conversation
  - Jacob realizes that man is from God/ or is God
- What happens to Jacob as a result of this violent encounter – FIVE THINGS!!
  - 1. Jacob's Hip is dislocated
    - He is "touched" and injured by God
  - 2. Jacob's name is changed to Israel by God
    - Jacob = Supplanter, Usurper, literally: "heel grabber"
    - **Israel = Engaged with God, Contender with God, literally: "Struggles with God"**
  - 3. Jacob recognizes that His opponent was God & asked for a blessing
    - "I won't let go until you bless me"- holds face and contended with God
  - 4. Jacob walked with a Limp (because He held fast & contended with God)
    - Israelites celebrate that Jacob was "injured by God"
  - 5. Jacob was blessed (because He held fast & contended with God)

#### **God is looking for those who will CONTEND with him**

- Instead of listening to the enemy
- Instead of working harder without joy
- Instead of giving up or being discouraged
  - CONTENDING WITH GOD means "staying engaged"
  - CONTENDING WITH GOD means " Seeing the world as it really is..."

#### **ALL OF US ARE SO BLESSED... Think about it...We have everything that we need!**

- A place to live – a bed to sleep in
- Food to eat – Too much good food to eat
- Good friends – People who surround us and love us
- Transportation – a way to get around

#### **EVERYONE HAS A DISTRACTION – THE ONE THING the "PRESSURE" that inhibits your "Pursuit" of God**

##### **Moses – "I cannot speak well"**

##### **Abraham – "barren and childless/ many offspring"**

Gen 15:1-6 (NKJV) After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "**Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.**" [2] But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" [3] Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" [4] And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but **one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.**" [5] Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." [6] And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

- Abraham was distracted because He had no children
  - In those days, your legacy rested on having children (particularly a son)
- Abraham KNEW GOD

- He was concerned that HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WOULD DIE WITH HIM
  - Abraham was SERIOUSLY FOLLOWING GOD
    - BUT ABRAHAM WAS MEASURING HIS WALK WITH GOD BY
- God Said
  - Do not be afraid – (Abraham was walking in fear)
  - **I AM YOUR REWARD**
    - Stop responding to “pressure” and put on “pursuit”
    - The Presence of God IS the GREAT REWARD
      - Living in contentment with
        - the provision of God
        - the presence of God
- This does not mean that we stop working – but that we enjoy working
  - Being “pressurized” takes the joy out of our lives
    - Makes “working” difficult or tedious
  - Being in “pursuit” fills us with purpose
    - Energizes “working” – gives each day purpose

TALK ABOUT LOSING TRACK OF GOD... LETS TALK ABOUT JONAH

Jonah 3:10-4:5 (NKJV) Then God saw their works, that **they turned from their evil way;** and **God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring** upon them, and He did not do it. [4:1] **But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.** [2] So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. [3] **Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!**" [4] Then the LORD said, **"Is it right for you to be angry?"**

Jon 4:5-11 (NIV) Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and **waited to see what would happen to the city.** [6] Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and **Jonah was very happy about the plant.** [7] But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. [8] When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, **"It would be better for me to die than to live."** [9] But God said to Jonah, **"Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"** **"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."** [10] But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. [11] And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?" THE END...

Jonah Hates Ninevah

- He runs away
- God contends with Jonah sending the whale
  - Jonah spend 3 days in torment – in fear of His life
    - He chose this place – because of His disobedience
- Jonah Repents & reluctantly follows the plan of God
  - He preaches destruction “In forty Days, Ninevah will be destroyed”
- God spares the city
  - Jonah is upset
  - God did something that Jonah didn’t like
- Jonah pouts – He does not contend with God about it

- He refuses to accept the disposition of God
- Jonah hangs around... He doesn't "move on" with God
  - He is frustrated
    - Every little thing bothers him (the plant died)
    - He seems to have little interest in other things
    - He
  - He cannot see that God used Him to save one of the largest and most influential cities on earth
    - He thinks that God should not care for Pagans
    - He does not think that leading NINEVEH to cry out for God was important
- NINEVEH WAS - also known as Kouyunjik, was an ancient Assyrian city of Upper Mesopotamia, located in the modern-day city of Mosul in northern Iraq. It is located on the eastern bank of the Tigris River and **was the capital and largest city of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, as well as the largest city in the world for several decades.**
  - GOD SAVED THE GREATEST CITY IN THE WORLD THROUGH JONAH
    - AND THE RESULT: JONAH IS MAD AT GOD
      - HOW CAN THIS BE

THE LORD LOVES US... Therefore he allows us to experience hardship....

Heb 12:7-12 (NIV) **Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children.** For what children are not disciplined by their father? [8] **If you are not disciplined, then you are not legitimate,** not true sons and daughters at all. [9] Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should **we submit to the Father of spirits and live!** [10] They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but **God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.** [11] **No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace** for those who have been trained by it. [12] Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.

- **God matures us by hardship**
  - Have you ever seen a spoiled child in the grocery store
    - They are not having ANY FUN – why?
      - **Because their expectations will never be met**
- **God's plan is the MAKE US HOLY**
  - **Set apart for Him...**
    - It's not pleasant at the time!!
      - **It produces a HARVEST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE**
- **THE GOAL OF THESE DISTRACTIONS IS TO DRIVE US TO HIM**
  - So that we can live in RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE
- **God's plan is to make us into the image of Jesus**
  - **Jesus lived a POWERFUL life of FOCUS and MEANING**
    - **But he had to Die to self...**
  - Php 2:5-9 Let this mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus: [6] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; [7] rather, **he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant,** being made in human likeness. [8] And being found in appearance as a man, **he humbled himself by becoming obedient** to death— even death on a cross! [9] **Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,**
    - **God's goal is destroy the life that that is governing by the flesh**
      - **His goal is for us to become conformed to Jesus**

- **Die to self**
- **Filled with His Life and peace**
  - **Live in PURSUIT of God**
  - **IN EVERY SITUATION TO BE CONTENT**

## PAULS DEFINITION OF CONTENTMENT

THERE IS ALWAYS ONE THING...

- **WHEN YOU ARE SINGLE** you are “pressured” to get married
  - **The Lie is “If I get married then I will be satisfied”**
  - You feel as though the “dissatisfaction” will end when you get married
    - “Satisfaction will occur when I get married”
  - Then you get married
    - Then you You feel a larger “pressure” to be an adequate spouse
      - Concerns about your spouse can overwhelm
      - Then you feel “pressured” to have children
        - You think that that you will be satisfied to have children
          - This brings another level of “pressure”
- **AT YOUR WORK – You feel “pressured” to get a better job**
  - The lie is “if I had a better Job I would be satisfied”
    - If you get a job with more money – more responsibility
      - More headaches... “If I had a different job”
      -

## 3 WAYS TO LIVE IN “PRESENCE” – NOT “PRESSURE”

1. We take every doubt captive...

- 2Co 10:5 (NIV) **We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**
  - We can demolish the “pressure” by getting rid of the LIES (ARGUMENTS and PRETENSIONS)
    - Expose the LIES to the TRUTH = THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD
      - Knowledge of God = The relationship/ Presence of God
  - We take every THOUGHT CAPTIVE
  - We take our eyes off of what’s wrong, what opposes us
    - We put our eyes on what God is saying, what God is doing
      - We put our eyes on “presence”
  - Does this mean that we stop working?
    - Actually it usually means that we are working harder
      - (Not just milling around like Jonah)
    - Obedience is KEY to the process
      - BUT WE ARE EMPOWERED WITH PURPOSE & JOY IN THE WORK OF OBEDIENCE

2. We repent of working in “pressure” – Choose to live in surrender to the “presence” of God

- Exchange our strength for His strength

Php 4:11-13 (NIV) I am not saying this because I am in need, for **I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.** [12] I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. **I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation,** whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. [13] **I can do all this through him who gives me strength.**

- What does He mean, “I can do all things through Him who gives me strength”

- It just means
  - I am incapable – accept that!
  - The enemy wants me to look at what is wrong – see the ONE THING that restricts me
    - To put “pressure” on myself to perform
  - The Lord want me to see things as they really are.. THE ONE THING that empowers me!
    - To see things as they really are by his “presence”
      - Surrounded in blessings
      - Filled with Joy
      - Empowered by the Spirit
    - Failure is not failing at the task
      - Failing is NOT being incapable
    - Failure is failing at knowing and obeying Jesus

### 3. Live in thankfulness – Several times a day express thankfulness to God for Who He is and what He does

- Israelites were to gather for worship MORNING and EVENING

- Thankfulness = means We see things as they really are!

Rom 1:21 (NKJV) because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

- WE AVOID THE DARKNESS AND DECEPTION OF ENTITLEMENT

- The kid in the grocery store
  - He can't see anything other than just what he wants that he can't have
  - He can't see the blessings that surround His life...

### THE TRUE ONE THING...

Psa 27:4 (NKJV) **One thing I** have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That **I may dwell in the house of the LORD** All the days of my life, To **behold the beauty of the LORD**, And to **inquire in His temple.**

Luk 10:42 (NKJV) But **one thing is needed,** and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

- THE ONE THING IS PURSUIT...

- TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU ARE HERE FOR..
  - ALL CONFIDENCE COMES FROM THIS...