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Finding Your “Do Point”

Friday, September 30, 2011 | Written by Laura Z. Sowers

This has been a year of brittle drought. Typically, July brings heat-breaking, late-afternoon showers. These monsoonal rains originate in the Pacific Ocean driven by the Sun, and commence when the land is warmer than the ocean.

This year they were late. So, I was interested when the weather forecasters began talking about a hopeful trend in the *dew point*. I wasn't sure what that meant, so I googled it. I got way more information than I really wanted, but basically the dew point is that particular ratio of moisture saturation in the air that in the Southwest, indicates the onset of the monsoon season. I visualized a sponge. Once the sponge has absorbed all it can hold, it begins to drip.

I think I have my own personal dew point--only it would be better described as my "do point." I'm the kind of person who rarely leaps before I look. Often, I have to absorb information for awhile before I act. Looking at it positively, I'm generally careful and thoughtful; but on the negative side, my forward motion can sometimes stall in the wake of over-thinking.

It reminds me of being a kid trying to learn to ride a bike. I was already nine (late by kid standards) when I took my brother's bike to the street and floundered around wildly. My awkward struggle must have sent out some kind of silent dog-whistle to the neighborhood kids who sensed an opportunity to taunt someone in a vulnerable moment. They literally rode circles around me as I blundered along. Eventually, I fell, and they hooted in laughter. Humiliated, I walked the bike back into the garage, thinking I really didn't want to ride a stupid bike anyway. But I did. So, I brought the bike in through the back door and bumped it down the basement stairs. I started at the far wall and tried to peddle a time or two before I reached the other wall. Over and over I repeated this until I felt that magic moment of balance; I reached my do point.

Similarly, as a new believer, my faith awkwardly spilled out in my journal and spawned a strong desire to write about the Christian life. Specifically, at that time I wanted to write a novel. So I began studying about the novel-writing process. I enjoyed talking about it, reading books about it, and attending

conferences to learn how other people did it. I absorbed lots of information and brought that knowledge into a basic idea and framework for a book. But there was that cautious-kid part of me that rationalized that as long I just talked about writing; I didn't risk failure. And did I really want everyone to see me fall off my novel-writing bike? I was saturated with information, but until I typed that first word, I hadn't reached my do point.

I finally wrote that novel. It wasn't very good, and it was never published. But God used it to hone my writing skills and build my confidence. It was a mile marker that proved to me that I *could* do it, and that maybe the next one would be better. God encouraged those fledgling efforts knowing there is a necessary time when we are learning, absorbing, studying, and listening. And then comes the time to *do*.

Even the Apostle Paul had a start-up period to his ministry. After the Lord got his attention by knocking him off his horse, Paul, blinded, trembling, and terrified asked this question: "Lord, what do You want me to do?" That was followed by a few years in Arabia in which Paul thoroughly absorbed the word of God.

Immediately, Paul understood that the Lord made Himself known to him for a purpose. Specifically, Paul spent the rest of his life teaching and making the Lord known to others. The same is true with us. In the book of James, we are told to be *doers* of the word, and not just hearers (See Jas. 1:22).

But sometimes we *want* to do something, but we can't figure out what God has in mind for us. Here's where we can get stuck. We attach powerful importance to finding our *ministry*. Just the word can be daunting. But maybe we're making it too mysterious.

If you're an over-thinker and under-doer like me, here are few easy steps that might help in the pursuit of reaching your "do point."

1. **Begin on your knees.** Without prayer, our efforts will likely wind up as wood, hay, or stubble and accomplish no lasting good. When God sent Ananias to find the horseless, blinded Paul in Damascus, he found him praying. (See Acts 9:11). I suspect Paul was doing more listening than talking at that point. He was humbly seeking God's will.
2. **Shhhhh...** Keep your conversation just between you and the Lord for awhile. Paul knew the apostles were knowledgeable, godly counselors, but he said, "I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood..." (Gal. 1:16). During that life-changing period, Paul wanted pure input and undiluted intimacy with the Lord. Sometimes too many opinions obscure God's voice.
3. **What do you love?** Think about your inclinations. Do you love teaching your kids or other adults? Can you strategically organize an office or a pantry? Are you able to look at a complicated situation with insight, clarity, and wisdom? Are you passionate about helping the poor? *Now* is the time to talk to others about what they observe in you as gifts of the Holy Spirit.
4. **Surrender yourself to God, warts and all.** Paul possessed obvious traits of passion and zeal. Before the Lord got hold of him, he used those qualities to persecute the believers of the Way. We are told that initially Paul was "...still breathing threats and murder against

the disciples of the Lord..." (Acts 9:1). God took those tremendous faults and turned them toward His purposes and for His glory.

5. **Get over yourself.** Looking back on learning to ride a bike, I see that my pride drove me to the basement to stumble in private. *For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself* (Gal. 6:3). In retrospect, I wish I had bravely persevered right there on the street in spite of those mean kids. Fear of failure and pride can often paralyze our effectiveness and delay progress for God's kingdom.
6. **Man-up, ladies!** Recently, the news carried an incredible video of several men and women tipping a 3,000-pound BMW on its side in order to pull out a young motorcycle rider pinned underneath. God provided amazing strength in response to their courageous efforts. I tend to think about my weaknesses rather than God's never-diminishing strength. Paul said we are not to "grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9) I want a strong heart that seeks to do good with whatever strength I possess.
7. **Come from a place of love.** The truth about our worldly efforts is this: the only works that will survive, are the ones we do in love. Paul reminded us, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Gal. 5:14). Dry clouds, of thunder and lightning create a lot of noisy commotion and dangerous fires. Let whatever you do be filled with the living water of Jesus and love for others.

Satan is the grand discourager. The moment we decide to do something for the kingdom, he is there to discourage us, puff us up in pride, increase our self-consciousness, or cause us to shy away in fear. But when we are successful in our efforts, let's not forget who gets the glory. Paul determined to boast only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (see Gal. 6:14).

If you are feeling the presence of spiritual warfare in what you are doing, congratulations! You're on the right track and, most likely, you are firmly in your do point. Persevere, and be strong and courageous. One day you will hear your Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

P.S. I recently got a new bike. It is so cool.