

The Danger of Using Our Human Reasoning in God's Work

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting on God and seeking His guidance, rather than relying on human reasoning and understanding.

Scripture: Genesis 15:5, Genesis 16:1

Topics: "Trusting God's Timing", "Obedience to God's Will"

Description

Zac Poonen warns against the dangers of relying on human reasoning in God's work, illustrating how Abraham and Sarah's attempt to fulfill God's promise through Hagar led to complications and strife. He emphasizes that God's plans do not require our assistance and that acting without divine guidance can lead to confusion and disobedience, as seen in the examples of Moses and Uzzah. Poonen encourages believers to seek God's will through prayer and to trust in His timing rather than relying on their understanding. The sermon highlights the importance of respecting God's boundaries and the unique roles He assigns within the church. Ultimately, believers are called to wait on the Lord and act only when directed by Him.

Transcript

We can create a lot of confusion in God's work and in our own lives when we use our human reasoning and try to help God according to our own understanding.

"The Lord said to Abraham, 'Look towards the heavens, and count the stars. So shall your descendants be.'.....Now Sarah had borne Abraham no

children.....So Sarah took Hagar, the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to Abraham as his wife....And Hagar bore Ishmael to him.....And Abraham said to

God, 'Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee'. But God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son....and I shall establish My covenant with

him" (Gen.15:5; 16:1,3,16; 17:18,19).

God had promised Abraham seed as countless as the stars. Yet Sarah was barren. Abraham and Sarah must have both feared that God's Name would be

dishonoured, if the promise was not fulfilled. So at Sarah's suggestion, Abraham took another wife and had a son through her, in order to help God out of a tight spot!!

What Abraham did not realise was that God needs no such help. The help that he offered God (by producing Ishmael) finally caused problems not only for his wife, but also for his son Isaac and his descendants.

How often we feel that without our help, God's promises will not be fulfilled. And so we move and act when God hasn't told us to move or act. We trust in

our man-made plans and efforts to do God's work, and don't believe sufficiently in waiting on the Lord to direct us.

Jesus never did anything in His life without seeking His Father's will and guidance (Jn.5:19,30). But most believers don't seek God's will and

guidance like that, because they trust more in themselves than in God!!

Our lack of prayer and our leaning on our own understanding (or our wife's understanding, as in Abraham's case above!!!) in the decisions that we take, is

what brings confusion in our homes, and in God's work.

"The Lord said to Moses, `Speak to the rock that it may yield its water'.....Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his

rod.....And the Lord said to Moses, `Because you have not believed Me, you shall not bring this assembly into the land" (Num.20:7-13)

God had asked Moses only to speak to the rock this time. But Moses decided to help God by striking the rock twice. How true it is that the flesh would

rather strike hard (and twice) than speak gently (once)! We feel that God's purposes will be accomplished quicker with a bit of human hardness, even when

He commands us to be gentle (Mt.11:28,29). But it is through His kindness that God leads people to repentance (Rom.2:4).

Moses may also have felt that since God had asked him to strike the rock once before (Ex.17:6), it must be so every time. Many imagine that the

Holy Spirit must always work in the same way as He did earlier or elsewhere! And so they try to help Him with psychological gimmicks to bring "revival", to "heal" the sick, and to get people to "speak in tongues". What they don't realise is that the Holy Spirit works

differently at different times, and does not need any soulish help to manifest his gifts.

"Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God

struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there" (2 Sam.6:6,7).

Uzzah's intentions were good. He really longed to protect the ark of God's testimony from falling down. But he was not a Levite, and so he had no right to

touch the ark. He went outside his boundaries. This was so serious a matter, that God slew him. We cannot trifle with God's laws.

In the church too, God has given different responsibilities to different ones and drawn boundaries around each one. When we see a lack in a certain area

and seek to help God by trying to resolve the problem, we need to first ask ourselves whether the Spirit is leading us to do that, or whether it is our own

human reasoning that is urging us to do something about it. God respects everyone's boundaries, even if we don't. And God does not need any help from us,

outside the boundaries that he has drawn around us. Only within those boundaries can we find God (Acts 17:26,27). Outside them, we will find only

the Devil (Eccl.10:8b)

The application to our lives, of the principles outlined in the above examples, are manifold. Let us ask God then for light on this matter in relation to

our own life and ministry.

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