

Wounding Waters, Part 3: Goal Driven Life



October 25, 2013

Welcome Heartdwellers. Tonight I'm going to discuss the subject of the goal-oriented life. It's the third set of videos in the series entitled Wounded Waters - The Condition of the Church. The Lord said that Living Waters would flow from us, but in the Church, there are some Wounded Waters - places that are polluted and difficult to swim in. These are the subjects that He is bringing up.

The first one in the series is Love of Money; the second one in the series is Social Status, and how that affects the Church and the Body; and now, the third one, is the Goal-oriented Life.

I want to begin by focusing on the abundant life, because I believe that all of us want to live that abundant life that Jesus came and promised to us.

In John 10: 10, it says,

A thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came, that they may have life, and life more abundantly.

I was raised to believe that the abundant life consisted of setting firm goals, and then working straight toward them, in a very linear fashion. In my professional life as a photographer, this is a concept that I took very seriously. I would move everything else aside, and I would head straight for that target! Yes, I did have success in my career, but I was empty inside. There was definitely something missing. I'll share my conversion experience with you sometime, which was really amazing!

Now, back to the point we were discussing: my understanding of the abundant life was being a success; seeing a return on your investment, and being accepted by the professional community - being used, being called upon, working on teams. All of those things to me signified the abundant life, before I became a Christian.

When I became a Christian, I brought with me and into that life some of these habits from the world. I was goal-oriented. I was frustrated with interruptions - I didn't like to be interrupted when I was in the middle of a project; I was selfish with my time. I had very long To Do lists, which was a frustration in and of itself.

One day, the Lord said to me, "*You're too ambitious! Don't make that list so long, because you're bound to be disappointed at the end of the day.*" But I had these To Do lists, and they were part of my goals. But something felt wrong, and as my walk with the Lord deepened, and as He began to address these things in my life, I realized that I had been selfish, self-serving, and arrogant. And I want to share some of those insights with you tonight.

God would give me goals. He's really fun when it comes to teaching you, and straightening you out - He's

the Master! There's no two ways about it - He is the Master! And we don't even know what He's doing with us half the time...that's the fun of it!

The Lord would give me a goal - He would hold it out to me and say, "*This is where we are going.*" Now, I don't want to get into it too deeply, but when the Lord gives us a goal, He expects us to wait on Him and do things in the sequence that He orders. Not to go shooting - WHOOSH! - off on our own, to try to get to the end of that goal as quickly as possible.

He would give me a goal...and then He would send frustrating interruptions - interruption after interruption after interruption - and I would return in tears, saying, "You expect me to do this? You let all of this happen - people come to the door, the phone rings, You let my husband have an emergency, You have my kids calling me with another emergency - how am I supposed to do this?"

That was a good question! The Lord was testing me. He was testing me to see "Where is your heart?" The heart is so important. It is the very life of our lives, and what we have in our hearts is really important. It is important for us to know, and to be exposed to what is truly in our hearts. A lot of times we don't really know where our thoughts are; where our desires are - that's where your heart is! Those things are in your heart!

I want to use an example from the Lord's life, because He set an example for us that is perfect; and, as in everything, if we lead a life that is conformed to Him, we will lead a very abundant life! This life may not resemble those that are touted in some churches, but it will be abundant in that it is very satisfying, very beautiful, very rich, and very rewarding.

Now, to return to this example - in Luke 8, as Jesus was on His way, the crowds almost crushed Him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. In fact, somewhere in the gospels it states that she spent all her money on being healed, and we know what that's like! She came up behind Jesus, touched the edge of His cloak and, immediately, the issue of blood stopped.

This is rather a scary situation, because she was bleeding and considered unclean and, certainly, she was not to touch a rabbi. In fact, she was not supposed to touch anyone. She was to be isolated during that time! But she had endured this problem her whole life. Who can imagine what she went through? And she was very frightened, because she had touched a rabbi! She, an unclean person like a leper - had touched a rabbi!

The Lord stopped. In the midst of this huge crowd, where everyone was touching Him, He asked, "*Who touched me?*" When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you, and you are asking, who touched Me" And the Lord replied, "*Someone touched Me. And I know Power has gone out from Me.*"

The Lord knew that she had touched Him, in faith, and been healed because the Power left Him. The woman was scared to death! She had tried but could not go unnoticed, so she came, trembling, and fell at His feet. In the presence of all the people, she told Him why she had touched Him. That, in and of itself, must have been very hard, because the ones that didn't know that she had an issue of blood must have been shocked, I'm sure! She told why she had touched Him, and that she had been instantly healed. He replied to her, "*Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.*" What a beautiful thing!

She needed to hear those words! She needed to hear, "Go in peace," because I'm sure she was struggling with guilt for having touched Him. And when He turned and called her forward, allowed her to explain to everyone what was going on, and then told her, "*Go in peace. Your faith has healed you,*" that took so much off of her mind! Demons could have tormented this woman, telling her, "You touched the rabbi! You did an unclean thing!" She could have been tormented for the rest of her life. Healed, but tormented. And the Lord took the time to address her situation. That is beautiful. He stopped what He was doing and took the time to search her out, because He wanted to be sure that she would be in His peace, and to take care of any type of guilt that she might have had.

The Lord had a goal - to get from Point A to Point B - since, obviously, He was going somewhere to teach. And all of these people were pressing in on Him, as He attempted to move. Linear, goal-oriented people are most likely thinking things like, "I've got to be there by 5:00; I have this to do, I have that to do" and they take the most direct route possible, involving the fewest interruptions. Given this huge crowd of people, pushing Him this way and that, a "normal," goal-oriented person would have been anxious about getting through that crowd and to his destination; but not the Lord!

I am going to relate to you an example from my own life, which I feel has a lot to do with this topic. We were going to a conference in San Francisco, riding in a car with a group of women, and the driver takes the wrong exit; then turns around and goes the wrong way, so that we're heading away from San Francisco. We're already late, because we had to pick up an extra person.

She goes the wrong way, and everyone is saying, "Oh no! You went the wrong way!" She gets to the next exit ramp and she gets off, loops around, and begins to approach the new entrance ramp, going in the right direction; and she sees a woman, standing off to the side of the road, holding up a big sign which says, "hungry." This is a one-way street, and she pulls off, jumps the curb, parks right next to this woman, and gets out of the car. The other women in the back are saying, "What is she doing now? What is she doing? We're already late for the conference! We're never going to get there at this rate!" She goes and speaks with this woman, and then she returns to the truck and grabs this huge bag of pistachios that she had just bought, along with the other people's lunches (which is certainly getting their attention) and everything that she can find. She brings it all back to the woman and hands it over to her, gets back into the truck, and once again they start on their way to the conference.

One of the women in the back seat says to her, "I'd really like to get to this conference before it's over. Do you think we could do it the right way this time?" I have to say, that comment smarted. It did. The woman replied, "This lady's husband is out of work and sick, and she had nothing to feed her children tonight. I wouldn't be surprised if the Lord hadn't turned us around deliberately so that we could take care of this woman."

The goal in this situation was to get to the conference on time. Right? Not to look for homeless people, or hungry people to feed. It was to get to this conference on time. (As an aside, it turned out that the speaker was an hour and a half late, so in the end it was no big deal.) It was a test! That's what we're talking about. It was a test, to see where our hearts are at. Where does the rubber meet the road in our lives?

In I John 2:6

The one who says he abides in Him, ought himself to walk in the same manner as Jesus walked.

I think that stopping for this woman was certainly like something that the Lord would do, and I think that was a result of her persistence in the gospel. And looking at what's more important? To arrive at the conference on time, or to stop and help this woman? I think that she chose the abundant life! The spiritual life! The life full of the life that really is life. Which is an abundance of joy, of peace, of love spread to other people. Of seeing joy on their faces, knowing that God has really touched someone through you! That is so beautiful...

I like James 1:27, which says:

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is to be punctual in attending to the church events and make a good impression."

Obviously, that's not what it says!! It says:

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after the orphans and the widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Jesus met people as life happened to them; it was random. We need to be 'in season' all the time. The Samaritan woman at the well, the widow who was burying her own son is a good example. The Lord met people right where they were at, when they were at that point in their lives. He was never in too much of a hurry, or so goal-bound that He couldn't stop. In fact, in the Scriptures it says that He healed everyone who sought Him! Huge crowds followed Him, and He healed every single person! That's amazing! No person is too little for the Lord to touch. Using the Lord as our example, there shouldn't be anyone that we aren't willing to help.

We are tied to goals. We are obligated to keep our focus on the goals and not respond to those things around us that could distract us. That is not an abundant life. It is a life that is confined by agendas and goals, and in the long run it is about productivity and what you have to show - with your gifts and talents - for your time. That's pretty shallow, considering the needs of people around you that might be pretty desperate or dire.

Let's look at the word Life, as it's used in the Scriptures. In John 6:63 it says:

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.

The Lord is defining life here. His words - the words of Jesus - are life. That is an important thing to remember. It's the Spirit that gives life, and the words of Jesus are life; and He came to bring an abundant life.

Let's look a little deeper at what He means by that. Later on in John 6:33 :

For the bread of God is He who came down from Heaven and gave life to the world.

Jesus gives life - a commodity that only God can give. Certainly not material possessions!

In John 6:47

Verily, truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. I am the Bread of Life.

The Lord Jesus is nourishing; the very substance of life itself.

How does the modern Church define abundant life? Let's look at that. I've heard this time and time again - the abundant life starts with tithing. You cannot 'out-give' God. If you want an abundance, then give, and you will get in return. We're "sowing seeds" into the Kingdom. The more money we give, the more money we'll get. In other words, if you want a prosperous and abundant lifestyle, then start by giving money. That is the way to a prosperous and abundant lifestyle. This is what is being taught in some of the churches.

How does that measure up to the Scriptures? This is important to look at. The object is to give more money, so that you'll get more money. It's not about love; it's about selfish ambition and gain. This doesn't resemble anything that the Lord came to give us. This is not what the abundant life is about. That is a real twist and perversion of these Scriptures!

Let's look a little further. The Lord said, in John 5:39:

You study the Scriptures diligently, because you think that, in them, you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me; yet you refuse to come to me to have that life.

What was the Lord talking about? There are probably several dynamics in play here, but the one that I want to focus on is this - do we refuse to come to Jesus for life? Let's take an honest look at our goals and the way that we allocate time throughout our day. Are we coming to Him for life? Is He as important as dinnertime and having a nice meal? Setting the table, preparing the food, sitting down to dinner, doing the dishes afterward - all of this takes time and effort. Is He as important as all of that?

Well, I suppose that this depends upon how much time you spend in prayer, and how much you get out of your prayers. It's not always about quantity of time; it's about quality of time. The lifestyle that we pursue is called "The American Dream" - financial security, a big house, two cars in the garage; a freezer full of meat, a boat, a motorcycle, a summer home, nice vacations, lots of leisure; things we've accumulated, vacations, entertainments, and so on and so forth. That is the abundant life! And if you give, then Jesus will give that to you, in return. This is part of the thinking right now. This is why we're swimming in Wounded Waters in a worldly Church -- because of this kind of perverted thinking and twisting of the Scriptures.

These are common goals amongst Christians. Life does not refer to money or material gain anywhere in the New Testament that I can find; but if I am mistaken, then please write to me. In fact, to the contrary, what the Lord has to say about money - and what the Scriptures say - is quite different.

I Timothy 6:9:

Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. I have to bear witness to that.

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I have seen this so many times. And if you ever follow what happens to people who win the lottery, it's pretty amazing to see how their life ends, and the difficulties that they have as a result of this money, this abundance that comes into their life.

In Luke 12:15 it says, Beware and be on your guard against every form of greed. For not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.

In 1 John 2:17 The world is passing away and also its lusts, but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Beautiful!

So the abundant life Jesus came to give us has no connection with material wealth. The Scriptures are very clear about that. I have another little story to tell you.

There was a lady who took a friend to prayer group, a widow with three children. She took her friend to prayer group and when they were on the way home, (the widow had cashed her widow's pension of \$500 , put it in her purse) she was going to go to the electric company, the gas company, pay her bill and pay her mortgage. Well, she went up for prayer at the front to the church during the service, and when she came back the money was missing out of her purse.

Now, she'd been taking care of a semi-homeless person who was sitting right next to her purse during this service. She had befriended her. She assumed that, well, that's where the money went. She asked, and of course the lady denied it. So, we don't really know what happened to the \$500, which is what she had.

Well, the lady who is taking her home from the prayer group heard this story, and she had JUST gotten a donation of \$500 to have CD's of her music burned. And she was so excited - she had the artwork done and everything. All she had to do was order the CD's. When she heard that the widow had lost her pension, and said, "I don't know what I'm going to do. I have no way to get this money back. I don't have any way to get it back, I don't know what to do. But I DO know that God is faithful."

Now, the woman had no idea at all that this other woman had \$500 in her bank account that had been marked for something - she didn't know anything about this, so it couldn't have been concocted. But the woman who was driving felt convicted that she needed that \$500 more than...that the widow needed it more than she did, and so she gave her that money. Well, her goal was to make the music, make the artwork, have the CD's burned and printed and distribute it for free. But she was unable to meet that goal because the \$500 wasn't there any more. So here again, we have a clash between motives.

In Luke 12:33 the Scriptures say, Sell your possessions, give to charity, make yourselves money belts which do not wear out and unfailing treasure in Heaven where no thief comes near, nor moth destroys. For where you treasure it, that's where your heart will be, too.

Jesus wants our hearts. He wants ALL of us, and He wants our hearts. The good man, out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good. If Jesus is dwelling in our hearts, the fruit should be sweet and good. In alignment with the Kingdom of God and with a life that is truly life. Not material possessions, not applause from people and a product to show, the approval of groups or people. Or invitations or any such thing. It's all about the abundant life of the heart and meeting the needs of Jesus each day.

You know, when you are tied to goals, it's very difficult to stop what you're doing. But the Lord lived one complete, seamless life of Love. And that's what He's calling us to do. And that means that if you're focused on your goals to the exclusion of things that happen that could interfere - guess what? Your "god" is not Jesus - your god is yourself and your goals and accomplishment. That's the sad truth. If our God is Jesus, then we'll be willing to stop and give up what we think is important for someone who has something more important, a need. Especially when the Holy Spirit is convicting us of that situation.

So, the Lord wants our heart, and we can't make an idol of accomplishments, that's for sure. And you know, the Lord's not like a worldly employer, He doesn't look at our accomplishments - He looks at our hearts. He looks deep into our hearts, every nook and cranny. And He can see everything that goes on inside of us. He understands us so well. You know, Proverbs 4:23 says, Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Guard your heart. And if you see that something is beginning to tug at your heart and pull you away from the Lord, pull you away from charity and being instant in season, take a real close look at it. It could very well be something that is turning into an idol in your life.

Well, did she do the right thing? I think so. Did she meet the goal and feel productive? No... Did she have something for "show and tell"? No! All that she had were hidden things, things that are seen in Heaven but are not seen on this Earth. So, when you work for love, your only obligation is for Love. No trophies for doing the right things. No trophies. In fact, you're likely to get a crown of thorns. Think about that... Another clash with goals - taking an example from the Lord's life. His mission was to spread the gospel to the whole world. Now, shouldn't He have approached that by going to the officials and winning them to His cause? Yeah, I can just imagine Judas, pacing back and forth anxiously while the Lord is sitting and talking to children and mothers outside the Temple. And I can just see the Pharisees on one of the balconies looking down and saying, "What is He doing talking to children and mothers??? What kind of Messiah is that? That doesn't make any sense, they're not important." But to Jesus they were so important that it was worth His time to be with them, even though I'm sure the other apostles and people thought, "Well, He should be appealing to the scribes and Pharisees, not little children!" That just shows you how different our thinking is from the world's thinking.

So, they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, He was indignant, and said to them, *"Permit the children to come to Me, do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."*

Wow. I can just see the apostles, probably for the umpteenth time, blushing because the Lord straightened out their thinking a little.

For those who wanted to see the political goal of a messiah to free Israel, it was imperative that He meet with Pharisees, not mothers and children...really!

You know, I believe that goal-seeking is a virus from Hell - orienting your life around goals is an absolute virus from Hell, and it enters the church and dictates much of her behavior. Just as surely as our computers can be destroyed by a virus, true religion, pleasing and acceptable before the Father is destroyed by the virus of worldliness and living in shallow existence based on productivity and laurels. But Jesus' entire life was one of continuous outpouring of Love, to His very last breath. Other than the shroud and bloodstained Cross and spikes, He produced nothing! I believe his purpose was not fragmented by goals, but to Love until there was no breath left in His body.

Now, if He came to succeed at goals the way we humans set goals, He was a perfect failure! But He is our model. So, what do we make of that? I want to share something from my journal right now - a personal entry. I was close to finishing our website, Heartdwellers.org and totally buzzed - I love to get into Photoshop and just - Oh, I have so much fun. I'm very graphically oriented and minded, and I was so close to finishing and going live. But the needs of two women, one injured, and the other one running from domestic violence tugged at my heart. So, I put my computer away, and went to see to their needs. Later that night, when I went to the Lord for prayer, He started speaking to me and I wrote it down: *"I know it was difficult for you today, to lay aside your agenda, but I am proud of you for doing it. I'm satisfied that you love Me more. When I see you setting aside what you want, for what I want, to fulfill the very suggestion and longing of My heart speaks volumes to Me about your love. I needed to see the fellowship in caring for one another tonight. You mustn't be too attached to your agenda. I want you to be well-rounded and still sensitive to others needs in the midst of your passion for creating. So many of my*

artists are not. They live to create and are driven to give meaning to their lives through their creations." And my note on that is, the only meaning in their lives will be when they fed and comforted the Lord. They're going to find that out.

"This is where spiritual adultery comes from. My Bride should live for Me and Me alone. Whether it's cleaning, cooking, building websites, music and art. I love these forms of expression of love for Me, but when they are driven by selfish ambition, they lose their savor and injure Me, as well as depriving the soul of their true nourishment, their true worth, which can only be found in Me. That is one reason why self-will is so poisonous and disastrous to the soul. When any activity becomes more important than Me, the soul ceases to obey the first commandment: Love Me with all your heart, all your strength and your neighbor as yourself."

"Yes, enjoy your work, I enjoy creating with you. But always be on the lookout for what your neighbor is in need of, and put them first."

So, that's where His heart is at. It's a beautiful place to be. Demanding, really demanding. It means we have to lay down our agendas for the Lord's agenda. And that's what we're called to do as Christians. Okay. I believe that this is the abundant life. Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, spreading perfume of His love. Making sacrifices like that. I mean, the world would pass people by left and right; they don't care. They're on their way to meeting their goals. But the Christian has something the world doesn't have. They have Jesus living in their heart. So we're called to reveal Jesus to a hungry, thirsty, hurting world, and that's very inconvenient sometimes. We never know when we will be called on to take care of someone. So, if this is what makes Christians different and makes us salt with savor, I'm going back to our original Scripture: The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. When we allow a worldly virus to dictate our lives to us, the thief steals the very life of the Gospel from us, and we are like salt without savor. Sanctity becomes a nice sentiment, but productivity is the bottom line. "The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Let's begin right here and right now to kick this worldly virus out of our lives and our of he church, so that when Jesus comes, He will recognize us as His Bride.

Wounding Waters, Part 3: The Goal Driven Life, Addendum to Goals

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Well, I just wanted to add a little addendum to the teaching on goals. I wanted you to understand that I am not speaking against goals in the sense of destinations. The Lord has destinations for us in our lives; different destinations at different times and I'm certainly not downplaying the role of being aware of your destination and making choices and decisions that flow into line with what the Lord has revealed to you is your destination.

So, I just wanted to clarify that, about the goals that that destination is a Godly thing and arranging your life around that destination is something the Holy Spirit will help you do.

What I bring up in this teaching on goals is the exclusion, it's really a spirit of ambition. It has a goal in mind and it excludes everything to pursue this goal leaving, many times, the Holy Spirit grieved because the things that were meant for you to do along the way you ignored, because your mind was on the goal and not on the Lord. So, in essence, it's a spirit of ambition and it's a situation where the product or the goal has become your god. There's nothing wrong with having a destination and making choices that will aid in the arrival of that destination in the Lord's timing.

So, God bless you and may the destinations He has for you bring you great joy.

Heart Dwellers

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