

Into the Deep

Have you ever felt like you have leveled out in your relationship with God? In a rut? Haven't grown. Staying the same?

In my experience with God . . . He seems to always be pushing us a little further and this story is no different:

Luke 5:4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

When we are comfortable on the shore of life there is very little to catch, it's when we venture out into the deep . . . we catch the multitudes.

Peter is about to learn a lesson on personal growth that he will carry with him for the rest of his life. Just when he thinks he can't do more . . . Jesus challenges him to go deeper.

I. The Plateau

Plateau - [Verb] reach a state of little or no change after a time of activity or progress:

[Illustration] Weightlifters know exactly what plateauing is. They level out. The feeling is like hitting a wall.

A. You will experience times in your walk with God when you seem to level out!

1. Weeks or months of progress and then all of the sudden:
Nada!
2. There will be times when it looks like you have met your limits on growth.
 - a) Peter is a relatively new convert . . . we know there are years ahead of growth . . . but in the middle of it . . .

b) No matter where you are [whatever stage] you will have times of growth and plateaus.

3. But Jesus is always pushing . . . growth, new levels . . . and tells Peter to LAUNCH OUT into the DEEP!

B. Listen to Peter's reaction and see if it does not sound familiar:

Luke 5:5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing;

1. I can't. [General]

a) The immediate reaction from Peter was . . . resistance. "I can't".

b)

2. I'm tired [Specific]

a) Remember when just coming to church was difficult? And you grew.

b) Remember when coming to prayer before service seemed like bench pressing 250lbs? Now . . .

c) Remember when . . .

d) Remember when . . .

e) Remember when . . .

3. I failed

a) I tried to improve and I failed . . . I'm done trying for now.

b) This is okay for a day or so, but see how Jesus doesn't let too much time go by?

c) Far too often men sit after a failure for far too long!!!!

C. God always challenges us to do more . . . get used to it until we get to heaven!

Exodus 3: 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I . . . ?

Luke 10:2 Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. 4 Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals;

One more???????

D. The only way to break through the plateau is to . . .

II. Go deep . . .

Luke 5:5 But Simon answered and said to Him, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.”

A. “Nevertheless”

1. Going deep is . . . surrendering the will.
2. Going deep is . . . not what I want [the shore] but what you want.
 - a) Shore = comfort / security.
 - b) Deep = out of my zone = dependence on God!
3. Nevertheless was the same words Jesus used when He went as deep as you could go!

Luke 22:42 saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”

4. Nevertheless - “in spite of that”.

5. When you say the word “nevertheless” you are breaking through to a whole new level with God!
 - a) Share you testimony with him/her . . . “Nevertheless”
 - b) Quit smoking . . . “Nevertheless”
 - c) Go to China . . . “Nevertheless”

B. “At your word”

1. Wouldn't that be the best?
 - a) Many times we are on the shore of revelation. Ankle deep.
 - b) We walk by sight.
2. God's WORD takes us to places we could never go on our own. Or would go on our own.
3. God's word takes us to where the fish are! Leads us. Directs us.
4. When we dive into God's word we enter into a world of revelation!

Ezek. 47:1 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. 2 He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side.³ And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. 4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?” Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

5. If you want to go deep with God you must go deep into His Word . . . “At your Word I will go deeper!!!!

C. “I’ll let down the net” [Risk]

1. I’ll take the risk! I’ll take a shot.
2. I’ll give it a try [Can you feel it???
3. Risk takes it out of our hands and puts it in God’s hands.
4. Will you let down your net?
 - a) Will you join a ministry?
 - b) Will you spend money on a Fall Festival?
 - c) Will you launch a church even if . . . ?
 - d) Will you go?
 - e) Will you . . .
 - f) Will you . . .
 - g) Will you . . .

D. Peter did it! Look what happened!

Luke 5:6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

1. Their net was breaking!!
2. Breakthrough was found in the deep!!!!

III. Look what’s waiting on the other side of your breakthrough:

A. Fish!

Luke 5:9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. **From now on you will catch men.**" 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

1. In the deep is where we catch the multitudes . . .
2. You are being stretched, challenged, and pushed . . . for what is waiting on the other side of your plateau.
3. Everytime you breakthrough to the next level the Kingdom of God is enlarged.
4. Every time you breakthrough to the next level you grow NEW spiritual muscles for . . .

B. A bigger challenge . . .

11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Luke 5:12 And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

1. A convert that is falling apart . . . literally!!!

C. Until you get to heaven you will be required to go deeper and deeper and deeper . . . welcome to