

“The Comfort Zone”

It is easy to get comfortable, is it not? Most people would rather stay at a level of comfort than be put in a position that would force them to change. We are all creatures of habit. It seems that whatever is simplest, burden-free, and absolves us of any resistance is the path we will always choose even when that particular choice is not the best one. I can recall many times (I'm sure you can too) where the decisions I made were not because they were good for me or the right decisions but rather they were the least likely to require much effort or discomfort. The strange thing about staying in one's comfort zone is that we never grow as a person, never experience real change, and never create the momentum we need to get to the next level in our lives, not to mention, stifle everyone else around us. The danger arises when we are so comfortable that the thought of change becomes incredibly unattractive and we begin to resist it. This can be the hindrance to the possible solution to the dilemma or, in fact, be the dilemma itself. Either way, God has minimum patience for those who choose to stay in the comfort for too long especially when He is expecting greater things from His children. Let's examine one such example from the Bible in the Book of Numbers, Chapter 32.

Early in the chapter, we gather that the Israelite tribes of the Reubenites and Gadites are very comfortable (vs.1). In fact, they are so comfortable with their large herds and flocks, their living arrangements, and their land that they petition Moses, Eleazar (the priest), and other leaders to “not make them cross the Jordan” (vs.5) and go to war with the Canaanites in order to take the land that the Lord had given them. If we take the Reubenites and Gadites point of view, we can see how they would rationalize staying where they were. After all, they were certainly in full swing of their comfort zone. I suspect many of us would have made the same request to Moses and the others: “Hey, Moses, you go ahead and go conquer that land...we're just gonna hang out here, instead. We're doin' alright.” The problem with this is that this comfort zone attitude was in direct opposition to what God was commanding them to do. God wanted more for His people yet these two tribes were willing to settle for less because of their level of comfort. In addition, they would have discouraged and negatively influenced the other Israelites who wanted to cross the Jordan and take possession of the land that God had promised as well as the opportunity for a better life (vs.7). Their choice to stay would have affected many more people than just them. The Reubenites and Gadites would have been part of the problem and not the solution. And finally, staying in a place that would have allowed them to steer clear of any resistance, burden, struggles, or change would have put a cap or limitations on how far they could have gone. That was not God's plan for His people then and it is still not His plan for you and me now. He desires the best for His children and expects us to play an active role towards the fulfillment of His promises. Anything less is not pleasing to God (vs. 14-15). The temptation to remain in this state can bring about one further issue which is regret. At some point, regret does set in when you realize what you could have been, how far you could have gone, the dreams you could have achieved, and the impact you could have had for Christ if you had just stepped out of your comfort zone for a little while.

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