

Nextness

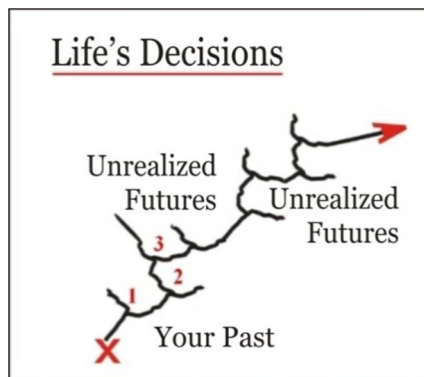
God's Next Most Needful Thing

Suggested Reading: Philippians 2:12, 1 Corinthians 3:12

Nextness is really a subset of Featheriness; it deals with some additional aspects of obedience. Several times in this book I have said that God has a “*next most needful thing*” for our lives; let’s look at some of the implications of it for our walk.

Life is not only made up of a few large decisions, such as what college to attend, your career choice, who to marry, whether to have children, whether to buy a house, etc. Life is primarily made up of a myriad of small decisions every day. It is important

that we are obedient to God’s leading even in these small things, because each of these decisions closes off other life paths and opportunities for transformation. In the “Life’s Decisions” diagram below, if you make the right turn at “1,” a left turn at “2,” and another right turn at “3,” there are a whole series of unrealized futures that are no longer available. Time moves on, and decisions not made have been left in the past. When we choose to follow our own path, time passes, those unrealized futures do not happen, and we are not changed. Transformation is a process; the more we are disobedient, the less we are like Him in this life. God waits for obedience—without it, there is no transformation.



Helping God is Not Obedience

Now, if we insist on helping God out by telling Him what we want and what He must do in our lives, then the change does not happen—only religion happens. God’s plan is put on hold until we are willing for the *next most needful thing* for our lives. God is a gentleman. He will not force us to do His will for our lives. He waits until we are willing to follow His program.

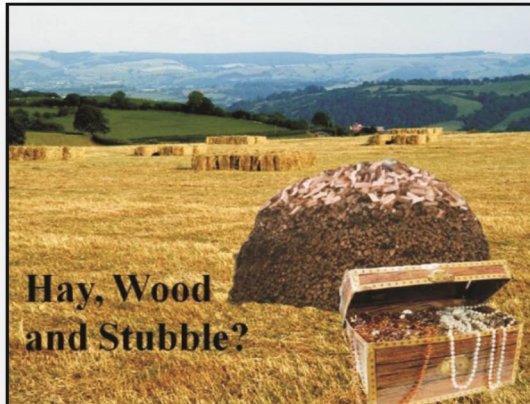
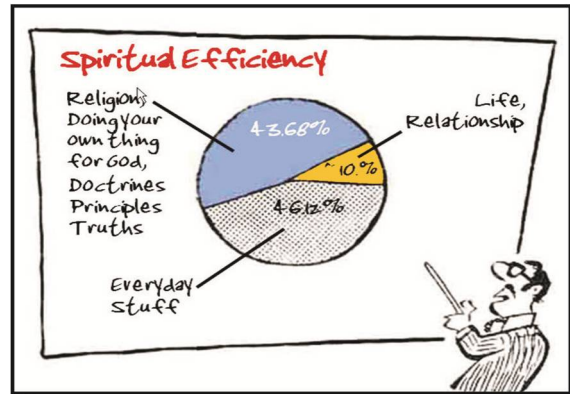
If God is doing something in your best friend’s life, and you decide He should also be doing it in your life, and you pester Him for it, that is usually a problem. That “something” is most likely not the *next most needful thing* for you; it will not change you into the likeness of Jesus. Yes, God may have that “something” also for you in your life at some point, but not next and not now. It is His program, His plan. Your part is obedience; His part is both the **willing** and the **doing** (Philippians 2:12f) in accordance to His plan. Only obedience causes you to change, and obedience is not obedience if it is out of order. If God wants A, then B, and then C in your life, and you insist on B first, then A, and then C, that is not obedience. God will wait until you are willing and ready to do A first. Then He is able to bless you with all that He has for you.

God's Plan

The plan for the process of your salvation exists only in the mind of God. He planned it for you from before the foundations of the world. If only God knows the plan, then it means that you do not know the plan. The concept of obedience to God presupposes that you do not have a plan of your own; it means that you must participate in His plan, in His timing, and by His power. That is called obedience.

Spiritual Efficiency

Consider the 1 Corinthians 3:12ff passage of Scripture that speaks of our spiritual foundations. It tells us that we can build it with gold, silver and precious stones, hay, wood and stubble. It says that on the day of judgment God will test our foundations with fire. If we have built with gold, silver and precious stones the foundation will withstand the judgment; but if we have built with hay, wood and stubble, it will be burned; there will not be anything left of the foundation; we will still be saved, though by the "skin of our teeth."



The gold, silver and precious stone here represent the increase of the person of Jesus Christ in our lives as we are changed into His image by our obedience. The hay, wood and stubble represent the product of a life spent doing good stuff, bad stuff, and our own stuff; everything but God's stuff. If we spend 44% of our time doing religion, doctrines, principles, truths and generally doing good for God – all two dimensional – and we spend 46% doing our everyday routine stuff without practicing the Nesses,. and we only spend 10% in a Life relationship with god in the third dimension of

His Life, then most of our foundation is built of hay, wood and stubble and will be burned. God is calling us to walk in His Life 100% of the time, buying up the time and storing away gold, silver and precious stones. A constant practice of the "nesses" will assist in an on-going and continual relationship with God. There is a spiritual efficiency in the walk... the more we walk in relationship with God, in obedience, the more our foundation is gold, silver and precious stones

Restoration and transformation do not happen in two-dimensional Christianity—adherence to a theology or to doctrine won't do it, and doing good for God won't do it; only the Life of God in our lives and a walk in obedience in three-dimensional Christianity can make it happen. Only God knows the plan; only God knows what must come next. The Christian life is a series of *next most needful things* in obedience to God's prompting. It is Him executing His plan in our lives by His Life in the third dimension. That is Nextness.



Prayer: Engage your heart and pray: “Father God, I give you permission to show me the *next most needful thing* in my life. Share your heart with me and provide me with that inner witness of your Spirit that this is the way of Life. I want to will both Your **willing** and Your **doing**. Forgive me for all the wasted time in my life when I have been disobedient to you. I give you irrevocable permission to deal with everything that the enemy has added to my life, and I give you permission to change me into the likeness of your Son, Jesus. Father, I want Nextness in my life.”

