

Accepting the Lord's Closed Doors

Written by Steve Marr

Thursday, 17 January 2019 15:49

I have always found the conversation between Balaam and his donkey in scripture, very interesting. I pick up the conversation here:

Then the angel of the Lord moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn, either to the right or to the left. When the donkey saw the angel of the Lord, it lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat it with his staff. Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, and it said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"

Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If only I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now."

The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?"

"No," he said.

Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown.

The angel of the Lord asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If it had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared it." (Numbers 22:28-33, NIV)

Frequently I encounter clients who seek my counsel but only want me to affirm what they've already decided. They're not open to other perspectives. Likewise, we may go to the Lord in prayer regarding a difficult situation; but rather than seek God's help, we tell the Lord what He needs to do. This is always a mistake.

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Years ago I invested in a small business with other partners, but the business wasn't working out very well. I petitioned the Lord to either get me out of the business or show me how the company could be successful. I sensed the Lord asking me, "Did you ask me *before* you made the commitment?" I had to confess the answer was "no."

The Lord made it clear to me that if I was going to get into ventures on my own strength without asking Him; then, I was going to have to get out of the situation on my own." The lesson for next time was clear: Ask the Lord for His counsel *before* I take any action.

Most of us prefer that everything goes smoothly in all involvements whether it is ministry, personal life, or business. However, everything does not always go well. A key life lesson to learn is to ask the Lord first what path we should take. God knows how to show us the correct path through his Word, His wise counsel, the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, and through His open and closed doors.

When we encounter His closed doors, we need to take the situation to the Lord in prayer and ask the next important question: Should I try to knock down the door and go forward with His empowerment or does the closed door prevent future pain or unnecessary struggle in my life?

There is a fine distinction between perseverance and foolhardily plunging forward. Make sure you know the difference or keep asking the Lord for His counsel.

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