

The Cure for Confusion



David Wilkerson October 20, 2014

We all know what it's like to be confused. And for those who follow Jesus, confusion can be very bewildering. We're taught that our lives are to be guided by the Lord's clear voice, through his Word and the indwelling presence of his Holy Spirit. So when confusion sets in we begin to wonder about God's guidance in our lives.

What causes such confusion? First we have to understand that Scripture says God is not the author of confusion. And one source of confusion is sin. We see this illustrated in the words of the young prophet Daniel: "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face...because we have sinned against thee...we have rebelled" (Daniel 9:8-9). Daniel was saying, "Lord, we deserve to be confused. We've brought it on by our own sin."

The New Testament tells us that the stories of the Old Testament are meant to instruct us in these last days (see 1 Corinthians 10:11). I believe the story of Ephraim in the book of Jeremiah reveals how we may find a cure for our confusion.

Jeremiah tells us the tribe of Ephraim represents all who love the Lord. God identifies Ephraim as a son, calling the people "my dear son...a pleasant child" (Jeremiah 31:20). Yet this beloved tribe had fallen into something evil: "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus" (31:18).

Somehow Ephraim had drifted away from God and given themselves over to lust. The result was a cold heart and a groaning spirit. A once - godly people now walked in loneliness and confusion, feeling abandoned. They even ended up mocking God for a season, which hurting people sometimes do. I saw this happen countless times throughout my years in the Teen Challenge ministry.

A young man or woman would curse at us, resisting whatever we might say, yet they ended up in tears when we suggested to them, "You're hurting, aren't you?" Time after time, their anger and outbursts revealed a deep hurt inside.

Friend, you have to know that God has seen every tear you've shed in secret, heard every groan and cry deep within you. Maybe your life looks okay on the outside, but when you're all alone an awful feeling hits you: "I'm going the wrong way. Oh, God, I'm doing things I don't want to do, yet I can't seem to do the right things."

You're not alone. Even the apostle Paul said of his own heart's condition: "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:19). You have to understand, God is not standing over you with a whip, nor is he walking away from you in your time of need. Nothing could be further from the truth. He is standing right beside you in your pain, his arm around you as you groan and cry. He hears every word you utter, and he shares in your pain, loving you through it all.

Why was Ephraim grieving and so confused?

The tribe had tasted what it was like to be useful to the Lord, to have purpose in life, to have peace within and to care for others. But when life became hard, they had turned their backs on the Lord and gone back to their lazy, sinful lives of ease and pleasure-seeking. Now everything was miserable for them.

I believe Ephraim's deepest grief hit them when they realized, "We can blow our hope of changing." They had had a glimpse of what they could be. They had tasted the joys of giving their lives to the needs of hurting people. But now they had come close to throwing it all away in exchange for what they thought was freedom. When they realized this, they cried, "Oh, Lord, turn us around and restore us. Bring us back to your yoke and use our lives for your purpose. We want to count for something."

You see, when you became a Christian, the Lord put you in his yoke. When he did that, he was saying, in essence, "I'm not going to let you end up like an animal, with empty brains, doing whatever it pleases, whenever it pleases. I have a heavenly plan for you to fulfill my work here on earth, so I'm going to set you apart from the crowd. While everyone else is selling their souls to this world, whistling their way to a fool's paradise, I'm going to train you to make my mark in this world."

If you are a young Christian, take a look around at your peers who are partying. They've dedicated themselves to pleasure-seeking, their minds focused only on their next indulgence. In reality, they're living in a small world, making only small talk, looking cool but never finding fulfillment or purpose. The kindest way to describe them is, "They're going nowhere."

Right now, tragedy is striking the whole world.

Millions of children are dying of AIDS and millions of others are left orphaned by the disease. Entire nations are dying from starvation. In our own country millions of children have never known a father, while multitudes of mothers live on the streets trying to care for their suffering kids, who daily grow more terrified, angry or diseased. The world needs the love of Christ.

Meanwhile, consider what your peers' lives will be like a few years from now. They'll still be talking trash, refusing to take any responsibility, having no goals in life. Those who know them are going to ask, "What are they living for? What purpose do they have? They've never cared for anybody. I've never seen them stir to help a dying child or give something to help a homeless person. Their whole lives are about nothing."

It is so easy for those who call themselves Christians to totally miss it, and time is running out. God loves you, and that is the very reason he wants to change you right now. He's calling you to cry out in your soul, as Ephraim did, "Lord, lay hold of me and turn me around. I want my life to count."

"Turn thou me, and I shall be turned" (Jeremiah 31:18). Here was Ephraim's prayer, stating in essence, "God, turn me around and I will go your way. I'll repent, yielding my life to you fully. I realize I need to forsake all the so-called friends who drag me away from you. But I know I can't turn myself around. You have to do it, Lord."

"I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth" (31:19). Ephraim is declaring, in short, "I brought all this confusion upon myself because of my youthful stubbornness. Oh, Lord, I really am sorry. I'm ashamed of the way I've turned away from you. I repent!"

Here is how God responded to Ephraim's honesty and repentance: "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord" (31:20).

Behold these wonderful words from God about his children. He's saying of them, "Oh, yes, so often have I called out to my son, warning him with strong preaching and stirrings by my Spirit. I have even spoken to him of wrath and judgment, all to try to woo him back to me. He is still my son, whom I love and in whom I delight, and I will never forsake him. Indeed, I so yearn for my wandering child that my heart is troubled. Yes, I will surely have mercy on him."

Beloved, this word from the Lord applies to you also. It doesn't matter how far you may have turned from his ways. Your Lord still yearns over you, wanting you and loving you. He says plainly, "My child is still pleasant to me."

God himself provides the cure for confusion.

God told his people Ephraim to do three things in order to cure their confusion:

1. “Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps” (Jeremiah 31:21). God was instructing his people, “Set up markers for yourselves every day, reminders of my Word, and pile them up high. Place great heaps of my Scriptures before you to remind yourselves of my promises and my high calling on your lives.”

The Bible says God’s Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path at all times. For those who have strayed from him, that light shows the way back to God. His Word is also our yoke, guiding and turning us in our acceptable service to the Lord. And when we kick against that yoke or try to throw it off, we get lost every time. Simply put, if we remain stuck in our confusion, bewildered by what’s happening in our lives, then we’re not diligently reading and trusting in God’s Word.

2. “Set thine heart toward the highway” (31:21). This verse tells us in very clear terms, “It’s time to stop playing games and get serious. There can be no more running around helter- skelter, without purpose. It is well past time for you to get back on the road to Jesus, to set your mind on the high things of the Lord.”

I have found that the road to meaning in life – the road to understanding and peace within – is the road of prayer. Whom do you talk with when you’re confused and hurting? Your friends may console you, but they can’t heal you or lift your pain. At such times you have to turn to the Lord, crying out in honesty and humility: “God, I have messed it all up. I’ve brought confusion down on my life. I need you to come and take control again. I’m tired of my life as it is, tired of turning aside from you and suffering deeply for it. I need you to turn me, Lord, because I can’t do it myself.”

3. “Turn again...turn again to these thy cities” (31:21). This verse tells us we have a major decision to make in order to turn and change. Yet what does “turning” involve? It means to go with Jesus, which requires us to make a change concerning our ungodly friends. We’re to walk away from all those relationships that drag us away from Christ, to forsake those who lead ungodly lives of pleasure-seeking and blasphemy.

You may wonder: “What are these ‘cities’ we’re to turn to?” The “city” here represents Christ and his church. He calls us to make a decision to turn back to his house and be among his godly people.

In summary, here is God’s three-step cure for confusion:

- 1. Set your heart to read and study God’s Word.** Immerse yourself in his promises daily, to remind yourself that your Master seeks daily to guide your life by his yoke, which is easy and light.
- 2. Stop playing games, and take all your problems to Jesus.** Pour your heart out to him daily in secret prayer.
- 3. Change your friends if they’re dragging you down.** Dump the wicked and walk with the righteous, getting involved with the city of Christ, his church and his people.

This will cure all confusion!

[Download PDF](#) [1]

Links

[1] <http://worldchallenge.org/printpdf/89/>