



31: HOW TO SHOOT THE DEVIL WITH A LASER GUN (Luke 8:40-55)

There are times when we are called to be active, and times we're called to patiently wait...

I love playing Laser Tag. I really miss "Laser Quest" which used to be in the Fairlawn area of Akron Ohio, because it was the dopest Laser Tag place I had ever been. I remember when it arrived back in 1996, and I went plenty in High School, and as soon as my kids were old enough to handle it I brought them there!

Laser Quest was great because of the way you could operate in the game. There were really two tactics that worked well. You could either;

1. Find a hidden corner in the black light lit, multi level maze that had a very high visibility. Then, patiently wait for people's little glowing laser packs to show themselves, picking them off while they didn't know what him em'. Or,
2. You could be ultra aggressive, move quickly, and walk right up to people over and over again, picking them off while dodging their counter-attacks.

I tended, no surprise to those of you who know me, to go for the ultra aggressive option two, and it worked well. I would often get first or second place depending on who else was playing the game.

But once and a while, I'd get beat by one of those kats who did option number one really well, sitting like a sleuth lil laser sniper in a corner and just waiting to pick folks off while never being found.

There are times when we are called to be active, and times we're called to patiently wait...

The last miracle in the Luke 8 sequence is the only intertwined miracle in the Gospels. In one brief succession of events Jesus deals with both disease and death. These two miracles are related in detail so that the drama of the combination can be fully evident.¹ Let's dig into the text;

***40** When Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. **41** Just then, a man named Jairus came. He was a leader of the synagogue. He fell down at Jesus's feet and pleaded with him to come to his house, **42** because he had an only daughter about twelve years old, and she was dying. (Luke 8:40-42a)*

The opening scene here is rather poignant. Jesus finds himself in the midst of a crowd, which has been expectantly waiting for him. Among them stands a synagogue ruler, Jairus — a man in charge of arranging the service and the progress of worship. Everyone knows him. As Jesus approaches, the leader falls before Jesus and asks him to come to his house where his only daughter, a twelve-year-old, is near death. We are not told the nature of her malady, only that there is not much time. To rescue her requires quick action.²

I personally have a twelve year old daughter, Charlotte. And if I were in Jairus's place I would certainly have an aggressive urgency, way more so than I ever would while playing laser tag!

But, there are times when we are called to be active, and times we're called to patiently wait...

And by the way, though Jesus spent a lot of time rebuking and calling out religious hypocrisy in religious leaders and religious people, we need to always remember that plenty of religious leaders and religious people responded positively to His messianic

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status. Not all were out to slander Him, defame Him, trap Him, arrest Him, imprison Him, and kill Him! Some believed, despite danger to their power, popularity, and penny counts, that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God! (Matt. 16:16) In this case, it could also be possible that Jairus simply believed in Jesus's miracle wielding capability. Either way, we know that Jairus, a spiritual and religious leader in Israel, despite Jesus' controversial relationship with the Jews of the time, desperately, humbly petitioned Jesus for help!

The account in the text then shifts gears;

*While he was going, the crowds were nearly crushing him. **43** A woman suffering from bleeding for twelve years, who had spent all she had on doctors and yet could not be healed by any, **44** approached from behind and touched the end of his robe. Instantly her bleeding stopped.*

45 *"Who touched me?" Jesus asked.*

When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds are hemming you in and pressing against you."

46 *"Someone did touch me," said Jesus. "I know that power has gone out from me." **47** When the woman saw that she was discovered, she came trembling and fell down before him. In the presence of all the people, she declared the reason she had touched him and how she was instantly healed. **48** "Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has saved you. Go in peace." (Luke 8:42b-48)*

Jesus starts heading for Jairus' house, but along the way, another person also needs Jesus. A woman, who has suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years wants Jesus to heal her. This condition is not only frustrating; it also renders her constantly ceremonially unclean, isolating her from Jewish religious life. Even physicians have failed to help her. Understandably, she does not want a public spectacle; all she wants is to touch Jesus, an act she hopes will bring healing. Getting herself into position, she touches him as he walks by, and immediately she is healed. This is not an act of magic, since no incantations or potions are involved. She simply believes that Jesus possesses great power.³

"The Chosen" series displays this scene so beautifully, as well as speculating about the scenario surrounding it.⁴ I recommend watching the full episode from season 3, episode 5.⁵

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⁴ Watch this scene of "The Chosen": https://youtu.be/pYEmdFyWBq8?si=SxwHu80PaBdYbn_P

⁵ Watch "The Chosen" Season 3, Episode 5 here: <https://watch.thechosen.tv/video/184683594328>

We have been talking about how Jesus proved that God dwelt and operated powerfully in the margins, and this situation was such a powerful example of this. This woman had a humiliating, life altering condition that would have left her exiled from the society she was part of indefinitely.

This is why all serious disciples of Jesus should study the Old Testament, because if one doesn't understand Leviticus 15, they'll miss the weight of this situation between Jesus and this woman. Check out the text and what the law says;

19 *“When a woman has a discharge, and it consists of blood from her body, she will be unclean because of her menstruation for seven days. Everyone who touches her will be unclean until evening. 20 Anything she lies on during her menstruation will become unclean, and anything she sits on will become unclean. 21 Everyone who touches her bed is to wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 22 Everyone who touches any furniture she was sitting on is to wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 23 If discharge is on the bed or the furniture she was sitting on, when he touches it he will be unclean until evening. 24 If a man sleeps with her, and blood from her menstruation gets on him, he will be unclean for seven days, and every bed he lies on will become unclean.*

25 *“When a woman has a discharge of her blood for many days, though it is not the time of her menstruation, or if she has a discharge beyond her period, she will be unclean all the days of her unclean discharge, as she is during the days of her menstruation. 26 Any bed she lies on during the days of her discharge will be like her bed during menstrual impurity; any furniture she sits on will be unclean as in her menstrual period. 27 Everyone who touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 28 When she is cured of her discharge, she is to count seven days, and after that she will be clean. 29 On the eighth day she must take two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 30 The priest is to sacrifice one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for her before the LORD because of her unclean discharge.*

31 *“You must keep the Israelites from their uncleanness, so that they do not die by defiling my tabernacle that is among them. (Lev. 15:19-31)*

Alright, do you understand this woman's plight now? Read Lev. 15:31 again- all of Israel was literally warned that they might **die** if they didn't keep the law! This woman would have been a threat to everyone's physical safety according to this! These laws laid out above were in full effect, and were applied to her all of her life. She was literally a

walking embodiment of constant uncleanness! She was likely thoroughly rejected by any and everyone. You could understand why she blew her life savings on doctors and remedies. But the result? No healing, continued rejection, and despair. A terrible, terrible hand to be dealt.

And what does she do? She simply touches the end of Jesus' robe. She doesn't have the courage to make a scene, she simply believes that Jesus could heal her, touches not even Him, but His robe, and is **instantly** healed! All the years of striving, suffering, and rejection come to an abrupt end!

Do you feel "unclean" today? Do you relate to any of these things below?

- I don't deserve love.
- I am a bad person.
- I am terrible.
- I am worthless (inadequate).
- I am shameful.
- I am not lovable.
- I am not good enough.
- I deserve only bad things.
- I am permanently damaged.
- I am ugly (my body is hateful).
- I do not deserve (FILL IN THE BLANK)
- I am stupid (not smart enough).
- I am insignificant (unimportant).
- I am a disappointment.
- I deserve to die.
- I deserve to be miserable.
- I am different (don't belong).
- I should have done something.
- I did something wrong.
- I should have known better.
- I cannot be trusted.
- I cannot trust myself.
- I cannot trust my judgment.
- I cannot trust anyone.
- I cannot protect myself.
- I am in danger.
- It's not okay to feel (show) my emotions.
- I cannot stand up for myself.

- I cannot let it out.
- I am not in control.
- I am powerless (helpless).
- I am weak.
- I cannot get what I want.
- I am a failure (will fail).
- I cannot succeed.
- I have to be perfect (please everyone).
- I cannot stand it.
- I am inadequate. Or,
- I cannot trust anyone?⁶

Touch the hem of Jesus' robe... Believe in who Jesus fully is today, and know the words He wants to speak over you!

- You say, I don't deserve love. He says you deserve love; you can have love.
- You say, I am a bad person. He says He is good and will live in you.
- You say, I am terrible. He says you are fearfully and wonderfully made
- You say, I am worthless (inadequate). He says you are worthy in Him
- You say, I am shameful. He says I died to erase your shame
- You say, I am not lovable. He says you are eternally loved.
- You say, I am not good enough. He says He is good enough.
- You say, I deserve only bad things. He says He'll provide all the good things you need.
- You say, I am permanently damaged. He says He can fix you, bit by bit.
- You say, I am ugly. He says you are beautiful in His sight.
- You say, I do not deserve (FILL IN THE BLANK), He says you will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven for eternity.
- You say, I am stupid (not smart enough). He says He will fill you with His wisdom.
- You say, I am insignificant (unimportant). He says you are precious.
- You say, I am a disappointment. He says you can do all things through Him.
- You say, I deserve to die. He says your life is valuable for the Kingdom! To live is Christ, and to die is gain.
- You say, I deserve to be miserable. He says I can give you joy and peace that surpasses understanding!
- You say, I am different (don't belong). He says you are unique!
- You say, I should have done something. He says you're forgiven and He'll help you to do the right thing next time.
- You say, I did something wrong. He says, you're eternally forgiven at the cross.

⁶ https://emdrtherapyvolusia.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Beliefs_Negative_Positive.pdf

- You say, I should have known better. He says I know best!
- You say, I cannot be trusted. He says, trust me!
- You say, I cannot trust myself. He says, I can be trusted!
- You say, I cannot trust my judgment. He says, I'm the ultimate judge of all things!
- You say, I cannot trust anyone. He says, trust me and the people I bring your way!
- You say, I cannot protect myself. He says He'll be your shield and guide.
- You say, I am in danger. He says, even though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death you can fear no evil!
- You say, It's not okay to feel (show) my emotions. He says go ahead and cry on my shoulders.
- You say, I cannot stand up for myself. He says I will defend you.
- You say, I cannot let it out. He says, I will make you bold.
- You say, I am not in control. He says, I am in control.
- You say, I am powerless (helpless). He says, I am all powerful.
- You say, I am weak. He says, my power is made perfect in weakness.
- You say, I cannot get what I want. He says, I'll give you what you need.
- You say, I am a failure (will fail). He says in Him you are more than a conqueror!
- You say, I cannot succeed. He says I will redefine your "success" and redirect your efforts!
- You say, I have to be perfect (please everyone). He says He has perfectly obeyed God for you.
- You say, I cannot stand it. He says, I'll give you power to endure.
- You say, I am inadequate. He says, you are adequate in His eyes.
- You say, I cannot trust anyone, He says, You can trust me, I will teach you how to trust again, and I will bring trustworthy people into your life.

Touch the hem of Jesus' robe! This woman did. Jesus wondered who had touched Him...

There is no obvious need for what happens next to take place, but Jesus' next action puts Jairus in an awkward position. Jesus stops to find out what has just happened. He turns to the vast throng of the pressing crowd and asks, "Who touched me?" Needless to say, Peter is shocked. How can Jesus ask such a question in the press of a crowd where all are trying to get in contact with Jesus? Jesus persists. He is conscious of the fact that power has proceeded from him. The touch he asks about is not just a physical touch but a touch that pleaded for help and found it. The silent faith of the woman needs exposure.⁷

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Call on Jesus from anywhere, at any time and He will hear you! In the middle of a workday, call on Him. In the middle of an airplane ride, call on Him. While chilling out, call on Him. While doing yard work, call on Him. While parenting your kids, call on Him. While hanging out with a bunch of people, call on Him.

And understand that if you truly come out of hiding and call on Jesus, He might ask you to go public with your confession. If He has healed something in you, how could you not?

The woman realizes that Jesus knows what she has done. She is no longer hidden. So with great fear, she comes forward, revealing the reasonableness of Jesus' seemingly strange question. She falls before him and relates her story. Jesus commends her, noting that her faith has saved her. This remark is significant, because sometimes this woman is maligned for her "behind the back" approach to Jesus. But there is nothing in Jesus' treatment of her that indicates rebuke. What the woman needs is reassurance and confidence that her actions need not remain secretive. As one commentator puts it, her "smoldering wick" of faith needs fanning into a flame. Given the opportunity, she summons up her courage and gives her testimony to her now enhanced faith.⁸

A timid faith can become a testifying faith. God longs for us to share how he has been good to us.⁹ Can we please encourage one another? When you know someone has been hiding out, struggling, feeling worthless, feeling unclean, and feeling down, will you, in the power of Christ, help them to find their courage again? That's what "en-courage"-ment is!

I had a friend back in 2007 who I met at a seminary class. We got together for lunch and talked for a while. I got the feeling that he might be gay, so I shared with him at our first lunch, without being obvious, that I had another close friend who was gay, and a follower of Christ, and thereby felt compelled by his love for Jesus to abstain from sex his entire life, but struggled to do so. I told him that this friend had come out to me about his sexuality, and I was the first person he had come out to. I shared that this was one of my closest friends who was a groomsman in my wedding, and that I had walked with him through many seasons of both our lives.

A few days later, my new friend called me up, and we had a long conversation where he also came out to me about his sexuality. He also told me that I was the first person he had ever told about this. I was honored to be that safe place for him.

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Then came a flurry of confession. My new friend had been hooking up with random guys on the internet, and putting himself at risk for STD's, violence, and God knows what else. Then, he would dutifully attend Church every week with his parents at a huge megachurch, lost in the crowd of thousands of people. He loved Jesus, but struggled with this whole other hidden life, and didn't know how to reconcile the two. I listened patiently, offered him encouragement, and we gradually built a friendship.

Eventually, he asked me to be his "accountability partner". That's what we called it back in those days. I agreed.

One time, my friend called me. "Ben, I just hooked up with a random guy on the internet, he came over to my house, and I gave him a blow job. Can you pray for me?" Compelled by the Spirit, I prayed.

Gradually, my friend moved entirely away from these hook ups. He touched the hem of Jesus' robe and Jesus removed these desires from him. He wanted to find out if there were others in this massive megachurch who were in the closet like him. He boldly put together a plan where he would lead an anonymous group called "Bonds of Iron", that would contain other gay men who were living in the closet, but also following Jesus, and needed support, fellowship and encouragement. He put together an anonymous line that could be texted, and would go to him. He would keep their secret safe, and invite them into a group of other men in the same place.

My friend went from being timid, sexually and morally frustrated, to becoming a total bold lion for Jesus. After being given the go ahead by leadership, He got up in front of this Church, then containing about 10,000 people attending, and told his story of living a closeted life as a gay man, while trying to live out his faith. He shared the number to text, and the following week, texts flooded in. He found that dozens of men were living just as he was, a closeted gay life while attending the Church. Just as planned, he began a secret support group for these men, and eventually invited me in as the first "token straight guy" to come and hang out with the group called "Bonds of Iron". In this group, many men found support, strength, accountability, and spiritual growth. Some men came entirely out of the lifestyle they were in, and some didn't. The support, vulnerability, honesty, and love in the group was so strong that gay men who didn't believe in Jesus at all began to attend as well

Now that friend of mine is a lead pastor of a Church in Virginia.

When Jesus touches our lives, He'll often ask us to go public with the healing that has taken place! And He'll use our testimony to impact lives! We need not be ashamed of

what the Lord has done in us! We need not be ashamed anymore of the life we lived before we touched the hem of his robe!

There are times when we are called to be active, and times we're called to patiently wait... This woman waited for this amazing healing for twelve agonizing years! And just think about what Jairus, the synagogue leader with a dying twelve year old daughter, must've felt! All this amazing stuff went down, and Jairus, who was urgently pleading for Jesus' help, was put on hold! And look what happened next:

49 While he was still speaking, someone came from the synagogue leader's house and said, "Your daughter is dead. Don't bother the teacher anymore." (Luke 8:49)

One can only imagine the desperate frustration Jairus feels as this delay, orchestrated by Jesus' question, proceeds. Then things get worse. Someone from Jairus's house appears to tell him it is too late and that Jesus need not be troubled. His daughter has just passed away. I suspect with this announcement that pain, disappointment, and anger flooded Jairus's soul.¹⁰

Have you ever felt like God didn't come through for you? You asked for healing but it didn't happen. You asked for provision but it didn't show up. You want that relationship but no one has filled that void.

We all feel, at times, like God hasn't come through for us in small and big ways.

It's certainly a first world problem, but currently, my wife and I have been struggling financially for the past two years. We've been getting by but don't have a savings account and essentially live paycheck to paycheck. This is not where we anticipated to be in our forties. We're both hard working people that are convicted about giving our all to everything we do. We have three daughters, two, nine and twelve years old. We've got a dog and two cats. We've got a house that we bought back in 2016 for 85K that we're still paying off, and it has many problems- squirrels in our attic, a leaking basement, some plaster walls that still have ugly wallpaper on them, and more. We've got one car that is paid off, and another that we'll probably be paying on for awhile. The air conditioner just stopped working in the car that's paid off. Our washer and dryer are currently malfunctioning.

Our two year old will turn three in a few months, and is just on the brink of going to preschool four days a week for a few hours a day. This has opened up more possibilities for my wife Sarah to pursue work. She has a passion for radio and TV

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hosting, and landed a job as a fill-in for a radio station, but the pay is very minimal. Plus, her time slots on the radio are from 4:30am to 9:00am, so it interferes with hers and our schedule as family. She does some TV hosting, but despite what many may think, the pay is **very** minimal there.

And I'm a full time pastor of a small urban Church. Despite what many think, pastoring is a multi-faceted, complicated job, especially for me in the role I'm in and the context where our Church is. I wear a lot of different hats and juggle a lot of roles. Streetlight takes good care of me but we sure ain't rich!

And I often find myself grumbling...

"God, why can't Sarah make more money doing what she loves? When are you gonna open up that door, eh?"

Lord I would try to make more money but I just don't have the time! I can't doordash on every spare moment I have off, I need to be a husband to this woman and Dad to these kids!

Lord, I've written three books, and know that one especially is good! I want them published but just don't have the time to pursue it!

Lord, why does parenting have to be so dang hard?

There's more I internally, and sometimes externally complain about than the things I listed above! We all do this with stuff. If we're being honest, it's hard to trust God with everything in our lives.

And it would especially be hard to petition Jesus to heal your dying daughter, have some "unclean" lady (especially in this synagogue ruler's eyes!) interrupt Jesus, and then have your daughter die in the process! Could you imagine?

But Jesus relates words of comfort to the synagogue ruler, telling him not to fear but to believe.¹¹

50 *When Jesus heard it, he answered him, "Don't be afraid. Only believe, and she will be saved."* **51** *After he came to the house, he let no one enter with him except Peter, John, James, and the child's father and mother.* **52** *Everyone was crying and mourning for her. But he said, "Stop crying, because she is not dead but asleep."*

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53 They laughed at him, because they knew she was dead. 54 So he took her by the hand and called out, "Child, get up!" 55 Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he gave orders that she be given something to eat. 56 Her parents were astounded, but he instructed them to tell no one what had happened. (Luke 8:50-56)

When Jesus gets to the house, he allows only the family, Peter, John, and James to enter in the room where the corpse is lying. Outside, the mourners have gathered. In Israelite culture, they would've only been called after it was clear that death had taken place. In the midst of community sorrow, Jesus shockingly calls on them to stop, for the girl "is not dead but asleep." The agent of God will move to reveal the extent of his power over forces that reveal the mortality of humanity.¹²

The crowd laughs. Surely one cannot resuscitate someone from the dead. We often regard the ancients as gullible, but the reaction here shows they can be as empirically based as most people in our culture today. What Jesus proposes is ludicrous, unless... . Once inside, he grasps the girl's hand and tells her to get up. There are no potions or incantations, no appeals to outside powers. There is only the touching hand of Jesus. The girl sits up, her spirit revived within her. Someone immediately gives her food. Her parents are amazed. The call to faith that Jesus made to Jairus has now received its answer.¹³

The account closes with Jesus's instruction to say nothing about what had happened. This is an odd command, for obviously by the girl's walking the streets again, everyone will know what Jesus has done. Jesus' point seems to be that he does not want undue attention brought to what he has done. To broadcast this healing far and wide will turn him into a wonder-worker, with all the public attention focused on that ministry. Jesus wants the attention elsewhere, on his central teaching, and will have nothing to do with the promotion of actions that place the emphasis in the wrong place (see 4:41; 5:14). The miracles point to more fundamental realities. Jesus wants to major on the major issues.¹⁴

The raising of Jairus's daughter, which called for great faith, reminds us of the faith we must have in God's power to bring us to him after we die.¹⁵ Jesus might not heal everyone, or raise everyone from the dead on this side of heaven, but on the other side of heaven, when Jesus returns to earth as a conquering king to wipe out sin, hell, death, and the devil forever, He will establish a perfect Kingdom where **everyone present** will

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be ***eternally healed*** and be given ***sinless bodies*** that will ***never die***! Sort of puts things in perspective, doesn't it?

There are times when we are called to be active, and times we're called to patiently wait...

You may not get the heavenly result you're looking for this side of heaven! You might not get that miracle you were hoping for! God may not work out all the issues in your life!

But God can do a work inside of you that ***nobody***, not even the ***devil himself***, can take away from you! Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matt. 10:28)

So the point of reading this account isn't to say- Jesus rose this girl from the dead, how come He didn't bring back my grandma, my grandpa, my Father, my Mother, my sister, my brother, my friend, my son, my daughter, my dog, my cat, my goldfish, or my gerbil from the dead? We shouldn't read this account and say, "great Jesus, you healed the woman of a twelve year physical condition! How come you won't heal the mental, emotional, physical, psychological, or spiritual health of my grandma, my grandpa, my Father, my Mother, my sister, my brother, my friend, my son, my daughter, my dog, my cat, my goldfish, or my gerbil?"

Remember- Jesus did all of this while He was on earth. And then what did He do to validate His identity and authority? He willingly gave up His life, was mocked, flogged, and crucified, and on the third day He rose from the dead." (Matt. 20:19b) And why did Jesus do this? To ***seal the deal***. To seal our salvation. To seal our redemption. To seal our sanctification. To seal our resurrection. To seal our eternity. To make us able to suffer through anything for His Name's sake! That's the real hope of His life and message!

There are times when we are called to be active, and times we're called to patiently wait...

Are you like the woman who bled for twelve years? Are you in a place right now where you need to come out of hiding, come out of timidity, come out of shame, repent of passive aggression, and go after the things of God? Do it. Come forward. Get real. Ask God for boldness. Ask God for courage. Ask God for conviction. God will meet you in it! God will grant those things to you if you want them! But remember, if God does a work

in you after you put yourself out there, He will ask you to keep putting yourself out there!
Don't stop! Don't quit!

Are you like Jairus? Are you in a place right now where you need to cool your jets, slow down, stop striving, and stop being aggressive about demanding things of God and others? Chill out. Understand, as hard as it is, that God's ways are not your ways. Be patient. Wait on God. Keep believing. Keep seeking the Word. Keep praying. Keep showing up, worshiping, serving, giving, and seeking Him. Keep doing life and community with His people. Keep following the mission that He's put right in front of you. He'll show up eventually. He might not show up in the way that you expect! I'm preaching to myself!

And no matter how tough it is, we've got eternity to live for and to strive for! Hallelujah!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Is God calling you to be active in something but you're holding back?
2. Is God calling you to patiently wait on Him and you're tired of waiting?
3. What perspective can God help you to have in the situation you're currently in?