

## The Power is in the Details

Less than two years ago, I purchased a large sectional sofa. I was so proud of my sofa, but I made a mistake. I didn't research the fabric before purchasing it. I just walked my happy self into a furniture store, walked around for a few minutes and then pointed at it. "I want that one," I proudly said to the salesman. *I think I was his favorite customer that day.* I don't think I even took five minutes to consider my options. I did that because for the first time in my life, I was witnessing God, the Provider. We often acknowledge Him according to what we need the most. Some people have witnessed Him be God, the Healer; while some have witnessed Him be God, the Deliverer. I was tapped into God, the Provider and I did not know how to act. I'd grown up poor and thinking that I needed to have a two-income household in order to afford the things I wanted. That mentality directly affected the choices I made in both my physical and my spiritual youth. It also affected my income. I settled for low-paying jobs and decent-paying jobs that I hated for the sake of having "some" money. There I was in the furniture store feeling good about myself. I was dining out every weekend all by my lonesome and witnessing a supernatural peace that truly surpassed my understanding. Not only was I preaching about God, but I was witnessing His divine favor. So, where's the mistake in this?

The mistake was that I was too anxious; I was too hasty. God impressed upon my heart to get rid of a lot of stuff in my house, including the couch, and even though I obeyed Him, I did not do my homework. I thought that obeying God meant doing what He said do; that's it and that's all! But what I didn't realize is that the power is oftentimes in the details. Think about it this way. When your mother told you to go to the store and get a loaf of bread, you knew to ask her what brand of bread to get or you already knew which brand she preferred. If she wanted you to get a different brand other than the one she normally got, you knew that she would tell you. *(This is especially true for those of us who grew up in poverty.)* Obeying your mother meant that you had to pay attention to the details or she'd send you back to the store. You couldn't just go to the store and grab a loaf of bread; you needed to know which loaf to grab and how much you were supposed to spend. Sure, when you were younger, your mother would spell out the details for you, but as you got older, her words were fewer, but her expectations were higher. She told the ten year old you; for example, to go to the store and purchase a loaf of Wonder Bread, but when you turned sixteen, she likely told you to go to the store and get a loaf of bread. Even if she attempted to give you the details, you likely walked away proclaiming to her that you knew what she wanted. **Pay attention to this:** You knew what brand of bread to get because your mother chose it first! You'd already witnessed her buying that brand of bread time and time again, so you knew which one to pick. You also knew to look

at the expiration date and lightly press down on the bread to ensure that it was soft. You knew to look at the details!

The same goes for your car. If your mechanic told you that your car needed a new timing belt, you wouldn't just go to a parts store and ask for a timing belt. You would give them the details about your car to ensure that you got the right one, otherwise, you'd end up with a timing belt that you could not use! It would be a timing belt, but it would be useless to you! You wouldn't be able to put it on your car, which means, you wouldn't be able to go anywhere until you got the right timing belt!

Again, I was just starting to witness, God the Provider take over. Before then, the men I'd chosen for myself had been the "bread-winners". I just tossed my coins into the tray, hoping that I'd done my part. Of course, I'd been delivered from that mindset for several years by then, but being newly divorced, I was finally beginning to see the fruit of what I'd been preaching. So, the minute God impressed it upon my heart to get a new couch, I loaded my dog in the car and headed out to a nearby furniture store. I took my dog because I knew I wasn't going to be in there long; this was the evidence of my immaturity in that arena. I just wanted a new (and nice-looking) couch; that was it. It was that same mentality that led me into two (ungodly) marriages. It was that same mentality that led me into debt. I needed to look at the details, but instead, I looked at the surface. I walked into the store and made one circle around the furniture before pointing at my current couch. Two years later, I can truly say that I regret that decision. The fabric on my current couch is now fuzzy from me washing the pillow cases. The couch looks older than it is and the pillows keep slipping off the couch.

God recently impressed upon my heart to get a new couch (once again), but this time, I understand that the power (and the longevity) is in the details. He doesn't have to be as detailed with me because I'm older, wiser and I know my Father better. I know that when my Father says to get something, I need to be patient and prayerful. **I need to choose what God has already chosen.** Because of this, I was more detailed in my recent search for a new sectional. I found out that the best fabric for pet owners (furniture wise) is microfiber and (genuine) leather. My dog has claws like an eagle, so I knew that leather was not an option for me. I looked at hundreds of couches in my search for the one that best fit my lifestyle and God kept taking me back to one particular couch. It cost more than I wanted to pay, plus, it didn't look as fancy as the other couches I had been eyeing. Nevertheless, it's a nice microfiber sectional couch with pillows that don't slip and plenty of space for seating. I went ahead and purchased that couch after noticing that not only did I keep coming back to it, but it was the better suited

for me than the others. So what's the message here for you?

Men and women tend to shop differently. Women will oftentimes shop around when purchasing material things; we will weigh our options. *That's why men hate going to the store with us.* But when it comes to love, we usually lock in on the first man who captures our heart and keeps our attention. Needless to say, men are different. When it comes to material things (for the most part), the average man will not shop around. If he needs a pair of size 38 khaki pants, that's what he's going to go and get. He won't spend too much time weighing out his options, and having worked in retail, I can tell you that retailers are fully aware of this! That's why the men's department is a lot smaller than the lady's department. When it comes to love, however, men will oftentimes shop around, hoping to find that one woman who best fits their current lifestyles. This isn't always the best move to make because we (both men and women) oftentimes shop for people according to the level that we are on and not-so-much where we're going. For example, let's create a character that we'll call Leroy. Leroy is a 21 year old rebellious young man who thinks that "making it in life" is to have a driveway full of show-cars, a black book filled with the numbers of immoral women and being the envy of his friends. Because of this, Leroy makes a lot of foolish decisions in his youth. Fifteen years later, Leroy is a pastor, husband and father, but he also has children with women whom he is not around to raise personally. Some of Leroy's children have been raised by ungodly women in ungodly ways and nowadays, those children despise him. Leroy, Jr. can't seem to stay out of jail and Leroy's exes keep taking him to court trying to raise his child support. When Leroy was younger, his decisions reflected where he was and not where he was headed! That's because he didn't realize that his mind would eventually change and this would lead to a change in his choices and a change in his life. Of course, now that he's older and wiser, Leroy has many regrets. He's still paying for many of the foolish decisions that he made in his youth.

What about you? When we come to Christ Jesus, we aren't just handed a shopping cart and a few scriptures, and then told to go out and choose the things and people we want in our lives. We are given a Bible and the understanding that we need to remain prayerful (and patient) in all things. Howbeit, our ability to make decisions is still very much present. Our relationship with God and our knowledge of His Word will determine how and if we abuse that privilege.

When God said, "He who finds a wife, finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord," He wasn't saying that you should go out, pick a woman and marry her. Think about the countless men who've done just that, men who are now married to Jezebels, Delilahs and every "brand" of immoral woman there is. Did they obtain favor by marrying a member of the opposite sex?

The answer is a resounding no. They have headaches, mounting debt, no peace to call their own and wives who keep tearing down their marriages with their bare hands. This means that God wasn't just saying to go out and pick a woman; He was saying that as a man of God, you should be mature enough to look at the details so you'll come to know the difference between a wife and a woman. He said that you will know them by their fruit! The power is in the details! The same goes for choosing a car, a home and pretty much everything in life. When we make choices, we oftentimes choose according to where we are and where we want to go, but when we let God choose for us, we allow Him to align us with the destinies that He has called us to enter into. In other words...our promotions are not determined by our ability to make decisions; our promotions are determined by our willingness to trust God with the decision-making process! Consider King Solomon. He was king over Israel. He could have easily ruled the people of God without any direction from God, but this would have led him to make many, many mistakes where other souls were involved. He had God's permission to rule over Israel and he'd been crowned king, nevertheless, he inquired of God and asked Him to give him wisdom to lead His people. This petition pleased God and He blessed Solomon above all kings. Now, we all know that Solomon took a fool's turn at some point and he started marrying women who God had forbidden him to marry. The problem was that Solomon had the ability to make decisions and he eventually abused that privilege! When we exclude God from the decision-making process, we will almost always find ourselves disobeying a direct command from God just because we can! Solomon's decision led him down a dark path and he began to worship other deities. He ended up with a castle full of demon-possessed women who entertained his eyes, all the while, tearing away at his relationship with God.

The point is that God gave us free will, but a wise man hands the wheel of his life's vehicle to the Lord and asks that His will be done. It's easy for us to shop for the things we want when we can afford to get them, but know this: when you're anointed, you cannot afford to exclude God from your decisions. Just because a woman is within your reach doesn't mean that God wants you to have her. Sure, it is not sin for you to choose your own wife if she is saved and single, but a wise man seeks first the Kingdom of God and all His righteousness and he lets God add his wife to him. By doing so, he is blessed to share his space, his life and his children with a wife who can weather the highs and lows of life with him, as opposed to having a fair-weather woman who jumps ship at the sight of the first major storm. Don't let your eyes choose for you. Follow God's lead and let Him show you how powerful the details are!

Nowadays, I am prayerful about everything and everyone. I'm always at Heaven's door asking questions because I now realize that my life is not my own. I'm not here to accomplish my own

personal, selfish goals. Because of this, I even asked God to pick out my couch for me, and again, He didn't choose one of the ones I would have personally picked. The couch He chose for me was more functional than it was attractive, nevertheless, it is attractive and I know that it has longevity. The point is... God doesn't always choose for us what we would have chosen for ourselves. *Obviously, this is why many of us end up divorced.* God is not bound by our lusts, our blindness or any of the worldly cords that bind us. God looks directly at the heart and when He says a man or a woman is a beautiful soul, He is speaking truth! When we say that a man or a woman is attractive, we are oftentimes speaking from behind the cells of our bondage; we are speaking from our blind desperation! A man in prison will take just about any woman who'll put money on his books and visit him while he's locked up, but should that man ever get his freedom, he will likely choose a different woman! Yes, you are a free man, but you are also confined to your understanding. Think of it this way. The knowledge of God is a map and your understanding of that knowledge is nothing more than a dot on that map. If you have Connecticut-size understanding, you will miss the wife who requires Texas-sized faith to have. Nevertheless, if you let God lead you in all things, He will send you out to get patience. After you get that, He will send you out to get understanding. Once you have understanding, He will send you to dine with wisdom. In this, He is teaching you not only how to find "your" wife, but He is also giving you what you'll need to cover and lead her. In other words, He will personally train you if you let Him! Once He does this, He won't have to tell you; for example, that Tameka is your God-appointed wife. All He'll have to do is send you out, and because you know Him, you will know what qualities to look for. When the wrong women audition to wear your surname, you will look at the details (their fruit) and you will know that they are not assigned to walk with you in life. However, when you come across the one who is assigned to be your help-meet, you will recognize her because God chose her first, and then, He sent you back to life's store (repeatedly) until you learned the "brand" He favored. That's when you'll find your wife and obtain favor from the Lord.