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July 2016

Micah

Inside Terry's Office:

The Book of Micah; So Many Contradictions!

“One bright morning, in the middle of the night two dead boys got up to fight.”
“Back to back, they faced each other, drew their swords and shot at each other.”
“One deaf policeman heard the noise,... came and shot those two dead boys.”
“If you don't believe my story is true, ask the blind man, he saw it too.”

This contradicting story illustrates many “truths” for those wise enough to hear them: something about how we are still in the dark during our brightest moments, and how it is the deadness in us that motivates us to fight, and how even when we face each other we often don't reveal our true faces, etc. I'm sure you can find more profundities in the four sentences above. And, this is how some people read scripture; they go on a treasure hunt for profound truths (analogies, wisdom, principles, etc.). But, the reality is that we can only find the profundities that we already know when we read scripture this way.

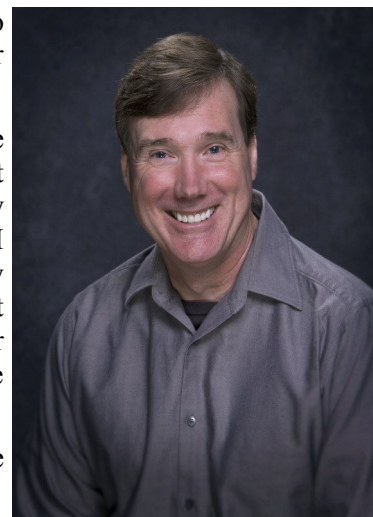
Instead, the Bible invites us into the historically real experiences of people who THEN experience the word of God speaking directly to them in the midst of their circumstances. I refer to this method of Bible study as “hearing the Word from within the story” (as opposed to “studying the Word for wisdom for today”; i.e. – from outside the story). Those who practice this second approach can really only hear the profundities that they already believe. For instance, if someone reads about Jonah being swallowed by a big fish, they may not believe the story is historically true yet still find many and varied insights, principles, and applications for today illustrated in the account. They may think they are studying scripture, but are really only revealing their own beliefs (which may be true or not). Unless the reader identifies with Jonah and what it must have been like to be actually swallowed by a big fish, they have not opened themselves to hearing what God is communicating to them (as he did to Jonah) His Word.

The book of Micah challenges the reader with this same dynamic when it records the reality of people seeking God at that time; “If a liar and deceiver comes and says, ‘I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer’, he would be just the prophet for these people.” And, “As for the prophets who lead my people astray, if one feeds them, they proclaim “peace”. The people were not prepared to hear God's Word because they would not believe the reality of their place in history (proclaimed in first two chapters) that all around them nations are being devastated BECAUSE of their idol worship, and the same will happen to them. They simply couldn't embrace the story of nations being judged due to their idolatry, injustices, and other evils. Therefore, they couldn't hear what God had to say to them.

I'm taking this opportunity to point out this dynamic because we see so much of it in the counseling office; when spouses don't accept the reality of the pain and/or distance that their spouse is feeling, they are not able to HEAR anything profound from their spouse (such as, “I love you, but I can't live with you.”) They are unable to see a way forward with each other (such as, “All I ask of you, is to assure me that you like me.”) When we listen to the story from the outside, we enter into an “as-if” relationship (as-if we honor each other). It can become as natural to us as reading scripture from the outside.

Sooooo, let's read scripture “from the inside” (accepting the historical events as recorded) in practice of listening to each other!

In His Grip, TWE



ESTABLISHING A PLUMBLINE IN THE HEART OF GOD'S PEOPLE

The Plumbline

Sand Walking

“ . . . you will fail to accept emptiness as the path to knowing Me. . . . Unless I AM a God who pardons sin, who in mercy and compassion hurls your self-centeredness into the depths of the sea, you are doomed. [Micah 7:16-20]”

66 Love Letters, Larry Crabb, p. 163

My family and I recently returned from a trip to the beaches of Destin, Florida. Just today I related a life concept to an experience I had walking in the sand. I recalled walking up an incline in the sand and how hard it was to get my footing. You take a step and slide back making it twice as long to get where you are going. It made me think about a conversation with a counselee who has made little progress in the last four years to move forward. My thought about it today is that it is like she is sand walking up hill. We discussed why things seem to be so hard for her, why there has been little change or progress. That's what we do in hard circumstances, isn't it? We try to figure out the whys of the circumstances. The answers might lead us to a method, a plan, a procedure to move us forward, beyond the struggle.

Micah 6:6-8 are the verses that are most well known to me from this prophetic book,

What should I bring into the presence of the Eternal One to pay homage to the God Most

High?

Should I come into His presence with burnt offerings, with year-old calves to sacrifice?

Would the Eternal be pleased by thousands of sacrificial rams, by ten thousand swollen rivers of sweet olive oil?

Should I offer my oldest son for my wrongdoing, the child of my body to cover the sins of my life?

No. He has told you, mortals, what is good in His sight.

What else does the Eternal ask of you

but **to live justly and to love kindness**

and to **walk with your True God in all humility?**

(The Voice)

So here's what I am thinking.....the truth is sand walking happens! And sometimes it happens up hill. It is not about avoiding the sand walking or figuring out how to make it easier. It is about embracing the process and enjoying it in humility with your TRUE GOD. Thank God for the opportunity sand walking affords you to depend on Him, trust in Him.

In the course of the conversation with the client I mentioned I recommended she seek help from a certain specialized resource to which she replied that she couldn't do that as she had not yet done what said resource had asked of her the first time she sought his help and she could not let him down. She couldn't admit she had "backslidden" so to speak. She couldn't go back to him until she had done what he asked her to do. Don't we do that with God? We

have to get it right before we can come back to God.

I think of James chapter one and the encouragement to persevere in the face of various trials. The Greek word for persevere is Hupomeno which means to remain, hold fast to one's faith in Christ, to endure. I heard Kay Arthur say it means to keep on keepin' on. *Walking with your True God in all humility* allows you to admit your failures and keep on moving forward. I love the new Toby Mac Song that's playing on the radio, (Move (Keep Walkin')) I hope you will take the time to look this song up and listen to the lyrics as, if you are like me, it is easy to get caught up in the rhythmic melody and miss the message. To close I would like to leave you with this refrain from Toby's song:

*Move, keep walkin' soldier
keep movin' on
Move, keep walkin' until
the mornin' comes'
Move, keep walkin' soldier
keep movin' on
And lift your head, it ain't
over yet, ain't over yet!*



Micah-Who Can I Trust?

“The godly people have all disappeared; not one honest person is left on earth. They are all murderers, setting traps even for their own brothers. Both their hands are equally skilled at doing evil! Officials and judges alike demand bribes. The people with influence get what they want, and together they scheme to twist justice. Even the best of them is like a briar; the most honest is as dangerous as a hedge of thorns. But your judgment day is coming swiftly now. Your time of punishment is here, a time of confusion. Don’t trust anyone—not your best friend or even your wife! For the son despises his father. The daughter defies her mother. The daughter-in-law defies her mother-in-law. Your enemies are right in your own household! As for me, I look to the Lord for help. I wait confidently for God to save me, and my God will certainly hear me.” Micah 7:2-7 NLT.

Anybody ever found yourself there? Feeling like those closest to you can’t be trusted? Maybe you’ve been betrayed by someone you’ve trusted? And how does this line up with James 5:16? “Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.” There seems to be a paradox here...we are supposed to have connection with others, yet we don’t trust others. Hmmm.

So here are my thoughts. The Bible doesn’t contradict itself. That means we need to look deeper and understand the context. The Blue Letter Bible online commentary says:

“Do not trust in a friend: Because of their rampant sin and selfishness, personal relationships have crumbled among God’s people. One cannot **trust in a friend** or put **confidence in a companion**, and even blood relatives are at war with each other.

Therefore I will look to the LORD ... my God will hear me: In this sin-immersed culture, there are few people to give confidence or compassion - so one can only **look to the LORD**.

This is a *bad* thing, because people should be honorable and trustworthy enough so that we can find confidence and compassion from them. Nevertheless, God can use this as a *good* thing, because it forces people to put their trust in the only One who can never let them down - the **God of my salvation.**”

It’s not hard to look around and find ourselves living in a time much like Micah experienced. My family is dealing with that now. Someone we allowed in and trusted has spread some things that are not true. So...what do we do?

I believe the first thing is, we look to God. He is the only One who is all-knowing. He sees the beginning from the end and everything in between. We seek Him and we listen. He is able to show us where to walk and who to walk with. We ask Him who our safe people are and we forgive those we trusted who were not.

The next thing is, we look for them...the safe people we can trust. According to Cloud and Townsend, in their book *Safe People*, “The best example of a safe person is found in Jesus. In Him were found three qualities of a safe person: dwelling, grace, and truth. Dwelling refers to someone’s ability to connect with us. Grace is ‘unmerited favor’ meaning that someone is on our side, that they are for us. Truth implies honesty, being real with one another and living out the truth of God.”

Sometimes we have difficulty, because of past abuse and traumas, discerning who safe people are. We have a *Safe People* class at Plumline, taught by Margo Hanne, that I strongly encourage taking. It will help you determine what safe people are and aren’t.

Keep hope alive my friends. There are safe people walking amongst us who would be delighted to be in relationship with you. Ask God and look for them. He will show you. And...take the next *Safe People* class. You’ll be glad you did.

Struggling, striving, growing,

Michelle Elliott



In Loving Memory of Steve Merrill



Our friend and board member, Steve Merrill, passed away on May 19th. We want to thank God for the privilege of sharing life and death with him! His personality, gifts, testimony, and love IS greatly missed. His death from cancer was not sudden, but when his body failed, he passed quickly.

For those of you who knew him, we share in ‘grieving deeply so that we may live fully’. For those of you who did not know Steve, please know that he did us good and any good you have/will experience from Plumblin Ministries has been encouraged and deepened by Steve Merrill.

~

“God of grace and glory, we remember before you our brother Steve. We thank you for giving him to us, his family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

~

ROMANS 8:37-39 *In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Establishing a Plumblineline in the Heart of God's People

Plumblineline Ministries

*Plumblineline is a nonprofit Pastoral Counseling
and Teaching Center.*

Our Mission is to partner with churches in order to offer Pastoral Counseling, to provide services to the community at large, and to establish a nation-wide teaching ministry promoting the principle that God delights in the struggling, striving, growing believer.

We accept clients through our sponsoring churches at no charge to the client, and from the public for a service fee. (\$65.00/hour)

Our sponsoring churches are:

Asbury United Methodist Church

Believers Church

Liberty Church

Northside Christian Church

Parkview Baptist, River Oaks Presbyterian

Members of any of the sponsoring churches, please bring a signed intake form from your pastor to be put on the waiting list. Clients from the public, download an intake form from our website and bring it to our office or come by the office for a copy.

Visit us on our website www.plumblinelineonline.com

Stickman's Prayers

Plumblin's newest book, *Stickman's Prayers* has been published and is now available at Plumblin!

stickman's prayers

the everyday practice of
"loosing prayers"
and the ministry of
"exploratory prayers"



Michelle Carpenter
Terry Ewing
Erin Garcia
Margo Hanne
Carolyn Knippers
Carol McNamarra
Sue Merrill

Would you be surprised to know that the "Prayer of Jabez" was a joke?

Would you be happy to know what kind of prayers are appropriate for you to pray for yourself and what kinds are meant for you to pray for others and others for you?

Would you like confidence and freedom to simply enjoy your personal and ministry prayers?

Praying is the most natural thing in the world for Christians; an on going conversation with our best friend, counselor, and confidant; gratitude to our Savior and provider; intercession on behalf of our friends; requests to our Creator. In this regard, a book on prayer may seem presumptuous. When you write a book on Prayer aren't you suggesting that some are praying wrongly, or, at least could be praying better?

That really is not the kind of message we look to promote. So...why the book?

The *Stickman's Prayer's* serves two purposes. First, to challenge some ideas that other teaching and preaching concerning prayer has promoted. And, to offer simple encouragements to personal prayer and prayer ministries.

FOUNDATIONS

Soul Care Training VI Unit 1

September 1, 2016 – November 17, 2016 (Cancel week of Fall Break)

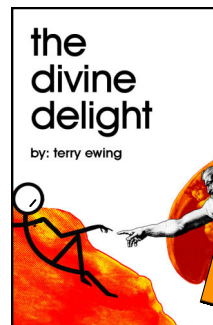
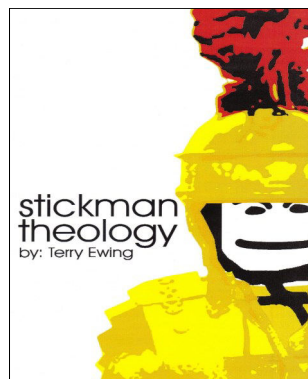
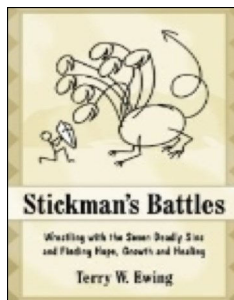
It will be back to the basics in Soul Care Training VI Unit 1. In this course students will learn about the foundational principles of counseling on which Plumblin is based. Students will be introduced to our most often used tools of discovery and emotional processing. The course will end with the sharing of "personal narratives" developed during the three months of the course. The required reading for this course includes Terry Ewing's [Stickman Theology](#) and [How to Stop the Pain](#) by Dr. James Richards. These books will be read in that order and will be reviewed during dedicated class discussion sessions.

Our goal in Soul Care Training is to equip individuals in the community of faith to embrace others as well as themselves in the midst of challenging life circumstances and to build confidence to engage in meaningful and soul shaping conversations. Our sixth two-year cycle of on-site classes begins [Thursday, September 1](#). The cost for our on-site classes is \$250 per unit. [Registration and a \\$50 deposit](#) is strongly suggested by [August 10, 2016](#). The remaining balance of \$200 is due by the first class session. You may register online at www.plumblinonline.com or at the Plumblin office, 8222 E. 103rd St., Suite 127, Tulsa, OK 74133. Call our office at 918-477-9068 for any further information or email Carol McNamara at carol@plumblinonline.com or Michelle Carpenter at michelle@plumblinonline.com.

For more information on Soul Care Video on Demand pricing and scheduling contact Anthony Elliott at Anthony@plumblinonline.com. For more information on satellite Soul Care class availability and pricing, contact, Traci Rostamo at tjrostando@gmail.com.

Financial Snapshot	April 2016	Year-to-Date 2016
Number of Client Hours	264	1,521
Contribution Income	\$11,077	\$50,420
Operations Expenditures	\$10,024	\$53,936
Shortfall	(\$1,053)	(\$3,516)

Available at Plumline for a suggested donation of \$10.00 each



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