

CHAPTER FIVE

A Worthy Fight

The Big Picture ...

What happens once you identify your holy discontent? Last week, Hybels told us to *follow* our holy discontent. Following your God-given passion will most likely take work. It will be risky. It may be challenging. But it will also be more fulfilling than anything you've ever done.

Prepare

Read chapter five in *Holy Discontent*, and look over the verses below.

Ice-Breaker

Share one food item that best describes the last year of your life. (Example: "frozen pizza" because I did a 180-degree turn this year, or "cinnamon roll" because it had lots of twists and turns but overall was pretty sweet)

Hybels' Words

"In 1968, after the Detroit riots tore apart her own community, Eleanor and her husband packed up the family's belongings, pulled up stakes from a comfortable suburban home, and relocated themselves to Detroit, risking everything to feed her holy discontent: creature comforts, family solidarity, personal safety, future stability, reputation. According to Eleanor, though, the decision was perfectly logical: 'Your goal in life has to be bigger than yourself, Bill. Until that move, mine wasn't.'" - *Holy Discontent*, p. 89

Discuss

1. Based on your reading and this excerpt, what did you learn from Eleanor's journey? (If some in your group did not get a chance to read, have one group member summarize Eleanor's story for the group.)
2. Eleanor says your goal in life has to be bigger than yourself. What does that mean? Can you give some examples? How can you apply that idea to your life?
3. Bob Biehl asks the question "What would you do if you were 100% free of all fear?" Sometimes, the biggest obstacle to pursuing the holy discontent

God has given us for this phase of life is fear. What should we do about the fears we face? How can we follow God in the midst of the fear and uncertainty?

One message from this chapter is simply, "it's not about us." Sometimes following God means sacrifice. We benefit, but God often calls us to actions that change the course of our lives. Determining your holy discontent isn't just about finding what you're passionate about. It's about seeing what God is doing in the world and how he has equipped you to join him.

4. Respond to the text above. Do you agree? Disagree? What would be the most difficult thing for you to give up?
5. Is there somewhere God may be calling you now that would require some life changes?

God's Words

Read: Acts 26:1-24

Paul before Agrippa

¹Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: ²"King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, ³and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

⁴"The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. ⁵They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. ⁶And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. ⁷This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me. ⁸Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

⁹"I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority

of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

¹²"On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.

¹³About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. ¹⁴We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

¹⁵"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. ¹⁶Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. ¹⁷I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them ¹⁸to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

¹⁹"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. ²⁰First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds. ²¹That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. ²²But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— ²³that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

²⁴At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."

Discuss

1. Describe Paul's life before his conversion and after his conversion.
2. Which seems easier? Which seems more fulfilling? Why?
3. What else stands out to you in this passage? What encourages or challenges you?

4. What questions does this passage raise in your mind? (Discuss as a group)
5. What can you learn about the character and nature of God from the text?
6. Is there any takeaway from this Scripture that you need to apply to your life this week? What is it?

Hybels' Words

We close this study with one more story from Eleanor's life:

"During a recent interview with a reporter from a local news agency, Eleanor was reminded of the far-reaching impact of Focus: HOPE's efforts. 'The reporter was a professional young woman,' Eleanor explained, 'and in addition to being a successful journalist, she was just a great people person. At the end of the interview, the reporter gathered her belongings and stood up to leave. Before she got to the door, she turned toward me and said, 'You probably don't know this, Mrs. Josaitis, but I grew up on your food program. I can't leave without saying thank you. This organization saved my family's life.'"

'I get that all the time,' Eleanor said with a wide smile, 'from the strangest of places.'" - *Holy Discontent*, p. 91

Discuss

1. Was there anything else from the reading that stood out to you this week?
2. So far, Bill Hybels has talked about *finding*, *feeding*, and *fighting for* your holy discontent. Where are you in that process right now? Is there anything you need to work on or seek God about?