



ALGORITHM

Experiencing Personal Revival

SCOTT CHAPMAN

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We'll be taking the next few weeks to dissect what it means to "live out our faith". This simple statement can get awfully complex in the sea of messages and books and authors and speakers, to the point where you just might want to throw up your hands and wonder "what the heck am I doing and how can I ever figure this out". We are going to approach this problem with an algorithm, a step-by-step process, in hopes that new connections and relationships will connect the dots in a powerfully transformative way.

SHARED FAITH/HIDDEN FAITH



Over the past four weeks we have been diving into the model on the left, learning a process by which we can experience personal revival, unlocking the keys to our faith, and exploring what it means to live with God and not for God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. To recap, the pillars of our faith according to the Algorithm model are Jesus (the Cornerstone of our faith), the Gospel (THE good news), the Holy Spirit (the conduit between God and humanity) and finally, Ministry.

LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF MINISTRY

Have you ever wrestled with the thought, "what am I here for?" Do you yearn to make a positive difference in the world around you? For some, these concepts are right on the radar. This inner dialogue between flesh and spirit - sometimes loud, sometimes a whisper - persists in those who abide in Christ because of God's calling on our lives – which we might be the vessels by which Jesus is known and the good news is shared. Ministry has the ability to help us change perspectives and cast a new vision for our lives. The idea that God has given each of us a unique identity, to use in our distinctive, complicated lives can seem a bit nebulous, but at its core, it's simple. There is a God-given destiny that is calling your name. When you understand what that means it will shift the flow of your life.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

Do you think about your legacy? What about how God's legacy will be revealed in you? Like silt falling to the bottom of glass of water, there are times when the little things settle and everything else suddenly becomes very clear. Sometimes we need an "interruption" to the flow of "normal" life, for our calling to come into focus. Talk, or journal, about an experience that changed your focus in life.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

READ: MATTHEW 5:14-16

Holman Christian Standard Bible: *You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lamp stand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven.*

The Message: *You're here to be the light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand - SHINE! Keep open my house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.*

Merriam-Webster defines Ministry as: "a person or thing through which something is accomplished."

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

What does it mean to be the light of the world?

What happens when you open your window/curtains/blinds first thing in the morning? Does the light come in or does the darkness go out? How does this relate to how we live our faith?

In light of the definition of the word, ministry, what do you think is accomplished when we let our light shine before men?

LAMPSTAND OR BOWL?

Read: John 1:1-5 NIV *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

~ *Give light, and the darkness will disappear of itself.* Desiderius Erasmus

In His life on earth, Jesus always pushed back the darkness and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we have the full power and authority to do the same. When we put our light on a lampstand the darkness must retreat. So then why aren't we all living light bulbs? The answer lies in the dialogue between flesh

and spirit. You might think "I have too many hang-ups," or "I don't have time" or "I don't know how to do this," or "People don't like the light shining in their eyes." While all these things may be true they simply aren't good reasons - they are excuses to play it safe and a symptom of a deeper problem: fear.

Another reason we aren't all walking around like human halogen bulbs is because of spiritual blindness. When we are blind, it is usually due to distractions - a case of too much "silt" clouding the water - and though unintentional, this renders us ineffective because we simply cannot see. The best way to let that gray matter settle to the bottom is to be still and know (read **Psalm 46:10**), abide in Him (read **John 15:4**), pray to see the Kingdom at work around you (read **Matthew 6:10**) and resolve to be activated as a vessel of light (read **Hebrews 3:13**).

Simply put, being a light means that you have the opportunity to be a blessing or a curse wherever you are. Everyone has the potential to be a blessing. And when you are a blessing consistently, people will notice, people will like it and people will eventually come to trust you and ask you about your faith. This is the point of being that city on a hill; "By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven."

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

What keeps you from putting your light on a lampstand? Give an example of a situation where you could be a blessing or a curse. What kind of "silt" is clouding your water?

ACTIVATION

Read: Matthew 9:35-36 HCSB *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

- 1) Jesus proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God; He ministered the very real and close presence of God. His presence was a witness of God's presence.
- 2) Jesus taught in their synagogues; He would minister the wisdom of God, He asked great questions and told great stories.
- 3) Jesus healed the sick; He would pray and heal with the authority of God through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- 4) Jesus had compassion; He loved people by inviting them to join His life. He loved sacrificially, and gave courage to those who needed it.



Letting our light shine before men means that we follow Christ's example of ministry. In order to do this, we need to assume a posture of believing the kingdom is near and knowing that we are in the presence of God. By asking one question, "What are you doing here and how can I help?" it presupposes that God is near and it allows us to do God-lead ministry vs. Human-led ministry. When we position our faith

through these four facets and pray about our daily interactions the fruit is on Him, meaning, your obedience is enough. The outcome is His job.

DISCUSS/JOURNAL:

Have you ever prayed up before entering into a situation you knew would be tough? What happened?

What quadrant in the graphic above is easiest for you? Which one is most difficult? Why?

Is your obedience enough for you? Have you “let go and let God?” Sometimes we let the fear of not being able to control the outcome or not being able to anticipate the reaction keep us from sharing our faith. What does it mean to share your faith through this model of ministry? How does it differ from the models you’ve been exposed to in the past?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Read: Daniel 12:2-4 NIV *Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.*

Our culture is radically changing – over the next decade we will see this country shift on its axis. Darkness will grow, but as the world grows darker, the church will shine brighter! This should not make us a slave to fear – it should encourage all of us to see the changing tides as wonderful opportunity for revival. We are the ones who have the calling of the almighty God on our lives. As we shine, the beauty that we bring forth will take the worlds breath away. Take Courage, have Joy and be at Peace because the Lord your God is with you!

PRAY

Lord, give us a curiosity for our calling – and when we catch a glimpse of where you want us to go, lead and guide our hearts into your ministry. Help us to be still and abide. Thank you for creating us to shine – we could have been created for robotic worship but instead you invited us into life. Some of us feel dull – some of us are feeling like the world has snuffed us out one too many times – Lord, breathe life into our dry bones. Rain your love over those that weep. God, wake us up. Help us all to receive your Word with excitement. Help us to grow in wisdom and compassion. Help us to live by your Spirit. In Jesus name. Amen.

PROVIDE US WITH FEEDBACK

We are excited about the potential these studies have to help each of us process the weekend message at a deeper level, and to see God change our lives in significant ways. In order to make these guides as helpful as possible, we would love to hear which elements are most helpful, which are least helpful, as well as any other comments, questions or suggestions. Feel free to send your feedback directly to Jon Holmberg at jonrholmberg@gmail.com.

REFERENCES

1. <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/c/cslewis162523.html>