



September 17, 20023 @ RHS  
November 5, 2023 @ Vancouver  
November 12, 2023 @Victoria

# Agency

Readings:  
Psalm 34  
2 Tim 1



# Helplessness



**Time comes to an end...**

Love

Self discipline

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and self-discipline”

2 Tim 1:7 NKJV

AGENCY

Power

How does this inform our comprehension of the nature of God?

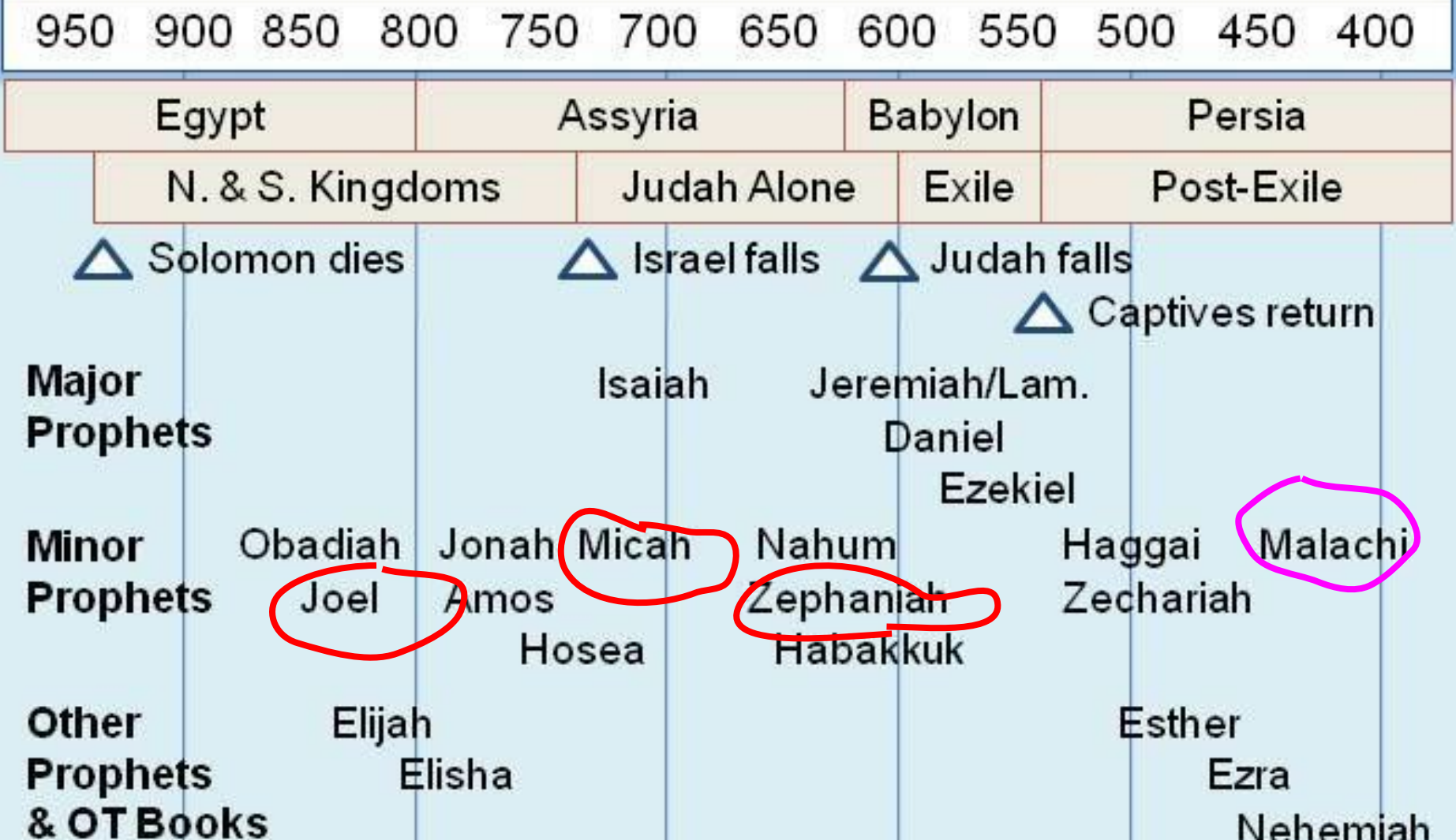
**“...return to the Lord your God.”** Joel 2:3

400 Years, issue: basic discipleship

Constant message across...  
**CENTURIES**

“At any time in our lives...likely we need to return to the LORD...”





“...return to the Lord your God.” Joel 2:3

400 Years, issue: basic discipleship

“At any time in our lives...likely we need to return to the LORD...”



“No being a disciple; not being deeply self-reflective is the issue facing all religious people of scripture”

**THE  
PROBLEM**

Common theme of...Sundays!

“If we were more discerning...would not be sick and weak” 1 Cor 11

Can be deeply religious in practice and failing miserably at application.



# The power of Agency: “The capacity to act...”

Learning?

Love?  
Power?  
Self Discipline?

Work, not magic

Discipline= “...to learn”

Discipleship: actively learning to be like God.

400 Years, issue: basic discipleship an issue

“The truth will set you free!”

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Jn. 8:31

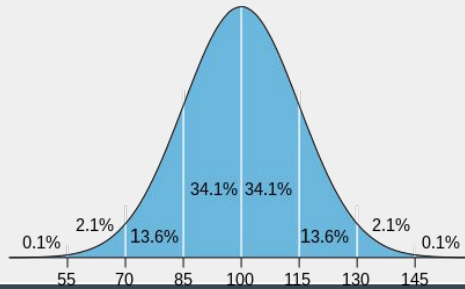
Return is...Learning = Work = Action : **BETTER?**



# Success determinants

## Intelligence

- “General prefrontal ability; general cognitive ability”
- “...not fixed...”



50%

Trait:

Conscientiousness

Industriousness\*

Work, not magic!

Orderliness

50%

# Success determinants

## Re Conscientiousness:

- behaviors represented: goal achievement and self-control, **broadly construed.**
- **Conscientious individuals are clean and tidy, work hard, follow the rules of society and social decorum, think before acting, and are organized. For example, conscientious people tend to write down important dates, comb their hair, polish their shoes, stand up straight, and scrub floors.**
- **People who are less conscientious exceed their credit limit, watch more television, cancel plans, curse, oversleep, and break promises.**

Trait:

**Conscientiousness**

**Industriousness\***

**Orderliness**

Point? Intention and effort = **Success/BETTER?** 50%

“Be ye sober minded...”  
3x Pt!

- Constantly muddled
- Aren't sober minded



“Do not be deceived...”  
7X Paul and James.

Because we exist in a state of constant self-deception:

- self-centeredness
- guilt
- fear
- shame
- relentless indulgence
- chronic distraction
- self pity
- self delusion

“Do not bear a grudge.”

- Leviticus
- Because we bear grudges

## There's a Reason...

We know the struggle: Ever present resistance/weakness

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous...” Ps. 34

**Point?** Return = Learning = Work = Action: **BETTER?**

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous...” Ps. 34

Help with inner dialogue.

- Low level level anxiety we are missing out.
- Low level of anxiety we are doing something wrong.

“Fear stifles my ability to think and act wisely”

The name of the LORD is a strong tower...**RUN**...Pr.18:10

**AGENCY**  
(Pick your poison)

**Point?** Agency = Return = Learning = Work = Action: **BETTER?**

The wicked flee though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion. Pr 28:1

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will fear not. Ps. 46:1

- Do you believe that Jesus' teachings are the best possible way to live?
- Do Jesus' teachings save us day by day?



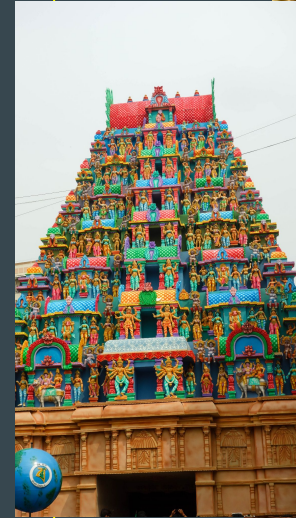
- Bullying
- Divorce/custody
- Dissatisfaction
- Health Issues: diabetes/cancer
- Cognition
- Social media conflict
- Non attendance
- Avoidance

**AGENCY**  
(Pick your poison)

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Suicidal ideation
- Obesity
- Family Violence
- Eating disorders
- Medication options
- Neglect

# GOD IS NOT

- We have not a God of fear... 2Tim 1:7
  - Religions of men leverage fear...violence
- God is not a God of Confusion, but of peace: 1Cor 14:33
  - Expectations are clear: Love God by loving your neighbor
  - Proof of his merit: peace/well-being
- God is not a God of the dead, but of the living: Mk 12:27
  - Not about the 'spiritual realm'/ancestors
- God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Gal 6:7
  - God is manifested in changed human character: almost exclusively
- God is NOT A GOD OF MAGIC
  - But of application. Of work. Of industriousness, of intention. Of deliberateness...



How does this  
inform our  
comprehension of  
the nature of God?

# Psalm 34/Acts/2Pt 3

(The Readings last week)

“Whoever would love life and see good days...(keep)(turn)(do)(seek)”

Ps. 34:12

Quoted in 1Pet 3:8-12

- Not a God of Magic...
- Our self discipline matters...
- Our work (industrious) matters...
- Do not pay back evil for evil
- Most anti-superstition message of all time
- Peter is saying new things in spite of them not being new...

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him from them all. He protects all his bones; not one of them will be broken. Evil will slay the wicked, and the haters of the righteous will be condemned. The LORD redeems His servants, and none who take refuge in Him will be condemned. Ps. 34:19-22

-Does he protect? Broken bones?

-God's laws deliver us. BUT NOT WITH MAGIC. We ignore them at our peril

- Haters are condemned:

-We see this in others!

-Reactionary/aggressive/contentious



I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise will always be on my lips. Ps. 34:1

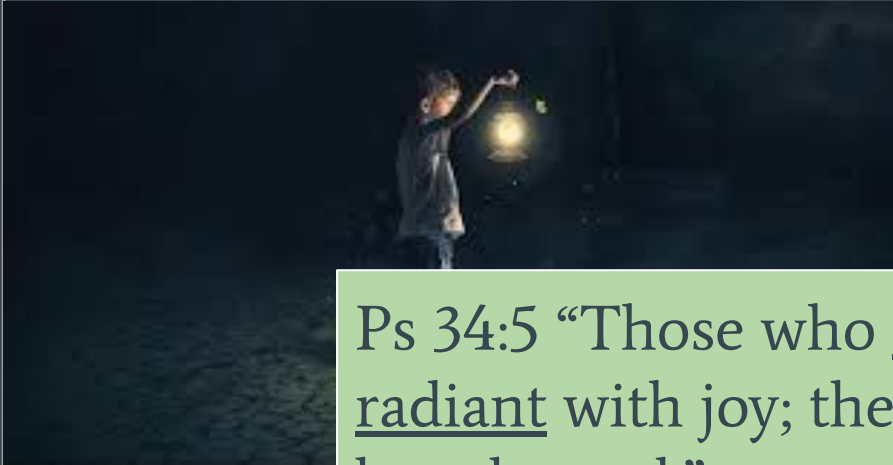
No matter what happens



*You are the light of the world.*

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

*MA. 5: 14 & 16*



Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body is full of darkness. Be careful, then, that the light within you is not darkness. So if your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, you will be radiant, as though a lamp were shining on you. **You are the light of the world.**

Luke 11: 34-26

Ps 34:5 “Those who look to Him are radiant with joy; their faces shall never be ashamed.”

Number one tool for assessing your discipleship:

“How do you make others feel?”

“Let your light so shine before men that people will see your good deeds and glorify God”

“I determined to be wise” Ecc 7:23

- Be present. Be intentional

## Big Questions for Sunday?

1. What is the work/industry you are doing to be a better disciple?
2. What are you actually changing in order to be MORE of a disciple?
3. What are people seeing in you that identifies you as a disciple?

AGENCY

## Success Determinants.

- Effort/work
- Organization
- **BETTER?**

50%

“...to him that order with his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.” Ps. 50:23



Ps 34:5 “Those who look to Him are radiant with joy; their faces shall never be ashamed.”

**THE  
PROBLEM**

“We have not a God of fear, but of love, power and self-discipline.”



**AGENCY**

God is...

- Not About fear
- Not About confusion
- Not About the dead
- Not Mocked
- NOT MAGIC



How does this inform our comprehension of the nature of God?





Number one tool for assessing your discipleship:

“How do you make others feel?”

“Let your light so shine before men that people will see your good deeds and glorify God”

“I determined to be wise”

Eccl 7:23

- Be present. Be intentional

“Be not as you are, but as you should be”

“Know Thyself” (Socrates)

summary of all philosophical thought.

Plato, Aristotle, Epictictus, Euripides

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

How humans thinkers cut across basic tenets

“We have not a God of fear...”<sup>2Tim</sup>

*Reading for wisdom with wisdom.*

God is not a God of magic.

But of application. Of work. Of industriousness, of intention. Of deliberateness.

Are you comfortable...

“This is the message of God...”

“What does this say about God’s character?”