

DOING WHAT WE DO
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Things move quickly in the gospel of Mark. We're not even out of the first chapter and we see Jesus calling one disciple after another: Philip, Simon, Andrew, James and John. All Jesus had to say was "Follow me." Each one of us is called to be a disciple of Jesus – worshiping, learning, and serving together. Yes, each one of us is CALLED – it's not just for pastors or apostles or certain people only. Each and every one of us is called by God to BE a disciple, and to go and MAKE disciples. And I guess the question is, HOW? How do we answer God's call on our lives and serve him faithfully and tackle the problems that may come our way?

Let me begin by saying, this is NOT one of those magic internet articles – ten ways to get a date with the person of your dreams, five steps to a perfect marriage, drink grapefruit juice and stay skinny forever – you know the kind I mean. No, following Jesus is both the simplest and the most profound thing in the world. We've got to build a strong relationship with the Lord. And we've got to work at it just as we do any other relationship.

Psalm 62 says, *For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.* I have to ask – have you had much success with your soul waiting in silence? It's difficult! We're easily distracted, we have a thousand things to do and think about – surely God couldn't mean for us to just sit and WAIT. And yet, those who practice this discipline will tell you that yes, it takes some time to quiet your mind, but when you do ... God shows up. God's actually eager to communicate with us if we'd just give him the time. In all our lives, there are times when we need to feel God's presence, and some sense of being guided by his hand. That experience is what comes when we're silent before him and let him know we're serious about hearing from him. Is it easy? No! It takes practice and commitment.

But I believe it makes God smile.

Verse 8 of Psalm 62 says, *Trust in God at all times, O people.* God tells us this repeatedly in scripture ... and do you know why? Because trusting is difficult. It's easy to trust God when all's going well, but when hard times hit we want God to make it better NOW, and it's hard to trust him ... and let our soul wait in silence. Awhile ago I heard a song lyric that really makes sense to me: "Even when I can't trace God's hand, I trust his heart." We can rest assured that no matter what's going on in our lives, God's heart, his very nature, is always good and loving. His promise to work all things together for good for those who love him is true whether we trust him or not – but WE'LL have a much easier time if we learn to trust God, and take time to sit with him and open our hearts to his presence.

Pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us, Psalm 62 continues. God invites us to pour out our hearts to him because he knows that sometimes, we really need to do that. One time I was so angry at someone I loved that ... well, all I can say is, it's a good thing I wasn't ARMED. I'm not really a yeller, and there was no place to put all that rage, and I took it to bed with me that night. And then, not knowing what else to do, I started yelling at God – in my mind, but at the top of my lungs – and I told God all about it and expressed all my frustration and anger. It was no time to try and be on good behavior and impress God with my unselfish piety. I was so mad I was VIBRATING! When the storm was over, there I was ... and I actually laughed a little bit. I'd poured out my angry heart before God, and the anger was gone, purged by God's presence and patience and peace. Hmmm ... hope that doesn't sound TOO crazy to

you! But if God's going to invite us to pour out my hearts to him, there's a good reason for it. And that night I found out more about trust than I'd realized before. I also learned that once the storm had been calmed, my soul was ready to wait in silence for God's comfort and guidance.

Each of us is called to be a disciple of Jesus, and to serve him with the gifts he's given us. Discipleship isn't easy! There's only one way we can do what we're called to do, and that's by waiting for God, learning to trust him, and pouring our honest hearts out before him and bringing him fully into our lives. We need God every minute of every day, and he wants to be our rock and our fortress, and our refuge. When we reach out for God, he's reaching out for us. In his presence is fullness of joy.