

What Can I Do About This Uncomfortable Feeling?

Dino Senesi

God makes us uncomfortable because He wants to change us. His Holy Spirit works in different ways. One example is through the ***Vital Signs*** sermon series. Pastor Chris challenged us with five ways to check our spiritual pulse. The corresponding discomfort and questions that we have about ourselves is a healthy part of God's transforming process.

How can you tell what He is saying? How can you discover what to do about it? At times the answers are unclear. Finding what God is saying and how to resolve your discomfort is a journey. What the journey looks like varies, depending on the person and the issue.

As you begin this important journey remember three things:

- ***Finding the 'easy answer' is not likely.*** I spoke to a counselor the other day who told me a funny practice. She said that people often visit with a child or family member and ask her to "fix them." She had a magic wand in her desk that she would pull out, swish across the person and say, "there, they're now fixed." Her practice sent a powerful message. What a wonderful world that would be! What if a pastor, friend or Journey Group leader could use a magic wand, pray for us, or give us incredible advice and in doing so "make it all better?" Maybe that kind of world would not be that great either. Patience and focus are critical. You must invest in your journey.
- ***Discomfort is God's way of leading you to better places with Him and for Him.*** Uncomfortable feelings can make us feel frustrated and embarrassed. What will other people think about me because I have these questions? Why doesn't God just make them go away? God's word reminds us, " 'For I know the plans I have for you'— [this is] the LORD's declaration—'plans for [your] welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope' " (Jeremiah 29:11). God loves you and has great plans for your journey with Him. God is not trying to hurt or embarrass you. He loves you so much that He does not want you to stay where you are. He wants you to move forward in your relationship with Him. God wants to change you. That is a good thing, right?
- ***Ignoring the discomfort is not an option.*** The consequences of ignoring God's discomfort in your life are significant. Don't ignore or suppress this discomfort that God has given you. Treat your discomfort as a gift from Him and a reminder of His love. Follow the journey to the end. Ignoring the discomfort will not only cause you to miss God's best but it has dangerous consequences as well. Ignoring the discomfort could cause you to miss God completely! God gives us this warning through His Word: "Therefore, while the promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear so that none of you

should miss it” (Heb. 4:1). As with our own children, so it is with us, discomfort is a necessary pathway to growth.

So, how do I resolve the discomfort? Although commitments can be tricky, there is one that makes perfect sense right now. Before you consider a commitment, make sure that *you don't see the new commitment as a solution*. Often, if we have been around church for any length of time, we have been conditioned to make our life with God about a series of commitments. Speakers and leaders constantly ask for them. We soon figure out that commitments are normal expectations of a life with God and the church.

Usually a “commitment” of some sort gives us temporary relief from discomfort. Most of these commitments are seldom kept and resolve nothing. In fact, they only disappoint us in ourselves, further alienate us from God, and alienate us from other people.

The commitment I am asking for is not a solution. The commitment I am asking for is necessary in order to ***find a solution***. The journey to resolve this discomfort is a commitment to find God's purpose and to experience true transformation.

Paul felt discomfort on behalf of his people who were going through difficult spiritual transitions. He wanted to see God transform or “reform” them. He gave an interesting insight into transformation: “My children, again I am in the pains of childbirth for you until Christ is formed in you” (Galatians 4:19). Christ being formed in you is a process. The word picture here is that of God the Father as the master artist literally reshaping or reforming you on the inside to become a different person.

True transformation is only something that God can do in our lives. Our commitment, however, is to place ourselves in the position to let God transform us. So resolving the situation happens in partnership with a transformation specialist, God Himself!

Your relationship with your doctor is a partnership with a specialist. Your physical health and well-being need outside intervention from a specialist to be maintained. But you have to show up to be in the position to experience the intervention! So, your commitment is to complete this journey so that God can further transform your life. Your commitment is to “show up” and let the specialist go to work!

Let me describe the commitment for you in a prayer:

Lord, thank you for loving me enough to make me uncomfortable. I want to know what you are doing and how I need to respond. I commit to stay on this journey until I make the discovery and let you finish what you started. The journey will require something from me and the discovery may require something from me, too. I am perfectly willing to give whatever it takes to see this to the end, starting now. All for Jesus, Amen.

If that describes where you are now and the commitment that you are willing to make, include this in an extended time of prayer before God.

What are your next steps?

1. Communicate with our ***staff and your Journey Group leader*** that you are on the journey to discover what God is doing. You are committed to go forward.
2. Put together a ***prayer team*** of three people you trust. Give them specific prayer requests from your life. Update them each week by e-mail about your progress and your next steps.
3. Schedule a ***personal retreat*** for prayer, scripture, reading and journaling. In addition to your daily time with the Lord, write into your calendar (like a Doctor's appointment, etc) a time block of quiet, get alone time of at least two hours. That may present a challenge, but remember that you are committed to the journey, right? Find a way.
4. Read a ***Christian book*** that addresses spiritual growth and is specific to your journey. Although it may feel this way at times, you are not alone. All of us have gone through intense periods of questioning and discomfort on our journey to Jesus. Leverage the spiritual journey of others for insight about your own. Pastor Chris has a list of recommended reading linked to his blog that can help narrow your search.
5. Find a ***spiritual coach or mentor***. Do not look for a person to solve your issue for you. Neither should you create an unhealthy dependence on another person. Remember, ultimately you are responsible for discovering what God is saying and doing. Any substitute or commitment will only give "temporary" relief. However, doing life with God is doing life with other people who are doing life with God! Who can help you one-on-one? Schedule a conversation with them soon.
6. When you make the discovery, ***tell your story!*** You are not alone here. When God does something significant in your life we will all learn from it. You are responsible to tell the story. That is one reason why God will give you the story. You can inspire and encourage all of us on the journey with your story.

Finally, post the verse below somewhere where you will see it every day. Have confidence that God is at work in your journey to take you new places with Him!

"I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).