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GSU-1107 Foundations of Learning

September 25th, 2017

Assignment 5.3

Building Resiliency

We often like to convince ourselves that we know it all or even worse; we know enough. However, to have a lifetime of learning we must face a very human fear; the reality that there is so much out there that we do not understand. Courage is vital to a lifetime learner, as the capacity to learn is rooted in knowing that we do not know it all. As Christians, this is especially important as we must be confronted that we will always be seeking a better understanding of God.

It is a natural human instinct to be afraid of things we do not understand. This can mean that higher education is scary for some due simply to the unknown nature. Very few people a wired to jump head first into an endeavor if they are unsure of the expectations or events that will follow. The unknown can cause fear and anxiety that can be crippling to many students. Gordon T. Smith relates this to the story of Martha in the Bible. “This is the heart of the matter, rather than doing her work with focus and clarity, her heart was filled with anxiety and worry” (Smith 176). Martha was too busy being concerned with what people might think, what customs were appropriate or what they would eat, she couldn’t see that the most important work was right in front of her. Jesus was there and present. That’s what she should have been paying attention to. Fears about our schooling can lead to the same clouded heads. In an attempt to get everything done, we get nothing done. All the newness and procedures overwhelm us, we learn that we can easily lose track of what the valuable work is, expanding our spiritual base and education through our course work and studies. We would be better served to pursue our studies with 1 Timothy 1:7 in mind, “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline” (The Holy Bible, New International Version ). We should have courage and go after our studies not as timid students, but craving knowledge with zeal.

We should also remember that it takes courage to entrust others with our education and development. Often, we want to pick our own direction and seek out individually what we wish to study, pursue, or believe. The college experience while encouraging creativity, can be very structured. For some of us, learning with deadlines, due dates, and following where instructors want to take us might not be a part of our normal behavior. We must learn to submit to the process, which for some students can be very painful. We should find professors or mentors that can help us navigate these waters and provide good accountability for our studies. This often means being vulnerable with people. We must admit when we don’t understand a concept or are feeling overwhelmed by a work load and find the correct people to help us overcome. Just admitting that we are not always ready for the task at hand takes a great deal of courage. It takes courage to depend on others and trust their judgment over our own. Peter Scazzero lists steps to better spirituality in his book *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* including finding trusted companions to take the journey with you. Speaking of his own trusted companions he said “They have helped me pay attention to God and see through my inconsistencies. Most significantly, God has used Geri, my wife, to lovingly reflect back to me who I am” (Scazzero 87). It takes a great amount of courage to let people affect you in that way. It takes great courage to admit that others might be able to see our weaknesses before we can acknowledge them. By having good companions and mentors we can achieve better learning.

Mentors and friends might help us point out our weaknesses, but it takes courage to look within ourselves to find our areas of weakness and areas that we need to better educate ourselves, especially when it comes to Biblical topics and Spirituality. Especially for those in Christian leadership we struggle that if we don’t have a correct answer for every question people may soon doubt our relationship with God or ability to lead. Craig Groeshel says that he feels complete inadequate as a Pastor despite leading a growing church. “So, while people see me leading a large church, writing books and speaking around the world, I live every day with the fear that I won’t be able to pull it all off. I can’t escape the feeling that certain failure is only one bad decision away” (Groeschel 140). Facing these fears of failure is not something many can do. We often like to put on a brave face and pretend we’ve got it all under control. We must be able to admit that when we are not enough, God will be enough. God challenged Job with this idea “Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know?” (The Holy Bible, New International Version ). The nature of God is beyond us, all our learning is to simply draw closer. We will forever be imperfect beings, in need of grace and a savior, which is why Jesus came. So, admitting our own weakness and struggles is not to say that we are somehow wrong, but instead to acknowledge that Jesus is so very right! His greatness ascends not just beyond us, but beyond our understanding! So, of course we are going to have areas where we don’t understand. We continue to education ourselves because we are not God. Only God can have the true wisdom that we seek. Our courage comes from relying on that God to give us the wisdom we need as He sees fit.

By acknowledging the great amounts of courage it takes to continue our education and seek the wisdom of God, we can face the fears that would hinder us, and by moving past them become lifetime learners in both knowledge and the wisdom that God grants us.

# Works Cited

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