

How are you doing?

It's a question we, as leaders, are accustomed to asking of others. Sometimes the responses come to us in the form of a quick "fine," while other answers are much more detailed. At times we hear more than we wish to hear. While often we don't know what the responses to this question may bring... we strive to stay equipped to help with scriptures, prayer, and a listening ear. That's our job, right? But it's more than a job. We really do care.

Yet, I find that all too often, we don't take time to ask this question of ourselves or to each other.

So, how are you doing?

Really.

I ask myself this question often, and have several spiritual sisters who never fail to ask me this question. I appreciate that. I need it. Sometimes I pause before answering, because life can get so busy I have to stop and think about the question and an honest answer. Other times I might cry as I answer, as I think of my husband's health challenges. There are many times when I'm really excited about something that is going on. Most of the time I feel pretty okay with answering, "pretty well." So, what does that even mean?

Here's how I evaluate my answer:

The difficult or good circumstances that we face vary from person to person and from day to day. Those circumstances we usually can't control. The one thing we can control is how we are doing amidst those trials and blessings. So, I ask myself:

1. How am I doing with God? Am I seeking him, really relying on him today? Is my time in the Bible just preparing lessons for others, or do I also seek God's message for me? If I am close to God, in his word, and talking with him...that's a good day. I need daily bread.

He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. (Luke 11:2-3)

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. (Psalm 84:10)

If you aren't feeling close to the Lord, you know you can change that today? He is always waiting. Go off and pray; fast; read; do something different to reconnect. Whatever it takes, as nothing is more important.

2. How am I doing with my family? Am I united with my husband as we grow closer to God and each other? Do we really communicate, and pray to God with each other? Is there intimacy, encouragement, kindness, humility, and gentleness? If our kids are at home, are we leading first by example and then by training? If they are older and gone from home, do I have a close connection with them?

It's imperative that we have someone in our lives with whom we are regularly open about these things. We need it as individuals and couples. Who is that for you? We never get "too old" or "too experienced" for this, as we continually change and go through different stages of life. I know I need this and count on it.

If we don't have this, we can change this quickly. God will provide within our own fellowship, as well as within the fellowship of "Skype."

3. How am I doing with my sisters? Are there those with whom I am open and vulnerable,still seeking spiritual and practical input in my life? While I've been a Christian for nearly 50 years, I know I still need (very much) others in my life. It can be tempting to think... "I've got this. I'm here to give input...not continue to learn and to seek input." However, if we go there...Satan is not far away. I ask myself, "Am I encouraging and being encouraged? Am I an initiator?" Again, if this has slipped away, you can pick up the phone or speak with a friend today.

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. (Hebrews 3:13-14)

4. How am I doing with the lost? I often think of the story of the lepers who find the extravagant spoils of a deserted village. How can I not share what I have been given? (2 Kings 7:3-11)

Yet, sometimes my life can feel so full of people I can be tempted to think there is not time for more. However, if I remember that each person I meet is someone's sister, daughter, mother...and is loved by God I can usually get back on track in my heart and mind. I want to be a ready vessel to be used by God. I know God's spirit is always at work bringing open souls to those that can point them to Jesus. I pray to have my heart, eyes, and mouth open and ready. Today, we may still meet someone who might seek God and therefore find him, as he promises.

So, I ask this question not to add a burden, but because it's a question that can ultimately bring much encouragement and refreshment. It's a super important question:

How are you doing? Really.

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