

# Practice Discernment in your Christian Publishing Business

- when to lead and when to be lead;
- how to understand your calling and measure your success/failure; and
- where to get wisdom in starting/sustaining/expanding your publishing venture.

# INTRO

## Invitation to Go the Opposite Direction

- ▶ Being involved in Christian publishing business or related content projects, we often tend to deeply focus on “publishing business” part and thus neglecting the “Christian” part, i.e. the truth that we are invited by God to accomplish His plans and participate in His work of nourishing His people and building up His Church. Thus: Danger of getting to another extreme!
- ▶ This time: going the opposite direction - from professional issues to spiritual ones. Let’s look back to where we started from.
- ▶ Sharing a personal story - my 25 years in media and 20 years in Christian media projects. Reconsidering the values.
- ▶ Being an expert and paying attention to things every media professional should - like a Christian baker still should take care of the flour, dough, starter, oven temperature etc.



## Your publishing tasks & burnouts (whether you want it or not)

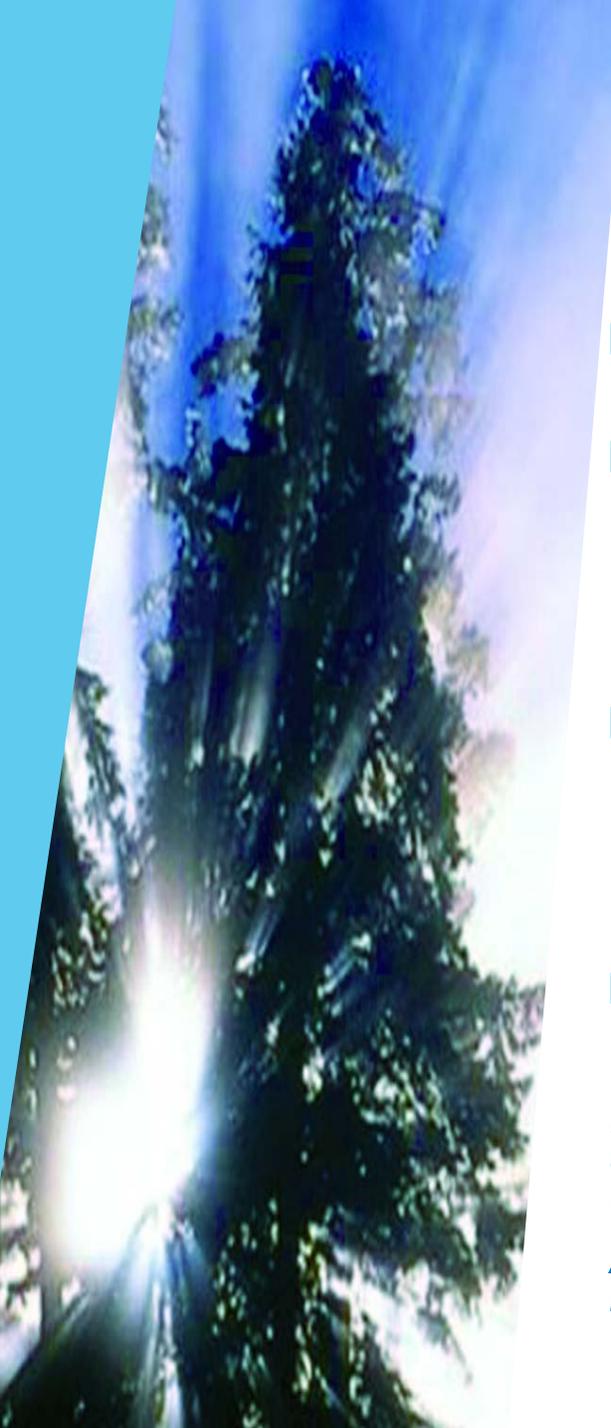
- ▶ Mind Your Publication - what you do
- ▶ Mind Your Reader/listener/viewer - who you do it for
- ▶ Mind Your Team - who you do it with
- ▶ Mind Your Information Sources - who you follow
- ▶ Mind Your Instruments/Values - how you do it

(see for more MTI webinar [Editorial Marketing in the Post-Truth Digital Era](#))

- ▶ BUT... Your motivation, goals and choices should come from above. Otherwise - burnout!

*The term "burnout" is a convenient psychological translation for a spiritual death.*

*- Henri Nouwen, In the Name of Jesus*



# EXPERIENCING GOD

## The Biblical Practice Of Christian Ministry

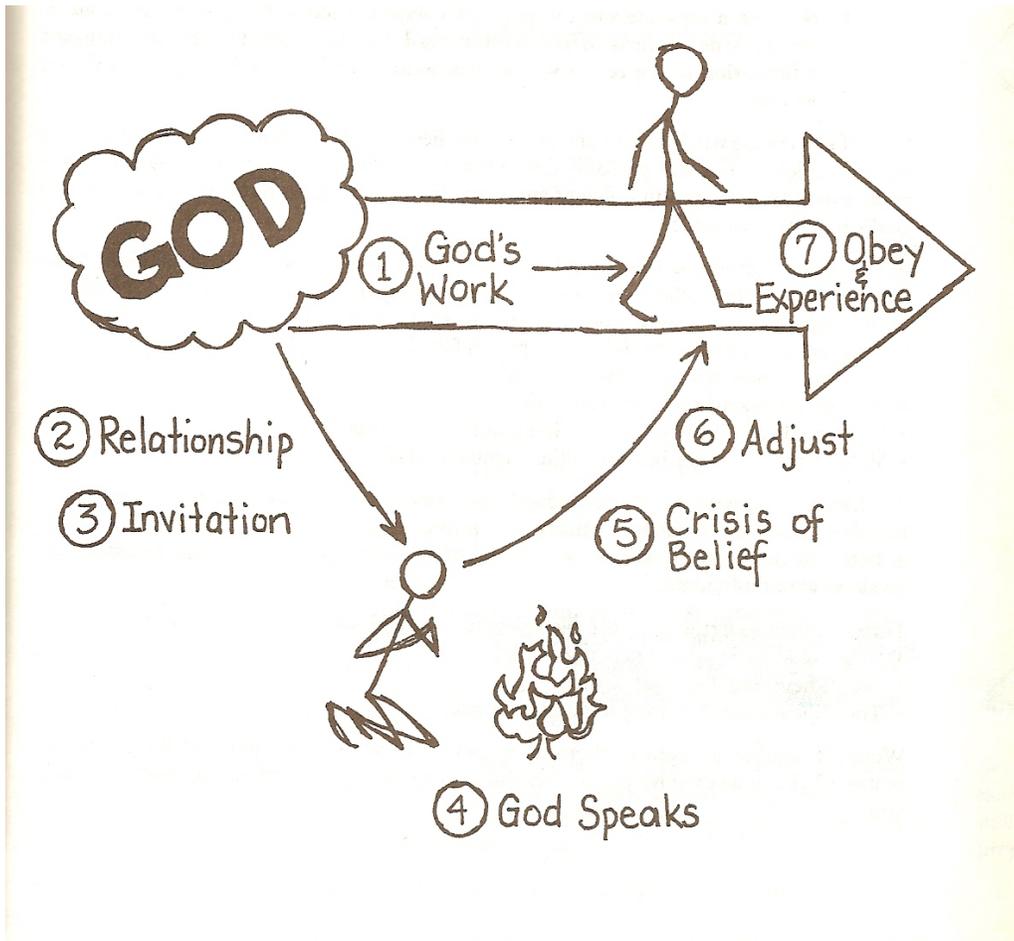
- ▶ Frequent situation: we start a great ministry and then pray hard to invite God into it
- ▶ A Good Servant to his Master
  - ▶ the more you do/provide/take care leaving less to him
  - ▶ the better you anticipate what your master might want, like or need and
  - ▶ the faster you meet those needs/desires, even before they occur
- ▶ Not quite so if your Master is
  - ▶ Almighty
  - ▶ All-knowing
  - ▶ Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Sovereign, etc.
- ▶ The biblical examples: Moses (Ex. 3), Barnabas and Saul (Ac. 13), ...

*I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good land and a large, to a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:8)*

*As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (Ac. 13:2)*

# EXPERIENCING GOD

## The Seven Realities of Experiencing God



- ▶ 1. God is always at work around you.
- ▶ 2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
- ▶ 3. God invites you to become involved in His work.
- ▶ 4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
- ▶ 5. God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
- ▶ 6. You must make adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
- ▶ 7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him, and He accomplishes His work through you.

## EXPERIENCING GOD

### The Seven Realities of Experiencing God

- ▶ Hear when God is speaking to you
- ▶ Clearly identify the activity of God in your life
- ▶ Believe Him to be and do everything He promises
- ▶ Adjust your beliefs, character, and behavior to Him and His ways
- ▶ Clearly know what you need to do in response to His activity in your life

*But Jesus answered them, My Father works till now, and I work. ... Then answered Jesus and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do: for what things soever he does, these also does the Son likewise. (John 5:17, 19)*

*I am the vine, you are the branches: He that stays in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)*



# THE FOURTH WHALE

▶ The 3 whales of every media project...

- who I do it for
- what they want to hear
- what I want to say and why

This shapes every aspect of your publication - topical range, language, design, frequency, etc.

▶ ...and for Christian media projects

- what God wants to accomplish thru all this (He always lets you to see the next step) and where He leads you

Don't be afraid to follow -  
remember the Noah's Arc principle



# Don't be afraid to follow God!

Remember that *Titanic* was constructed by tough professionals...



# Don't be afraid to follow God!

...while Noah's Arch  
was built by the  
God-lead amateurs.

Moral: if you are led by the Lord, no matter how difficult the task  
might look like, the outcome will be good and long-lasting



# THE ART OF DISCERNMENT

- ▶ Spiritual discernment comes from the Spirit of God. The human side is the concentrated effort to create sacred time and empty space in the heart where God can dwell and speak to us.
- ▶ Certain events serve as signposts pointing to the will of God and the new creation for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

*God speaks to us all the time and in many ways, but it requires spiritual discernment to hear God's voice, see what God sees, and read the signs in daily life.*

*– Henri Nouwen, Discernment*



# THE ART OF DISCERNMENT

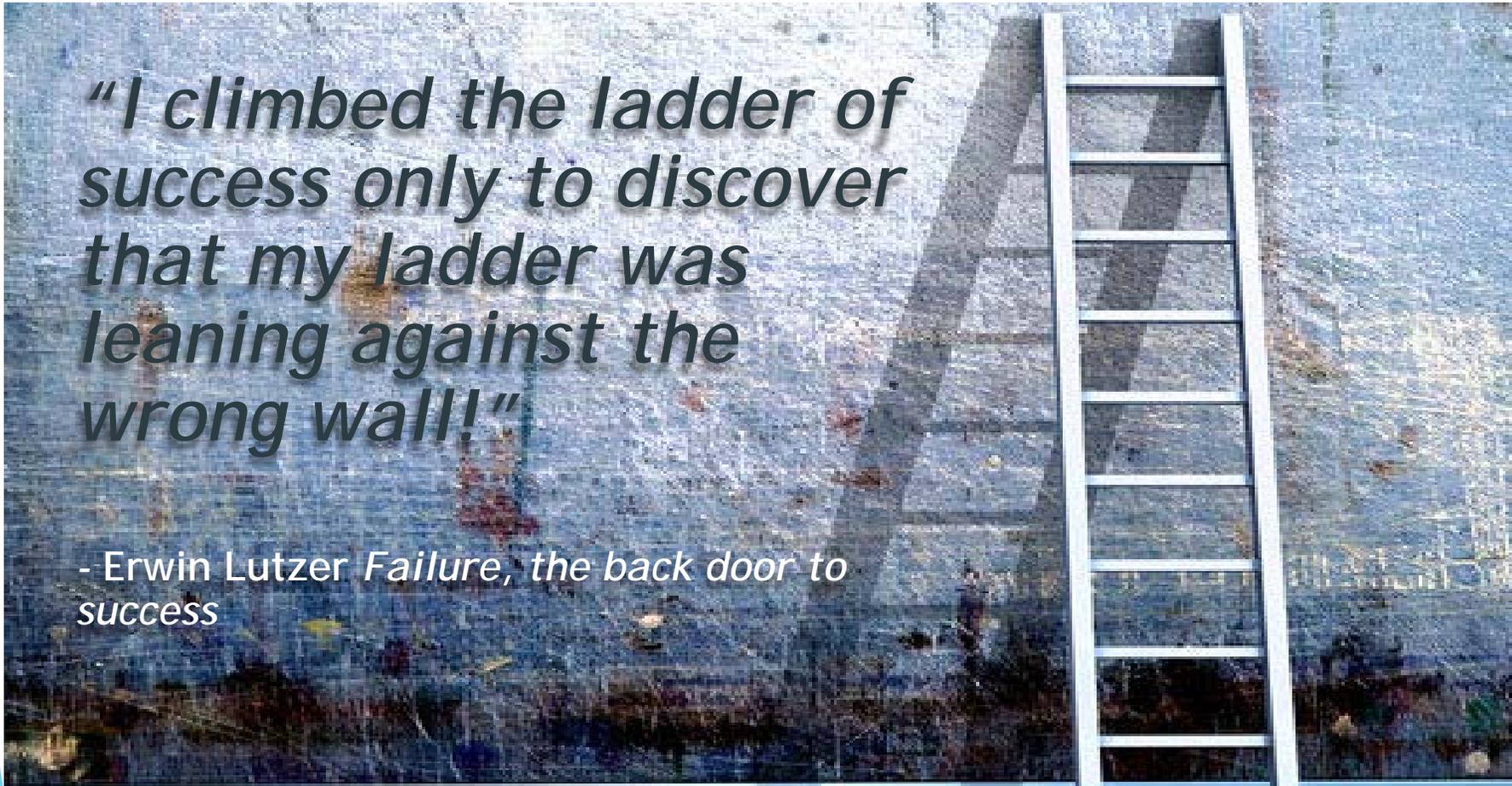
## Discerning Guidance

- ▶ Practice Solitude to hear God's small voice. Busyness might be a curse.
- ▶ Pay Attention to People in Your Path - all people should become persons (*per sonare - sounding thru*)
- ▶ Open Your Heart: Discerning Divine Presence in Prayer (the wheel model of prayer for executives - the rim, the spokes and the hub)
- ▶ Know the Time: When to Act, When to Wait, When to Be Led. *Kairos* instead of *Chronos*.
- ▶ Remember Who You Are: Discerning Identity as a beloved child of God in whom He is well pleased.

...this leads you to complete re-assessing the meaning of failure and success

# THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

- ▶ **The body principle:** No failure is a completely yours (it may be the part of somebody else's success), neither any success is yours as other people inevitably contributed to it!



*"I climbed the ladder of success only to discover that my ladder was leaning against the wrong wall!"*

- Erwin Lutzer *Failure, the back door to success*

# NOW YOU GO

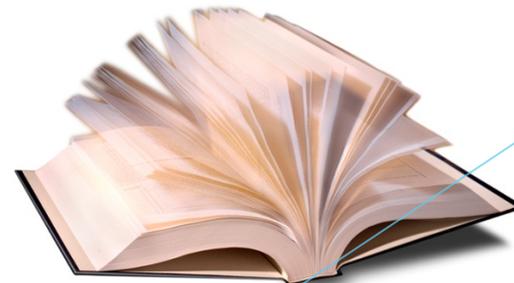
Encourage you to reboot your attitude towards your business/ministry...

- ▶ spend several days in solitude and contemplative prayer
- ▶ ask God to speak to your heart and show you where you are now in His plans, not yours - and to reveal the difference
- ▶ pray for discernment in understanding the ways of developing your ministry
- ▶ read the signs He leaves on your path

*...and maybe stay where you were but with quite different objectives, motivations and relations with God and people.*

# SUGGESTED READING

- ▶ Henry T. Blackaby *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (B&H Books, 2008)
- ▶ Henri J. M. Nouwen *Discernment: reading the signs of daily life* (HarperOne, 2013)
- ▶ Henri J. M. Nouwen *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (Crossroad, 1992)
- ▶ Erwin W. Lutzer *Failure: the Back Door to Success* (Moody Publishers, 2015)
- ▶ Peter Kreeft *Prayer for Beginners* (Ignatius Press, 2009)



Questions?..

Thank  
you!

