

What Is The Hardest Thing In Ministry?

Bill Loveless

As I have testified before, there are very rewarding times in ministry. Witnessing God work in people's lives is the most gratifying part of ministry for me. However, there are some things in ministry that can be heartbreaking. The most difficult for me are believers who come to me for one-on-one discipleship and who are in a hopeless and helpless situation. The struggle for me is for those people facing impossible situations who hear the truth that their hope is in Christ but who continue believing the lie that there is no hope.

At times like this I realize how helpless I really am. It is like watching a person dying, and I have the pill that will heal them, and there is a glass panel between us that I can't get around or over to get to them. Therefore, the real struggle in ministry for me is that I am NOT "THE Promise Keeper." I can share the truth of God's promises and even testify to them, but I can't accomplish the revealing, renewing, healing, or transformation of people's lives.

Why do I share this with you? You, too, have people in your life exactly as I have described. It may be a spouse, a child, or another family member. It may be a friend or a co-worker. You are walking in the truth, and you are witnessing His transforming power in your life. You see this other person's pain, struggle, and bondage. You share the truth (if possible), and yet they continue believing the lies. It is heartbreaking because you know the freedom that they can truly experience in Christ.

In these situations God reminds me of four words: **love**, **share**, **entrust** and **rest**. These relationships reveal to us that all we can truly do is to allow Christ to **love** them through us. In His love we **share** God's truth when we have the opportunities (and I am aware that there are sometimes that we are not allowed to verbalize God's truths to some people). We can testify of His awesome work in our lives. I believe that one of the most crucial things is to **entrust** these people to God's care. You have heard me define "entrust" as the "giving over to God something or someone that you are holding onto and leaving it or them with Him." I have seen in my own life the consequences of holding onto some of the people that I minister to and not entrusting them to God. Frustration toward the person or toward God can begin welling up in my soul in those times. It is critical that I entrust them to God. I know how difficult it can be because we do feel deeply for those closest to us who are imprisoned in some form of their self-life. However, I find that if I truly entrust this person to God and not play "spiritual tug-of-war" (entrusting them to God and then taking them back), I can enter into His **rest**. It is a rest that says, "You are God, and I am not."

My friends, God knows your empathy, pain, and compassion concerning the hurting people in your life. However, as much as you may want to be God in their life, all you can be are vessels of His love and truth. But, be encouraged that even though you may not see anything happening in the "seen" realm, you can know by faith that God is faithfully working in the "unseen" realm through you to draw them to Himself. Just continue to love them and to "be" Christ to them so that you can then look forward with anticipation to what God is going to do in their lives.

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