

I want to start by talking about your life and my life for just a minute.

We're born. We come into this world—this slimy, Buddha-looking thing ;-)

Then we get cleaned up, wrapped up and we're this adorable little bundle of **joy**. And bundle of **hard work**. (*all the young mommas say amen*)

We're "work" because we came into this world totally dependant. We're dependant on everyone for everything: food, clean diapers, bath. As a baby we were so dependant that without others, we'd literally **not make it!**

Then through childhood we start moving from dependence to having moments of **independence**. We're getting **dressed** ourselves, **feeding** ourselves, creating phenomenal **crayon** drawings ON THE WALLS.

By our teenage years, we moved further into independence and we get hooked into this **alluring, magnetic force** called REBELLION.

And we started **pushing away** from the people who literally kept us alive just a decade and a half before.

This was really **fake independence**, even though we thought we were **totally** independent and didn't need anyone.

It was fake because we were **still living at home**, getting **fed & clothed** by the older people we were rebelling against.

From there we graduated high school, got a job or went to college, then got a job.

We made our own **money**, bought our own **car**, got our own **place**, our own **food**, our own **clothes**. Finally—we were **legit independent!**

And in our American culture this is where it all stops—pretty much. At independence. And let's just be honest—this is where many of us **live**. We live **among** people. We live **in** a neighborhood. We work **with** people, but—we are free to buy, do, behave, believe—whatever we want.

We are not TIED to the people around us. We're tied to our independence. We're among people, but we're self-contained.

"Morgan, I thought this was about how the Holy Spirit speaks through people..."

This is about how the Holy Spirit speaks through people.

But before we go there, we have to understand God's design for people and what He thinks about independence.

In the Bible we can see people being born into dependence and maturing into independence. And then, God's design involves moving into a FURTHER level of maturity—becoming **interdependent**.

Everything we see of God's people in the Bible is in the context of community—in the context of interconnected, **interdependent** relationships.

Interdependence: Together we achieve things that **cannot** be achieved by **ourselves**.

In Romans 12, Paul talks about this—talks about the body of Christ--**us**:

“Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.” *Romans 12:4-5*

Church-- we have to SOAK IN that phrase, “we all belong to each other,” because the world is saying, “Do what you want, believe what you want, buy whatever you want...”

HERE'S why I'm talking about this:

It's very possible that the Holy Spirit will give a “word for you” to a brother or sister in Christ (listen) THAT MAY BE HARD FOR YOU TO HEAR!
God's words can be hard to hear, yet critical to our growth...critical for our soul.

And if that happens, and we don't **live** and **believe** in the biblical truth that “**we all belong to each other**,” we're going to blow off that person who tells us something we don't particularly want to hear!

If I believe I'm **independent**, then I don't need to hear you.

But if I understand that **we belong to each other**, and that my life is connected to yours—I'm more likely to hear what you have to say to me---less likely to **dismiss** you.

And the things that are hard to hear are usually the things that are CRITICAL in us maturing in Christ.

It's hard to hear someone say,

“Fight for your marriage,”

when our marriage is jacked up because we haven't been leading in it.

It's hard to hear someone **talk to us about a tithe**

when we've behaved ourselves into a financial mess.

It's hard to hear someone talk to us about **purity**

when we're single and lonely.

It's hard to hear someone talk to us about our **parenting**,

when we're out of ideas about our out-of-control kids.

And it's easy to respond to the **whispers God spoke** through someone, out of an **independent** spirit and say,

"You don't know what my marriage is like."

"My finances are **my** deal."

"You don't know what it's like going to bed by yourself at night."

"YOU try to parent my kids!"

The truth is **God whispers to our friends to speak clear truth to us---even though it may be hard to hear**. And He's not doing it just to mess with our life---God's goal is to speak through people so that we can become more like Christ.

God does **not** want us stay **stuck and mired in our struggles**. He wants to **pull us through them** and **grow us through them**. And our friends are His mouthpiece. And our friends are our **allies** and the people God wants to **use to help us**.

(Selah)

God's been speaking truth to us through friends for thousands of years.

In the Old testament, in **2 Samuel chapter 11**, there's the story of King David and Bathsheba.

King David saw Bathsheba taking a bath. As my daughter, Meghan, would say, "He was creepin' on her."

David knew she was married to Uriah the Hittite who was off fighting in a war for him-- but he sent for her anyway. He slept with her and she became pregnant.

David schemed to get Uriah home from the war so he could sleep with Bathsheba to cover up the pregnancy, but that didn't work....

So he devised a scheme for Uriah to get killed in battle—which did work.
(If you think the Bible's boring—you just haven't read it enough...)

From here I'll read starting at 2 Samuel 12:1. Again this illustrates the principal that **God whispers to our friends to speak clear truth to us—even though it can be hard to hear**. (parable)

"So the LORD sent Nathan the prophet to tell David this story: "There were two men in a certain town. One was rich, and one was poor. ² The rich man (David) owned a great many sheep and cattle. ³ The poor man (Uriah) owned nothing but one little lamb he had bought. He raised that little lamb (Bathsheba), and it grew up with his children. It ate from the man's own plate and drank from his cup. He cuddled it in his arms like a baby daughter. ⁴ One day a guest arrived at the home of the rich man. But instead of killing an animal from his own flock or herd, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it and prepared it for his guest."

⁵ David was furious. 'As surely as the LORD lives,' he vowed, 'any man who would do such a thing deserves to die! ⁶ He must repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole and for having no pity.'

⁷ Then Nathan said to David, 'You are that man!...''

Sometimes God uses people to **whisper things to us that are hard to hear**—but we **need to hear**.

The story goes on---David finally receives Nathan's whispers—realizes his sin and is broken saying, "***I have sinned against the Lord.***"

David could have played the independent card with Nathan. He could have said, "***Hey—who are you to call me out?! Dude-- I am the king!***"

But David **knew how God worked**. He knew God **uses people to whisper to us**. And he knew he was part of a faith where **we need others**.

Because **we all belong to each other**—we have to **cultivate the heart of a David**—we have to be open to the possibility that the Holy Spirit may whisper to us through a brother or sister in Christ. And be ready to **set aside our independent spirit**—and be humble—teachable.

And I say this next part **cautiously** --- The Holy Spirit may want to use us as **a Nathan in someone else's life**. CAUTION (Don't want everyone "**Yosemite Samin' it--**" *Got a word for you, & you & you...*)

In times where I have sensed the Holy Spirit nudging me to be a Nathan to someone, I realize two things:

We all belong to each other. And **I belong to God**. So before I go to someone with an **admonishment** (gentle redirect)—I say,

"Father, is this what YOU want? Or is this some twisted version of my own agenda for this person?" (Don't go "Yosemite Sam" on people—check your spirit.)

So:

- 1) As Christ followers, we all belong to each other. (Interdependence, not independence)
- 2) God will whisper to others to tell us things (difficult or hard to hear) so that we can become more like Christ.

I know a lot of us are in small groups, so I know there is a lot of relational connection represented here. But, **do you have a "Nathan?"**

Is there anyone in your life that will tell you **last 10% truth?**

Years ago I was with Jeremy Carter and we were discussing a problem--- and I can be quick to solve things & go for the solution.

And he said, "Can I take our relationship to the next level?"

And I said cautiously, "Yes." (I think)

And he began to explain how my dogmatic jumping into the solution didn't play well with him. And from there we discussed it more. And it **did** take our relationship to the next level. And it was great last 10% truth.

What happens all too much, is we say **90% of the truth** then walk away **stewing** or talking to others about the last 10% that we don't have the nerve to say to the person who needs to hear it.

Very often, the Holy Spirit's whispers lie within the last 10%.

When I asked if you had a Nathan—a last 10% person in your life---If someone **didn't** pop into your head---then you probably need to INVITE **someone to play that role.**

Say to someone you trust, "Hey, I want you to have the freedom to be **last 10% honest** with me. I want to be more like Christ—and if **you can help me**—if God would give you a word about me—**would you not hold back?"**

(Selah)

And the Holy Spirit will speak to us through others in more ordinary ways as well. It is not always a hard conversation or a redirect.

Proverbs 11:14 nlt says,

**Without good direction, people lose their way;
The more wise counsel you follow, the better your chances.**

Proverbs 12:15 nlt,

Fools think their own way is right (independence)
But the wise listen to others.

I'll never forget—it was YEARS ago. I was riding in the passenger seat of Mark's full-sized conversion van. We were at a conference up by Chicago and I was pretty new to Oakbrook and to the faith.

He said to me, "**So what are you going to do?"**

I said, "**I'm doing it. I play drums every week!"**

He said, "**You can do more than that. What are you going to do? What does God want you to do?"**

That was a tiny conversation. I bet he doesn't even remember it. But those words, "**You can do more than that—what does God want you to do?"** Kind of got **rooted in my spirit**---got stuck in my soul.

And I would say, those simple words were the start of a process that lead me out of the workplace and into ministry.

Almost as soon as I first started hanging out with Mark, he said, "**You should read,**" and tossed a book at me.

I wasn't a reader. Reading was something that I left back in high school. But I tried it. And to my surprise, LIKED IT!

I can't tell you how much God has shown me and changed me through reading books between time when Mark said, "You should read," and now.

(((((Selah))))))

Let me get out of the box and stretch you for a second.

I think God whispers to us through people **via Twitter and blogs.**

Dave Horrine told me that during a weekend he spent with theologian, author, and futurist, Leonard Sweet—Sweet said matter-of-factly, "Jesus would tweet."

We know the Holy Spirit speaks through people. So since people tweet and people blog, we can get fed online "soul food."

Twitter is an online community where people's posts are limited to 140 characters. And you see posts from people you choose to follow.

Recently I've made changes to whom I follow and now I hear whispers through tweets. I used to think Twitter was more noise in my life. Now I've turned it into "**soul food whispers.**"

Show you what I mean (tweet from this week):

RevRunWisdom

Warning: Stop being isolated! BEST =(B)ring (E)verybody's (S)trengths (T)ogether!

Wanna know if you're in sin? Worry is sin @stopit!

Reminder: the depth of your struggle will determine the height of ur success!

Give 2 others with a smile (never try 2 take a person's dignity, it means everything 2 them & nothing 2 u!

JohncMaxwell

The biggest human temptation is to settle for too little –*Thomas Merton*

The most important words we'll utter are those words we say to ourselves, about ourselves, when we're by ourselves. –*Al Walker*

Monotony is the awful reward of the careful. –*AG Buckham*

And I saw a tweet the other day from Tony Morgan, a pastor I follow. And it said, "**8 reasons why I'm a fan of Halloween.**"

And I thought, "Hmm don't hear that from many pastors, what's up?" And I clicked the link that took me to his blog: (disclaim...)

1. Friends from my neighborhood come to my front door, unannounced, to visit.
2. I get the chance to meet neighbors that I haven't met before.
3. I have the opportunity to engage in conversations I would not normally have.
4. My kids are darn cute when they dress up in costumes.
5. My home feels warm and inviting after being outside for a couple of hours.
6. No one is expecting me to do anything "pastoral" on Halloween evening. I can just be normal Tony.
7. I have a rich assortment of candy that I can steal from my kids.
8. I get to enjoy a fun evening with my family.

He concluded the post with:

"I'm probably going to get slammed for admitting this. After all, Halloween is supposed to be the *evil* holiday. But, until someone comes up with a alternative holiday where I get to connect with my neighbors and enjoy quality family time, I'm going to be a fan of Halloween."

Tony Morgan reminded me that our God is everywhere His people are. And if they're handing out treats, walking around with dressed up kids, God is there too. He reminded me that maybe more than other days of the year, on this holiday we have opportunities to connect with all kinds of people. And Christianity is all about people.

So every so often throughout my day, I hop on Twitter to see if the Holy Spirit has any whispers for me. Because He speaks through people—and people tweet & blog.

(invite Robin & Josh up)

Let me tie these three weeks together for us:

Week 1: **God is a talker—a low talker.** Because of the mysterious nature of Him, because he rarely speaks **audibly**, when we feel like He is telling us something it's great to...

Week 2: **Go to his Word.** Make sure the words we think we're hearing are **true to God's nature** and to **Scripture**. If those two things line up then...

Week 3: **Share it with a "Nathan"** -- someone you can trust to affirm what you're hearing, give you some **cautions** or maybe say, "I love you but I think you're off base here."

<<< Whaley story >>>

<<< My Dream for OCC cards >>>
(pic of card)