

Entrust Biblical Masculinity Lesson 6 Masculinity & Embracing Discomfort 12/1/22

1. Introductory thoughts

a. Example areas

- i. Unless we are perfected in glory, we have areas of life and obedience to God with which we may be uncomfortable at times.

b. A general recognition of the importance of embracing discomfort

- i. Irv Busenitz: "There are 2 pains in life: the pain of discipline and the pain of regret. You choose which one you want."
- ii. Jordan Petersen: "The way that you make people resilient is by voluntarily exposing them to things that they are afraid of and that make them uncomfortable."
- iii. Andrew Ferebee: "Can you imagine yourself in 10 years if, instead of avoiding the things you know you should do, you actually did them every single day?"

iv. Winston Churchill:

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts."

"You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something in your life."

"The nose of the bulldog has been slanted backwards so that he can breathe without letting go."

2. Disclaimer

- By "embrace discomfort," we are not saying things like, "whip yourself," or "starve yourself" or "sleep in the cold," like Luther did before he was regenerate in an attempt to atone for his own sins.

- We do not work hard to do uncomfortable things so that we can earn our way into heaven
- As we've been studying in Romans, justification is by faith alone in Christ alone. We are granted salvation, not by our works or embracing discomfort, but by the faith in Christ as our representative
- For life's most important matter, right standing with God and eternal life, we rest in the Person and finished work of Jesus Christ.
- As Jesus said:

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
- So, embracing discomfort is in no way a path or means to securing eternal life for ourselves.

3. Biblical vs. Worldly Embracing of Discomfort

- a. How is a brief study on embracing discomfort like this any different than, for example, a self-help, man-centered manual for guys on how to get more disciplined and do better, for the glory of self ??
 - i. There are similarities. It is a general life principle that embracing discomfort is a necessity to a measure of productivity in this life.
 - ii. However:
 - 1) We recognize that all wisdom in life comes from God. Any principle here that conforms to righteousness is from God.
 - 2) We recognize that God's word is to instruct and guide us in all and any endeavor, especially when it comes to living a fruitful life. This includes the embracing of discomfort
 - 3) Embracing discomfort is not a principle for its own end. We do not seek to embrace discomfort for the glory of self or embracing

discomfort. Rather, we seek to embrace discomfort for the glory of God where needed

4) Rather, there are a few governing principles for us as men who are in the highly privileged and joyful status of slaveship under the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. God's grace

In all endeavors of embracing discomfort, we do not depend on ourselves, but God's grace (1 Cor 15:10). Without Jesus, we can do nothing (John 15:5).

2. Faithfulness

We want to be faithful unto Jesus Christ. The Scripture commands us to be faithful and pleasing to the Lord:

1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

We are not seeking to embrace comfort as an end in itself. Rather, there will be areas of obedience and faithfulness to the Lord which are uncomfortable to us, whether in doctrine or practice.

The reason for this is that we are not yet perfected creatures. Therefore, where an area of obedience and faithfulness is uncomfortable to us, we see that as an opportunity to embrace discomfort.

3. Fruitfulness

We hope to have a God-glorifying impact and influence. We want to see God use our imperfect efforts to hopefully benefit others.

This is why we seek to embrace discomfort. We want people to be helped, for God's glory, by the ways in which we embrace discomfort.

4. Personal godliness

We seek to embrace a measure of discomfort, not for self-glory, but for sanctification. We understand that, in part, sanctification involves laying aside the flesh and putting on the new self. Sometimes, this involves thinking, saying, and doing things that are not inherently comfortable or familiar to us.

Philippians 2:12-13 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

5. Trusting dependence upon the Lord

Embracing discomfort can come down to an issue of trust.

When facing a discomfort, we can ask ourselves, "Who will I trust in this matter? Am I tempted to trust in myself, and stick to what is comfortable? Or, is this an opportunity to walk forward in faith, embrace this discomfort, and thus, trust the Lord?"

In these situations, I can trust the Lord that, though this is uncomfortable, my loving and sovereign Father will see me through it for his glory and for my good.

6. Growth in humility

It has been observed that humility is the chief virtue for the Christian.

Humility is commanded of God's people throughout Scripture:

Philippians 2:3-5 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as

more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus

1 Peter 5:5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

James 4:6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

Facing discomfort can present an opportunity to grow in humility.

In moments of discomfort (e.g. serving in a way that is difficult, performing a righteous task in which we are unexperienced and/or unskilled, obeying Christ in a way that is uncomfortable) we typically feel that we are less in control.

Therefore, we experience that sense of dependence and neediness. We feel that we need help; a strength and skill beyond what we sense that we have.

We are needy before the Lord and man.

Despite the discomfort and "unsure-of-ourselves" sensation, that can be a good place to be because it drives us to the Lord.

4. Biblical Examples of Individuals Who Embraced Discomfort for God's Glory

a. Noah

Genesis 6:11-14 Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. ¹³ Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy

them with the earth. ¹⁴ “Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.

2 Peter 2:5 Noah, a preacher of righteousness

b. Abraham

Genesis 12:1-4 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” ⁴ So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Genesis 22:1-2 Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ² He said, “Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.”

c. Joseph

Genesis 37, 39-50

d. Moses

Exodus 3:10-12 “Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.” ¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?” ¹² And He said, “Certainly I will be with you...”

Exodus 4:10-12 Then Moses said to the LORD, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” ¹¹ The LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes *him* mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹² “Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say.”

e. David

Psalm 55:4-8, 12-13 My heart is in anguish within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. ⁵ Fear and trembling come upon me, And horror has overwhelmed me. ⁶ I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. ⁷ "Behold, I would wander far away, I would lodge in the wilderness. Selah. ⁸ "I would hasten to my place of refuge From the stormy wind *and* tempest." ... ¹² For it is not an enemy who reproaches me, Then I could bear *it*; Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me, Then I could hide myself from him. ¹³ But it is you, a man my equal, My companion and my familiar friend

f. Jeremiah

Jeremiah 38:6 Then they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchijah the king's son, which was in the court of the guardhouse; and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. Now in the cistern there was no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank into the mud.

g. Paul

Philippians 1:12-13 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, ¹³ so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else

Acts 20:24 But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Timothy 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

2 Timothy 2:3 Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

h. Christ

Matthew 26:37-39 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." ³⁹ And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will."

Matthew 27:27-35 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole *Roman* cohort around Him. ²⁸ They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. ²⁹ And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ They spat on Him, and took the reed and *began* to beat Him on the head. ³¹ After they had mocked Him, they took the *scarlet* robe off Him and put His *own* garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. ³² As they were coming out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, whom they pressed into service to bear His cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, ³⁴ they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall; and after tasting *it*, He was unwilling to drink. ³⁵ And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots.

5. The Flesh and the Need to Embrace a Measure of Discomfort

a. The presence of our sin nature suggests the need to embrace discomfort

- My very nature seeks and favors sin, even as a regenerate person (cf. Rom 7:18, Gal 5:16-17).
- What "feels right" will often be that which originates from my fallen nature.
- Therefore, I will often have to go against impulses, thoughts, and desires despite a good feeling.

b. Sin tends to resist joyful, tender-hearted subjection to God

- Instead, sin favors subjection to no one, because sin is fundamentally anti-God (cf. Rom 5:8, 10).
- Therefore, our impulse is to be our own God.

- Therefore, we will have to embrace counter-impulses in order to live out a proper Creator-creature distinction and observance
- In fact, to put saving faith in Christ requires embracing discomfort by faith:

Luke 9:23 And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

- c. Sin tends to resist beliefs and practice that do not promote the glory of self
 - The sin of sin is pride
 - Its opposite is humility, that which God commands.
 - Therefore, to put off pride and grow in humility involves embracing discomfort.
 - d. Sin tends toward laziness and the path of least resistance
 - Therefore, we will have to embrace discomfort
6. Embracing Discomfort and Strength for this Genesis 3 World
- a. Part of the reason that we must learn to embrace discomfort early on is because it prepares us to function in this cursed fallen world
 - b. Genesis 3:17-18 declare phenomena which will require the embracing of discomfort if we are to persevere:
 - i. The created world will resist our efforts to subdue ("thorns and thistles it shall grow for you")
 - ii. The physical life inside and outside of us is moving us towards death
 - c. I try to tell my kids, and myself, at times, that much of life is settling in to doing things that are not comfortable; and, similarly, to face things that are disappointing, but keep going, trusting God

- d. If you can do that, by God's grace, you'll do about as good as one can do in this broken, sin-infested world
- e. I think it can be safely said that one of the great problems currently in western culture is that young people have been taught, if inadvertently, that discomfort is a bad thing; that going against your feelings is wrong
- f. So what happens is, Junior wasn't shepherded to deny his "shyness" and learn how to interact appropriately with new people in a way that is righteous. So, junior becomes an emotional cripple.
- g. And, he refuges in a make-believe world of video games, or something else ... and is continually not properly shepherded to face the discomfort of the world .. and the problem continues
- h. To the point where he will not get out into this difficult Genesis 3 world and:
 - i. Learn to interact with ideas that he is uncomfortable with
 - ii. Learn to interact with people he is uncomfortable with
 - iii. Learn to work a job in which he is uncomfortable
 - iv. Learn to embrace proper sexual behavior, with which he may be uncomfortable
 - v. Learn to give of himself and serve in a way that is uncomfortable
- i. So, again, junior propagates his emotionally and socially infantile state
- j. And when faced with ideas about himself (he's not that great), the world (it's not going to spoon feed things to you), the transcendent (there is Something out there far, far, far greater and more powerful than you), what happens? He breaks; he can't handle it; he resorts to unrighteousness
- k. This isn't about making people hardened and jaded. That's not the way to go.
- l. A jaded demeanor is, in part, the result of having various affliction and discomfort befall us, and instead of coming under the good yoke of God's sovereignty so as to be tenderized by God's grace; softened by God's grace; grow more humble; long-suffering; more patient with people ..

- i. The jaded person has said, "I'm done with this or that type of discomfort," whether it be people, or ways of being challenged, and/or legitimately difficult forms of suffering.
- ii. The jaded person ceased to remember things like:
 - 1. They have to be redeemed by the blessed Savior through a very bloody painful death
 - 2. God is daily and even minutely patient with them
 - 3. Other people have had difficult things happen to them, which can be the reason behind their sin against us
 - 4. An eternal perspective: God will make all things right
- m. But, by God's grace, we mustn't allow ourselves to go that direction in response to the sometimes immense affliction
- n. So, embracing discomfort helps us to live in this Genesis 3 world
- o. Anxiety, sorrow, depression, phobias, and the like are prominent these days
- p. Failure to learn to embrace a measure of discomfort will not solve the problem

7. Embracing Discomfort & Various Books of the Bible

a. Proverbs

- i. For the Proverbs, an unwillingness to face discomfort will prove catastrophic
- ii. Examples:

Proverbs 15:19 The way of the lazy is as a hedge of thorns, But the path of the upright is a highway.

Proverbs 15:31-32 He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise. ³² He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding.

Proverbs 24:30–32 I passed by the field of the sluggard And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, ³¹ And behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; Its surface was covered with nettles, And its stone wall was broken down. ³² When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, *and* received instruction.

Proverbs 29:1 A man who hardens *his* neck after much reproof Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.

- iii. But the Proverbs do not only commend to us a willingness to face physical discomfort. In other words, the Proverbs are not only saying, in effect, “Be willing to get dirty; work in the cold; work hard until exhaustion..”
- iv. They certainly are saying that, for the glory of God. But they also commend a willingness to embrace **spiritual** and **social** discomfort
- v. In other words:

- 1. Most guys are ok with the discomfort of, “Ok, climb up that mountain with your gear on a cold snowy day...”
- 2. But some of us guys are not ok with the discomfort of:

“Become a church member...,” or, “meet with a guy or 2 regularly to ask him about his marriage; his sexual purity; his thought life; his Bible reading, and how you can pray for him...”

Or, “Ask someone who will tell you the truth how you need to grow in biblical maturity”

For the Proverbs, that is the most important type of embracing of discomfort

Though not from Proverbs, the idea is there:

1 Timothy 4:7–8 ...On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸ for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and *also* for the *life* to come.

vi. Another way to put it:

1. Many guys are comfortable facing discomforts where they feel comfortable
2. And not comfortable with facing discomforts where we do not feel comfortable

b. Ecclesiastes

i. From our study a few years back in Ecclesiastes, we recall the thesis of the book: vanity of vanities

1. This does not mean “meaningless” but “vapor”
2. Like vapor, life is elusive and hard to control

ii. Examples:

Ecclesiastes 7:13–14 Consider the work of God, For who is able to straighten what He has bent? ¹⁴ In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider – God has made the one as well as the other So that man will not discover anything *that will be* after him.

Ecclesiastes 8:14 There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.

Ecclesiastes 9:11–12 I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all. ¹² Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.

iii. The discomfort that, at times, things will happen in a way that seem backward; that life is often not formulaic; there is no code to type in to make life go exactly the way you want it

- iv. God is sovereign; we are not; the world is broke
- v. This requires that we embrace discomfort.
- vi. Of course, the solution is: fear God and obey him
- vii. These truths mustn't be withheld from. This is the honesty of life in a Gen 3 world

Conclusion

- This is a brief survey of the importance of embracing discomfort
- Scripture commends the embracing of discomfort as a necessity to resisting the curse, growing in Christ, and strengthening ourselves in a Genesis 3 world