



The Elements ::: Wave 23

Wave Choices & Action Steps

Summer 2011

As always, feel free to choose the **WILDCARD** option in any category and come up with your own idea. Don't forget to share your choices with Becky at becky@westwinds.org or on your wave card (available on the metal wall in the lobby space).

SOUL

You have a God-given bent

- a. All of us are a varied combination of experiences, perspectives, values, talents, spiritual inclinations, etc., and your combination allows you to serve God in a way that is unique. When all of us serve God and others out of our authentic selves, we best reflect the Church.
- b. How are you uniquely wired? What has God given you that you could give back to Him in service? Learn more about spiritual gift inventories online (www.buildingchurch.net/g2s) or contact info@westwinds.org to inquire about our Archetypes Atlas.

a simple invitation

- a. God desires to be part of every aspect of our lives. He desires to permeate our thinking, our attitudes and perspectives, our words and actions. In order to invite Him to do this, we have to grant Him more and more opportunity to be part of our everyday lives. This requires a constant invitation on our parts.
- b. Try this. As you go about your next hour, repeatedly ask God to guide you and give you spiritual senses to recognize His presence. You can actually pray, "Lord, open my eyes" or "Speak to me." It takes practice to retrain our tendencies to rely upon our own devices and depend upon God's strength and guidance, but it is worth it. It is a gradual growth experience to more and more invite God in. One minute will become one hour, which will become several hours within a day (some hit or miss most likely), which will become the better part of a day, so on and so forth to eventually becoming a life marked by the presence of God. And it all starts with a simple invitation.

a little too much love?

- a. Is it possible to love your own excuses and BS a little too much? Oh yeah. It isn't just possible, it's probable. And it is keeping God from completely transforming you into your most authentic and best self.
- b. Take some time to get quiet and honest with God. Invite Him to reveal your perspective for what it is. Confess your attachment to your way of viewing things and any fear you have for how life may change if you give it up. Ask God to forgive your pride and arrogance that has led you to hold on to your stinking thinking and miss His movement. Ask Him to change you, grow you, make you new in your perspective.

you're on the winning team

a. Read through Colossians 2.13-15 in the Bible several times (in fact, it is a great couple of verses to memorize). Allow the truth of this passage to penetrate your thinking and way of living. b. Ask God to reveal this in your life in everything you do; sin and Satan are defeated. Make it your prayer.

RELATIONSHIPS

“relational authority”

a. It is true. You have to earn the right to speak into someone else's life. In order to really have the ears, mind and heart of another, they have to first believe you authentically care. While the type of relationship matters in how you demonstrate that care, the essential rule remains the same.
b. Whose life do you build into? How much time do you invest in showing your authentic love and respect for them? How could you improve?
c. Over the next few months, invest in the life of another person by getting with them at least once every ten days, spending no less than one hour together. Set all agendas aside other than just to spend time with them and getting to know them better. Do a lot of listening and ask questions about what interests them, etc. Silently pray for God to lead you and guide you as you do this and be obedient to His leading. Watch how He uses your time together and gradually gives you the permission you need to speak in to their life.

the “with and not for” principle

a. This week make a concentrated effort to live by the “with and not for” principle, that everything you do is an opportunity to invite others, people and God, to participate with you. Ask God to help you make this mindset change and to constantly remind you when you jump back into your “for” mannerisms.
b. How does it change the way you live, work and play when you apply the principle that we do things “with” people and “with” God rather than for them/Him? Do you view your work any differently? Parenting? How do your words and attitudes change when you live this way? Do you treat people differently?
c. Journal about your experience.

a battle? what do you mean there's armor?

a. Get together with some other people in your life, like your children, friends, or satellite and read Ephesians 6.10-20 in the Bible together. Talk about the spiritual battle that we are engaged in as Jesus followers and the way we are to prepare ourselves for it.
b. Discuss what happens when we understand our lives to be a spiritual battle rather than an earthly one. What do you think about the various pieces of God's armor? How might they make a difference in the battle? Everyday life?

breaking the rules

a. Retribution is the name of the game in so much of our society. You know, “you get what's coming to you” mentality. It is kind of an unwritten rule that there are paybacks.
b. While consequences and punishment are often unavoidable, and not necessarily bad, the grace of God acts differently. Grace is when God gives us a pass on retribution. He does it for you more than you think. Next time you have the opportunity, “break the rules of retribution” by showing someone grace. This doesn't mean you ignore the circumstances, but that you use them as a teaching moment or opportunity to display the gospel in practice. Go ahead and talk about it. Share humbly why are you choosing to show grace.

CHURCH

getting the most out of worship service

Christian spirituality is relational in nature and this applies to a worship service as well.

a. Over the next month, plan to attend Westwinds' weekly gathering of the Cue. Prepare your mind and heart ahead of time by focusing on God. Anticipate that He will speak to you. Expect a dialogue of sorts; as you listen and participate, ask questions internally about what you are hearing and experiencing. Take notes about the things that stick out to you or wonder about. If something is especially "off" to you, intently read your Bible or pray (about your attitude, your discomfort, for the person speaking/singing, for God to speak to someone sitting around you...).

b. Keep a journal of your experience. How is God meeting you? How is it different from before? What new insights are you gaining about your own Christian spirituality? About how God's presence in a service?

a better life

a. How does our church demonstrate that life can be better? What is reflected out into our community that reflects this Gospel truth? How is WW serving outside our walls to demonstrate a better way of living, thinking, relating? What should you be doing that you're not?

b. Get together with some others from WW and brainstorm creative, contextual ways to help our community live better, experience hope. The ways are endless. Don't just think it, do it.

connecting the old fashioned way

a. It is easy to stay isolated and then whine about how we don't really feel connected. You can change this by doing the inviting. Over the next two months, invite a minimum of four times.

b. Make a list of persons in your church that you would like to get to know better and then have them over, maybe in groupings, maybe in smaller numbers. It doesn't have to be fancy, just be welcoming. Enjoy getting to know someone you may have otherwise missed out on.

a little mind renewal goes a long ways

a. If our minds are one of the main weapons we have against the work of Satan in our lives, then we ought to be very purposeful about protecting it and making it stronger. We can and should be doing this in the church as well as individually.

b. How can you help foster healthy minds in our church body? Do you study together? Do you offer opportunity for people to dig deeper with you? How do you allow yourself to be held accountable in your thinking? Do you collectively ask God to renew your mind as a church?

If not, you should be.

WORLD

we don't get to choose

a. Since we are part of God's family by invitation and nothing we do in and of ourselves, this should affect our attitudes towards others also part of the global Church.

b. What attitudes do you carry about other churches and denominations? Do you see yourself as superior or better in some way because of your own church style or bent on something? This attitude isn't the one of a grateful party invitee. It is one of pride and arrogance.

c. Read Matthew 20.1-16 in the Bible (which is a story about a land owner and his invitation to workers in his vineyard, not a party, but the principal remains the same: you're invited and you agreed to take part. Your opinion about whom else the owner invites to work and how they are looked after is pretty much none of your business. Be grateful for your own invite).

d. Pray about your attitude and sense of entitlement when it comes to your position in God's kingdom. Ask Him to change you and give you a foundation of gratitude for your own invitation.

be a student of your surroundings

a. In order to contextualize the Gospel of Jesus, we must first become students of the way our culture works, noticing the trends, attitudes, values and mannerisms. (It's like a giant puzzle that is

continually evolving). As you check things out, think in terms of generalizations like loneliness, fear, excessive spending, indulgence, etc. What statements are being made in advertising, in literature, journalism, music, cinema and other outlets? What are your neighbors saying around the table of your local breakfast joint? What is going on with the youth in the area you live?

b. As you observe the trends and habits, consider what the Bible says about these things. What does God want us to know about fear, consumerism, etc? What can you do/say to help your culture understand God's perspective on these topics? What mediums can you use (which will probably be generationally different)? Pay attention to how God is nudging you and leading you. Follow through and don't be afraid of trying new ways of inviting and storytelling.

learning to boldly speak up

a. Over the next few weeks take opportunity to use the responses shared in this series:

"that's not ok" – when someone wrongs you

"that's not right" - when you see a wrong in the world around you

"stop" – when an action or words should not be allowed to continue

"fix it" – when someone needs to be advised to make things right after making things wrong

b. What do you notice when you use these responses? What happens? What are the reactions? How does it make you feel or think to have used them? What are the short term and longer term results?

voice of the martyrs

a. Take a look around www.persecution.com, the website for the The Voice of the Martyrs, an organization dedicated to recognizing, aiding and if possible preventing the persecution of Jesus followers in the world. Read the stories, watch the videos, get the picture...there is a lot of persecution going on around the world because of Jesus. We have it pretty easy in the US in comparison to many other places where the Church is forced to be secretive and meet underground.

b. How does this effect the way you view your own Christian spirituality? How might it challenge you to live differently?