

# Benedict's rule of discernment assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Midterm Paper Assignment, 10/28/13 In the beginning of class we were proposed a model of discernment from Part 1: the Rule of Saint Benedict. “ Listen carefully, my son, to the master’s instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart. This is advice from a father who loves you; welcome it, and faithfully put it into practice. ” (St. Benedict, Prologue Page 1) With this rule as Benedict explains in his reading and in the presentation notes in class Benedict tells us the basis of his model of receptivity, reflectivity, and activity. Model of Vocation Part. page 3). For each word Benedict tells what to do with each word or phrase and how to use it like the word receptivity (Model of Vocation Part 1, Slide 3, point 1). When receiving something or listening it is need people must listen to God in the many ways that he intends to get the attention of us. Some possible ways he can try to tell people something is by the words of the bible in church and outcomes in normal human life and how he tries to lean us towards one path over the other.

Maybe someone new comes into one’s life and influences this person to God’s word who maybe wasn’t on the right path. This could be God’s way of speaking to us without even really thinking about it. “ If you hear His voice today, do not harden your hearts,” (Ps 94 [95]: 8), St. Benedict, Prologue, pg. 1) This quote explains that if we do by chance get to hear God in any way don’t turn the other way and deny listening to him, but instead embrace the words he is preaching.

Reflectivity is the next step in the Benedict Rule of discernment. For this step it is just thinking of what you receive from God (Model of Vocation Part 1, page 3, point 2). When using this step and trying to figure out what God is

saying to people, people must seek out how to interpret his words. An example would be if a person is not having success at their current job and really isn't enjoying their life. Is God telling you to switch jobs in order to get more satisfaction in your life while possibly helping others?

First step is thinking deeply about your current situation and possibly seeking help of others to help make this choice and make sure this person is understanding God correctly and maybe toughing the situation out. Overall when receiving the word of God the key part is truly thinking about what he is telling people and understand what God is saying so that his words are not interpreted in the wrong way. The last step of discernment for the Rule of St. Benedict is Activity (Model of Vocation Part 1, slide 3, point 3). This is putting God's word into action after understanding what is being said.

Things that God could be trying to do is push a person in a certain direction for your life, to help someone else, or just a simple thing like having a better attitude in life. The St. Benedict's Rule of Discernment is very easy to understand once simplified but hard to follow at certain points. Once realization occurs and understanding of all three parts in the See, Judge, Act (Model of Vocation Part 1, Slide 3) following it is easier to achieve. your hearts," " If you hear His voice today, do not harden (Ps 94 [95]: 8). 1 And again, miou that have ears to hear, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches," (Rev 2: 7). 12And what does he say? " Come and listen to me, sons; I will teach you the fear of the Lord," (Ps 33[34]: 12). 3"Run while you have the light of life, that the darkness of death may not overtake you. " (John 12: 35). (St. Benedict, Prologue Page 1) This is just one of the many

examples in the Prologue but they all have the same three parts of listening, understanding what is said, then acting upon what has been said to you.

Part 2: Besides the models presented in class we have learned many others such as *The Alchemist*, by Paul Coelho. In this novel Santiago, the main character, learns to understand the omens to find his personal legend. For his model, it starts with understanding and believing in personal legends, the major part of the model, and discovering how to follow omens and symbols to reach the personal legend that has been laid out for this person in the dynamic world created in the story.

First in this model of discernment, you must understand the personal legend that is to be achieved. In the novel, the personal legend is shown by a dream Santiago has about a treasure that he must seek when he meets with the gypsy and tells him about the treasure by the pyramids (Coelho, pg. 11). This is understanding what is supposed to be done when the feeling that God is trying to impact people's lives in some way. Understanding the omens is a crucial part as well.

When Santiago is at the Oasis and makes the statement that there would be an army invasion of the Oasis, he gets this from watching the birds and how they were battling which he concurred that there would be an invasion (Coelho, pg. 108). By saying this he risks his life since the chief says he will kill him if a gun isn't fired by the end of the day the next day. This took a lot of guts and courage for him to believe in the omens presented to him and not fear what could happen if he was wrong. By understanding the omens or

symbols it saved Santiago's life while pointing towards the direction of his treasure.

Too many Benedict's model relates to Coelho's with the different representations of the dreams, understanding omens, and trusting the omens. An example is when Santiago listens to God in his dreams for his personal legend of treasure (Paul Coelho, pg. 4). Then he realizes that these repeating dreams are more than just a dream which is thinking deeply about listening to the dream presented by God. After understanding then he acts by asking the gypsy about his dreams where she points him in the direction of his personal treasure in the vicinity of the pyramids (Coelho, pg. 3). This is just one of several examples where he listens to omens or messages from God, understands them, and then puts them into action by doing something about the omen he receives. *The Alchemist*, by Paul Coelho, has its own model of vocation that shows a lot of differences as well as similarities between other discernment models. The model presented by Coelho contains how to follow personal legends for everyone willing to believe that they are out there, as well as how to understand omens and the world.

This is a great discernment model and turns things that could be construed as bad and turn them into a positive thing while still achieving something in life that is meaningful by attaining a personal legend. Another model learned in class was the Dietrich Bonhoeffer model of discernment. This is explained through the video (shown in class) as well as the reading (Bonhoeffer handout, Moodle) where there are stations to the road to religious freedom as well as how to follow his model in the video.