

# LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

LEADERSHIP

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to Leadership II. This course of instruction in leadership is where students will be challenged to consider the true meaning of leadership in ministry. Further the students will experience knowing what it means to be tested for ministry in both preparation and promotion. They will learn the impact that character has on one's ability to be an effective leader.

Many leaders volunteer to lead others within a ministry without giving thought to the responsibilities that accompany even the smallest of assignments in leadership. The heart of leaders will dictate their effective ability to serve rather than expect to be served. Further, they will know the role of the Holy Spirit in all that they do.

## **WEEK 1 ASSIGNMENTS**

**Prior to class, please complete the following:**

- Prepare a 1-2 page spiritual journal; include answered prayers.
- Read Leadership.
- Read Fellowship of Believers.
- Video to be viewed during class – The Apostle Peter and The Last Supper. Also see SPWOC Opening Class Movie Sheet. Students may also view the video prior to class online.
- Identify at least 10 of the various characteristics or behaviors displayed by the leaders in the group.  
Share the significance of each.
- Local students attend face-to-face classes. Online students can watch the recorded face-to-face classes 1 week after the class date.

## LEADERSHIP II

*Opening Class*

### APOSTLE PETER AND THE LAST SUPPER

*Movie Time: 88 Minutes*

*(Student Observations Within The Movie)*

This movie is set in Rome: AD 67. Two jailers at the ancient Mamertine Prison take custody of a famous criminal. He is Simon Peter of Galilee-apostle, disciple, and personal friend of Jesus. He is also called The Christ. Condemned to death, the elderly Peter recounts his life as a simple fisherman who became one of the boldest figures in all of Christianity. As Peter prepares on his jailers through the saving power of the Gospel.

Students, in a face- to- face setting, are asked to make notes reflecting what they see and/or hear in the portrayals of the disciples called to follow Jesus Christ as they watch this powerful movie.

Some Word Descriptions to look for:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>1. Obedience</b>                   | <b>7. Called of God</b>                       |
| <b>2. Servanthood / Humility</b>      | <b>8. Betrayal of Leaders</b>                 |
| <b>3. Relationship with God/Jesus</b> | <b>9. Covenant</b>                            |
| <b>4. Influence of the Evil One</b>   | <b>10. Temptation</b>                         |
| <b>5. Power of Testimony</b>          | <b>11. Discernment</b>                        |
| <b>6. Fulfillment of Prophecy</b>     | <b>12. Acceptance / Belief of the Messiah</b> |

# INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP

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## WHAT IS SAID BY OTHERS ABOUT LEADERSHIP?

Notable Quotes:

### ***Leadership is Example***

“The best example of leadership is leadership by example.” – Jerry McClain

“Setting an example is not the main means of influencing others, it is the only means.” – Albert Einstein

“The difference between a boss and a leader is that a boss says, ‘Go!’ while a leader says, ‘Let’s go!’” – E. M. Kelly

“Nothing so conclusively proves a man’s ability to lead others as what he does from day to day to lead himself.” – Thomas J. Watson

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”  
– John Maxwell

### ***Leadership is Character***

“Managers are people who do things right, while leaders are people who do the right thing.” – Warren Bennis, Ph.D.

“The greater a man is in power above others, the more he ought to excel them in virtue. None ought to govern who is not better than the governed.” – Publius Syrus

### ***Leadership is Influence***

“Leadership is influence — nothing more, nothing less.” – John C. Maxwell

“A leader is one who influences a specific group of people to move in a God- given direction.” – J. Robert Clinton

“The only test of leadership is that somebody follows.” –Robert K. Greenleaf “Leaders don’t force people to follow; they invite them on a journey.”  
– Charles S. Lauer

“Leadership is the desire and ability to inspire individual achievement, while a leader is just a guy at the top of the heap worried about his own.” – Keith Mullen

“Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” – John Quincy Adams

“Leadership is the ability of a single individual through his or her actions to motivate others to higher levels of achievement.” – F. G. “Buck” Rodgers

### ***Leadership is Serving***

“The first step to leadership is servanthood.” – John Maxwell.

“He who has learned how to obey will know how to command.” – Solon

“You cannot be a leader, and ask other people to follow you, unless you know how to follow, too.” – Sam Rayburn

“Be gentle and you can be bold; be frugal and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others and you can become a leader among men.” – Lao Tzu

“The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say, ‘Thank you.’ In between, the leader is a servant.” – Max De Pree

### ***Leadership is Lifting Others***

“Blessed is the leader who seeks the best for those he serves.”  
– Unknown

“Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it’s amazing what they can accomplish.”  
– Sam Walton

“Leadership is getting someone to do what they don’t want to do in order to achieve what they want to achieve.” – Tom Landry

“A good leader inspires others with confidence in him; a great leader inspires them with confidence in themselves.” – Unknown

“Leadership must be based on goodwill. Goodwill does not mean posturing and, least of all, pandering to the mob. It means obvious and wholehearted commitment to helping followers. We are tired of leaders we fear, tired of leaders we love, and of leaders who let us take liberties with them. What we need for leaders are men of the heart who are so helpful that they, in effect, do away with the need of their jobs. But leaders like that are never out of a job, never out of followers. Strange as it sounds, great leaders gain authority by giving it away.”

– Admiral James B. Stockdale

### ***Leadership is Vision***

“Leadership is not magnetic personality — that can just as well be a glib tongue. It is not making friends and influencing people — that is flattery. Leadership is lifting a person’s vision to high sights, the raising of a person’s performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations.”

– Peter F. Drucker

“Leadership is the special quality which enables people to stand up and pull the rest of us over the horizon.” – James L. Fisher.

“The first basic ingredient of leadership is a guiding vision. The leader has a clear idea of what he wants to do – professionally and personally – and the strength to persist in the face of setbacks, even failures.” – Warren Bennis

“The very essence of leadership is that you have to have a vision. It’s got to be a vision you articulate clearly and forcefully on every occasion.”

– Theodore Hesburgh

“Leadership: Seeing further down the road than those around me.”

– Bill Gothard

### ***Leadership is Daring***

“Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” – Emerson

“The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.” – Henry Kissinger

“There are many elements to a campaign. Leadership is number one. Everything else is number two.” – Bernd Brecher

### ***Leadership is Courage under Pressure***

“All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership.” – John Kenneth Galbraith

“Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm.” – Publilius Syrus

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Leadership is the ability to hide your panic from others.” – Unknown

“Leaders must be tough enough to fight, tender enough to cry, human enough to make mistakes, humble enough to admit them, strong enough to absorb the pain, and resilient enough to bounce back and keep on moving.” – Jesse Jackson

## ***Leadership is Discipleship***

“The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on.” – Walter Lippmann

“How do you know you have won? When the energy is coming the other way and when your people are visibly growing individually and as a group.” – Sir John Harvey-Jones

“Leadership is the ability to establish standards and manage a creative climate where people are self-motivated toward the mastery of long term constructive goals, in a participatory environment of mutual respect, compatible with personal values.” – Mike Vance

“I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.” – Ralph Nader

## ***Other Leadership Quotes***

“Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate, and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand.” – General Colin Powell

“No man will make a great leader who wants to do it all himself or to get all the credit for doing it.” – Andrew Carnegie

The challenge of leadership is...

- ... to be strong, but not rude;
- ... to be kind, but not weak;
- ... to be bold, but not bully;
- ... to be thoughtful, but not lazy;
- ... to be humble, but not timid;
- ... to be proud, but not arrogant;
- ... to have humor, but without folly.

– Jim Rohn

## WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF “LEADERSHIP”?

There are many definitions that have been given to the concept of “leadership.” The following are just a few of them:

### *From Wikipedia*

Leadership has been described as the “process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.”

A definition more inclusive of followers comes from Alan Keith of Genentech who said “Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen.”

### *From BusinessDictionary.com*

“In its essence, leadership in an organizational role involves (1) establishing a clear vision, (2) sharing (communicating) that vision with others so that they will follow willingly, (3) providing the information, knowledge, and methods to realize that vision, and (4) coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members or stakeholders.”

### *From BNED Business Dictionary*

“Leadership is the capacity to establish direction and to influence and align others toward a common goal, motivating and committing them to action and making them responsible for their performance.”

### *From Answers.Com*

“Leadership is a process in which a leader attempts to influence his or her followers to establish and accomplish a goal or goals. In order to accomplish the goal, the leader exercises his or her power to influence people. That power is exercised in earlier stages by motivating followers to get the job done and in later stages by rewarding or punishing those who do or do not perform to the level of expectation. Leadership is a continuous process, with the accomplishment of one goal becoming the beginning of a new goal. The proper reward by the leader is of utmost importance in order to continually motivate followers in the process.

### *Others*

“The new leader ... is one who commits people to action, who converts followers into leaders, and who may convert leaders into agents of change.” – Warren Bennis

“... persons who, by word and/or personal example, markedly influence the behaviors, thoughts and feelings of a significant number of their fellow human beings.”  
– Howard Gardner

**Most of the definitions of “leadership” have certain common elements to them.**

- Leadership involves establishing direction, vision and purpose.
- Leadership involves exciting others with regard to that vision and purpose.
- Leadership involves motivating others to join with that vision and purpose.
- Leadership involves equipping others to succeed in that vision and purpose.
- Leadership involves rewarding those who contribute to the vision and purpose.
- Leadership involves raising other leaders with a sense of vision and purpose.
- Leadership involves releasing other leaders to fulfill their vision and purpose.

## **WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF “LEADERSHIP”?**

There are several key passages in the Old Testament that lay a foundation for building a biblical definition of leadership.

### ***Exodus 18:13-23 – Jethro’s Counsel to Moses***

**The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:**

- Biblical leaders will experience a call that demands the involvement of others to fulfill.
- Biblical leaders must focus on training leaders in two key areas including the way to walk and the work to do.
- Biblical leaders must be able to select others in whom to invest their heart and vision.
- Biblical leaders fulfill their call by delegating to and managing others.
- Biblical leaders release others to do the work without jealousy.
- Biblical leaders only do what their delegates cannot do.

### ***Deuteronomy 17:14-20 – The Law of the Kings***

**The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:**

- Biblical leaders must be chosen by God Himself.
- Biblical leaders must not use their position for self-gratification.
- Biblical leaders must submit to the laws of God.
- Biblical leaders must be humble before God and the people they serve.

### ***Psalm 23:1-6 – The Good Shepherd***

The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:

- Biblical leaders are concerned about the needs of those that they lead.
- Biblical leaders seek to lift rather than suppress those that they serve.

The Good Shepherd provides, gives rest, confidently leads, renews, restores, guides, directs, protects, corrects, comforts, feeds, anoints, loves and furnishes permanent shelter.

There are several key passages in the New Testament that lay a foundation for building a biblical definition of leadership.

### ***Mark 10:35-45 (See also: Mt. 20:20-28; Luke 22:24-27) – The Greatest***

The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:

- Biblical leaders are not position and authority minded seeking to be served by others.
- Biblical leaders are servants-minded and understand that they have their position for the purpose of serving others.

### ***John 10:11-18 – The Good Shepherd***

The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:

- Biblical leaders live for the sake of others.
- Biblical leaders protect their followers from danger.
- Biblical leaders care about individuals.

### ***John 13:1-15 – Washing the Feet of Disciples***

The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:

- Biblical leaders understand their call and position before God.
- Biblical leaders are secure enough before the Lord to be able to participate in tasks at all levels.
- Biblical leaders provide an example to others of what it means to humbly serve.

### ***Acts 20:17-38 – Tending the Flock***

The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:

- Biblical leaders live a life of example that is open to all (vs. 18).
- Biblical leaders serve the Lord with humility (vs. 19).
- Biblical leaders do not keep back anything that will help those they serve (vs. 20, 27).
- Biblical leaders take every opportunity to instruct their followers (vs. 20).
- Biblical leaders are driven by a sense of purpose and destiny (vs. 22-24).
- Biblical leaders are able to face the challenge of opposition to their calling (vs. 19, 23).
- Biblical leaders live a life that is ethically clean (vs. 26).  
The word “innocent” that is used in this passage literally means “clean, genuine and free from corrupt desire, guilt or sin.”
- Biblical leaders prepare their followers for potential danger (vs. 29-31).
- Biblical leaders know how to commend their followers to God (vs. 32).
- Biblical leaders are not greedy but generous to those under their influence (vs. 33-35).

### ***Romans 12:3-8 – Grace, Gifts and Ministries***

The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:

- Biblical leaders function in the context of their grace level.
- Biblical leaders function according to their measure of faith.
- Biblical leaders maximize the ministry gifts that have been given to them.
- Biblical leaders are diligent in their pursuits.

### ***I Corinthians 12:12-31 – The Body of Christ Functioning Together***

The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:

- Biblical leaders recognize that they are a part of something that is bigger than themselves.
- Biblical leaders acknowledge that their gifts and ministries are theirs by God’s choosing and not their own merit.

- Biblical leaders understand that they are part of a team and that it takes more than one person to accomplish God's purpose.
- Biblical leaders understand the need for diversity in team members.
- Biblical leaders acknowledge that every person is vital and must be given due respect regardless of their specific role.
- Biblical leaders realize that sometimes followers who seem to be less important are actually more important.
- Biblical leaders treat everyone with equal pastoral concern and care.

### ***Ephesians 4:7-16 – The Five-fold Ministry***

**The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:**

- Biblical leaders recognize the specific calling on their lives.
- Biblical leaders realize that they are Christ's gift to His people.
- Biblical leaders acknowledge that since they have been given to another, they do not belong to themselves and cannot live for themselves.
- Biblical leaders understand that they exist for the purpose of equipping and building up others.

### ***Philippians 2:1-11 – The Humility of Christ***

**The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:**

- Biblical leaders do not lead out of selfish ambition or conceit.
- Biblical leaders do not see themselves as better than others but they treat others as better than themselves.
- Biblical leaders genuinely care about the interests of their followers.
- Biblical leaders humble themselves to raise others up.
- Biblical leaders look to God to raise them up.

### ***I Thessalonians 2:1-12 – The Spirit of a Leader***

**The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:**

- Biblical leaders are able to move forward with courage and boldness in the face of great opposition (vs. 2).

*We had previously suffered and been insulted in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in spite of strong opposition. I Thessalonians 2:2, NIV*

*You know how badly we had been treated at Philippi just before we came to you and how much we suffered there. Yet our God gave us the courage to declare his Good News to you boldly, even though we were surrounded by many who opposed us. –NLT*

- Biblical leaders do not function out of wrong motives (vs. 3-6).

**This means that they do not function...**

**From error.**

This word means “fraudulence.” Paul is saying that we did not minister with hidden motives. It means that we were what we said that we were. We were genuine and sincere.

**From uncleanness.**

This word speaks of impurity as it relates to living and lifestyle. Paul is saying that we did not minister in a lustful or immoral way seeking only self-gratification.

**From deceit.**

This word means craft, deceit or guile. It means that we were not trying to cunningly manipulate you for selfish purposes by our use of words.

**From the desire to please men.**

Paul is saying that our motives were not to please men, but to please God who is the one we were representing to you.

**From covetousness.**

Paul is saying that we did not use flattering words or language with the motive of extorting money from you. We did not minister to you in such a way that you would feel so good that you would be happy to give us your money.

**From a desire for personal glory.**

The word “glory” means praise and honor. Paul is saying that when we ministered to you it was not with the goal of getting personal praise out of it.

- Biblical leaders function out of a correct spirit (vs. 7-8).

**This means that they function...**

- With gentleness.
- With affection.
- With dedication and commitment.
- With diligence.
- With devoutness.
- With justice.

- Biblical leaders are not demanding or a burden to their followers, they are a blessing (vs. 6, 9).
- Biblical leaders cherish their followers as a nursing mother cherishes her children.
- Biblical leaders exhort, charge and comfort their followers as a father does his own children.

### ***I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 – The Qualifications of Leaders***

**The key things from these passages that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:**

- Biblical leaders must be spiritually qualified as mature believers.
- Biblical leaders must depend on the word of God for guidance.
- Biblical leaders must be balanced in their personal, family and corporate life.
- Biblical leaders must be gifted to lead.

### ***I Peter 5:1-5 – The Pastoral Charge***

**The key things from this passage that fill out our understanding of biblical leadership include:**

- Biblical leaders embrace their role as leaders cheerfully and willingly.
- Biblical leaders do not see money as the main reward of leadership.
- Biblical leaders serve as examples to people rather than as lords over people.
- Biblical leaders recognize that their followers are a stewardship from God and do not belong to them.
- Biblical leaders understand that the reward for leading God's way is not merely temporal but extends into eternity.

***There are several good definitions of leadership from a biblical perspective.***

There are several good definitions of leadership from a biblical perspective.

**"I define a leader as a godly servant (character) who knows and sees where he or she is going (mission and vision) and has followers (influence)."**

**– Aubrey Malphurs**

Perhaps the definition I like the most is from Dr. J. Robert Clinton in his book *The Making of a Leader*. He defines biblical leadership this way:

**"Leadership is a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity and God-given responsibility influences a specific group of God's people toward God's purpose for that group."**

This definition has several parts to it.

1. The responsibility of the leader is tied to the eternal purpose of God (Acts 13:36).
  - a. The purpose of the leader is to fulfill the will and purpose of God.
  - b. The purpose of the leader is to assist others in fulfilling the will and purpose of God.
2. The position of the leader is tied to God's design not man's qualification.
  - a. God gifts a person with leadership capacity (i.e. abilities, skills, etc.).
  - b. God holds leaders accountable for the use of His gifts.
3. The main tool that the leader uses to enable his leadership is influence.
4. The sphere of a leaders influence is directly related to God's design for a specific people or group.

# THE NEED FOR LEADERSHIP

*"A Christian leader is someone who is called by God to lead; leads with and through Christ-like character; and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership to take place." – George Barna*

## WHY ARE LEADERS SO IMPORTANT?

***Leaders are important because God needs leaders to fulfill His purpose on earth.***

Leaders are the stewards of God's purpose. When God created man, He put His purpose into the hands of man (Gen. 1:28).

The charge given to Adam was repeated to key leaders that followed him.

Noah (Gen. 8:17; 9:1)  
Abraham (Gen. 17:6)  
Isaac (Gen. 26:22)  
Jacob (Gen. 35:11)  
Joseph (Gen. 48:4)

***Leaders are important because people are likened to sheep and as such need to be led (Num. 27:17; I Kgs. 22:17; II Chr. 18:16; Zech. 10:2; Mt. 9:36; John 10:14, 27).***

*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6*

Note: The following is taken from the Pastoral Ministry course, Lesson 1.

When God chose to compare His people to an animal, He chose to liken them to sheep. This is, on the one hand, very unflattering and, on the other hand, quite flattering. This imagery has two aspects to it.

**On the negative side, sheep are very needy.**

Sheep are especially needy because they have:

No ability to find food on their own (Num. 27:16-17).

Sheep are not like other foraging animals that will send out scouts and lead the herd to food. It is said that sheep will die in a pasture that has been grazed out with fresh pasture right over the next hill. Sheep must be led to their food.

Part of the call of leaders is feeding the people of God with that which is vital to their growth, development and ministry fulfillment (Acts 20: 28).

No instinct to return home (Ezek. 34:6-8).

Sheep have never been known to be able to find their way home if they are lost. Dogs and other animals can often do this. However, the nature of sheep is to make all of the wrong choices when it comes to guidance. They need someone to lead them back to the safety of the fold.

Part of the call of leaders is providing direction and counsel so that God's people do not stray.

No natural defense system.

Domestic sheep have no claws, sharp teeth, powerful jaws, or incredible speed and are not known for their great strength. These are some of nature's means of defense for many animals. Their only real defense is their ability to flock. As they stick together under the leadership of the shepherd they are less vulnerable to an attack from a wild animal.

Part of the call of leaders is to protect God's people from the natural and spiritual enemies of their soul.

On the positive side, sheep were always considered very valuable.

**They were valuable to the shepherd because they could provide most of man's needs including:**

- a. Meat
- b. Milk
- c. Clothing

***Leaders are important because people need assistance in reaching their divine destiny.***

Leaders are to people what a shepherd is to sheep.

**When you compare all of the verses about sheep and shepherds you realize the need for shepherds.**

The following chart demonstrates the condition of people with and without true shepherds.

Without True Shepherds	With True Shepherds
Sheep are scattered (Zech. 13:7; Ezek. 34:5-6)	Sheep receive provision (Ps. 23:1-2)
Sheep wander (Ezek. 34:6)	Sheep receive direction (Num. 27:17; Ps. 80:1)
Sheep are lacking (Jer. 23:4)	Sheep are fruitful (Jer. 23:3)
Sheep are devoured (Ezek. 34:5)	Sheep are kept (Jer. 31:10)
Sheep are weak (Mt. 9:36)	Sheep are strengthened (Ezek. 34:4, 16)
Sheep have want (Ps. 23:1)	Sheep are fed (Jer. 23:4; I Pet. 5:2)
Sheep are diseased (Ezek. 34:4)	Sheep receive healing (Ezek. 34:4, 16)
Sheep are broken (Ezek. 34:4)	Sheep receive binding up (Ezek. 34:4, 16)
Sheep are lost (Ezek. 34:4)	Sheep are found (Ezek. 34:15; John 10:16)
Sheep are prey for their enemies (Ezek. 34:8)	Sheep are safe (Ezek. 34:25)
Sheep are fearful (Jer. 23:4; Ps. 23:4)	Sheep receive rest (Ps. 23:2; Ezek. 34:15)
Sheep are despondent (Jer. 23:3)	Sheep are comforted (Ps. 23:4)
Sheep are destroyed (John 10:10)	Sheep are restored (Ps. 23:3)
Sheep are divided (Acts 20:30)	Sheep are visited (Jer. 23:2)
Sheep are robbed (John 10:1-2)	Sheep receive increase (Jer. 23:3)

**Psalm 23 is the summary passage that reflects this need.**

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. 4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

**Jesus is the Good Shepherd, but He does His shepherding through human leadership. Psalm 23 indicates that...**

- People need leaders to provide them with spiritual sustenance.
- People need leaders to keep them accountable.
- People need leaders to guide them in decision making.
- People need leaders to correct or discipline them when needed.

- People need leaders to equip them for ministry.
- People need leaders to keep them from going astray.
- People need leaders to teach them the right ways of God.

Leaders are to people what a teacher is to disciples. The purpose of a teacher is to give their students a foundation in their lives.

Leaders are to people what a guide is to traveler. The purpose of a guide is to assist people in reaching their desired destination.

Leaders are to people what a Sherpa is to a mountain climber. The purpose of a Sherpa is to guide people to the top.

Leaders are to people what a professor is to a student. The purpose of a professor is to prepare people for their life calling or chosen career.

Leaders are to people what a tradesman is to an apprentice. The purpose of the tradesman is to equip the apprentice to do what he is able to do and position him to go even further.

Leaders are to people what parents are to their children. People without leaders are like children without parental guidance. The purpose of parents is to bring their children to maturity.

## HOW DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT REFLECT THE NEED FOR LEADERS?

***Jesus made it clear that people needed leaders (Mt. 9:36-38; Mark 6:34).***

*But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*

*Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”*

- Matthew 9:36-38

The answer to Jesus' concern was more laborers or harvester (Mt. 9:36-38).

**This is similar to Moses' observation when he was about to leave the scene (Num. 27:15-17).**

*Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.”*

The answer to Moses' concern was Joshua (Num. 27:19).

**Paul made it clear that people needed leaders.**

**People need leaders because...**

1. They need encouragement to live the Christ-life (I Cor. 3:1-3; II Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:1, 13-15; Eph. 4:1, 17-32; Phil. 1:27; 4:9; Col. 3:1-17; I Th. 4:1-8).

*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

- II Corinthians 7:1

2. They need assistance in discerning between right and wrong (I Cor. 6-8).

**Notice the phrase, “Do you not know...” (I Cor. 6:2, 3, 9, 16, 19).**

3. They need constant affirmation when they are doing well (II Th. 1:3-5).

*We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure... II Thessalonians 1:3-4*

4. They need examples to follow (I Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17).

*Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. - Philippians 3:17*

5. They need instruction in the ways of God (I Cor. 12:1; I Th. 4:13; 5:14-22).

**Over and over Paul begins his instruction by saying, “I do not want you to be ignorant...” (Rom. 11:25; II Cor. 1:8).**

6. They need assistance in finding their place and entering God’s purpose. (Eph. 5:17; Phil. 3:12-16; Col. 1:9-12; 4:17; II Tim. 1:6-7).

*For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. - Colossians 1:9-12*

7. They need equipping for their ministry calling (Eph. 4:11-12).

*He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. – NLT*

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9. They need understanding during the dealings of God  
(Rom. 8:28; II Cor. 1:3- 5; Jam. 1:2).

*All praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of every mercy and the God who comforts us. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. You can be sure that the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ.*      II  
Corinthians 1:3-5

10. They need help in overcoming obstacles (Eph. 6:10-18).

*Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Ephesians 6:11*

11. They need guidance for many of life's decisions (Eph. 1:15-18).

*Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...*

12. They need the impartation of spiritual gifts and to be established (Rom. 1:11).

*For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established...*

13. They need assistance in resolving conflict and coming to unity  
(I Cor. 1:10; Phil. 4:2).

*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.  
I Corinthians 1:10*

14. They need to be warned of and alerted to the dangers around them  
(Rom. 16:17; Phil. 3:2; Col. 1:28; 2:8).

*And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things that are contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them. Such people are not*

*serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people. But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to see clearly what is right and to stay innocent of any wrong.*

**Romans 16:17-19, NLT**

15. They need adjustment to remain doctrinally sound  
(Gal. 1:6-10; 3:1; Col. 2:11-23).

*I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who in his love and mercy called you to share the eternal life he gives through Christ. You are already following a different way 7 that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who twist and change the truth concerning Christ. 8 Let God's curse fall on anyone, including myself, who preaches any other message than the one we told you about. Even if an angel comes from heaven and preaches any other message, let him be forever cursed. 9 I will say it again: If anyone preaches any other gospel than the one you welcomed, let God's curse fall upon that person. 10 Obviously, I'm not trying to be a people pleaser! No, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please people, I would not be Christ's servant. – Galatians 1:6-10*

16. They need assistance in rightly relating to the times and seasons in which they live (I Th. 5:1-11).

***Paul made the need clear to his appointed leaders (Timothy and Titus).  
Paul indicated that leaders provide an important service to people by...***

1. Instructing them in sound doctrine (I Tim. 4:6; Tit. 2:1).

*If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.*

**I Timothy 4:6**

2. Being an example to them (I Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:6-8).

*Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*

**Titus 2:6-8**

3. Exhorting and admonishing them when needed  
(I Tim. 5:1; II Tim. 2:14; Tit. 2:15).

*Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you. Titus 2:15*

4. Challenging them to keep their priorities right (I Tim. 6:17-19).

*Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

5. Investing themselves into future leaders (II Tim. 2:2).

*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

6. Reminding them of their position in Christ (II Tim. 2:14) and their responsibilities as believers (Tit. 3:1-2).

*Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. Titus 3:1-2*

7. Preaching and teaching the Word of God (II Tim. 4:1-4).

*I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

**If God has called you to be a leader, it is important that you know that your success as a leader is not in you fulfilling your personal calling; it is about your being an instrument in God's hands to assist others in reaching their God-ordained destiny.**

# LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS

1

Note: Much of the content of this lesson is drawn from Lesson 3 of the Leadership course offered at Portland Bible College in Portland, Oregon, instructor Ken Malmin.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP?

Having a biblical concept of leadership is important because your concept of leadership will affect expectations, attitudes, and actions in ministry.

### *It will affect you as a person.*

It will affect your expectations of ministry and ministry goals.  
It will affect your attitudes in relation to those that you lead.  
It will affect your actions or the way you function within your leadership.

### *It will affect those that you lead.*

It will affect the expectations of those that you lead.  
It will affect the attitudes of those that you lead.  
It will affect the actions of those that you lead.

### *It will affect other leaders that you develop.*

It will affect the expectations of those that you develop.  
It will affect the attitudes of those that you develop.  
It will affect the actions of those that you develop.

### *It will affect your representation of the Lord.*

People will either get a correct view of the Lord and His leadership in their lives or they will get an incorrect view.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COMMONLY ACCEPTED CONCEPTS OF LEADERSHIP?

Often people associate leadership with people who possess certain qualities or who have achieved certain accomplishments. Many people see a leader as...

- Someone who is successful in his or her field of endeavor.

In this case, success would be defined as someone who has achieved position, power, fame or wealth.

- Someone with personal charisma who has the ability to attract people.

"Charisma becomes the undoing of leaders. It makes them inflexible, convinced of their own infallibility, unable to change." –Peter F. Drucker

In this case, success would be defined as having crowds coming to your ministry.

- Someone who has a strong vision for the future and the drive to make it happen.
- Someone with superior intelligence.
- Someone who is aggressive and able to dominate in relationships.
- Someone who can motivate others to do what they want them to do.
- Someone who can make decisions and solve complex problems.

In the world outside of Christ it is easy for leaders to see their gifts and abilities as coming from themselves to be used for and on themselves. They can easily see a position of leadership as an end in itself or as their personal destination. They can easily see people as resources for their use to achieve their personal goals. God has another idea of leadership.

*Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*

I Corinthians 4:6-7

## WHAT IS A MORE BIBLICAL VIEW OF LEADERSHIP?

While many of the above concepts can have a positive or a negative side to them, they are all tempered by biblical concepts of leadership. From a biblical perspective, a leader is...

- Someone who is called by God to be a leader.
- Someone who is anointed by the Holy Spirit and given the gift of leadership.
- Someone who knows how to be under authority and how to use authority.
- Someone who is an expert at serving others.
- Someone who has a shepherd's heart like God's heart.
- Someone who has been given godly wisdom to lead.
- Someone who is humble, moldable and teachable before the Lord.
- Someone who excels in personal integrity and character.
- Someone who loves people.
- Someone who is willing to live as an example in all areas of life.

Most of these concepts we will be developing throughout the course as we seek to be the kind of leader that properly represents God to His people.

## HOW CAN SOME OF THE COMMON VIEWS OF LEADERSHIP BE REDEEMED?

Not all of the commonly held concepts about leadership are without merit and when introduced to the God-factor they can be redeemed.

*We redeem these concepts by extracting the fallen human elements from them.*

These fallen human elements include such things:

- Selfishness
- Wrong Motives
- Personal Ambition
- Misplaced Values
- Striving and Competition

*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Philippians 2:3-4

*Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing. –NLT Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. – MSG*

***When these views are redeemed they look a lot different.***

- Leaders should be people who achieve the place in the Body of Christ that God has prepared for them.
- Leaders should be those with a personal charisma or anointing that is tempered by the fruit of the Spirit operating in their lives.
- Leaders should be those with a strong vision and drive to accomplish their role or function relative to the eternal purpose of God.
- Leaders should have wisdom, knowledge and understanding that has come to them by virtue of their communion with God and His word.
- Leaders should be those who move with boldness and decisiveness against the strategies of the devil all the while being totally submissive to and under the control of God.
- Leaders should be those who can inspire, motivate and encourage others to be all that they can be in the context of God's plan for their lives.
- Leaders should be those who can lay decisions before God and bring solutions to complex problems.

# JESUS' MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

*“Jesus Christ is an authentic leader, one who is truthful and honest about the past, connects to the present, and points his followers to a future that builds on both.” –Bill Donahue*

Jesus has to be seen as the greatest leader of all time. Any study of leadership without looking at Jesus is a serious oversight.

## HOW DO WE KNOW THAT JESUS WAS A GREAT LEADER?

We know that Jesus was a great leader because of the fruit of His life (Mt. 12:33). Even though His life on the earth was short and even though He only functioned in official ministry for less than four years He had incredible fruit.

- He gathered many followers.
- He trained a team of world-changing leaders.
- He transformed all of history through His words and His life.
- His words are cited more as authority than any other single individual.
- He started the greatest movement that the world has ever witnessed.
- He is talked about by millions of people daily nearly 2000 years after leaving the earth.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE QUALITIES THAT MADE JESUS A GREAT LEADER?

Jesus understood that His business was to be about His Father's business (Luke 2:49). He understood that as a Christian we are not doing what we do because we have chosen to do it, but because God has chosen us (John 15:16).

*And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Luke 2:49*

Jesus knew how to submit to God-ordained authority (Luke 2:51). Submission begets submission. The only way a leader can expect to bear authority is to be personally submitted to authority (Mt. 8:5-13).

*Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. Luke 2:51-52*

Jesus understood His calling and His responsibility to accomplish it (John 8:42; John 13:3).

*Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.” John 8:42*

Jesus understood that the highest calling was to please His Father and love people (Mt. 22:36-40).

*“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” 37 Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”*

Jesus understood that what He did was for the purpose of bringing glory to God (John 7:18).

*He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.*

Jesus understood that His success was dependent on His relationship with His Heavenly Father (John 5:19, 30).

*Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.” John 5:19*

Jesus understood that His boundaries for ministry had been determined by the Father (John 10:14, 25-29; Mt. 15:24).

*But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 15:24*

Jesus lived what He preached. He led by example (John 13:14-15). His words lined up with His works (John 10:37-38; 14:10-11).

*Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. John 14:10-11*

Jesus was able to resist the temptations of wealth, fame and power (Mt. 4:1-11). He was tested in all of these things yet remained true to His primary mission.

Jesus was willing to lay His life down for others (John 10:11, 17-18).

Jesus demonstrated high levels of integrity (John 6:63).

*It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

Jesus knew how to act decisively (Mt. 21:12-22).

**When Jesus saw the money changers in the temple he moved decisively to deal with it.**

Jesus led with passion (John 2:17; Luke 22:15). Jesus was zealous for God and for His house.

*Then His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.” John 2:17*

Jesus was not intimidated by the opposition (Mt. 22:15-46; Luke 13:31-32).

**All of the different political groups and religious groups tried to catch Him in His words. But he was not intimidated by their questions of Him.**

Jesus led by compassion, not fear (Mark 6:34).

*And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.*

Jesus was a finisher who knew how to finish what He started (John 17:4, 6, 19:30).

*I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. John 17:4-5*

## **WHAT ARE SOME LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES THAT WE SEE FUNCTIONING IN THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS?**

Jesus had a clear vision and goals and He reached all of them (Luke 4:18; 18:31-33; Mark: 1:38). He declared that vision from the very first days of His ministry. He declared the work finished when it was accomplished (John 19:30).

*But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.” Mark 1:38*

Jesus was a big thinker (Mt. 16:18; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). He believed He could touch the entire world. And He did!

*And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15*

Jesus was not controlled by the expectations of others (Mt. 12:38-39; 16:1-4; Luke 7:31-35). He did not dance to their music. He had a script that was given to Him from the Father and He did not waver from it.

*Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.” But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.” Matthew 12:38-39*

Jesus was not partial or arbitrary but had one standard for all (Mt. 12:46-50; 19:16-22; John 3:1-5). He was not tempted to change the standard for the rich, for relatives or for people of prestige and power.

His relatives were not given special treatment (Mt. 12:46-50).

The wealthy were not given special treatment (Mt. 19:16-22).

The powerful were not given special treatment (John 3:1-5).

Jesus was always realistic about the cost of the vision (Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:57-62). He let His followers know from the front end what the cost of building with Him would be.

Jesus taught and demonstrated a servant model of leadership (Mt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45). He demonstrated that if you want to be great, you must learn to serve. You must learn to serve not only those who can benefit you, but everyone.

Jesus taught with authority and conviction (Mt. 7:29; Luke 4:32). Jesus exuded confidence and used imperatives in His teaching. He did not use words like “perhaps” or “maybe” or “you might consider doing this or that.”

Jesus knew how to discriminate between good and bad traditions (Mt. 15:1-6). He was willing to eject anything that was hindering the primary objective.

Jesus communicated at a level at which He could be understood (Mt. 5-7). Not only did He use the very common language of the day, He spoke in terms that could not be misunderstood.

Jesus was careful in selecting the right team (Luke 6:12-16). While He had many followers, He took the choice of His team members very seriously, seeking God fervently so that He could make the right choice.

Jesus chose a diverse team with a variety of skill and experience. The Twelve Apostles were a very diverse people including skilled and unskilled, educated and uneducated, political and apolitical, rich and poor. Jesus understood that there is strength in diversity and that a good team involves a variety of talent.

Jesus focused His efforts on the development of His team (Mark 3:14). While He ministered openly to the masses, He spent intimate time with only a few. While some of His time was spent with crowds, most of His time was spent preparing His team.

*Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach...*

Jesus knew how to delegate to others to fulfill His vision (Mt. 14:19; 15:36).

**Even in the smallest things (such as a mass feeding scheme) He delegated much of the task to other. He only focused on what others could not do.**

Jesus empowered His team to function as He did (Mt. 10:1; Luke 9:1; 10:1). Jesus imparted to them His team the secrets of His success and then empowered them and released them to function.

Jesus focused on coaching and mentoring His team to be able to do what He could do (Mt. 17:14-21; Luke 11:1-2). His goal was to reproduce Himself. To do so He would need to stand on the sidelines and let the team do their part.

*Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” So He said to them, “When you pray, say...” Luke 11:1-2*

Jesus inspected the fruit of His followers (John 15:1-2). Jesus believed in reporting and in giving account. He used all of the training times as learning opportunities whether those proved to be positive or negative.

Jesus was willing to give people another chance after failure (John 8:11). Whether it was Peter who let Him down or Thomas who doubted His resurrection, Jesus had patience with their immaturity and lack of faith.

Jesus did not overlook the next generation (Mt. 19:13-14). All generations were important to Jesus, especially the youth. He understood that if you are going to build for the future, the youth must be a big part of your vision.

*Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.*

Jesus confronted problems head on (Luke 9:51-56). Jesus did not let things sit. If someone needed a rebuke He would give it and follow it up with loving instruction.

*Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” 55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village.*

Jesus raised up successors. It is said that there is no success without a successor.

Jesus trained and released an army of leaders to follow in His footsteps. Jesus knew how to let the right group of people into His plans at just the right time (Mt. 16:21; 20:17; Compare Mark 5:43). Jesus released certain sensitive information slowly beginning with His core followers and moving beyond.

*From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

Jesus was the first one to die for His vision. He did not ask more from others than He was prepared to give Himself.

## RECOMMENDED READING ON LEADERSHIP

*Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church,*  
Aubrey Malphurs

*Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership,* Aubrey Malphurs

*Courageous Leadership,* Bill Hybels

*Developing the Leader within You,* John Maxwell

*Good to Great,* Jim Collins

*In Search of Excellence,* Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman

*Leaders on Leadership,* George Barna

*Spiritual Leadership,* Henry & Richard Blackaby

*The 21 Indispensible Qualities of a Leader,* John Maxwell

*The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership,* John Maxwell

*The 360 Degree Leader,* John Maxwell

*The Dream Manager,* Matthew Kelly

*The Making of a Leader,* Frank Damazio

*The Making of a Leader,* Dr. J. Robert Clinton

# FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS

*Building People to Change the World*

## INTRODUCTION

This Leadership Manual was written in its original version by Diane Lafler of the Fellowship of Believers Church in Sarasota, FL. Diane has allowed me to streamline, make changes, and add content to her original version. This has allowed us to use this teaching in a variety of settings including the Leadership Training Course offered at Sarasota Bible College and Leadership Seminars. The Bible College course covers 30 hours of teaching, while the Leadership Seminar takes 6-8 hours and highlights only key information. The manual contains information from many well respected authors, pastors, and leaders. Their work is well documented, using endnotes in each lesson. I want to personally thank Diane Lafler for all of her hard work and research on this project. Her work will continue to benefit us for many years to come.

Our desire is to equip the church to do the work of the ministry. Paul talks about this at length in the book of Ephesians. As we all grow and develop ourselves as stronger disciples and leaders at home, work and ministry, we will make our mark in this world for the glory of God. The fact is, all of us are leaders in some aspect since a leader is simply one who influences another. We are leaders as we influence others at home, work, and in the environment that surrounds us. Of course, we should all aspire to be a positive influence and lead others toward Christ. In view of this, I believe every believer needs to grow in their leadership skills. In this way we can be the most effective for Christ, wherever we may be. May God bless you as you mature in Him.

God Bless,

Tom Wilhoit

# THE CHARACTER OF TRUE LEADERSHIP

1

## WHAT IS CHARACTER?

“Character is the foundation of great leadership. The spiritual man must never try to build character upon spiritual gifts; spiritual gifts must be built upon character.”<sup>1</sup>

The following description displays the different aspects of the word “character.”

1. Character is the inner life of man. It will reflect either the traits of the sinful nature (being influenced by the world) or the traits of the divine nature (being influenced by the Word of God).
2. Character is the sum of all the negative and positive qualities in a person’s life, exemplified by one’s thoughts, values, motivations, attitudes, feelings and actions.<sup>2</sup>
3. Character is not only how a person acts. Character also includes a person’s inner thoughts, motives, and attitudes. To change the character of a person, one must go deeper and deal with the heart.
4. Character does not appear without pressure. The pressures of life test what the Lord has really accomplished in a person’s character. Character is formed under such pressures and circumstances.
5. Character is not only that which other people see on the outside but also what they do not see. A person can do many outwardly religious works, and still be ungodly. Works are not always a sign of good character.
6. Character is not limited to having wisdom to comment on the behavior of others. A person with true character doesn’t just verbally tell other people what to do, but lives as an example worthy of following.

## FOUR PHASES OF GROWTH

Joseph experienced four phases of development as leader.  
What stage are you on right now?

**Stage 1:** “I don’t know what I don’t know”: at 17 years old, he was doing and saying things without understanding. It cost him 2 decades of alienation from his family.

**Stage 2:** “I know what I don’t know”: it took a life changing incident to help him to see that there were many things he needed to learn about.

**Stage 3:** “I grow and I know it starts to show”: leaders who show great skill when opportunity presents itself do so only because they’ve paid the price to prepare for that opportunity. When Joseph was finally before Pharaoh, he was ready.

**Stage 4:** “I simply go because of what I know”: Joseph executed his leadership with excellence as God had prepared him to lead and eventually unite with his family.<sup>3</sup>

## THE BIBLICAL APPROACH TO CHARACTER

Many churches have emphasized the gift and power of a leader, far above his character development. This imbalance has caused many problems in the Church, including the backsliding of many leaders. Today, however, God is bringing us back to a balance between gift and character. The Lord is not concerned with a leader’s gift and anointing only. He also cares deeply about a leader’s lifestyle and character. He desires a balance between gift and character in every one of His true leaders.<sup>4</sup> What one builds up with his gifting, he can tear down with his character.

In the days we are living in, as the world around us grows increasingly darker and values are constantly changing, the Church and its leadership must give a clear word to the world. Believers must see the need to develop Godly character for themselves and all who carry the name of Christ.

Believers have all it takes to develop a mature Christian character as they follow the Lord. See 2 Peter 1:1-11 and Galatians 5:20-22. It is our responsibility through God’s grace and our discipline to develop these virtues. Much is determined by each Christian’s attitude of response to the dealings of God in his or her life. God wants to develop character. When a believer lacks the discipline to develop his character, the Lord Himself will provide learning experiences and circumstances to help him. This learning process is commonly called “the dealings of God.”

*Phil. 1:6 (Amp.): “And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.”*

*Hebrews 12:7 (Amp.): “You must submit to and endure [correction] for discipline; God is dealing with you as with sons. For what son is there whom his father does not [thus] train and correct and discipline?”*

We need God’s dealings to:

Deal with our fallen nature and motivate us on to spiritual perfection, removing apathy and laziness.

Reveal hidden areas of sin in our lives to prevent them from destroying us and our ministries. Psalm 19:12-14; Psalm 32:3-5. Biblical examples of this are found in:

- Saul – He gave way to an independent spirit.
- David – He succumbed to lust.
- Solomon – He exercised pride, self-confidence, and rebellion.
- Peter – He was influenced by a controlling spirit and instability.

Leaders must be alert against the secret sins that can so easily destroy their lives and ministries, especially in areas of finances, morality, and authority. 1 Cor. 9:23-27

## CHARACTER IN LEADERSHIP

### ***Be an Example:***

*"Let no one despise or think less of you because of your youth, but be an example (pattern) for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity." 1 Tim. 4:12 Amplified*

**When you set an example, you are giving people a pattern to follow. Your lifestyle is your most powerful message. When you minister in a church, you are to lead a life that others can follow. The bottom line is that as a leader, or even as a spouse of one in leadership, you are watched! You are almost studied and scrutinized, and God knew you would be!**

### ***According to Paul, we are to be an example to others by our:***

#### Word

**Our conversation is to be exemplary. Ephesians 4:25-29. Put away lying and speak truth. We should never reach the point where we are so upset that our words become bitter, vengeful, or ungracious. No filthy words or coarse jesting. No gossiping! We must show the ability to keep confidences.**

#### Conduct

**Live out convictions based on biblical principles. What do you spend your time, money and energy on?**

#### Love

**We should always demonstrate the compassion and love of Jesus to those we are serving and ministering to. 2 Peter 4:8 says, "Above all things have intense and unfailing love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins [forgives and disregards the offenses of others]."**

#### Faith

**"Faithfulness, trustworthiness, or consistency" 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 "So then, let us be looked upon as ministering servants of Christ and stewards (trustees) of the mysteries (the secret purposes) of God. Moreover, it is [essentially] required of stewards that a man should be found faithful [proving himself worthy of trust]."**

#### Purity

**The Greek word "hagneia" refers not only to sexual chastity, but also to the intent of the heart. If your heart is pure, your behavior will be pure as well.**

## LOSING GROUND

The effects of sin on a leader can be devastating to many. Sin will always do the following:

- Sin always takes you farther than you wanted to go
- Sin always keeps you longer than you wanted to stay
- Sin always costs you more than you were willing to pay

As Christians we begin to lose ground when we focus more on our giftings or pleasures of life rather than our character and walk with God. The life of Samson is a reminder of this.

When leaders begin to lose ground, they usually exhibit one or more of the following signs:

- Fail to address glaring character weaknesses—Samson failed to address his problem of sexual impurity
- Count on deception to safeguard themselves—he used riddles to trick others, then eventually lied
- Act impulsively—he chose his wife rashly and didn't consider the consequences
- Misuse their God-given gifts—he possessed immense strength and anointing, but he took both for granted
- Are overcome because of an area of weakness—those who give free reign to sins, are eventually overcome<sup>5</sup>

## BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS OF LEADERSHIP

There are two main scripture passages in the New Testament that give the qualifications for those in leadership positions. These are a yardstick for measuring development, especially in leadership, but also for all believers in general (*1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9*). While they are definitely desirable for each person, they are a must for anyone in leadership.

*Take some time to consider how you measure up to each of the qualifications below:*

1. Above Reproach (blameless, strong integrity)
2. Temperate (self controlled, disciplined)
3. Prudent (using sound judgment)
4. Respectable (good behavior, modest, disciplined)
5. Hospitable (fond of guests, warm)
6. Apt to Teach (teaching in a skillful manner)

7. Not Self-Willed (not self-pleasing, arrogant, or stubborn)
8. Not Quick-Tempered (not prone to anger, irritable, or cranky)
9. Not Pugnacious (not violent, combative or a striker)
10. Uncontentious (not quarrelsome, nor argumentative, but peaceful)
11. Gentle (patient, kind and considerate)
12. Free from Love of Money (not greedy, nor pursuing dishonest gain)
13. Rules his own house well (family members, finances, possessions)
14. A Good Reputation
15. Lover of Good (desires the things of God, not worldly things)
16. Just (righteous, equitable, upright)
17. Devout (pursues holiness, pleases God)
18. Holds Fast the Faithful Word (firm grip on the Word of God)

### ***Other Leadership Attributes***

- Discipline (living a self-controlled Christian life)
- Vision (includes insight and foresight, optimism, and hope)
- Wisdom (imparts necessary balance to a leader & the ability to use/apply knowledge)
- Decisive (once a leader is sure of the will and timing of God we must act appropriately)
- Courage (the quality of mind enabling us to overcome fear or other difficult obstacles)
- Humility (God will resist the proud, yet give grace to the humble)
- Humor (the joy of the Lord is our strength!)
- Patience (it's in personal relationships that patience meets its most stringent test)
- Friendship (you can tell the stature of a leader by the number & quality of his friends)
- Tact and Diplomacy (the skill of dealing with persons or difficult situations effectively)
- Listening (time spent listening is well invested)

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- The very foundation from which every leader's calling and gifts operate is his character.
- Character is not just what people see (actions) but a person's inner motivations, thoughts, desires, and attitudes. It's everything he is and all that God can see. It basically means to be transparent before God.
- What a person builds with his gifts, he can tear down with his character.
- God's emphasis in the Scriptures is more on a leader's character, or what he *is*, than on what he *does*.
- Much of God's dealings with a person is to develop his character, to expose and deal with the hidden weaknesses and sins that could destroy his ministry, influence, and spiritual life.
- The list of character qualifications in the Word for elders and deacons are really qualifications *all* believers should be aiming for.
- It is as a leader yields to the Holy Spirit that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is produced and manifested in that leader's life.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

Take a few minutes to consider all the character traits you have just read about. Review them again prayerfully, meditate on them, ask the Holy Spirit to show you which ones He may be working on in your life right now and write them below.

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Pray, asking the Lord to prune what is necessary in your life so that the fruit of His character in that area may be produced in a greater harvest. Continue to yield to the Holy Spirit as He does the work.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

Read:      [Qualities for Spiritual Leadership](#), by J. Oswald Sanders  
[Reflecting the Character of Christ](#), by Dr. Les Carter  
[Negative and Positive Qualities that Affect Leadership Wives](#)

Listen to:    Audio tape entitled "Don't Let Your Gift Take You Where Your Character Can't Keep You", by Paul Scanlon

## **Endnotes**

- 1 Joyner, Rick, The Morning Star, "The Characteristics of Leadership", p. 24.
- 2 Damazio, Frank, The Making of A Leader (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1988), pp. 106, 107
- 3 Maxwell, John, Leadership 101 (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2002) p. 13-19.
- 4 Damazio, Frank, The Making of A Leader (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1988), p. 106.
- 5 John Maxwell. The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2000.

# UNDERSTANDING THE ANOINTING

1

In his book “*The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*”, R.A. Torrey described the Spirit’s ministry this way: “Not infrequently the Holy Spirit takes one who seems to give the least natural promise and uses him far beyond those who give the greatest natural promise. Christian life is not to be lived in the realm of natural temperament, and Christian work is not to be done in the power of natural endowment, but Christian life is to be lived in the realm of the Spirit, and Christian work is to be done in the power of the Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

## IMPORTANCE OF THE ANOINTING

Without God’s anointing on a leader’s ministry, it will not produce any lasting fruit for the Kingdom of God. The Church today desperately needs to operate under the anointing of God.

What the anointing is not:

- Mere natural ability or talent
- Professionalism
- External show
- Mere fancy oratory
- Famous preaching styles mimicked
- Formal homiletics courses
- Ecclesiastical position or authority
- Good speaking technique
- The direct result of good education
- External religious forms
- Nice-sounding music
- Mere emotionalism
- Following a simple “how to” list
- Recognition by an organization

None of the above can ensure God’s anointed presence on a life, a leader, or a church service.<sup>2</sup> The true anointing of God is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

## ANOINTING DEFINED

- A. The anointing is the enablement or unction of the Holy Spirit upon a person, a particular gift, calling, or a group of people to do the purposes of God. According to the root words for anointing, it means “consecrated, quickened, to cause to be spiritually stimulated or kindled, to cause to burn more intensely, to shine more brightly.”

- B. In the Old Testament, the anointing was the divine spirit descending and abiding upon them from God. It was especially seen in the offices of the priests, the kings, and the prophets. It was not an abiding presence, however.
- C. In the New Testament, the believers are referred to as priests and kings. The anointing of the Holy Spirit has been given to us to enable us to fulfill God's callings. It is, however, an abiding presence of the Holy Spirit within. A synonym for anointing is "power" or "energy of the Holy Spirit" which comes from the Greek word "dunamis." This is the same word used for the Holy Spirit that was both promised and given in *Acts 1:8, 2:4*.
- D. The anointing is the unction or enabling strength of the Holy Spirit upon a person or a group of people to do the work of ministry.
- E. Some foundational points about the anointing are:
  - 1. To anoint someone was to commission him for a certain purpose, and often involved induction into a major office, such as king, priest, or prophet.
  - 2. Anointing was accompanied by a special divine enablement to carry out the mission for which one was commissioned.
  - 3. The anointing can be seen in many ways. Some examples include: a preacher who connects with the Spirit of God to bring a needed word, a singer who makes a spiritual impact on people because of the presence of God's Spirit on them, a person who is anointed by God to bring a word of exhortation to someone in need.
  - 4. It must be said, however, that a leader can function in the anointing by following previously made plans, previously outlined sermons, etc., provided that they were originated or quickened for that occasion by the Holy Spirit. It does not negate the importance of discipline or organization in leadership. It uses the mind of a leader as a vessel for transmitting the heart and Spirit of God, as the leader flows with the moving of the Spirit.
  - 5. A deep prayer life, meditation on the Word, and an open humble heart allow us to flow in the anointing of God. As we are diligent in these, He will use us for His glory time and time again.

## PURPOSES OF THE ANOINTING

- A. To consecrate things and people to God and His service. *Ex. 28:41; 29:29*
- B. To break the yoke of bondage. *Isa. 10:27*
- C. To preach good news of hope to the hopeless. *Isa. 61; Luke 4:18*

- D. To bind up the broken-hearted, to heal those with crushed hearts and shattered emotions. *Isa. 61:1-3; Luke 4:18*
- E. To set at liberty the bitter-hearted and captive and proclaim freedom for the prisoners.
- F. To create zeal, or the passion of the Spirit. *John 2:13-17*
- G. To empower the Christian with the gifts and ministries of the Lord. *1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-12*
- H. To minister healing power to the sick. *James. 5:14*
- I. To destroy the works of the devil. *1 John 3:8*

## TRAITS OF ANOINTING OIL

Beaten (Exodus 30:36)

The anointing oil in the Old Testament was beaten from olives. The anointing of the Holy Spirit in the life of a leader of God comes through the hard and deep dealings of God (which release the life of the Holy Spirit within him). It comes upon a leader to develop the fruit of the Holy Spirit in his life, or to bring forth Christ's character.

Fresh (Psalm 92:10)

The holy anointing oil had to be fresh and new for use. No leader can depend on past anointings to serve him today. Every leader must obtain a fresh anointing daily in the Lord. It is also fresh and unique each time. You can't do the same thing over and over and expect the same anointing!

Holy (Ex. 30:25, 31, 32; Psalm 89:20)

The anointing oil was holy. The Holy Spirit enters the life of a leader to make him holy, but will flow through him to others only as the leader himself embraces this holiness.

Pure (Ex. 27:20; 1 Kings 5:11)

The holy anointing oil was pure. The Holy Spirit will flow through a leader's life only as he is pure before the Lord (morally, emotionally and spiritually). The Holy Spirit will not anoint that which is sinful or fleshly. Samson's life is a strong reminder of that!

Precious (Prov. 21:20)

Anointing oil was very precious. Every leader should guard and protect the Holy Spirit's precious anointing in his life, as he considers it to be the most valuable possession in his ministry.

Quality (Amos 6:6; Ez. 30:23; Num. 18:12)

Only the finest oils in Israel were used in the anointing oil. Every leader should

realize that the fine quality of the work of the Holy Spirit, in and through his life, is more important than the quantity of that work.

Costly (Mark 14:3)

Anointing oil required very expensive ingredients. Every leader must realize that for every new depth of spiritual anointing he desires to experience, he must give up precious and costly things to God. The anointing costs the leader something. It cost Jesus Christ His entire life.<sup>3</sup>

## THE ANOINTING CREATES ZEAL

Without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the Church becomes dull, listless and lifeless. What does the Bible say about zeal in the Church?

John 2:17 (Amp) says "...Zeal (the fervor of love) for your house will eat Me up. [I will be consumed with jealousy for the honor of your house.]

Isaiah 59:17 says: "For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak." (Remember that a mantle or cloak is a symbol of God's anointing.)

### ***The definition of the word “zeal”***

In Hebrew, zeal means to “burn with strong feelings of good or bad, as in jealousy or anger.”

The Greek word “zeelos” is used 17 times in the New Testament. It means: “capacity or state of passionate committal to a person or cause; forces which motivate; a warlike spirit; passion; enthusiasm; to boil hot; fervent; to concern oneself with something so as to take up responsibility for the matter, to make it a goal and strive after it energetically.”

### ***The Enemy of Zeal***

Though there are many enemies of zeal, the most potent of them all is lukewarmness. Lukewarmness is the surest evidence that a person is living more in the flesh than in the Spirit. The indictment against the Laodicean church in *Revelation 3:16* is this: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.”

What causes lukewarmness? Becoming self-centered instead of God-centered will definitely begin the process of sliding into a state of apathy and carelessness about the things of God. Neglecting spiritual disciplines such as prayer, worship, Bible reading, and strong fellowship with other believers will add to this downward process. Doing the opposite and strongly practicing the presence of God will break apathy and bring back zeal into your life.

Lukewarmness is indifference, coldness, lack of heat/fire. It causes:

- Spiritual paralysis
- Surrender of the first-love relationship with Christ
- Profession of faith without its substance
- Mediocrity in service to Christ and the Church
- Indifferent, ineffectual prayer
- Complacency and idleness
- Extreme reluctance to sacrifice anything
- Burdenless attitude toward the suffering of others
- Passionless attitude toward all good things
- Neglect of spiritual activities and responsibilities
- Spiritual deception about one's actual status as a believer<sup>4</sup>

### ***The Focus of Zeal***

#### Loving God's House

Numerous verses express the zeal of the Holy Spirit through a focused love of God's house, activities to build and beautify it, and to meet the needs of others through it. *Psalm 26:8; Hebrews 10:24-25.*

#### Building up God's House, not tearing it down

True zeal, as produced by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, is more than mere intensity or emotion. It is a commitment to doing that which builds the house of God, and to avoiding that which tears down the house of God. In this, true zeal that comes from the anointing of the Holy Spirit embraces wisdom to pursue its goals, even if zeal is not always associated with wisdom. Godly zeal produces good fruit, not just steam! *Prov. 24:3-4, 1 Corinthians 14:12.*

#### Being planted and rooted in God's House (the people of God)

The true zeal that is produced by the anointing of the Holy Spirit does not lead to self-destruction. On the contrary, it produces a love of the house of God that leads a person into becoming rooted in God's house. *Psalm 92:13, 14; Psalm 84:10.*

### ***Zeal and Balance***

Because zeal involves intensity and passion it requires wisdom and maturity to be spiritually zealous without injuring other elements of one's life. You don't want to be like a shooting star, shining brightly, but over quickly!

A life of zeal has potential problems of which the man and woman of God must be aware:

- Burnout and Worn out (emotionally, physically).
- Financial problems (from failing to develop a healthy career and work life).
- Isolation and Relationship problems (from neglecting friendships).
- Discouragement (from neglecting recreation and simple joys).

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- For lasting fruit in the leader's life, the anointing of the Holy Spirit must be present.
- The Holy Spirit's anointing isn't necessarily a feeling, or a certain form, or the result of special training. It is a quickening of the Spirit in a yielded life of holiness and fellowship with Christ.
- God will not anoint sin or unholy living. There is a cost to the anointing.
- We should value the anointing and treat it as precious in our lives, not mishandling it or taking it for granted.
- One way to keep the anointing strong in your life is to cultivate the fire of zeal for God and for His Church.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

- Do I recognize that the anointing will cost me something, and am I willing to pay that cost?
- I must be sensitive not to use the anointing for my own selfish purposes. What purposes could those be?
- What in my life right now could be affecting the flow of the Holy Spirit's anointing through me?
- Am I careful to respect and protect the anointing or am I too casual with it?
- Am I zealous for God and for His house right now? If not, what can I do about it?
- How do I keep from sliding into lukewarmness?
- How would a lack of zeal affect my leadership and those around me?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

[Flowing with the Anointing](#), by Graham Cooke

[Avoiding the Hazards of Ministering Under the Anointing](#), by Jim Goll

[Holiness, Truth, and the Presence of God](#), by Francis Frangipane

[Glory: When Heaven Invades Earth](#), by Bob Sorge

[The Release of the Spirit](#), by Watchman Nee

### ***Endnotes***

<sup>1</sup> Stanley, Charles. Discipleship Journal, "You Gotta Have Parts (Issue Ninety, 1995), p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Damazio, Frank. The Making of A Leader (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1988), p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 295-296.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 304

# UNDERSTANDING OUR CALLING

1

## INTRODUCTION

"Personal calling is not something that can be written in a book or schemed up in your mind. It is something that is very personal and uniquely ordained for you by God. It always involves other people, and it is usually much simpler than your own plans and designs. To hear God's call and walk in His anointings, you must live close to the hearts of people and within the hearing of His voice. To keep this divine balance, you must stay ever close to Him in the journey. To be called by God and anointed to serve Him and the people for whom He died is a tremendous privilege and high calling."

Jim Goll also says in His book, "The Coming Prophetic Revolution" that no person can give you a calling in life. Gifts are the Lord's alone to give. A purpose or destiny is His to distribute. The call of when, what and with whom is not about us; it is up to Him.

*Ephesians 1:18 spells it out very plainly for us: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling."*

## TO BE A LEADER

"The New Testament presents all Christians as ministers in the sense that all have definite ministries to perform in the Body of Christ. The New Testament does designate two different general functions in the Church, which we refer to as governmental and congregational. But this general distinction is never made in an attitude of complete superiority of one over the other, as has been the general understanding of clergy being superior to laity."<sup>3</sup>

It is God who anoints a person to minister, and at best, organizations can only agree with His anointing. The goal of ministry is spiritual increase and growth in other people's lives, *not* personal prestige for the minister. Fruitfulness in ministry comes not from receiving a title, but from earnest service by the person who trusts God to yield the increase."<sup>4</sup>

We must follow the example of Jesus who said, "For even Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, to give His life as a ransom for many."

Matt. 20:28.

## WHAT IS MINISTRY?

### ***Titled position vs. the work of the ministry***

1. In the Old Testament, a leader was first of all a servant of God and of His people. Servanthood went before leadership. It is not “Moses, my leader” but “Moses, my servant.” *Deut. 34:5; Josh. 1:1*

**Instead of asking, “What is my ministry?” one should be asking, “What service am I able to render to others that might be a strength and blessing to them?”**

**Too many are jockeying for position and trying to determine who is the greatest in the kingdom of God. Too many people are looking for a position where they can sit and be served rather than looking for the towel or the apron of humility with which to wash the feet of others. (see the example of James and John in *Mark 10:35-45*).**

2. Today the word “minister” has come to primarily refer to an ordained pastor, elder, or Christian worker who does God’s work on a full-time basis. However, minister literally means “servant”. It is grammatically an action verb. In the early Church, it related to *all the saints*. **The workload of the church was not in name, title, position, or salary. It was in action, commitment, spontaneity and individual service.**
3. *Acts 6:3* – The choosing of deacons was the first example of a person being appointed or put into an office of leadership in the early church. They were already functioning in the area of their calling; they just needed to be recognized and validated before the people.
4. *Isaiah 42:1-5* shows us a prophetic picture of Jesus and reveals what the spirit of servanthood is:
  - 42:1 – Total dependence upon God  
“Behold My Servant Whom I uphold” In Phil. 2:7 it says that Jesus emptied Himself and became a human being, dependent upon God the Father.
  - 42:1 – Approved by God  
“My chosen One in whom I delight”
  - 42:2 – Walked in humility  
“He will not cry or shout aloud or cause His voice to be heard in the street.” He would not be sensational, drawing attention to Himself, but would be modest.
  - 42:3 – Showed empathy  
“A bruised reed He will not break....” He would be sympathetic and understanding with the weak and erring.
  - 42:4 – Modeled optimism

“He will not fail nor be discouraged....”

- 42:1 – Served with the anointing  
“I have put my Spirit upon Him.”
5. The Hebrew word for “leader” is “nagiyd”. It has servanthood as its basis, and developing out of that base, setting an example to the people. It has as its root the picture of a man under authority, one who is subject to a higher power, and who fulfills the wishes of that power. God’s desire is for a person who will listen to His will, and execute it faithfully with divinely appointed authority.<sup>5</sup>

**Another root meaning of this word is “to stand out boldly, to announce, to manifest.” It is being an example to the people as how to follow the command of God – taking the forefront and leading by example.**

*“Tend (nurture, guard, guide, and fold) the flock of God that is [your responsibility], not by coercion or constraint, but willingly; not dishonorably motivated by the advantages and profits [belonging to the office], but eagerly and cheerfully; Not domineering [as arrogant, dictatorial, and overbearing persons] over those in your charge, but being examples (patterns and models of Christian living) to the flock (the congregation).”*

**1 Pet. 5:2-3 (Amp)**

### ***The Necessity of the Divine Call***

1. Personal victory in the ministry hinges upon an initial call from God.
2. God rejects false leadership.

**There must be a divine encounter with the Lord before the Lord can send out a person. God must call the person and equip him before he goes forth. There must be an appointment by God.**

3. God rejects self-appointed leadership.

**Numbers 16 shows us that Korah was a self-appointed leader who took upon himself the authority and responsibility of a spiritual office into which he had not been divinely called.**

4. There's limitation in man-appointed leadership.

**In 1 Samuel 8:1-10 we see that Saul was man-appointed. The people put much reliance upon gifts, abilities, education, and training. Leadership was treated more like a professional career.**

5. God desires God-appointed leadership. How does God put man into leadership?

- God appoints him. *Numbers 27:16 “Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation.”*

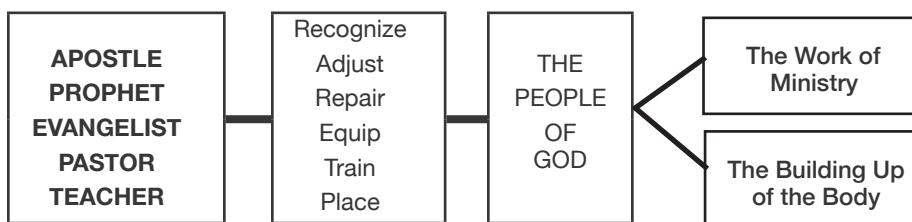
- God separates him. *Acts 13:2* “*The Holy Ghost said, ‘Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’*”
- God calls him. *Romans 1:1* “*Paul...called to be an apostle.*”
- God sends him. *Isa. 6:8* “*And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? Then said I, “Here am I; send me.”*”

## CHURCH LEADERSHIP

*1 Cor. 12:4-7; 11* shows us that all the ministries and gifts are inspired and distributed by God through the Holy Spirit as God has chosen.

### ***The “Five-Fold Ministries” Ephesians 4:11-12***

1. There is a difference between the five-fold ministries, the governmental/office gifts, and the congregational/body gifts.
2. One of the most important functions of these ministries in the Church is to have spiritual eyes to discern those who are called to a particular work in the body and to be able to release them to that work. They are the equipping ministries.



3. The five-fold ministries are defined as follows:

**Apostle:** One who establishes foundational direction and doctrine in pioneering, planting, and establishing churches. He provides a “father figure” for other ministries by training, equipping, recognizing, and releasing others into ministry. He operates with spiritual authority and oversight, bringing needed correction and encouragement both to local churches and in relating to other ministries.

**Prophets:** One who provides vision by hearing and relating the heart of God and by teaching others how to hear the voice of God for themselves. He is able to discern and draw out the gifting in others and to impart and multiply the prophetic anointing.

**Evangelist:** One whose main concern is for souls and to equip the believers to

witness and evangelize. He teaches the body how to infiltrate the community and the world with the Gospel of the Kingdom.

**Pastor:** One who shepherds the church by providing ongoing and hands-on care and protection. He gives wise counsel and oversight to the local church ministries and works to see that the people are fed and maturing.

**Teacher:** One who establishes the people in the Word of God by rightly dividing the Word of Truth. He is involved in discipling and insuring that all is done on a solid Scriptural foundation.

#### ***Governmental/Office Gifts:***

In the New Testament church there are clearly two distinct ruling positions for the rule and service of the people, that of Elders and Deacons.

**Elders:** Elders are appointed offices in the church that provide for the spiritual oversight of the congregation, making decisions for the spiritual direction and all situations that would arise. There is plurality of eldership, although there is a presiding elder or senior pastor. *Titus 1:5*

**Deacons:** These are those who look after the practical aspects of the congregation, serving in particular ways to administer to the needs of the body. While they are primarily involved in practical services, they are still encouraged to be giving forth in spiritual matters also, and developing in these areas. We see this strongly in Acts with the deacons, Stephen & Philip. *Acts 6:1-4*

#### ***Congregational Gifts/Ministries***

J. Oswald Sanders says that not every Christian is called or qualified for a position of major leadership, but all are leaders to the extent that they influence others. All of us can, if we will, increase our leadership potential.

All Christians receive the command to serve. The parable of the talents in *Matthew 25* shows us that we receive ability in differing degrees. It is our responsibility to develop them and use them for God's Kingdom.

All believers receive grace. Grace is the divine influence and enablement in the heart of a believer that causes him to come forth in some area of service. It is freely given to all. *Romans 12:3-6*

## YOUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S CALL

- A. Whatever your ministry is, you probably will be called to act in a leadership role at some time. Each member of the body has a calling, and each calling is unique, and each is perfectly rewarding and satisfying to the Christian who is living in faith.
- B. No one can keep you from fulfilling the call of God on your life – except you! While circumstances will naturally have an effect upon you, they do not dictate your response to God's call. Some of life's circumstances that can affect you are:
  - 1. Your gender or marital status: Even if you are a leader's wife...you have your own unique gifts and calling that identifies you apart from your spouse's ministry. It is up to you to grow and develop them.
  - 2. The seasons of your life: The circumstances of your life may change but your call and gifts can flow through any season of your life.
  - 3. Your age:  
**Youth---see 1 Tim. 4:11-16 (Amp.)**

*"Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. Stay at your post reading Scripture, giving counsel, teaching. And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed – keep that dusted off and in use."*

*Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them. The people will all see you mature right before their eyes! Keep a firm grasp on both your character and your teaching. Don't be diverted. Just keep at it. Both you and those who hear you will experience salvation."*

**Older Adults---see Psalm 92:13-14 (Amp.)**

*"Planted in the house of the Lord, they shall flourish in the courts of our God. Growing in grace they shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap, of spiritual vitality, and rich in the verdure of trust, love, and contentment."*

- C. God has a great diversity in His methods of calling: a burning bush, a dream, a prophetic word, and a deep, inner desire. The important thing is to know your calling and develop and walk in it. 2 Pet. 1:10; Eph. 2:10 (Amp.)

**The following are some examples from the Bible of those called, and the excuses they had to overcome.**

- 1. **Moses:** He chose suffering and shame with God's people rather than the wealth and prestige of Egypt. Heb. 11:24-27. However, he still had to overcome the excuses of:
  - Failure – trying to fulfill God's call in his own power. Ex. 2:11-15

- Unworthiness – Moses asked God, “Who am I to do this thing?”  
*Ex. 3:11-12*
- Fear of rejection – Moses feared that the people would not recognize him. They would ask, “Who are you? Who gives you this authority?” God said he was to go forth in God’s Name – the I AM! *Ex. 3:13-16*
- A lack of eloquence – God assured Moses that He would teach him if he was just obedient. *Ex. 4:10-12*

2. **Gideon:** His excuses were:

- Circumstances– Everything is obviously against us. How can this be God? – *Judges 6:13*
- Unbelief and frustration – *Judges 6:13.*
- Inferiority – Gideon felt he was not the right man for the job!  
*Judges 6:15.*
- His family background – *Judges 6:15.*
- Youthfulness – *Judges 6:15.*

3. **Jeremiah:** had three major excuses

- Lack of eloquence – *Jeremiah 1:6-9.* He was not required to use his oratorical gifts! God would give Him the words!
- Youth – *Jer. 1:6.* He feared those who had attained more age, experience, and education. However, God knew he was young when He chose him!
- Timidity / Fear of Man – *Jer. 1:8, 9.* Abundant grace was provided to break the fear of man.

## WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

- Christian ministry is for all believers and is appointed by God in each individual’s life. Ministry and leadership is a calling.
- To “minister” literally means “to serve.” Jesus both modeled and taught serving as the primary purpose for those in any form of leadership.
- It is important that we seek to find our ministry in God’s calling and appointment, not by self-will or by the ways of man.
- To be a leader may or may not mean a position or title. It is primarily a place of influence. People will naturally follow those who model the walk before them.
- Through His grace, God has given us all gifts, and through His grace He enables us to use them to minister to others.

- Only you can keep yourself from fulfilling God's call on your life. You must meet every excuse or hindrance with the truth of God's Word and remember that God delights to call and use those who are most unsuitable, so that He can get the glory!

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

- Do I need to adjust my thinking on what ministry really is?
- Do I think "serving" is just for a few with that gift, or for everyone?
- Am I leaning too much on my abilities or on the God who called me?
- Can I be patient and wait for God's timing and appointment?
- What do I think is the No. 1 excuse holding me back from my call or ministry?
- What is God's answer to that?

### ***Endnotes***

<sup>1</sup> Malmin, Glenda, Woman, You Are Called and Anointed (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1998), Preface.

<sup>2</sup> Goll, Jim W., The coming Prophetic Revolution (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2001) p. 84

<sup>3</sup> Damazio, Frank. The Making of A Leader. (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, Inc., 1988), p. 3

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 11

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 18

## INTRODUCTION

Why do you have to be tested? Doesn't God know if you're ready to minister? Of course, He does! But *you* need to know it, too! The tests are not simply to expose weaknesses, but to cause you to turn to Him for healing.

The Bible clearly teaches that God tests and tries every ministry which He uses. When we say that God tests a ministry, we mean that God:

- Uses any means which He Himself knows will determine the presence, quality, or genuineness of His call on someone's life.
- Assesses and examines the true inner attitudes and motives of those whom He calls, to show whether they are pure or not.
- Refines them spiritually. Producing faithful men and women is a primary purpose of God's testings.<sup>1</sup>

"The degree to which we allow the cross of Christ to work in us will be the measure in which the resurrection life of Christ will be manifested in us. To evade the cross is to forfeit leadership."<sup>2</sup>

The following Scriptures are just a few that show us God's purpose in testing us.

**Genesis 22:1** – "After these events, God tested and proved Abraham and said to him, Abraham! And he said, Here I am."

**Deuteronomy 8:2** – "And you shall earnestly remember all the way which the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and to prove you, to know what was in your heart and mind, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

**Psalm 11:5** – "The Lord tests and proves the righteous..."

**1 Peter 4:12** – "Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange (unusual and alien to you and your position) were befalling you."

## DIFFERENT TESTS

These tests are taken primarily from Frank Damazio's book The Making of a Leader.

### **The Time Test**

Definition: By all outward appearances, God does not seem to be fulfilling the promise or word He gave in the past.

Purpose: It forces a leader to trust God to fulfill his call and ministry in His own time and way. It gives the leader an opportunity to grow in faith. It purifies a leader's motives and attitudes. It can show God's miracle power, faithfulness, and brings Him all of the glory.

Biblical Illustration: Abraham waited 25 years to see his promised heir. (Gen. 12-18)

### **The Character Test**

Definition: A leader may be tempted to sin in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. This is the fiery trial of temptation.

Purpose: To show the leader the areas of weakness in his own personality. Every leader has hidden character deficiencies of which he is totally unaware, until confronted with a specific situation that demands a godly response.

Biblical Illustration: Samuel chose not to be corrupted by his immoral environment. (1 Samuel 2:27 – 3:3)

### **The Motivation Test**

Definition: God exposes to the leader what inner and outer forces influence his decision-making. A leader may not always know why he does something. What appears to motivate him may be a far cry from his true internal motives.

Purpose: To disclose those inner drives and to purify them into desires for God's glory, not to serve God for what he can get or use his gifts to glorify himself.

Biblical Illustration: Balaam the prophet failed the test when he was tempted with the profit of money. (Numbers 22-24)

### **The Servant Test**

Definition: When asked to do menial tasks that seem below his high calling in God.

Purpose: To keep one in touch with those he ministers to, and to encourage humility. Ministry does not end servanthood. It only means that a leader now must serve even more people in an even greater capacity.

Biblical Illustration: Elisha serving Elijah. (2 Kings 3:11)

### ***The Wilderness Test***

Definition: When God directly or indirectly guides a leader into a materially and/or spiritually dry and desolate place. When no fruit comes from his life or ministry.

Purpose: Teaches one to discern whether the Lord alone sustains his spiritual life, or he draws from his ministry activity to sustain his relationship with God. Also, to strip the leader of all the wisdom and ways of the world, and to teach him the ways of the Spirit. To cultivate his life in prayer and the Word.

Biblical Illustration: Moses in the desert. (Exodus 2, 3)

### ***The Frustration Test***

Definition: When a leader feels his life or ministry goals cannot be achieved, or his giftings aren't being used. Impatience is usually the hotbed for ungodly ambition, and can be seen when a person can't wait, but manipulates to fulfill his vision.

Purpose: To cause him to re-examine his spiritual priorities. God will many times bring frustration to a leader's life when his priorities need re-adjustment, or even when He is about to make directional changes.

Biblical Illustration: Paul's response to circumstances. (2 Corinthians 11)

### ***The Discouragement Test***

Definition: Allows circumstances or people to dishearten him and deprive him of courage in the Lord. During such times, a leader may lose his confidence or hope in God, His provision, His promises, or His calling. Close scrutiny of leaders mentioned in the Bible indicates most experienced failure at one time or another. They learned from failure, repented and were used in even mightier ways.

Purpose: To cause the leader to deepen his prayer life and to see the reality that the joy of the Lord is his strength. Must guard against persisting in self-pity or emotional dependence. Will reveal the hidden, bad attitudes in a leader's heart.

Biblical Illustration: Elijah's depression after ministry. (1 Kings 19)

### ***The Warfare Test***

Definition: When a leader encounters violent spiritual opposition to His spiritual progress or ministry. Though it happens in the spiritual realm, it can find natural expression in conflicts with people and struggles of various sorts.

Purpose: Forces the leader to grow stronger in the Spirit, and to exercise their spiritual senses, especially that of discernment. Through spiritual warfare, a leader learns how

to use effectively his spiritual weapons of the Word, prayer, praise, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Biblical Illustration:* The young pastor, Timothy. (1 and 2 Timothy)

### **The Usage Test**

*Definition:* When a leader cannot find the need, demand, opportunity, invitation, or expected occasion to exercise his ministry. “Put on the shelf” is a common description for this situation.

*Purpose:* It may happen “temporarily” for several reasons: May be to show the leader is depending too heavily on his ministry or activity, rather than the Lord Himself, for his joy and spiritual fulfillment. It speaks to the issue of ministry ownership. It also is an opportunity for God to humble a leader who perhaps has become proud and self-sufficient. God is more inclined to use a man’s weakness for His glory, than to use his strength. It gives God time to purify a leader’s motives. It may also deepen the message of a leader. A little “R & R” never hurt anyone!

*Biblical Illustration:* John the Baptist after Jesus began His ministry.  
(Matthew 3)

## **PERILS OF LEADERSHIP**

### ***The Peril of Pride***

Proverbs 16:5 says that “everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord.” To be proud of spiritual gifts that God has given or of the position to which His love and grace have elevated us, is to forget that grace is a gift, and that all we have has been received.

Pride is a sin of whose presence its victim is least conscious. There are, however, three tests that will help us discover whether or not we have succumbed to it.

#### *The Test of Precedence:*

**How do we react when another is selected for the assignment we expected or for the office we desired? When another is promoted and we are overlooked? When another outshines us in gifts and accomplishments?**

#### *The Test of Sincerity*

**In our moments of honest self-criticism we will say many things about ourselves and really mean them. But how do we feel when others say exactly the same things about us?**

#### *The Test of Criticism*

**Does criticism arouse hostility and resentment in our hearts and cause us to fly to immediate self-justification? Do we hasten to criticize the critic?**

### ***The Peril of Jealousy***

Moses showed that he could respond correctly to this trap in Numbers 11:28-29. He refused to allow jealousy to take root in his heart.

“Although there are occupational hazards in all callings, the perils of the spiritual leader are especially subtle. He is by no means immune to the temptations of the flesh, but the dangers most to be guarded against lie in the realm of the spirit. He must remember that Satan, his relentless enemy, will take advantage of every inch of ground he concedes in any area of his life.”<sup>3</sup>

### ***The Peril of Popularity***

There will always be those who are unwise and who tend to exalt one spiritual leader above another (1 Cor. 3:4, 6-9). This is a mark of spiritual immaturity and carnality.

Spiritual leaders are to be “esteemed very highly in love for their work’s sake,” but that esteem should not degenerate into adulation. Leaders must refuse to be idolized, but attach the affection of their followers more to Christ than themselves.

Success exposes a person to the pressure of people and thus tempts him to hold on to his success by any means even fleshly methods. “Doorways of opportunity can quickly become trap doors for the leader driven to promote his ministry. The enticement of success and popularity can easily delude a leader into believing the fallacy that opportunity and guidance are synonymous. Add to this the clamoring expectations of followers, and an almost irresistible pull develops which can easily lure

a leader away from accomplishing the true will of God.”<sup>4</sup>

### ***The Peril of Infallibility***

Spirituality does not equal infallibility. Even the divinely called and Spirit-filled apostles made mistakes that required divine overruling.

Willingness to concede the possibility of an error of judgment and to defer to the judgment of one’s brethren enhances rather than diminishes influence.

“A servant leader is willing to expose his humanity.....Loneliness in leadership is a sign that we have isolated ourselves from others, often out of a sense of superiority that causes us to deny not only our weakness, but ultimately, our humanity.”<sup>5</sup>

## **ATTITUDE TESTING THROUGH PRESSURES**

A leader’s attitudes (his mental and internal dispositions toward life and the ministry) will help to determine his success or failure in ministry. If a leader cooperates with God in developing godly attitudes in his life, he will succeed. If, however, a leader allows the

roots of ungodly attitudes to grow within him, he will fail in performing what God has asked him to do.

When God convicts a leader of a sinful attitude, his best response is immediate repentance and prayer for cleansing.

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- God allows us to be tested to show us our true self and our weaknesses so that they can be corrected. Otherwise, we are left with areas the enemy can and will use down the road to hinder our ministry.
- No matter *what* we go through, we must ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to us the purpose and desire of the Father in using it in our lives.
- There are perils to watch out for, and even more seriously if we are in some form of leadership. We must maintain a pure and honest heart before God to see these things, such as pride and jealousy, in our lives.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

Look over the Tests of Leadership again and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas you need to surrender to Him. Are you on the right track right now in your life, in the center of God's will? If the Holy Spirit reveals areas in your life where change is necessary take some time to write out He is saying to you below and how you plan to line up your life to be in the center of God's will.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Pain, Perplexity, and Promotion, by Bob Sorge  
Envy, the Enemy Within, by Bob Sorge  
The Bait of Satan, by John Bevere  
The Rejection of Man, the Praise of Man, by Bob Sorge

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Damazio, Frank. The Making of A Leader (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, Inc., 1988), p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Sanders, J. Oswald. Spiritual Leadership (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), p. 141

<sup>3</sup> Sanders, J. Oswald, The Spirit of Revival, "Peculiar Perils of Leadership", March, 1998, Issue, p. 27

<sup>4</sup> Gunderson, Denny, Through the Dust (Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 1992), p. 37

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 73

# THE PREPARATION PROCESS

**1**

## INTRODUCTION

"Proper preparation is the only assurance of a leader functioning effectively for God. God prepared nearly every leader in the Bible before he began to do his full work for the Lord. God Himself has a tailor-made education for each one of His leaders, depending upon the work to which He has called him or her."<sup>1</sup>

It is important that one remembers that the call is not the commission. There is a time of cultivation or preparation between the two. This may involve a certain amount of formal education, or it may not. However, it definitely involves God's "School of Ministry."

Definition of Preparation: "to make ready for a special purpose, to make suitable, to fit, to adapt, to train, to equip or to furnish, to make ready to function properly."

**2 Timothy 3:16-17:** *"Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration) and profitable for instruction, for reproof and conviction of sin, for correction of error and discipline in obedience, [and] for training in righteousness (in holy living, in conformity to God's will in thought, purpose, and action), so that the man of God may be complete and proficient, well fitted and thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (Amp)

## AN ANALOGY

An analogy used throughout the Scriptures is that of the clay and the potter. See Jeremiah 18:1-4. From these scriptures we can see how God uses the ancient art of pottery making to speak of His dealings with us, His children.

Pottery is produced by "firing clay shapes to a temperature sufficiently high to change the physical and chemical properties of the original clay into a new substance with many of the characteristics of stone."<sup>2</sup>

Let's look at the process of making the pottery that the potter would go through and compare it to God's work in our life:

1. The potter needed a field where he mixed the clay with water, and by treading on it with his feet turned it into potter's clay. *Hosea 10:12; Isaiah 41:25.* We need to break up the fallow, hard soil of our heart so it will be soft clay that is responsive to God's touch. If we fail to do it, God has tools to use with that purpose in view.
2. The softened clay was put on a disc and turned counterclockwise while the potter first hollowed out the interior, and then with light pressure from his hands he formed the exterior.

*"Yet, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our Potter,*

*and we all are the work of Your hands.” Isaiah 64:8*

**God starts on the inside and works to the outside as He conforms us to the image of His Son. Rom. 12:1-2 (Amp.)**

3. Impurities in the clay or insufficient treading could mar the vessel on the wheel. If this happened, the potter would reshape the clay into a lump and begin again. If the clay would not cooperate, he might discard it to the potter's field.

*“Woe to him who strives with His Maker! Shall the clay say to Him who fashions it, What do You think You are making? or, Your work has no handles?” Isaiah 45:9*

4. After drying, the vessel was replaced on the wheel for cutting and trimming off excess clay. *Heb. 12:5-11; Jn. 15:1-6*
5. The potter would then apply a cream or polish to fill the pores, beautify it, and sometimes add color. Next he would rub the surface with a smooth stone to produce a sheen. *2 Cor. 3:18; 4:16-17*
6. Finally, the jar was “fired” by heating it in an open fire or kiln. This was the most difficult part of the process – usually a trade secret handed down from father to son. Not enough heat would make the vessel too soft for use; too much heat could cause it to crack.  
*1 Corinthians 10:13*

## THE SEASON OF PREPARATION

Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 3:10: “*And let them [future leaders] also be tried and investigated and proved first; then, if they turn out to be above reproach, let them serve...*”

Leader's Salvation	Leader's Call	Leader's Preparation	Leader's Function
Ministry planted as a seed	Ministry birthed as a sprout	Ministry tested as a plant	Ministry matured as a fruit-bearing tree <sup>3</sup>

Some potential leaders identify their call, but fail to prepare for their ministries. Others proceed into the preparation period, but fail in the process.

In Isaiah 49:1-3, we see a prophetic word that not only applies to the coming Messiah, but also to Isaiah and to all of the Lord's servants. Isaiah is speaking about an arrow hitting the mark. There are five important points here:

1. *The Lord called me from the womb”*  
**All those whom God uses have been called from the womb or birth with a specific purpose and divine destiny. Eph. 1:4,5; Rom. 8:28**

2. *"He makes my mouth like a sharp sword"*

This is referring to the ministry of the Lord's servant as he shares the Word of God. The Word is like a sword, however, not to injure God's people, condemn, or bring death as the leader speaks. Every leader should learn to use God's Word for edification and healing, and not for destruction. Hebrews 4:12

3. *"In the shadow of His hand hath He hid me"*

During the time of training, we are hidden from the eyes of the world, and sometimes even from the eyes of the Church. Many of the Biblical leaders experienced a hidden period in their lives. Moses spent 40 years in the backside of the desert. During this time, the Lord prepared a shepherd's heart in Moses, helping him to lead the people.

Psalm 91:1 speaks about hiding under the shadow of His wings. All must learn to abide under the shadow of the Almighty without a spirit of impatience or distrust. You must not chaff under God's overshadowing for a season, but learn well. It is an important period of preparation for the future.

4. *"He also made me a polished shaft"*

The shaft is one of the arrows most important components. If it is warped or misaligned in any way, the arrow will not hit its mark. The shaft speaks of our character and the head represents the ministry. "Polish" means to clarify, to examine, to purge so as to brighten. The shaft must undergo the purging, sanding, and polishing process.

"During Isaiah's time, preparing an arrow was a detailed process. Acacia wood, a strong but very rough, crooked and knotted wood, had to be carefully straightened and sanded. First, all of the leaves were plucked from the chosen piece of wood. Next, the naked piece of wood was left in a frame using tightly-placed pegs that would slowly straighten it. The shaft was then anointed with oil to soften the wood before the final sanding. After sanding, the shaft was then ready to receive its tip."

All of these steps in the preparation of a natural arrow speak of many spiritual truths in the process of preparing a leader. In a similar way, the Lord will take every leader through a stripping process before He uses him to hit the mark for which he was prepared. Every leader will experience character preparation (the straightening of the shaft) and ministerial preparation (sharpening of the head). This is a very painful and long process at times. But every leader can encourage himself in the knowledge that the more God plans to use an arrow, the more demanding will be its preparation."<sup>4</sup>

5. *"In His quiver hath He hid me"*

The quiver experience is very hard for us, because we feel we have already totally experienced the progressive steps of preparation to be sent forth. We ask, "Why the waiting period?" Each of us must realize that God has a perfect time, when, as an arrow, we are shot forth to hit the mark God has ordained

for us. There is a perfect time for our release. Temptations will come to us to go ahead of God's timing. The time and manner of release is different for each person. We must patiently wait for the marksman to release us.

## BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Preparation is not limited to one period in a leader's life, though it is often most intense during one period. Preparation is a lifetime process through many cycles.

While each of these people had distinctly different lives and experiences, one can see similar examples of preparation in each of them. For instance, many of them experienced rejection from those around them.

<u>Leader</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Preparation</u>	<u>Ministry</u>
Joseph	Gen. 37:5	13 years in prison	Ruler
Moses	Ex.2:11	40 years of wilderness	Deliverer
Joshua	Ex. 17:9	40 years of wilderness Mentored by Moses	Captain
David	1 Sam. 16:13	31 years between being anointed & being crowned	King
Elisha	1 Kings 19:19	Mentored by Elijah 10 years.	Prophet
Jesus	Luke 2:49	30 years	King
Paul	Acts 9:15	14 years of obscurity	Apostle
Timothy	Acts 16:1-3	Mentored by Paul	Pastor

## YOUR PREPARATION AS A LEADER

While one cannot necessarily speed up the process of preparation for God is a methodical builder, you can definitely hinder the workings of God in your life. What is a test for? To see if you have learned anything! So as you pass the tests in your life, you go from "glory to glory."

Take a moment now to evaluate your own preparation as a leader. Remember again that you need not be called to a positional or governmental ministry to be one of God's leaders. You also may lead in a congregational ministry in a major, temporary, or more limited capacity.

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- God always lays a solid foundation on which to build, and we see this in a person's call and ministry also.
- There is a difference between one's call and one's commission, and there is always a process of time and training between the two.
- We can yield to this process or hinder it by our attitudes and choices.
- It is in God's timing and choosing that one's ministry is launched or promotion comes. We must learn to trust Him.
- Academic training is excellent and helpful, however, it cannot take the place of the experiences God brings to our lives to teach us. This is, so to speak, "hands-on training".

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

Take time to read through the application below and write down your responses to the questions. Then prayerfully evaluate your areas of strengths and areas of weaknesses.

*Calling:*

**Focus on the area of confirmation to your calling. Has your calling been confirmed by leaders of your local church? These people have watched you grow into your calling, and they can confirm the outward evidence of your calling.**

*Studies:*

**What have you done to study God's Word in preparation for leadership? What material have you found to enhance your understanding of the call or gift you are operating in? Under whose authority and guidance are you studying?**

*Relationships:*

**Most leaders are launched into their ministries through significant relationships with other leaders. Do you have a teacher, a leader, an example to follow? How faithful are you as a disciple? Have you begun to develop solid relationships with younger Christians, so that you can help them grow?**

*Practical Learning:*

**Do you see daily progress toward functioning in your ministry – even if it happens in the school of hard knocks? What are you doing to build on your successes, and to avoid repeating your mistakes? What can you learn in that regard by watching other people?**

*Service:*

**Have you already begun to function in your unique calling? Ordination or the assignment of responsibility only confirms that you are already functioning in your ministry. What are you doing to minister to the needs of the Church, with or without receiving a formal ministry title?**

*Promotion:*

Has recognition of your calling and preparation reached the point of your promotion in the church? At any point, have you made yourself less available for promotion through pride, or any other damaging attitude or sin? How have you responded to promotion – have you kept the Lord and your ministry in focus throughout this process?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Study the life of Moses, David, Paul, or a Bible character of your choosing and pay close attention to the preparation process in their life.

Read: The Rejection of Man, the Praise of Man, by Bob Sorge.

### *Endnotes*

<sup>1</sup> Damazio, Frank. The Making of A Leader. (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, Inc., 1988), p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas, J.D. and Merrill C. Tenney. The New International Dictionary of the Bible, “Pottery” (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), p. 810

<sup>3</sup> Damazio, Frank. The Making of A Leader. (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishers, Inc., 1988), p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

# DISCIPLINES IN THE LIFE OF A LEADER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Christian disciplines are the practices which promote Christian growth and development into the image of Christ so that we may say, "...it is no longer I that live, but Christ....". God tells us in His Word what the attitudes of our heart should be. He also tells us the external practices that will foster that growth into Christ-likeness. These basic discipleship tools are utilized to allow us to maintain a successful walk in the Spirit. Practicing the Christian disciplines bring blessings into our lives. Christians are not blessed as a *reward* for practicing these disciplines, but rather the blessings come to them because the activity inherently brings with it the blessings; we will be *blessed through the activity*.

Christian author, Jerry Bridges says, "Discipline is not necessarily a reliance on human effort, or as it is often called, a work "of the flesh." It can be, and unfortunately, often is. But when Paul urged Timothy to train, or discipline himself to be godly, he certainly didn't envision a reliance on sheer human discipline and will power. In fact, in *2 Timothy 2:1*, he urged Timothy to be strong in grace – that is, the strength (enablement) – that is in Christ Jesus. Yet Paul did exhort Timothy to discipline himself, not just 'turn it all over to the Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

**"We are not passive in the pursuit of holiness. If we are to make any progress in the pursuit of holiness, we must assume our responsibility to discipline or train ourselves. But we are to do all this in total dependence on the Holy Spirit to work in us and strengthen us with the strength that is in Christ."**

Your *number one responsibility* is for your own discipline and personal growth. A reporter once asked the great evangelist D. L. Moody which people gave him the most trouble. He answered immediately, "I've had more trouble with D. L. Moody than any man alive." More potential leaders fall because of inner issues than outer ones.

*Proverbs 4:23 states, "Watch (or guard) your heart with all diligence for from it flows the springs of life."*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE

You cannot effectively walk in the anointing of God and serve people for very long if your hearing is deafened and your spiritual tank is low or empty. Yes, God loves us enough to anoint us, even when we have not found time in our schedule to be renewed in His presence. However, He also loves us enough not to let us run on empty for too long.

**"Leadership is sometimes defined as "the ability to withstand pressure." Simply stated, leaders need help – divine help. God never designed you to carry the load that so many of you are carrying alone. He wants to help. Knowing Him – that is, really knowing Him – gives you strength for the journey."<sup>3</sup>**

**Matthew 11:28-30 says,** “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” (Message)

Are you running on empty? You may need to refuel your tanks. Life is much less manageable when you have no physical, emotional, or spiritual reserves to draw from. You should be able to tell if you need a pit stop!

### ***Watch out for red lights!***

**If you’re irritable, unmotivated, easily tempted, or just don’t feel good about yourself, you may need to refuel. If your ministry has consistently become more of a burden than a joy, you may need to take some time to refuel.**

### ***Identify the reason for the depletion***

- Spiritual reservoirs often empty first. When intimacy with God slips, so does spiritual vitality. Maintain your relationship with Him. Plan to spend extra time with Him when you’re heavily stressed.
- Physical reservoirs can be emptied by a lack of sleep, poor nutrition, inadequate exercise, or bad health. Analyze your lifestyle and eliminate problems that deplete you.
- Emotional reservoirs may be the most individualized. Some people need contact with friends, exciting conversations, and a variety of scenery. Others need solitude, quiet affirmation, and a refuge that is theirs alone.

### ***Until you have time to fill up your tanks...***

- Wait on the Lord to renew your strength. He will give you wisdom and grace to hang on until you have time to rebuild your reserves.
- Hide in Him. Stay protected from the arrows of circumstance behind His impenetrable shield.
- Reflect on God’s purposes. He has wonderful lessons to teach as He walks us through difficult and busy times. Rather than getting us out of the messes we’re in, He asks us to let Him in on our mess. And as soon as He is involved, you can trust that everything is under His control.

You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage, pleasantly, smilingly, non-apologetically, to say “no” to other things. And the way you do that is by having a bigger “yes” burning inside. The enemy of the best is often the “good.”

Some of the most important things such as your devotional life, study, rest, family, leisure can be easily neglected but will harm you the most in the long run.

You must recapture your time. If you don't, you will find your time being controlled by these four laws:

**Law #1:** Time will flow toward your weakness. You can spend 80% of your time doing things at which you are second best.

**Law #2:** Time will come under the influence of dominant people. Others can force their agendas and priorities upon you.

**Law #3:** Time will surrender to the demands of all emergencies.

**Law #4:** Time will invest in things that gain public attention, things that bring the most immediate results.

## THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

### *The Word*

Phil. 2:5 exhorts us to have the “the mind of Christ,” and Rom. 12:2 encourages us to have a “renewed mind.” How do we get the mind of Christ? How can our minds be renewed? The primary way is to give your mind to the Word of authority – the Bible. The Bible is where we learn what God thinks. The Bible is where we discover how God sees things.

A leader should always remain teachable and hungry for more of God’s Word. We are blessed today to also have good teaching available through books, tapes, and videos. This should never take the place of personal study of the Bible, but definitely supplements your diet of the Word.

“Every generation must hear the rhema word of the Lord for their own generation. Hearing God’s spoken word, however, does not take the place of studying God’s written Word as His highest level of truth and communication. It is out of His written Word that God quickens present truth – a truth in season for a specific day and a specific people to do a specific thing.”<sup>4</sup>

We grow in the Word by reading it as a devotional, studying it in depth, meditating on it and finally by applying its truth to our lives. If we fail to humbly apply the truth we receive, then we are in danger of becoming religious, eating from the Tree of knowledge of good and evil as opposed to the Tree of Life!

### *Prayer*

Prayer is an expression of intimacy with God, and it comes out of relationship. It should involve constancy, or an ongoing commitment to sharing what’s going on in our lives and hearing His heart. It includes times of solitude, which gives room in one’s life for reflection. Mark 1:35

Consistent, concentrated times of prayer are needful in your relationship with the Lord. Free your mind while in prayer by keeping a pen and notebook handy to write down the thoughts that clutter your mind constantly.

"You can be diligent about praying for your family, your friends, your finances, your church gatherings, and the lost souls of your city. You can even be diligent about praying for greater accuracy in your prayers, more anointing on the decisions you make or more effectiveness in the words you say, all for the sake of the harvest. However, how often do you take time to sit and commune with the Father? How often do you come to a quiet place and listen to what He might want to say? How often do you come to His Word and "selah," simply pause and think about what it says?"<sup>5</sup>

Jude 20 says "*But you, beloved, build yourselves up [founded] on your most holy faith [make progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher], praying in the Holy Spirit.*" We need to stir up the gift of the Holy Spirit within us by exercising our spiritual prayer language. The purpose is to edify, build up, stabilize and strengthen. Our spirits are edified, our minds are renewed, and our strength is replenished by using our prayer language.

### **Fasting**

The goal of effective fasting is to pray repentance, revival, restoration, and redirection.

Fasting is effective when:

- facing impossible circumstances
- to hear from God for fresh direction
- to seek the mind of God
- to prepare for ministering in the power and grace of God
- Fasting puts the soul back in its place of submission to the spirit by saying, "no" to the soulish appetite for food and carnal pleasure.

### **Worship**

A. W. Tozer said that God wants worshippers before workers. Indeed, the only accepted workers are those who are adapt in the art of worship.

We need to be like David, who spent time waiting upon the Lord, longing, worshipping, writing songs to Him, and the next minute rising up, grabbing a lion by the mane, and ripping his head off! Warring and winning were born from worshipping and waiting! We must wait in His presence and allow all ministry to be born of relationship.

## **PRACTICAL DISCIPLINES**

### **Organization**

The basic principle for effective time management is to focus on doing the will of God. Eph. 5:15-17. Schedule regular planning times. It is important to slow down, listen to God, and get vision and direction from Him.

John Maxwell said, “I believe that thinking ahead and prioritizing responsibilities mark the major differences between a leader and a follower.” Decide what to do and do it; decide what not to do and don’t do it. A lack of order in a person’s life can harm their ministry effectiveness.

Organize or Agonize! Following are 5 ways people spend their time:

- Urgent/Loud things first: you must discern what is truly urgent and what is not
- Unpleasant/Hard things first: just because something is hard doesn’t mean it should be first priority
- Unfinished/Last things first: if a task is not a priority one day, should it be a priority the next?
- Unfulfilling/Dull things first: Peter delegated such tasks to focus on the ministry
- Ultimate/First things first: give your best time, now and every time, to your most important tasks<sup>6</sup>

### ***Effects of our Attitude***

John Maxwell shares, “Leadership is influence. People catch our attitudes just like they catch our colds – by getting close to us. One of the most gripping thoughts to ever enter my mind centers on my influence as a leader. It is important that I possess a great attitude, not only for my own success, but also for the benefit of others. My responsibility as a leader must always be viewed in the light of the many, not just myself.”<sup>7</sup>

Our attitude may not be the asset that makes us great leaders, but without good ones we will never reach our full potential. Leadership has less to do with *position* than it does with *disposition*.

“Robert Half International, a San Francisco consulting firm, recently asked vice-presidents and personnel directors at one hundred of America’s largest companies to name the single greatest reason for firing an employee. The responses are very interesting and underscore the importance of attitude in the business world:

- Incompetence: 30 percent
- Inability to get along with other workers: 17 percent
- Dishonesty or lying: 12 percent
- Negative attitude: 10 percent
- Lack of motivation: 7 percent
- Failure or refusal to follow instructions: 7 percent
- All other reasons: 8 percent

Notice that although incompetence ranked first on the list, the next five were all attitude problems.”<sup>8</sup>

The greatest day in your life and mine is when we take total responsibility for our attitude. It's not what happens *to* me that matters but what happens *in* me.

#### Common rotten attitudes

- An inability to admit wrongdoing
- Failing to forgive
- Petty jealousy
- A Critical Spirit
- The disease of me (NBA coach Pat Riley says of team members that have it, “They develop an overpowering belief in their own importance. Their actions virtually shout the claim, ‘I’m the one’. Riley says the ‘Disease of Me’ will always result in the ‘Defeat of Us’”)

## WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

- While in ministry, we ourselves cannot or should not neglect our own spiritual walk with God.
- In order to effectively give out in ministry, we must be in a place of receiving from the Lord.
- In the pursuit of God, there is the place of discipline that comes that is rooted in our own motivation and seeking.
- A leader must learn to recognize the warning signs of depletion in spirit, soul, and body, and by ready to refuel and strengthen those areas.
- Basic disciplines of the Word, prayer, fasting and worship fill a leader up, balance a leader out, and give the leader something to minister to others.
- Along with the spiritual disciplines, a leader should endeavor to be wise and organized in his time management.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

List three areas in your life that lack discipline, placing them in order of your priority for conquering them.

- #1 \_\_\_\_\_
- #2 \_\_\_\_\_
- #3 \_\_\_\_\_

- Take them on, one at a time.
- Be accountable to someone about it.
- Allow 60 days to work on one area before you go to the next.
- Celebrate with the one who holds you accountable as you show continued success.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

**The God Catchers**, by Tommy Tenney

**A Heart Ablaze**, by John Bevere

**Secrets of the Secret Place**, by Bob Sorge

### ***Endnotes:***

<sup>1</sup> Bridges, Jerry, The Discipline of Grace (Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press, 1994), p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Garlow, James L., Tested by Time (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), p. 65

<sup>4</sup> Damazio, Frank. The Gate Church (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 2000), p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Malmin, Glenda. Woman, You Are Called and Anointed (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1998), p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Maxwell, John. The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Maxwell, John. Developing the Leader Within You (Nashville, TN: TN Publishing, 1993), p. 105

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 98-99

# UNDERSTANDING AUTHORITY

1

## GOD'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY

Although in this lesson we are studying authority as it relates in the church, there are actually four divisions of governing authority that we encounter in life. They are:

1. Civil: All governing institutions. Romans 13:1-2
2. Church: Church governing authorities. 1 Peter 5:1-4
3. Family: Family relationships. Ephesians 5-6
4. Social: Relationships in employment, education and all social organizations.  
1 Peter 2

Anyone being in spiritual leadership must establish a true biblical understanding of spiritual authority in his life. Rick Joyner says, "We must be able to differentiate between secular authority and true spiritual authority. Typical human authority uses the people for its own purposes, but true spiritual authority gives itself for the sake of the people."<sup>1</sup>

Moses gives us a good example of delegated authority, and in him we see the credentials God is looking for, that of a meek person. "There is a conjunction between humility and authority. Moses' meekness was the statement not of some affectation or superficial polish, but of a union with God in such a way that God's very own character was imparted to him."<sup>2</sup>

- When we think of meek, we think of mild, quiet and deferring. Meekness is, however, total obedience to God, and can appear just the opposite! (Jesus attacking the moneychangers is an example.)
- "True spirituality is unselfconscious. It is just a wonderful mindlessness, not in the sense of being irresponsible, but where you are not exalted in your own calling. It is a poverty of spirit."<sup>3</sup>
- One's authority before people is equal to one's ministry before God. You can't be in public more than you are in private. God spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting with revelation. One should never try to establish their authority by *insisting* others listen to them. If people err, let them err. You cannot force someone to obey or submit. A delegated authority should not strive with man.
- Rick Joyner says, "The source of true spiritual authority is not influence with men [is not from men], but with God."<sup>4</sup>
- Jesus turned leadership upside down in His day when He taught, "*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise*

*authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.” Matt. 20:25-26*

The characteristics of Godly delegated authority will resemble true fatherhood.

Graciousness – One who is kind and courteous; easily approachable. They are tactful, merciful and compassionate.

Exhortation and restoration – One who desires to build up another, and aims to restore and see people grow in God’s purpose for them.

Not a judging spirit. – Moses had no personal axe to grind; he didn’t murmur against the people. As soon as God’s purpose was accomplished, he quickly forgave. Numbers 14:11-20

Intercession - Will bear the burdens of many as in Gal. 6:1-3.

Makes no self-defense. Vindication or defense should come from God, not man.  
1 Cor. 4:3-5

No authoritarian attitudes or cultic control – Not a dictatorship.

There is a vast difference between leading and commanding. What does an autocratic [one ruling with unlimited authority] leader look like?

- “One-rule” type of leadership. Leader sees himself as indispensable, the only one who knows what to do.
- Legalistic; uses rules to get people to perform.
- Answers to no one; can operate by manipulation, control, and threat. There is no “checks and balance” system.
- The leader is narrow, an extremist; often ethnically bigoted. Has strong convictions and cannot accept others in other groups. Has a “party spirit.”
- Tends to glory in adversity and has a martyr complex.
- Tends to be task-oriented and uses their power to influence their followers.
- Feels threatened by change initiated by another.
- Low self-esteem; often known to have grown up with a rigid authority figure.

“A position of authority is significant no matter who holds it. God requires us to recognize the position of authority regardless of who is in the position. It is not necessarily the one who is the most qualified. God honors positional authority and expects us to do the same.”<sup>5</sup>



## LAWLESSNESS

According to the account in Genesis, what was the nature of the first sin? It was simply disobedience.

1 John 3:4 says, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.” The Greek word for lawlessness is “anomia” which means “the condition of being without law, because of ignorance of it or because of violating it.” It essentially means not to submit to the law or authority of God.

In His discourse on the end times, Jesus said that lawlessness would be one of the signs describing our society and the church!

Matthew 24:12-13 says, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

The word for love in this text is “agape” which is God’s love and can be only experienced by a believer. Therefore, we can see that lawlessness or disregard for authority will grow among believers.

Matthew 7:22-23 says, “Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

The consequences of disobedience or its after effects are not always immediately recognizable or obvious but the harvest is certain. We see this in King Saul’s life 1 Sam. 15.

Though Saul received specific instruction, he only partially obeyed. Partial obedience is not obedience at all in the eyes of God. It was called rebellion. Saul had developed a pattern of disobedience.

The Lord will take a person through a progressive process in order to reach him in his disobedience:

- Holy Spirit conviction: When we disobey without true repentance after sensing Holy Spirit conviction, a veil of deception can cover our heart.
- A strong warning: Samuel was sent to confront Saul with his disobedience. Besides a prophetic messenger, God can send a warning or strong admonition in many ways. James 5:19-20
- God’s judgment: It is not God who brings these things on us. Rather, He lifts His hand of protection and allows the enemy to bring on us what obedience would have protected us from. Psalm 119:67, 75; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5

It is the rebellious nature of man that makes him want to obey God’s direct authority without being subject to the delegated authorities God has established.

Acts 5:29 says, “We must obey God rather than man.” Here we see the exception to obeying delegated authority. This was due to the fact that the delegated authority in this passage of Scripture had distinctly violated God’s command and trespassed against the Person of the Lord. Such an answer as Peter’s can be given under this particular situation.

Submission is *absolute*, but obedience is *relative*. Submission is a matter of attitude, while obedience is a matter of conduct. God alone receives unqualified obedience without measure, any person lower than God can only receive qualified obedience.

Signs of the submissive person:

- Tries to find authority wherever he goes and come under it.
- Soft and tender, not hard or self-willed.
- Never eager to be in authority. Doesn’t take delight in controlling others.
- Is under restraint and keeps his mouth closed. Does not speak carelessly.
- Is sensitive to acts of lawlessness and rebellion around him. Will lead others to obedience.

## BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF RESPONSE TO AUTHORITY

### ***Positive Examples:***

Jesus:

- As a young boy, Jesus showed an obedient spirit to His earthly parents. Luke 2:51-52
- He was obedient to His Father, being dependent upon Him for ministry. John 5:26-30
- Jesus did not assume His position of leadership, but the Father appointed Him. Hebrews 5:4-5

David: (1 Samuel 24:4-6; 26:9, 11; 2 Samuel 1:14)

- Even though David had the opportunity, he never rebelled against Saul, even when he was encouraged to do so. “Backbiting or bad manners or inward resistance may not be classified as killing, yet they can certainly constitute the same as cutting off the skirt. They all originate from a rebellious spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

No one should ever permit another person’s authority to be damaged in order to establish his own.

### **Negative Examples:**

Lucifer's rebellion (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:13-17):

- Self-exaltation and rebellion were the cause of Satan's fall.
- Satan is still a usurper today. According to Webster's Dictionary, "usurp" means "to seize and hold, as an office, place, or powers, in possession by force, or without right; to take the place of by or as if by force (supplant); to seize or exercise authority or possession wrongfully."
- There are two principles in the universe: the principle of God's authority and the principle of Satanic rebellion.

Moses and the children of Israel:

- They began to separate Moses' authority from God's authority.  
Exodus 5:13-21
- God considered the complaints against Moses as actually being against Himself!
- What separated Joshua from the rest of his peers was not his discernment, but his ability to recognize and submit to true authority. Out of that submission came true discernment.
- We cannot bypass delegated authority and declare ourselves subject only to God's. The only exception is when authority directly contradicts the commands of God (Numbers 30:1-5).
- "A war-horse is not fit for service until his will is broken. Though he may be stronger, swifter, and more gifted than all the other horses in the stables, he cannot serve until he's broken. He will stay in the stable while less gifted horses go to war. To be broken does not mean to be weakened. It has to do with submission to authority".<sup>7</sup>

Noah and his sons:

- The Bible says that when Noah had a few too many grapes in the vineyard he became drunk and disgraced himself by laying naked in his tent (Gen. 9:20-27).
- One of his sons found him there and instead of covering his father, he told his other brothers. Out of respect for their father, the other two sons walked in the tent backwards to not look on their father's nakedness and covered him.

The Bible says the first son was cursed because he did not conceal the matter but instead told others.

Even though those above us may not use good judgment, we are still responsible for our attitude toward authority and how we handle each situation.

## HOW TO APPROACH YOUR LEADERS

Churches are full of imperfections that catch our attention and prompt us to complain. We dash off notes to our leaders, or corner them after the service. Is our input helpful and constructive, or is it merely murmuring? Before complaining, check your attitude by asking yourself these ten questions:

1. Am I certain God is leading me to address the problem? God might want you to pray, not confront. Try praying about your concern daily for a month and watch for God to work. John 15:5
2. Am I the problem? God uses irritations to teach and correct His people. Don't miss the opportunity to be molded into His image. James 1:2-4
3. What is my real motive in wanting to complain? Impure motives include wanting to be noticed or promoted, getting your own way, blaming others, and venting anger. Right motives are born in love and prayer, glorify God, and aren't self-serving. 1 Cor. 13:4-6
4. Is there a biblical principle behind the matter I'm addressing? Find out what the Bible teaches on the subject. You might discover that your complaint is based on personal taste or style rather than on an essential issue. 2 Tim. 2:15
5. Am I being humble, gentle, and patient, bearing with others in love? Step back and look at yourself from God's perspective. Eph. 4:1-3
6. Am I submitting to my church leaders, or am I demanding that things be done my way, and in my timing? Beware! Your "vision" or "desire for excellence" might actually be a case of disguised rebellion. Heb. 13:17
7. Am I genuinely grateful for the leaders God has placed over me? If you have consistently affirmed your leaders for what they have done well, your recommendations for change will be given and received with grace and love. 1 Thess. 5:12-13
8. Am I demanding perfection from my leaders? Leaders are real people with weaknesses just like yours. Instead of criticizing them from afar, try holding up their arms like Aaron and Hur did for Moses. Ex. 17:8-13
9. Can I state my input in the form of constructive suggestions rather than complaint or criticism? Write out your ideas and reread them over the next several days. Screen out any hint of anger. Be helpful, not hurtful. Col. 3:12-14
10. Am I willing to be part of the solution? Your willingness to help solve the problem gives validity to your recommendations. Back up your words with actions, and cover everything you do with love. Col. 3:23-24

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- One of the foundational issues in a person's life that will either hinder or strengthen their ministry is how they relate to the authority in their life.
- In order for a person to successfully exercise authority, they must first learn how to live well *under* authority.
- Authority is an issue relating to every area of one's life and cannot be avoided.
- Exercising true spiritual authority, the kind modeled by Jesus, is different than what one sees in the world.
- The very root of all sin from the beginning was lawlessness and rebellion.
- You cannot obey God and not submit to His delegated authority. A person who is out from under proper delegated authority will always bring God's corrective dealings into their life.
- Obedience is related to actions, submission is related to attitude. Submission is absolute, while obedience is relative.
- We must all guard our heart in this area, and learn to approach our leaders in a godly manner.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

Let each of us examine our hearts and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal any resistance to God's authority in our lives that we might have. Also allow the Holy Spirit, who is truth, to show us if we are allowing any bitterness, contempt, or attitude toward any of God's delegated authority in our life, and repent of it. We need to know that this will hinder our spiritual progress and handicap our ministry, and must be dealt with. As we become broken before God and others, His living water will flow out with renewed authority.

### ***Endnotes***

<sup>1</sup> Joyner, Rick. The Morning Star Journal , "Spiritual Authority" (Charlotte, N.C: MorningStar) p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Katz, Arthur Apostolic Foundation (Laporte, MN: Burning Bush Pub., 1999), p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 225

<sup>4</sup> Joyner, Rick The MorningStar Journal, "Spiritual Authority" (Charlotte, N.C: MorningStar), p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Tompkins, Iverna Spirited Woman. "When Shepherds Hurt Their Sheep" (Altamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, Dec/Jan, 1999), p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> Nee, Watchman. Spiritual Authority (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> Bevere, John, Under Cover (Nashville: Thompson Nelson Publishers, 2001), p. 161

## INTRODUCTION

God designed us with an awareness of our need for relationships. Gen. 2:18 says, “It is not good that the man should be alone...” Notice that God does not create Eve until Adam became aware of his need. “There are a variety of reasons relationships will end or change over the years, but never forget that God did create you with a need for companionship. God did it. This need is not some weakness in your personality, but rather something that God put in your heart.”<sup>1</sup>

C. S. Lewis says, “To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wronged and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully around with hobbies and little luxuries. Avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness.

But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, aimless, it will change. It will not be broken, instead it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable.”<sup>2</sup>

Many leaders cannot handle the process of loving, being hurt, forgiving, being repaired and restored, and making themselves vulnerable in relationships again. To isolate yourself from people is dangerous and God will do all that is necessary to prohibit this. You are called to serve and in serving you face the possibility of being misused, abused, offended, and hurt.

We must remember that God is not building ministries, but rather is building a Body, where the parts are interconnected. God is Himself relational – and flowing out from His inherent nature is the goal of relating to us and seeing that we relate to each other.

## THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

Leaders who are married will have some unique pressures in regard to their marriage. The marriage relationship is so important!

“All ministry is the extension of covenant keeping. The marriage covenant is our highest priority of interpersonal relationships. A person’s outward ministry, therefore, is an extension of his/her covenantal faithfulness to his/her spouse. Ministry that goes beyond the bounds of covenantal loyalty to one’s spouse is not valid ministry.”<sup>3</sup>

Peter says in 1 Peter 3:7 that the husband and wife are co-heirs, or joint heirs, of the blessings that God intends to give them.

There are several common hindrances to developing oneness in marriage:

- Not scheduling time for togetherness
- Not communicating regularly or meaningfully
- Not resolving differences that arise

- Communicating in a hurtful way
- Being dishonest
- Nagging
- Being unfaithful – even *emotional* infidelity

The keys to building a solid marriage are:

**Integrate, don't isolate**

Integrate attitudes, schedules, and activities.

**Release your expectations to God**

If you have been emotionally holding your spouse back from being fully released to minister in the capacity that they are called to, release them.

**Do not compare**

2 Corinthians 10:12 says “. . . when they measure themselves with themselves and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding and behave unwisely.” Your spouse will need your encouragement to expand and increase in their ministry and vocational development. However, if that encouragement isn’t pure, they will resist it. Comparison will not only affect your spouse, but it may also affect your children and those close to you. People can sense when appropriate admiration is lacking in a marriage.

**Be submissive**

Submission does not mean stifling all perspectives and gifts. God has given those to you. Godly submission requires that you express your heart and use your gifts.

**Be loyal**

Proverbs 31:11-12 says, “The heart of her husband trusts in her confidently and relies on and believes in her securely, so that he has no lack of honest gain or need of dishonest spoil. She comforts, encourages, and does him only good as long as there is life within her.” Never belittle your spouse to others, privately or in front of them. This is disloyalty!

**Cherish the intimacy in your relationship**

One of the keys is not to allow yourself to pour out the entirety of your energy during the day to other people and causes. Make it your goal to always have some emotional and physical energy reserved to give to your mate. Be sensitive to his needs, and grow in your friendship together. Be a fun and affectionate person. Learn what he likes, and respond accordingly.

**Be spiritually responsive**

Learn to draw out your spouse’s spiritual potential, both in the church and at home. If you are not pleased with their personal walk with the Lord, don’t pressure them about it. Pressure stifles spiritual motivation. Pray for them, and let the Lord deal with them! If you feel the Lord gives you the okay to correct or bring some adjustment, prayerfully wait for the right timing to do so, and do it ever so tactfully. Encourage them to take time to draw apart and seek the Lord.

## LEADERSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

Strong relational nets provide safety, fellowship, encouragement, increased joy, new friendships, teamwork, other viewpoints, unity, added resources, accountability, immediate pastoral care, interconnectedness. They are not to be easily broken.

- “Agape” love ties people together. It is not feeling or impulse based; it is a love of the will – a love that is constant, looking beyond the object, beyond a person’s fault. Agape love works by exercising covenant.
- Today we need an understanding of the Biblical principle of covenant. God operates with mankind through a process of covenant. Interactions between people today often operate on a minimum level of commitment. The purpose of covenant is to ensure faithfulness and commitment to the very relationships that are so precious in God’s sight. Proverbs 20:6 says “Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find?”
- David and Jonathan: A positive example of covenant love: 1 Samuel 18:1 – “When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David and Jonathan loved him as his own life.” The Hebrew word “qashar” means “knit together” or “to tie, physically gird, confine, compact or mentally to love, to bind together, to become stronger because of the ties.”
- Colossians 2:2 says, “For my concern is that their hearts may be braced, comforted, cheered, and encouraged as they are knit together in love...”
- Colossians 2:19 says, “And not holding fast to the Head from Whom the entire body, supplied and knit together by means of its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.”
- People can be knit together in wrong relationships, depleting instead of replenishing. A depleting relationship drains you emotionally and spiritually. It taps your energy resources and is continual hard work.
- Jesus and Judas Iscariot: A negative example of covenant love (Psalm 41:9):
  - “Even my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted (relied on and was confident), who ate of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” (Amplified) Jesus knows the sorrow of a broken relationship.

From Paul’s life we see that he placed high value on relationships. He maintained a demanding pace of travel and ministry, but his writings reveal a life neither too busy nor too important to cultivate and rely upon close relationships. His friendships crossed many lines – racial, economic status, gender, and age.

- Paul mentions more than 100 co-laborers. See Romans 16 as an example. A person who fell into relationship with the apostle Paul improved, became better, and fulfilled his destiny in God. It’s easy to use people to build things rather than using things to build people. Friendship is a trust that must be handled very carefully and wisely.

- Paul was part of a team. Teammates unite around a common cause or vision. They pool their resources. They notice triumph and failure and encourage one another in either circumstance. When one is down, others rally to help; when one is puzzled, others add expertise; when one is on the front lines, others pray.<sup>4</sup>
- As Solomon says in Ecc. 4:12 – “*Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*”

There are four levels of relationship:

1. Fellowship

**They do not have close relationships or intimacy with each other, yet the Holy Spirit places a love and identification between them because they are in the body of Christ.**

2. Relationship

**Responsibilities in the Kingdom of God get people working together and allow them to become close.**

3. Partnership

**Fellow-workers who have the same vision, values, heart, and kindred spirits (Pastors, Elders, Deacons, staff people).**

4. Friendship

**Have common ground, common love and choosing to be with each other. Relationship grows in transparency, responsibility, accountability and vulnerability.**

As leaders, we need to evaluate the people that surround us and that we are relating to and determine to spend most of our time and energy with those that will encourage and help build our vision. There are four basic attitudes in church life, based on well-known mathematical symbols:

1. Multiplier (x)

**There are those who multiply faith and generate a high level of power, positive influence, and significance to the work. Their presence and involvement in anything guarantees a high quality and anointed contribution.**

2. Adders (+)

**There are those who always add something to the work. Their faithfulness, servant heart, and patient good humor keep us in good spirits. They are team players and everyone loves them, and they are a constant reliable support in all that we do.**

3. Subtractors (-)

**There are those who simply take from us and have little or no capacity to give in return. They may have an expectation that the church will meet all their needs rather than their own faith in God. Some people are in this stage of their life where they need continual help for a season. It is the people**

who perpetually live in that place and have no intention of developing faith or strength to rise above it. They drain our resources and are liable to go elsewhere to leech off someone else.

#### 4. Dividers (÷)

There are those that rob and kill the congregation. Such people are malcontents with hidden agendas and unsurrendered lives. They have mixture in their lives and no purity of mind and heart. Quick to find fault and exploit other people's weaknesses, they bring division and sow discord among the other believers.<sup>5</sup>

## DYNAMICS OF RELATIONSHIPS

There are ten fundamentals that must underlie intimate, lasting, Christian friendships:

1. A God-centered basis of belief
2. A personal commitment to one another
3. Faithfulness in adversity
4. Straightforward honesty with sensitivity
5. Giving personal respect always
6. Unquestionable acceptance
7. Empathy instead of judgment
8. Loyalty over time
9. Willing to ask for help
10. Forgiveness, love, and compromise

Some generations of clergy have separated themselves from the laity, and some have not. Some leaders have favored certain people to the point of exclusivity, and thereby wounding others, and some have stayed away from any relationships with depth out of fear of being misinterpreted and suffering in loneliness. How sad this is! God must be grieved as He watches leaders turn away from those relationships by which He intends to bless and strengthen them.

If you're in leadership, you must guard against placing people in positions of leadership simply because they're your friends. On the other hand, you don't want to deny someone a position of leadership simply because he or she is your friend and you're afraid of how it might look to others. If your friend is gifted for the position, it will be obvious; you have no need to fear.

## PRESSURE POINTS

Here are four sources of pressure every Christian leader faces. If you're truly leading, you can expect a visit from each of them on a regular basis.

### 1. Pressure form the spotlight

The spotlight allows people to gaze at the life of the leader, who may be unaware of how closely others are watching. Those who serve in ministry already live in a fishbowl and find that extra scrutiny just adds more pressure to their job descriptions. The more successful the leader, the more he will be exposed to scrutiny.

### 2. Pressure from the calendar

Those of us in ministry are bombarded with responsibilities and invitations. It's nice to be included, but the pace can drain us if we're not careful. If you don't plan your schedule, others will! You'll need to find things to remove from your schedule so that you can concentrate on the things you've deemed the most important. The most effective leadership principle for you to embrace is: Only do what only you can do. Prioritize. Delegate. Be a wise steward, make time for the important.

### 3. Pressure from the sponges

The greater our influence, the more "sponges" we attract. There are people who just enjoy being close to Christian leaders. Some want to be your best buddy. Others say, "You're the only one who can help me." When you hear those words, alarms should go off in your brain. John Maxwell has challenged leaders to "spend 80% of their time with influencers and 20% of their time with non-influencers. If the same people are "in crisis" time after time, then you are no doubt letting the sponges sap you rather than allowing the influencers to stretch you. We must balance our mandate to reach out to others with our need for legitimate personal boundaries.

### 4. Pressure from the resistors

All leaders know how tough it is to be met with resistance, whether it's intentional or accidental. Remember, your task is to please God – not man.

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- God Has made each person with a desire for healthy relationships. God Himself is relational.
- Ministry is always done in the context of relating to other people.
- Outside our personal relationship with Jesus Christ, we are to guard and nourish our marriage relationship and how we relate to our family.

- God has meant for ministry to be a team effort. We see this modeled in the life of Jesus, and in the New Testament Church. God doesn't advocate "lone-ranger" ministries. They are potentially unwise and unhealthy.
- In our relationships we will experience different levels of relating, and this is very natural. As leaders, we need to be alert to the dynamics of our relationships and their impact on us as leaders.
- We need to be growing in our relationship with the Holy Spirit and allow the Lord to continually bring health to all our relationships. We are to be the initiators of this and not always projecting fault onto others. Even in the area of relationships, leaders are to lead!
- While it is okay and even suggested that we are to have friendships within the context of our church and leadership, we should never allow unhealthy influence from ourselves or our friends that would hurt the receiving of our ministry by others.
- We must be able and willing to cope with the special pressures that can arise due to being in leadership or ministry

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

***How important are close friendships to you?***

- not important at all
- nice, but not essential
- a top priority in my life

***How would you rate the quantity of close friendships in your life?***

- generally unsatisfying/disappointing
- meaningful but still lacking something
- deeply meaningful and satisfying

***How would you rate the quality of your friendships?***

- generally unsatisfying/disappointing
- meaningful but still lacking something
- deeply meaningful and satisfying

***What are the major obstacles for you when it comes to developing deeper friendships?***

- shyness
- self-protection
- too busy (me or others)
- move/travel too often
- not a priority/apathy
- don't know how to start
- critical spirit
- difficult to meet people I have much in common with
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

***What is one step you would like to take to strengthen an existing friendship or pursue a new one?***

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***Endnotes***

1 Malmin, Glenda. Woman, You Are Called and Anointed. (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1998), p. 170.

2 Damazio, Frank. The Vanguard Leader. (Portland, OR: Bible Temple Publishing, 1994), p. 264.

3 Intrater, Keith, Covenant Relationships. (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Pub., 1989), p. 188.

4 Schmidt, Dan. "Paul and Friends", Discipleship Journal, Issue 106, 1998, p. 35.

5 Cooke, Graham, A Divine Confrontation. (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1999), pp. 163, 164

## INTRODUCTION

This lesson will focus on what the Bible says about gifts, their purpose, and how to recognize and develop your giftings.

In *Matthew 25:14-30*, the Parable of the Talents, the Lord shows that He has given each of us certain talents. In this parable, He holds each of us responsible only for what He has given to us individually. He does not hold us responsible for what He has given to someone else. Bob Sorge explains it well when he says, “The master in the parable represents God; the servants represent God’s servants whom He has gifted at differing levels of ability; and the talents of money in the parable represent the giftings, abilities and resources that God gives to His servants, expecting them to multiply and maximize those resources for the furtherance of His kingdom.”<sup>1</sup>

You are unique. No one else in history is exactly like you. Not one other person has exactly the same combination of talents, gifts, personality, family placement, heritage and calling that you have. The good news is that you’re required by God to invest only the talents that He has given to you. You are required, however, to develop what He has given you to its fullest potential.”<sup>2</sup>

## DEFINITION

A spiritual gift is a special ability to function effectively and significantly in a particular service as a member of Christ’s Body. They are tools for building up the church.

In his book, *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall*, Ken Hemphill says, “Spiritual gifts are individualized endowments of grace from the Father, equipping you to play a vital role in His plan for the redemption of the world.”<sup>3</sup>

The more spiritual men and women are, the more involved they will be with the Body of Christ. Why? Because as they give free reign to the Holy Spirit, He will continually lead them to exercise their spiritual gifts for the common good of the Body. And that necessitates involvement.

Much of the teaching and training the Church gives focuses on identifying specialized interests, talents, and even personality types for the purpose of sending people down the right ministry avenue. While these avenues are helpful and can be used as tools, we need to be careful because this approach can interpret the Bible’s teaching too narrowly.

When we encourage people to look inside themselves to find the basis for

ministry, we risk communicating that personal fulfillment rather than meeting needs is the touchstone of ministry involvement. But this perspective grows out of a modern culture obsessed with self-fulfillment. God often does use our abilities. It would be hard to be an effective musician if one has no musical ability or training. But specialization is not the only principle. In the Scriptures we see many times when God called a person outside his comfort zone or natural ability to do the work God had called him to. There is a difference between natural talent and spiritual gifts.

## LOOKING AT THE GIFTS

The primary Scriptures concerning the gifts are:

- Romans 12:3-8
- 1 Corinthians 12 – 14
- Ephesians 4:1-16
- **1 Peter 4:7-11**

*1 Corinthians 12:1* “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware” (or ignorant).

The word “gifts” is a rendering of the Greek word charisma. The root of this word is “charis” meaning grace. Grace is commonly defined as unmerited favor – God giving us something we don’t deserve and can’t earn. Jim Goll says, “Gifts are gifts! They do not prove how much God loves us, they show how much God loves and wants to bless the people!”<sup>4</sup>

In other words, the gifts we have are not given to validate our worthiness or spirituality, but are given to bless other people. You are blessed to be a blessing!

*1 Peter 4:10 (Amp)* says, “As each of you has received a gift (a particular spiritual talent, a gracious divine endowment), employ it for one another as {benefits} good trustees of God’s many-sided grace {faithful stewards of the extremely diverse powers and gifts granted to Christians by unmerited favor}.”

God is looking for two primary qualities when it comes to our gifts and talents, and that is goodness and faithfulness. That will be our reward when we stand before Him, is to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

*1 Corinthians 12:7* “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” The Father would have us accept our gifts from Him, always aware that He is the Giver, we are the recipients, and in obedience, we share the gifts with the body of Christ to bring glory to God through His church.

The Gifts can be broken down into the three distinct categories:

### **Motivational Gifts:**

Taken primarily from Romans 12, these gifts are personality or temperament gifts. These are the gifts that God has built into each of us, shaping our personality, and giving us the motivating force for our lives. Here is a brief explanation of each gift:

- Perceiver: One who clearly perceives the will of God. This word is used instead of “prophet” to avoid confusion and distinguish it from the office of prophet and the manifestation gift of prophecy.
- Server: One who loves to serve others. Another appropriate word is “doer.”
- Teacher: One who loves to research and communicate truth. They are usually very detailed persons.
- Exhorter: One who loves to encourage others to live a victorious life. These are extremely positive people who can equally well be called “encouragers.”
- Giver: One who loves to give time, talent, energy, and means to benefit others and advance the Gospel. Another word could be “contributor.”
- Leader: One who loves to organize, or direct. Other words could be “facilitator” or “administrator.”
- Mercy person: One who shows compassion, love, and care to those in need. They empathize easily with others.<sup>5</sup>

#### ***Ministry Gifts:***

The ministry gifts are actually gifts of people. They are not titles so much as they are functions. There are three categories of these gifts:

- Ministry/Equipping Gifts: The “five-fold ministries” are to lead and equip the rest of the Body of Christ.
- Government/Office Gifts: The ruling Elders and Deacons.
- Body or Help Gifts: Ministries within the context of the local fellowship.

#### ***Manifestation Gifts:***

“These are called manifestation gifts because Paul used the Greek word ‘phanerosis’ meaning ‘an exhibition, expression, or manifestation.’ In other words, Paul defined these as supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit at work through a believer.”<sup>6</sup>

The Holy Spirit is the One in charge of the gift working through an available and expectant vessel. There are nine manifestation gifts listed in 1 Cor. 12:7-10.

- The word of wisdom
- The word of knowledge
- Faith

- Gifts of healings
- Working of miracles
- Prophecy
- Discerning of spirits
- Various kinds of tongues
- Interpretation of tongues

It is important to realize that while you may have several of the gifts, you will find that you function more strongly in one or two. Remember that you are *one cell* in the body of Christ, and all the cells are to function interdependently, mutually building up the entire body. All these gifts work together in the Body of Christ to build up a mature body. No gift is greater or lesser than another. All our gifts are equal in God's sight. They unify us in the body of Christ. They are equal in significance but uniquely different according to their function. Each one serves a different purpose, but together they enable the body of Christ to work effectively.

## A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO GIFTS

***The body grows stronger as gifts are used.***

In *1 Corinthians 12*, Paul shows us a profound word picture of the body of Christ. He says the body has many members. Every member has a function and is a vital part. He reminds us that no part is better than any other part. All parts of the body are needed for the body to be complete, to properly function, and to fulfill its purpose in the kingdom of God. The reason for your spiritual gifts is the building of the body of Christ through the ministry of your gifts. Gifts don't flourish in isolation.

If spiritual gifts are God's primary means of administering grace to His people, what does this say about believers who refuse to exercise their gifts for the good of the Body?

- They are robbing the Body of Christ.
- They are forcing other members of the Body to carry the load.
- They are dead weight on the Body, dysfunctional limbs.
- They are out of touch with the Spirit of God.<sup>7</sup>

***Learn to accept each other's gifts***

*1 Corinthians 12:4-6* “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working but the same God works all of them in all men.” How can I question or critique another's gift when the same Spirit gave gifts to all?

### **Affirm and encourage each other's gifts**

We can affirm, encourage, and help develop the spiritual gifts in others, empowering them to exercise their God-given gift in and through God's family, the church.

### **Do not promote your own gifts**

*Prov. 18:16 says “A man’s gift makes room for him and brings him before great men.” In God’s time, as you remain faithful, He will allow your gifts to be recognized and used in vital places. Solomon also says in Prov. 22:29 – “Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men.”*

**“Those who are faithful to cultivate their talents and become skillful in their arena will naturally rise to and be entrusted with corresponding spheres of leadership.”<sup>8</sup>**

## **HOW DO I FIND MY GIFTS?**

Although each of us is unique, and we hear from God in various ways, there are some principles that will help us in finding our own gifts.

### **CONSIDER**

Prayerfully study the gifts. Acquaint yourself with the different gifts and be able to recognize them in others. Paul said that we are not to be ignorant of the gifts.

*1 Cor. 12:1*

### **COVET/DESIRE - 1 Cor. 12:31 (Amp.)**

*“But earnestly desire and zealously cultivate the greatest and best gifts and graces (the higher gifts and the choicest graces)...” The passionate, not the passive, will find that “He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.” Heb. 11:6*

### **CONTRIBUTE**

You must be careful not to focus so intently on pursuing “your unique calling and ministry” that you forget the main goal is serving God and others. Be willing to serve and make yourself available to meet the needs within the body. Many times you find your gift through the process of elimination.

### **CONSECRATE - Romans 12:1-6.**

A life willingly placed at God’s disposal for whatever act of service He desires. Only this voluntary submission to God and His purposes will make our service effective. An attitude of humility is essential to finding one’s place in the body of Christ.

### **COOPERATE**

When a person is drawn toward a certain area of service or need, that in itself might be an indication of the gift within. Some gifts remain latent within us until someone comes along and helps draw the gift out or encourages it to be used.

## CULTIVATE

Faithfully using a gift increases its effectiveness. We are instructed to cultivate the gifts, not to be content with occasional expressions. See *1 Timothy 4:14-15*. We can develop a gift to a higher potential.

## CONSULT

Gifts can be enhanced through mentoring relationships. Place yourself with other church leadership, and other gifted people who function in their area of gifting. Observe them, talk to them, and ask if they can recommend good resource material for you to study.<sup>9</sup>

The laying on of hands / prophetic

You may also receive an impartation of a gift either by a prophetic voice, or by the ministry of the laying on of hands. This is usually done by those in office ministries, and is to be used carefully. Paul warns Timothy in *1 Timothy 5:22* that he is not to be hasty about laying hands on others for gifting lest he “share responsibility for the sins of others.” This is not so much the placing of gifts within you, but confirmation of that which the Spirit has already placed within, a recognizing and calling forth of your gifts.

## WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

- God has uniquely gifted you, as well as every believer, and that you are responsible to use your gifts to the highest potential.
- The gifts are given to you so that you can serve and use them to build the body of Christ, the Church. You are blessed to be a blessing!
- The gifts are interdependent upon one another, and not one of them can or will flourish in isolation.
- We should accept the giftings of others and do our part in affirming and encouraging them in the development and ministry of their gifts.
- It is primarily up to me to desire, discover, and develop my gifts and trust the Lord to give me opportunity to use them.
- I must be careful not to compare myself to others because God works uniquely in each life.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

- In what area of ministry do I sense the greatest anointing, fulfillment, and results?
- What do I sense is the area of critical need that stirs me, motivates me, and compels me to action?
- If I had all the resources, people, time, money, etc., I needed at my disposal, knew I was in the center of God’s will and that I could not fail, what would I pursue to bring glory to God?

- What gifts has God given me that others in the Body need for me to exercise?
- Am I developing more competence in my area of gifting?
- Do I need more opportunities to use my gifting?
- Are my efforts producing good results in the lives of others?
- Review the “Guide to Spiritual Gifts” at the end of this lesson. See where you fit in.

## FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Discover Your God-Given Gifts, by Don & Katie Fortune

Giftedness: Discover Your Areas of Strength, by Marcia L. Mitchell

Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church, by David Pytches

Breaking Intimidation, by John Bevere

Envy, the Enemy Within, by Bob Sorge

### ***Endnotes:***

<sup>1</sup> Sorge, Bob. Envy, the Enemy Within (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Malmin, Glenda. Woman, You Are Called and Anointed (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1998), p. 21

<sup>3</sup> Adams, Chris. Women Reaching Women (Nashville, TN: Life Way Press, 1997), p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Goll, Jim W. The Coming Prophetic Revolution (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2001) p. 89

<sup>5</sup> Fortune, Don & Katie, Discover Your God-Given Gifts (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1987), pp. 17-18.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley, Charles. Discipleship Journal, “You Gotta Have Parts” (Issue 90, 1995), p. 42.

<sup>8</sup> Sorge, Bob. Envy, the Enemy Within (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2003), p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> Tomczak, Larry. People of Destiny. “Hot Pursuit of Spiritual Gifts” (Sept/Oct., 1989), p. 10-14.

# A GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL GIFTS

## PEOPLE WHO ARE GIFTS

***Those ordained and anointed by God to build, direct, equip, and serve the Church.***

**APOSTLE** - One who is a spiritual father to others to train, discipline, and establish churches on a proper spiritual foundation. (Eph. 4: 11, 2:20) **PROPHET** - Working in a foundational capacity, motivates and directs the church with a current word from God. (Eph. 4:11,2:20) **EVANGELIST** - A pro-claimer of the gospel of the kingdom (with signs following) who also equips others for evangelism. (Eph. 4:11, Acts 8:57)

**TEACHER** - An instructor in the Word who helps establish sound doctrine and inspires others to search out the truths in Scripture. (Eph.4:11,1Cor. 12:29) **PASTOR** - The local overseer, presiding Elder, or shepherd who leads, equips, and cares for the local flock of God's people. (Eph. 4:11, 1Peter 5:1-3) **ELDER** - A mature person who leads and rules the people of a local expression. (Acts 11 :30, 1 Tim. 5:17-19)

**DEACON** - Serves the leaders of a local church in any capacity they consider necessary for the ongoing life and health of the church. (Acts 6:1,1Tim. 3:8-10)

## GIFTS GIVEN TO PEOPLE

***Abilities given by the Holy Spirit "for the common good."***

**PROPHECY** - Ability to exhort, instruct, or comfort with the Spirit-inspired articulation of God's Word and purposes. (Rom. 12:6, 1Cor. 12:10)

**TEACHING** - Ability to instruct others from the Word of God using sound doctrine. (Ro. 12:7)

**EXHORTATION** - Ability to admonish, encourage, or appeal to individuals in a way that motivates them to follow a godly course of action. (Ro. 12:8)

**GIVING** - Ability and willingness to give money liberally for the advancement of the kingdom of God. (Ro. 12:8)

**LEADERSHIP** - Ability to motivate, manage, and move people to fulfill God's purposes in their lives and in the church. (Ro. 12:8)

**MERCY** - Ability to identify with, minister to, and feel strong empathy for those suffering misfortune or experiencing pain. (Ro. 12:8)

**WORD OF WISDOM** - A divine inspiration or illumination enabling one to see, understand, and respond to life situations from God's perspective. (1Cor. 12:8) **WORD OF KNOWLEDGE** - A supernatural revelation of insight which transcends the sharer's own natural ability to understand the situation. (1Cor. 12:8) **FAITH** - Ability to believe God for the impossible in the face of colossal tasks or extraordinary circumstances.(1Cor. 12:9)

**HEALING** - Ability to minister physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual healing to those in need. (1Cor. 12:9)

**MIRACLES** - Ability to accomplish supernatural acts that defy physical laws of nature.(1Cor. 12:28)

**DISCERNMENT** - Ability to perceive the spiritual source of words, motives, or actions and to judge accurately between truth and error. (1Cor. 12:10) **TONGUES** - Ability to speak in a language one does not understand for the edification of the church. (Acts 1:8, 1Cor.12:10, 14:6) **INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES** - Ability to interpret, for the church's edification, a message given in a tongue. (1Cor.12:30, 14:6) **ADMINISTRATION** - Ability to manage affairs of the church. (1Cor. 12:28, Rom. 12:8)

**HELPS** - Ability to support others or take care of their specific needs. (1Cor. 12:28)

**SERVING** - Ability and motivation to meet the needs of others in a practical, joyful manner. (Rom. 12:7)

**SPEAKING** - Ability to communicate effectively as a spokesperson for God and the Church. (1 Peter 4:11)

## ADDITIONAL GIFTS. SKILLS. AND MINISTRIES

**INTERCESSION** - Ability and desire to pray for the needs of others with special fervency and frequency. (Isa. 59:16, 1Tim. 2: 1)

**CRAFTSMANSHIP** - Ability to design, build, or repair things using an inherent skill imparted by God. (Ex. 35:30-33)

**SINGER**- One who glorifies God and inspires others through song. (Ch 15:16-27)

**MUSICIAN** - One who plays an instrument skillfully and inspires others to play or sing for God's glory. ( 1Chron. 15:16; 16:42; 2 Chron. 5:13)

**WORSHIP LEADER** - One who oversees and directs the musicians, singers and congregation in praise and worship (see intro. to Ps. 109, 139, and 140)

## INTRODUCTION

Webster's Dictionary defines conflict from the Latin word "conflictus" which means "a striking together, a contest; originally meant to fight, contend, to clash; incompatible; to be in opposition; sharp disagreement; emotional disturbance resulting from a clash."

Conflict is an area that those in leadership often face, and therefore, they must receive understanding of the Biblical principles involved in resolving problems in relationships. Conflict happens for a variety of reasons, but we will see that whatever the cause for it, it always brings an opportunity to grow in Christ, being conformed more to Jesus' image.

Conflict strengthens our character by:

- Making us examine and purify our motives
- Revealing faults and flaws in ourselves and in the church which otherwise might not be revealed
- Teaching us spiritual endurance and spiritual carefulness

Not all conflict is negative. There are times the Lord shakes the church and allows conflict to come so He can make needed changes.

Ephesians 4:3 says, "*Be eager and strive earnestly to guard and keep the harmony and oneness of [and produced by] the Spirit in the binding power of peace.*" (Amplified) Effort must be expended in maintaining the harmony of our relationships. Building trust is a major investment in the Kingdom of God.

## THE CHURCH IN CONFLICT

"The greatest hindrances to a positive, powerful, glory-filled church atmosphere are divisions and unresolved offenses. When people are polarized and fighting among themselves, a thick cloud of oppression hovers over the church."<sup>1</sup> We must work to establish an atmosphere of **harmony and unity that is evidenced by joy and peace.**

There needs to be a cleansing of the atmosphere by removing the offenses. Every believer must accept responsibility for taking the initiative to resolve any and all conflicts. Our aim should be to try and maintain a forgiving and compassionate atmosphere. **Psalm 86:5;** **Col. 3:12-14.**

## SOURCES OF CONFLICT

While there can be many causes for conflict, the following are some more general and common causes.

### Transition

When the church is going through transition, confrontation will surface. "The enemy will attack the vision and the leadership. There will be criticism and resentment. Old power struggles will be reopened. Anything inside us that is unresolved will come to the surface."<sup>2</sup>

Instead of looking beyond the circumstances to detect the hand of God at work, some people look for the obvious and interpret it according to their own thinking and feeling; there is a problem in the leadership, there is sin in the camp, that we have a wrong vision, or we are out of God's will.

### Satanic Attack

The enemy seeks to get between people, to penetrate relationships. Marriages, leadership teams, and key positions are favorite targets. Leaders are particularly vulnerable. They must guard each other and develop their relationship in honesty, integrity, and true agape love.

### Jealousy (James 4:1-2)

The snakebite of jealousy is another source of conflict. Jealousy is the uneasiness that arises from apprehension that another enjoys some advantage we desire for ourselves. It is being suspicious that we do not enjoy the affection or respect of others, or that another is more respected and loved than ourselves. When jealousy is present, true fellowship is impossible. It breeds insecurity, and was present in the first sin of one human being against another (Cain and Abel).

### Comparing leaders/ministries (1 Cor. 1:10-12; 2:3-10)

Don't allow people to pull down any leader's reputation or ministry through criticism. Paul addressed this in

### Ministry Frustration

Sometimes when a person is position-minded they will only choose leadership tasks that bring him into the limelight. He will not serve his way into the ministry. Others will over estimate their own abilities and ministry and will create frustration and bitterness if one feels it is not being recognized. There is a genuine frustration that comes when one is not being used and receives no opportunity to grow in their gifting over a period of time. Those in leadership must become sensitive to this.

### Sowers of Discord (Romans 16:17)

We must be aware of negative fellowship, cynical conversation, and power-brokering amongst the people. "We need to be able to discern correctly and examine the behavior. Is there someone who is being domineering, controlling, or manipulative? Is there somebody behind the scenes behaving dishonestly? Is there somebody walking around getting into every house telling stories? Is there someone on the phone to everybody causing divisions and divisiveness? Who is doing the peaceful thing, and who is doing the divisive thing? Those who behave righteously in accordance with the fruit of the Spirit and the character of God are approved; those who are doing the opposite are clearly not, because they are walking in the flesh to get their own way."<sup>3</sup>

Conflicts can also arise from weaknesses in the way leadership conducts itself or responds.

1. When there is inconsistency in practicing clearly established principles which are clearly established in the local church.
2. When the leadership violates moral and ethical standards taught to the people.
3. When the leadership declares a vision or direction from the Lord and then abruptly abandons or changes from that direction to move in another direction without explanation.
4. When the leadership avoids, procrastinates, or ignores the necessity of confronting and handling the problem of those who are sowing seeds of contention and then does not properly handle the problem.
5. When the senior pastor violates his own standards and wisdom in choosing unqualified leadership to serve the people, thus causing confusion.
6. When the leadership carelessly handles an explosive situation without considering the ramifications or makes a hasty decision without prayer.
7. When the leadership does not consistently practice principles of forgiveness (taught in Matthew 18) and thus allows offenses to grow in the church and in the leaders.
8. When the leadership acts independently, violating the spirit of team ministry, in making decisions which will affect the whole body.<sup>4</sup>

## **HANDLING CONFLICTS CORRECTLY**

We err when we avoid any confrontation at all because of fear. Avoidance allows a potentially restored relationship to slip further into separation, possibly being lost forever. It takes courage to overcome the barrier of fear of rejection and go to the other person first.

### ***The Law of Perspective (Matthew 7:1-5)***

We are to avoid having a critical spirit. We are not to sit in a lofty position, looking down upon others. We are to use discernment, but not to be judgmental and condemning which is the satanic counterfeit of godly discernment.

Proverbs 19:11 says, “*The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and it is to his glory to overlook a transgression*”. When is it more appropriate to overlook a transgression than to confront it? We have two choices: to correct or to overlook it. If a person’s sin is not likely to be repeated in the future and has not broken our relationship, I can choose to forgive and forget. If an act of forgiveness will eliminate the problem, there is no reason for confrontation and correction. If there is a pattern in the other person’s life whereby the hurt may reoccur, then there must be dialogue to work out the problem.

Galatians 6:1 says, “*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*” The process of confrontation must be done in an attitude of gentleness. Our concern is for the growth of the other person. The law of Christ is love.

One of the most energy-demanding duties a person can be engaged in is to communicate. Communicating takes tremendous effort. Communication is worthwhile because it keeps people from being hurt, confused, and misunderstood. Therefore, a leader must make the effort to sharpen his communication skills.

#### **Strategies to help in the problem-solving process:**

- Attack the problem, never the person
- Get all the facts
- List all the options (be objective)
- Choose the best option
- Look for the positives in the problem
- Never withhold love<sup>5</sup>

### ***The Matthew 18 Principle***

Matthew 18:3-20 is the central passage of Scripture that describes the process of confrontation, discipline, and reconciliation. Confrontation should aim to lead to reconciliation. The attitude and spirit with which we approach a covenantal dialogue makes all the difference. The whole passage of Matthew 18 is dedicated toward gentleness, sensitivity, forgiveness, patience and reconciliation.

It must be firm and decisive when necessary, but it must be absorbed within the larger picture of reconciling love. The following procedure is taken from Keith Intrator’s book *Covenant Relationships*.<sup>6</sup>

**Stage #1:** Go to the person alone.

One must go to the person to establish communication, without involving other people. You want to try and contain the problem. You need to be as objective and direct as possible. There are two possible results – the person will receive the input and reconciliation will result. Or, he won't receive it, and the confrontation must escalate to stage 2.

Here it is important to both know how to properly seek forgiveness and be able to lead someone else in doing it.

**Stage #2:** Take someone with you.

Give some time before going to the next stage, which is to bring a third party in. This person/persons may be either a neutral mediator or an additional witness. Some people may not count the reconciliation process as very important and will tend to avoid coming to a meeting. They may try to pass over the fact there is not reconciliation by pretending that, from their point of view, reconciliation has already taken place. Either stubbornness or avoidance can keep the process from reaching its desired end. One must keep the right spirit by not becoming intimidating or vindictive, but remaining affirming and humble.

**Stage #3:** Take it to the church.

This is when there is the refusal to deal with the issue and be reconciled. The issue is told and explained to the elders in the hope that some solution can be found. If reconciliation cannot be brought to pass, the elders must inform those necessary depending upon the extent of the problem.

**Stage #4:** The end result - broken fellowship

Since the person insists upon continuing in a covenant-breaking attitude, his presence threatens the fabric of the congregation's inter-relationships. The poison of pride and resentment must be removed. The dis-fellowshipping is not so much an execution of punishment as it is taking note of a fact that has already taken place. This means to let him be to you as anyone else who is not within the covenant of unity of the congregation. Dis-fellowshipping is a clear, authoritative statement to preserve unity with the general membership. See 1 Cor. 5:4-5; 12-13. The purpose of dis-fellowshipping is to remove the unreconciled elements from the greater body of people who are reconciled.

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- In the community of church life, we can expect to have conflicts and disagreements. Even though there can be various root causes, God can always use them to strengthen and develop us and the Church.
- When offenses are not handled Biblically, there are always results that threaten the life and harmony of the corporate body.
- As leaders, we must stay sensitive to our own heart, and to those around us, and be quick to recognize and deal with strife and contention.
- We must learn to handle disagreements correctly and scripturally and model this before the other believers, helping them in their struggles, also.
- The clear Scriptural instructions found in Matthew 18 are to be our guide in all disputes.
- As leaders, we must always work to keep the harmony of the church and the flow of the Holy Spirit a priority. Therefore, we should be proactive in responding to the “points of tension” we become aware of.
- Leaders must always examine their own hearts and minister in tense situations with humbleness and gentleness, yet firmness at times. We must always give room for our own mistakes.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

- After reviewing this lesson, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anyone to whom you need to ask forgiveness or need to forgive.
- Do you harbor any unhealthy criticism, offense, or bitterness to anyone? Ask the Lord to help you forgive.
- Do you have a good, healthy relationship with your family and church leadership? If not, ask the Holy Spirit how He wants you to begin to repair those broken relationships.
- Have you become religious, allowing yourself to judge others? Humble yourself before the Lord and He will soften your heart.

### ***Endnotes***

<sup>1</sup> Damazio, Frank. The Gate Church (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 2000), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Cooke, Graham, A Divine Confrontation (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 1999), p. 322)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 329.

<sup>4</sup> Damazio, Frank, Lay Pastor Training Manual (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1997), p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> Maxwell, John, Relationships 101 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2003), p. 75-76.

<sup>6</sup> Intrator, Keith, Covenant Relationships (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 1989), pp. 79-90.

## INTRODUCTION

We will look at the fact that if you really want to be a successful leader, you must develop other leaders around you. You must be able to communicate your vision and impart it to those working with you.

"Our goal should not be to draw a following that results in a crowd. Our goal should be to develop leaders who become a movement! There is no success without a successor!"<sup>1</sup>

In the early days of America's history, there were two English revivalists that preached throughout England and came to America to spread revival fires. These men were George Whitefield and John Wesley. Both preachers drew large crowds wherever they went and met with great success. However, only one left behind a legacy of other preachers and a religious denomination that extends to this day – the Methodist Church. That was John Wesley. He learned how to equip and train and pass on his vision to faithful leaders.

We need to create a virtual greenhouse for leadership, an atmosphere or environment that will make potential leaders flourish. Jesus does not want us to just birth children into the Kingdom. He wants us to father them into maturity and bring them to the place where they bear fruit for the Father.

## IMPARTING VISION

Your vision for your ministry in your church and community must be God's vision or it will be on a shaky foundation. Through prayer you allow the freedom for God's Holy Spirit to guide you in all you do. Prayer must continue to be a thread woven into every area of your ministry to stay in tune with God's leadership. Remember this about your vision:

### Be specific

According to Habakkuk 2:3-4 the vision for your church or ministry should be made plain to everyone. Writing out a vision statement is helpful in clarifying in words just what your vision is. This will help you take it from being too general to being specific. It needs to be easy to be remembered, and repeated often enough that people know exactly what the vision is, especially those working with you.

### Share your vision with the Pastor and Elders

Your ministry vision should complement and support the overall vision of the church.

### Allow God to process and develop your vision

While you can and should receive input from other ministries, don't expect to "clone" another. God doesn't work that way!

#### **Develop goals and strategies**

These will help you, and those you are working with, to achieve or move toward this vision.

#### **Evaluate your ministry regularly**

Make necessary adjustments and prayerfully seek God's direction for improving.

#### **Keep focused**

Keeping your ministry's purpose and vision in front of the team at all times will help focus this ministry. Check to make sure all plans will accomplish the purpose God has given the team.

The goal of the visionary leader who oversees a church or ministry is primarily involved in sowing the vision in the hearts of the people to go beyond his or her ability and lifetime. We see this in the Biblical examples of Elijah and Elisha, Moses and Joshua, Paul and Timothy, and Jesus and the 12 disciples.

It takes a leader with vision to see the future leader within a person. Michelangelo, when questioned about his masterpiece, *David*, answered that the sculpture had always existed within the stone. He had simply chiseled away the rock around it. You must be able to see the potential in a person and help to encourage it forth.

Having and sharing a vision does even more than motivate a ministry. It also gives people vision and direction for their individual lives. As they contribute to the larger goals of the church, they begin to identify more clearly a vision for themselves. As that vision becomes clearer and that sense of direction stronger, their lives become more meaningful.

#### **Vision Killers:**

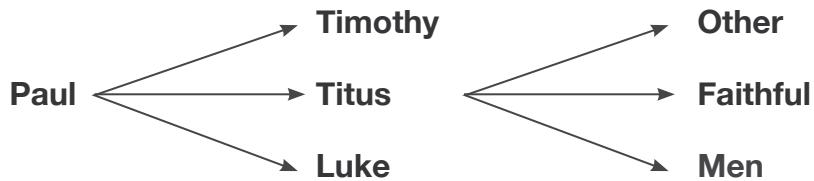
- Tradition
- Fear and insecurity
- Stereotypes
- Complacency
- Fatigue
- Short-Term thinking

## **THE LAW OF REPRODUCTION**

In the creation narrative found in Genesis 1, God repeatedly made reference to everything He created, including plant life, animals, and human beings, reproducing "*after their own kind.*" Every leader must realize that he is going to reproduce himself in those under him. He must remember that not only his strengths, but also his weaknesses, will be reproduced

in those to whom he ministers. This should cause all leaders to examine their own lives very carefully.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, we see that Paul desired to reproduce his life and doctrine in Timothy, so that his son in the faith could then reproduce the same in others. *“And the [instructions] which you have heard from me along with many witnesses, transmit and entrust [as a deposit] to reliable and faithful men who will be competent and qualified to teach others also.”* (Amplified)



This is not, however, to be robots or clones. Not all of God's people or ministries are exactly the same! Nor can one man or leader bring someone or a ministry to full maturity.

We must allow people to discover their aptitudes, abilities, and capacity for ministry. Then we can help them refine their skills. We must help people discover their spiritual gifts and allow them to develop and dispense those gifts. We are a training center. We must motivate and encourage people to discover and use their spiritual gifts.

This involves the following process:

- Modeling...I do it.
- Mentoring...I do it, and they are with me.
- Monitoring...They do it, and I am with them.
- Multiplying...They do it, I am in the background.
- Equipped....They do it!"<sup>2</sup>

## DELEGATION

Delegation is the process of identifying your work responsibilities and assigning portions of your work to others, so that workers become fulfilled and the work is accomplished.

“One definition of leadership is the ability to recognize the special abilities and limitations of others, combined with the capacity to fit each one into the job where he will do his best. He who is successful in getting things done through others is exercising the highest type of leadership.”<sup>3</sup> Dwight L. Moody once said that he would rather put a thousand men to work than do the work of a thousand men.

## **Why Do We Fail to Delegate?**

- Insecurity – We may be afraid to lose control of everything.
- Lack of confidence in others- Not being able to see the potential in others.
- Lack of ability to train others - Having a desire to mentor or delegate but unsure about how to go about it.
- Personal enjoyment of the task – The leader should focus on performing tasks no one else can do, not simply on doing tasks he or she enjoys.
- Habit - Just does what one has always done without considering other options.
- Inability to find someone else to do it.
- Lack of time - Or not making it a priority.
- An “I can do it best” mindset (would rather do it themselves rather than allow others to do it differently).

## ***Moses and the Jethro Principle (Exodus 18:13-18; Numbers 11:10-15):***

Like most leaders, Moses had a heart for his people. Like most congregations, the people had needs. It required wisdom, foresight, and the ability to delegate authority for Moses to find balance between his heart and his people's needs. As Moses did, we must first understand the ministry gift God has given us before we can release that gift to others. Moses' dilemma and his method of solving it provide valuable insights for us.

**For Moses, the benefits of delegating were:**

- He was able to concentrate on the higher aspects and responsibilities of his office
- The latent and unsuspected talents of many of the followers were discovered
- He developed those who could have become critics into loyal allies by using them in ministry. (a caution here, however, is that one cannot use this as the main reason you use someone!)
- He made provision for effectual leadership of the nation after his death

## **The Protocol of Delegating:**

Must have the right motives. It is *not* just to get rid of work we don't want to do. It is for “developing people.”

Must determine what can and cannot be delegated. You should delegate lower priority items such as routine tasks, so you can concentrate on higher priority items.

- List all your current activities. Combine them into natural groupings. Eliminate unnecessary activities. Circle tasks someone else can do. Put an asterisk by each one that only you can do.
- **Do not delegate the responsibility to correct or discipline, issues involving confidential information or the responsibility to create and maintain morale.**

Stephen Covey, who wrote *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, wrote: “Many people refuse to delegate to other people because they feel it takes too much time and effort and they **could do the job better themselves. But effectively delegating to others is perhaps the single most powerful high-leverage activity there is.**”<sup>4</sup>

#### **Good delegation involves:**

- Granting the person enough authority to do the job right. Avoid over-control and under-control. Be there to help when needed, but don’t breathe down his neck.
- Give them the job in a motivating manner and help them get off to a good, strong start. Provide ongoing support, encouragement, and training.
- Hold them accountable for their performance.
- Avoid bypassing delegated authority to solve a situation.

#### **Recruiting Potential Leaders:**

1. Plan what you intend to do
2. Evaluate
3. Make a list
4. Approach
5. Be specific and clear
6. Give the person time to prayerfully consider
7. Receive any “no” responses graciously
8. Hit a brick wall? If no one is available that is qualified or willing, ask yourself:
  - Does God really want this done?
  - Can we rearrange ministry responsibilities so we can do this?

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- As a leader, one of our goals is to multiply others in our ministry and impart vision to them.
- One of the most effective ways to do this is to learn to delegate to others.
- The Holy Spirit helps the leader to see the potential in others and gives insight in how to recruit and draw this potential out of them.
- As leaders, we need to look into the future and develop those who can take the ministry on. A successful leader will have a successor.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

**It would be good and beneficial for you to spend some time prayerfully writing down your vision for your ministry or life. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you define and sharpen your vision as you put it into words on paper. Be as specific and clear as you are able to. Then ask the Lord to begin to give you strategies on how to see your vision come to fruition.**

- Am I willing to invest in other people? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How much time do I spend equipping others? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Have I developed a prospect list? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What areas am I or could I equip others in? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Write out your vision statement for your life, your family and your ministry below:**

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### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Maxwell, John, Developing the Leaders Around You (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Damazio, Frank, Lay Pastor Training Manual (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1997), p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Sanders, J. Oswald, Spiritual Leadership (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), p. 167.

<sup>4</sup> Covey, Stephen R. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), p. 171.

## INTRODUCTION

A team leader is a person who functions in a leadership role as an elder, deacon, staff-ministry, department head, or care leader, fulfilling the ministry Christ has given him in the local church in support of the senior pastor. A ministry team is a group of men and/or women of God who are knit together in spirit and purpose for God's Kingdom.

God never intended for one person to carry all of the pressure or responsibility for a local church or major ministry. One man cannot carry the burden alone, without paying a price physically, emotionally, and spiritually. For practical reasons, as well as moral, doctrinal, and spiritual reasons, God has ordained ministry to work in teams.

One of the first things Jesus did at the start of His ministry was to call together and begin to establish His team of disciples (Matt. 4:18-23; Mark 3:13-19). We also see the concept of team ministering at work in the early church in Acts 13:1-5.

Over time a “team” always out performs an individual, no matter how talented one may be.

## THE PURPOSE AND ADVANTAGE OF TEAM MINISTRY

- Team ministry provides a living demonstration of the principle of body ministry as seen in 1 Corinthians 12.
- A team can more effectively find the mind of the Lord for a meeting or series of meetings and pray towards the fulfillment of God’s will. You might be the original vision caster, but let others have input and own the vision with you.
- Team ministry will be much more effective and will produce greater results.
- Team ministry provides a greater possibility for safety and balance in ministry.
- Team ministry helps guard against the immoral traps set by the enemy, which have snared so many individual ministries.
- Team ministry provides strength and encouragement for the ministries themselves. Ministering with others provides a sense of inspiration and spiritual growth. The great fellowship involved provides great strength.
- When less experienced ministries can accompany more mature ones, the process of discipleship and training is strengthened.<sup>1</sup>

## KEYS TO TEAM MINISTRY

You shouldn't let situations fester under the surface and grow worse. It is better to handle the matter when it is small, rather than to allow it to grow like an infection and harm many. Phil. 4:2-3; Heb. 12:14-15

J. Oswald Sanders said, "Morale is the attitude that leads to people working together as a team with a minimum of friction. When matters that call for attention are neglected and allowed to drift, morale drops, and performance is affected. If the stumbling block is a factor that can be remedied, it should be done at once. If it is a person, the delinquent should be dealt with as soon as the facts are clear, and let the chips fall. Of course, the person or group involved should be treated with consideration and love, but the work of God should not be sacrificed for the sake of keeping peace."<sup>2</sup>

Some important things to keep in mind as far as team ministry is concerned is:

- Keep Jesus as the head
- Be committed to the vision and to each other
- Pray together as a team
- Proper authority and submission to that authority must be recognized
- Maintain unity
- Leaders must both encourage and affirm team members

## BUILDING YOUR TEAM

We must remember that because people are so busy today, and sometimes hesitant to commit to many things, it is not easy to enlist leaders and volunteers to meet ministry needs. However, it can be done and there are people who are willing to serve.

A leadership team should be made up of people from different life stages and generations. It should also include different leadership styles. If you only choose those like yourself, there will not be balance in your planning or ministry. Respect and value all leadership styles, gifts, knowledge, experience, and personalities.

A leader's co-workers should be *like-minded* with their leader. They should agree on basic goals and objectives. In addition, co-workers should demonstrate a maturity, a holiness, an ability to do their job, and a faithfulness to those whom God has called them to serve. This will **express itself in loyally performing small responsibilities, in working cheerfully with others, and in a righteous lifestyle.**<sup>3</sup>

### **Five keys to building your team:**

1. Focus your time and energy to equip leaders and develop future leaders. Pastor Gordon MacDonald says that there are four groups of people to consider:
  - VIP – Very important people (current leaders)
  - VTP – Very teachable people (future leaders)

- VNP – Very nice people (the encouraging sheep)
  - VDP – Very draining people (the “you never solve their problems people”)
2. Select and recruit people with leadership potential.
  3. Agree on areas for training and development.
  4. Recognize the dynamics of an effective training process:
    - I do it, you watch me.
    - I do it, you help me.
    - You do it, I help you.
    - You do it, I watch you.
    - You do it with someone else.
  5. Schedule regular appointments for on-going reporting, encouragement, and accountability.

***How not to Choose Workers:***

- On their ability and not character.
- When under pressure to fill a position in the church.
- Because the co-laborer will give a lot of money to the church or add prestige in any way.
- Because they have the most academic education.
- Because they threaten to leave the church if you do not use them immediately.

A good example or picture from nature of team wisdom is given to us by geese flying in a “V formation”. We can learn the following principles from them:

- People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they travel on the thrust of one another.
- When a goose falls out of formation, it will feel the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly get back into formation.
- When the lead goose gets tired, he moves back in the formation and another goose flies point. It pays to take turns doing hard jobs.
- The geese flying in the back honk to encourage those up front. We need to be careful what we say when we honk from behind.
- When a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot and needs to fall out, other geese remain with him to help and protect him until he is ready to fly again. In the same way, we should stand by each other, protect one another, and assist in the healing process when necessary.

## ESSENTIAL QUALITIES FOR TEAM MEMBERS

### **Character**

Serious character flaws cannot be ignored. They will eventually make a leader ineffective every time. One must not confuse this with a weakness. A weakness can be changed or overcome through training or experience. Character flaws cannot be changed overnight and involves significant relational investment on the part of the leader. Warning signs to watch for include:

- A person's failure to take responsibility for his actions or circumstances.
- Unfulfilled promises or obligations. Doesn't have follow through, or the determination to get the job done completely and with consistency.
- Failure to meet deadlines.

Unwillingness to submit, play team ball, and follow the leader. You can tell much about a person's ability to lead others from how well he manages his own life, and his interaction with others through his relationships.

### **Influence**

What is the leader's level of influence? Who influences the leader? Look at whom they are influencing.

### **Positive Attitude**

Being positive includes the ability to be resilient or able to bounce back when problems arise. It also includes seeing the *whole* ministry and all of its needs, the "big picture mindset" and to do what is required regardless of personal mood.

"People of positive attitudes are able to go places where others can't. They do things that others can't. They are not restricted by self-imposed limitations. A person with a positive attitude is like a bumblebee. The bumblebee should not be able to fly because the size, weight, and shape of its body in relationship to its wingspread make flying aerodynamically impossible. But the bumblebee, being ignorant of scientific theory, flies anyway and makes honey every day."<sup>4</sup>

### **Excellent People Skills**

This involves a genuine concern for others, the ability to understand people, and a concerted effort to interact positively with people. It also includes a willingness to always put the leader and the ministry above personal desires.

### **Proven Track Record**

Look at what they've already done.

## **Evident Gifts**

**There are four kinds of people:**

1. **Never be's** – One who is directed into an area where he is not gifted  
They become frustrated, often blaming others for their lack of success, and eventually burning out. They need to be re-directed.
2. **Could be's** – One with the right gifts and abilities but lacking self-discipline.  
This person needs to develop the self-discipline to “just do it.”
3. **Should be's** – One with raw talent but few skills for harnessing that ability.  
Once they are given help and training in developing his gifts, they will become the person they were created to be.
4. **Must be's** – Only thing lacking is the opportunity. They have the right gifts, skills and attitude, and the drive to do it.<sup>5</sup>

## **THE TEAM LEADER**

The Team Leader plays a very important role in the success of the team. Remember that people are not loyal to a position, but a person. Some keys to empowerment are:

- Value people – that involves attitude.
- Commit to people – that involves time.
- Have integrity with people – that involves character.
- Set a standard with people – that involves vision.
- Influence people – that involves leadership.

***You must learn to nurture the members of your team by:***

**Building trust** – the single most important factor in building relationships.

**Showing transparency** – be willing to take responsibility for your actions and be honest about your imperfections.

**Offering time** – time is an investment. People cannot be nurtured from a distance – stay in touch with them.

**Believing in people** – motivates and releases them. Make sure the right people with the right gifts and right talents are in the right positions.

**Giving encouragement** – is “oxygen to the soul.” It empowers them by giving them energy to continue even when they make mistakes. Use lots of positive reinforcement.

Exhibiting consistency– creates security. They know what to expect from us.

Holding hope high – lifts morale and re-energizes people. It sees the potential in every situation and stays positive despite circumstances.

Adding significance – Shows that what he is doing matters. Connects them to the big picture.

Rewarding productions - Notice and draw attention to their fruit. Maximize every team member's contribution.

Establishing a support system – for emotional support, skills training, money, equipment and personnel. Facilitate communication so that all team members remain in the information loop. Assess and raise the level of community within the team.

#### ***Mastering your meetings. A quality leader will:***

- Set an agenda – Distribute the plan in advance so attendees can prepare.
- Stay on track. Keep the team focused on the mission.
- Include food, or create an atmosphere that is relaxed and inclusive.
- Keep the climate upbeat.
- Always follow up by sending a recap of the meeting. Try to do that within a week after the meeting.

## **WHAT WE'VE LEARNED**

- Throughout the Scriptures we see that God's intention is for ministry to be done in teams. While there is always a set leader, this helps to balance the load of ministry as well as providing accountability and balance.
- Team ministry also provides a proven format for equipping, training, and multiplying the ministry, and raising up new, qualified leadership.
- The leader is key, and should learn the art of leading and affirming his team of co-workers effectively
- A good team doesn't just happen, but must be built into one.
- If a leader neglects finding workers with the necessary good qualifications, he will encounter negative situations that can affect the whole team and potentially the ministry itself.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DISCUSSION

If a team leader, what are your obvious weaknesses & strengths as a team leader?

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If not a team leader, how do I contribute to the team of people I work with (family, job, church)?

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Is there anything holding me back from advancing forward? Ask the Holy Spirit what you can do about this. Remember to go forth in humility and in the Lord's timing.

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## FOR FURTHER STUDY

God's Dream Team – Tommy Tenney

Divine Confrontation – Graham Cooke

Courageous Leadership – Bill Hybels Any of John Maxwell's books

### *Endnotes*

<sup>1</sup> Damazio, Frank, The Making of A Leader (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1988), p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> Sanders, J. Oswald, Spiritual Leadership (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> Damazio, Frank. The Making of A Leader (Portland, OR: City Bible Publishing, 1988), p. 203.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p. 52-53

## **WEEK 2 ASSIGNMENTS**

- Read Test of Ministry Preparation
- Read Test of Promotion
- Submit a 3-5 page paper describing your personal test of preparation and test of promotion for leadership.

# THE TEST OF MINISTRY PREPARATION

Adapted from: Chapter 11, *The Making of a Leader*, Frank Damazio,  
City Bible Publishing, 1988, (used with permission)

WEEK

2

## INTRODUCTION:

Premise:

Many kinds of tests come to every leader, either as part of initial preparation for ministry or for taking us to a new level of leadership. Anyone who desires to serve God will go through these tests. I Timothy 3: 10, “*They must first be tested...*” (tried, investigated, proven)

**Note:** At any place in the outline where the masculine pronoun appears, it is used in the generic sense. What is described here can be for male or female.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN WE SAY THAT GOD TESTS A MINISTRY?

God uses any means which He Himself knows will determine the presence, quality, or genuineness of His call on someone’s life.

God assesses and examines the true inner attitudes and motives of those whom He calls, to show whether they are pure or not.

God puts those He calls into difficult situations which will refine them spiritually (like the Latin word for test, “*testu*,” which means to be put inside of an earthen pot with a lid on top).

## BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC TESTS

1. Hebrews 12:29 - “*For our God is a consuming fire.*” As a consuming fire, God tries the attitudes and motives of each person that He uses. This is not simply to expose weaknesses, but to cause them to turn to the Lord for help. God proves His vessels of leadership, already knowing their inner weaknesses, that these might be healed.
2. God will test a leader to purify them. God will use only pure leaders, whose only motive for ministry is the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Through trials and tough circumstances, God removes impure attitudes of bitterness, selfishness and covetousness from a leader’s heart, and replaces them with motives of love.
3. Producing faithful men and women of God is a primary purpose of God’s testing. Men and women who can keep believing and trusting in the living God during problems and difficulties, will develop true faithfulness to God and His Word.

4. Another purpose in God's testing of His leaders is to sort out those who are not truly called by Him. Only those anointed and called of God can sustain the pressures of filling a governmental ministry. God puts His leaders in desperate situations. Those who do not feel a true call of the Spirit upon their lives drop out of the preparation process. This is sometimes the best thing for them and for the Church. God's people can follow only those shepherds who have been divinely appointed to their task.
5. God also tests His leaders to equip them with the spiritual understanding they need to help His people. All Christians experience a variety of tests and trials. Only the leader who has successfully overcome them by themselves can help the people.
6. The different tests of God can and do occur throughout a leader's life. To emphasize their role in preparation, we will study the different tests of ministry in a special preparation role. The scriptural tests of God's leaders, listed in the next section, have some overlap and similarities. The list may not be exhaustive.

**(Stages of development from new birth to fulfillment of ministry) What follows in the teaching is a focus on the “tests of a ministry.”**

THE SALVATION	THE CALL	THE PREPARATION	THE MATURITY
THE SEED OF MINISTRY	BIRTH OF A MINISTRY	TESTS OF A MINISTRY	FULFILLMENT OF A MINISTRY

## SPECIFIC TESTS OF MINISTRY:

### **TIME TEST**

#### **Definition:**

In the Time Test, by all outward appearances, God does not seem to be fulfilling the word He gave a leader in the past. The Time Test tries a leader's patience, forcing them to trust God to fulfill their call and ministry in His own time and way.

#### **Purpose:**

- To provide opportunity to grow in faith.
- To purify a leader's motives and attitudes.
- To give God an opportunity to prove Himself to be a miracle-working God to everyone He has called to the service of His Kingdom.

#### **Biblical Illustration:**

Genesis 12-18 - The call of Abraham.

## **WORD TEST**

### **Definition:**

In the Word Test, the leader experiences circumstances that seem to nullify the written or living Word of God. "How can the known will of God possibly come to pass in my life?" is the leader's cry during this time. Many feel that because they have been filled and called by God's Spirit, they should never experience darkness or confusion as long as they do not fall into sin.

The Word Test is no accident. In fact, God purposely allows contrary situations in a leader's life and ministry. No leader is exempt from these times of trial and misunderstanding. During the Word Test, God has not forgotten or contradicted His promise, but He desires to accomplish certain purposes that are as yet totally unknown to the leader. If the leader endures with patience, trust and obedience, he will eventually find himself rejoicing in the Lord's wisdom and skill in the planning and use of these seemingly antagonistic experiences.

### **Purpose:**

- To reject his own resources and depend only on God's strength.
- To extend the reach of the kingdom of heaven.
- To give the leader further testimony of God's power and faithfulness to share with more people.

### **Biblical Illustration:**

Genesis 37-45 - Joseph (also note Psalm 105:17-19).

## **CHARACTER TEST**

### **Definition:**

In the Character Test, the leader is surrounded by ungodliness that attempts to pull him in its direction. The leader may be tempted to sin in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. In order to develop leaders with strong, godly character qualities - love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, faithfulness - God puts His leaders in fiery places so they may learn to stand strong in Him.

### **Purpose:**

- To show areas of weakness in his own personality.
- To expose his own true inward self.
- To motivate a leader to boldly take a stand against the powers of darkness around him.

### **Biblical Illustration:**

1 Samuel 2-3 - Samuel in the midst of a corrupt society.

## **MOTIVATION TEST**

### **Definition:**

This is a heavenly “examination” in which God exposes to the leader what inner and outer forces influence his decision-making processes. God will arrange situations to reveal a leader’s true inner intentions, thoughts, values and priorities that cause him to make choices or act in a certain way.

A leader may not always know why he does something. What appears to motivate him, from an outer inspection, may be a far cry from his true internal motives.

### **Purpose:**

- To disclose those inner drives and to purify them into desires for the glory of God.

### **Biblical Illustration:**

Numbers 22-24 - The story of Balaam and Balak.

## **SERVANT TEST**

### **Definition:**

In the Servant Test, a person is asked to do menial tasks that seem below their high calling in God. No menial task is below any true servant of God. Especially before (or even during) their time of fully giving oneself to prayer and the Word instead of “waiting on tables” (see Acts 6:1-6), God tests a leader to see if they are willing to do menial service.

### **Purpose:**

- To reveal if the ministry motivation is to be in the public eye and receive service.
- To give an opportunity to governmental leaders to experience what it feels like to do different jobs in the church.

### **Biblical Illustration:**

1 Kings 19 - Elisha serving and following Elijah.

## **WILDERNESS TEST**

### **Definition:**

In the Wilderness Test, God directly or indirectly guides a leader (or future leader) into a materially and/or spiritually dry and desolate place. When no fruit comes from their life or ministry, a leader feels he is in this test. In such times, a leader wonders whether he really received a call of God upon their life, because he appears to have no direct involvement in the true, living work of the kingdom of God. Sometimes a leader is left with no one else to talk to but God Himself

### **Purpose:**

- To increase the leader's appreciation for the good things that God has already put in his life.
- To teach the leader how to discern whether the Lord alone sustains his spiritual life, or he draws from his ministry activity to sustain his relationship with God.
- To strip the leader of all the wisdom and ways of the world, and to teach him the ways of His Spirit.
- To drive a leader to cultivate his life in prayer and the Word.

### **Biblical Illustration:**

Exodus 2-3 - Moses in the wilderness.

## **MISUNDERSTANDING TEST**

### **Definition:**

The Test of Misunderstanding occurs when those hearing a leader do not receive (or reject) the correct meaning he is trying to communicate. People may misinterpret or mistake the true significance of his actions, words, attitudes or motives.

### **Purpose:**

- To cause a leader to look for new or better ways of bringing across his feelings.
- To cause a leader to examine his basic attitudes and motivations in communication. Many times people will misunderstand what a person is trying to say just because the communicator has an attitude that is too hard, harsh or angry when he tries to say it.

### **Biblical Example:**

Hebrews 12:3 - Jesus serves as our pattern as one who endured misunderstanding.

## **PATIENCE TEST**

### **Definition:**

The Patience Test happens when a leader's expectations in God are not fulfilled "on schedule." Patience is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

This word comes from a Latin word which means "to suffer." In the Patience Test, God challenges a leader to wait patiently, or to endure some tribulation, without complaint. To grow in patience, a leader must bear pain or trouble, without losing self-control or becoming a disturbance to others. In portraying this quality, a leader calmly tolerates delay while refusing to be provoked by it.

### **Purpose:**

- To pass the test of yielding one's rights to Jesus Christ and wait for things to work out in God's timing.

- To learn how to release expectations that we put on others in order for our vision to be fulfilled.

**Biblical Example:**

Genesis 5-7 - Noah and the preparations for the flood.

**FRUSTRATION TEST**

**Definition:**

A leader undergoes the Frustration Test when he feels that his life or ministry goals cannot be achieved. People or circumstances may prevent him from gratifying his conscious or unconscious desires and goals. A leader especially experiences this feeling when he finds no logical or rational reason why his efforts are being baffled, foiled or confused.

**Purpose:**

- To cause the leader to re-examine his spiritual priorities. Is he giving enough time to prayer and the Word? Is he/she giving enough attention to their spouse and family?
- To re-examine priorities for ministry in general.
- To cause the leader to put more fervor into his primary spiritual battle against opposition to the simple gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Biblical Example:**

II Corinthians 11:17-12:1 - The many challenges that Paul faced in the ministry.

**DISCOURAGEMENT TEST**

**Definition:**

A leader is going through the Discouragement Test when he allows circumstances or people to dishearten him and deprive him of courage in the Lord. A discouraged leader is deterred from an undertaking which he believed was God's will. During such times, a leader may lose his confidence or hope in God, His provision, His promises, or His calling.

**Purpose:**

- To drive the leader to God in prayer, often using the Psalms.
- To teach the leader that joy comes from being rooted in the Lord and not only through happy circumstances.
- To reveal bad and hidden attitudes in the leader, leading to repentance of complaining, criticizing, and murmuring.

**Biblical Example:**

1 Kings 19 - Story of Elijah, after his victory at Mt. Carmel, and, upon learning that Queen Jezebel planned to kill him.

## **WARFARE TEST:**

### **Definition:**

The Warfare Test happens when a leader encounters violent spiritual opposition to his progress in the Spirit, or in his extending of God's kingdom. Though it happens in the realm of the spirit, it can find natural expressions in conflicts with people, lack of response to one's ministry, or struggles of various sorts (including the feeling of unbearable temptation to sin).

Some people think anointed leaders cannot be tempted like other people can. Much publicized leadership failures have proved that untrue! And the Bible says that even Jesus "*was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*" (Hebrews 4:15). The calling of God does not remove human susceptibility to temptation. Leaders must make a conscious effort to "*walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh*" (Galatians 5:16).

### **Purpose:**

- To force the leader to grow stronger in the Spirit.
- To train the leader how to effectively use his spiritual weapons of the Word, prayer, praise, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Biblical Example:**

I and II Timothy-(I Timothy 1:18;4:7;6:12; II Timothy 2-24)-Timothy was encouraged to fight the good fight of faith.

## **SELF-WILL TEST**

### **Definition:**

When a leader realizes God is asking him to do something that counters his own plans or desires, the Self-will Test has begun. God has to break the self-will and personal ambition of every person He uses, so that He can trust him or her to do whatever He requires in His Kingdom. Even good and appropriate things He asks us to sacrifice at times. God will sometimes even requests a person to do something for Him, and give no logical reason for it. In not always explaining His requests to leaders, God is developing a child-like faith and obedience in their hearts. God does not necessarily prefer painful sacrifices from His leaders, but when he speaks something contrary to a person's desire, that person must quickly respond to the word.

### **Purpose:**

- To subject the leader's will to God's Word (both the written and the quickened).
- To crucify a leader's desires, on occasion, so that He can accomplish His own way (Isaiah 55:6-9).

### **Biblical Example:**

Matthew 26:36-48-Jesus in Gethsemane.

## **VISION TEST**

### **Definition:**

The Vision Test occurs when contrary people and circumstances besiege a leader's spiritual insight into the purposes of God. Natural and physical vision is not enough for a leader of God's people. He must also have spiritual eyes of faith to see God's will and desire for His people. The spiritual Vision Test asks two main questions: "Can you see the spiritual needs and answers of the people of God?" and, "Can you resist opposition and adversity, and tenaciously hold the vision that God has given you as a leader?"

### **Purpose:**

- To show a leader how shallow his spiritual insight really is.
- To keep leaders fully dependent on the Lord.
- To ensure that the glory for success goes fully to God.

### **Biblical Example:**

Nehemiah 1, 2, 4 - Nehemiah rebuilding the walls in spite of constant challenges to the vision God gave to him.

## **USAGE TEST**

### **Definition:**

A leader undergoes the Usage Test in his life or ministry preparation when he cannot find the need, demand, opportunity, invitation, results, or expected occasion to exercise his ministry. "Put on the shelf" is a common description for this situation.

### **Purpose:**

- To show the leader that they depend too heavily on their actual service or activity, rather than upon the Lord Himself, for their joy and spiritual fulfillment.
- To humble a leader.
- To purify the motives of a leader.
- To deepen the message of a leader.

### **Biblical Example:**

Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 1,3; John 1 - Example of John the Baptist.

## **CONCLUSION:**

The tests of ministry preparation described in this outline may come especially during the early stages of a leader's ministry. But they can come at any time - as they did for the persons described in the Biblical examples. Governmental ministries face what may be a "hotter" refiner's fire. However, God takes all Christians through these tests to refine their faith. Because God's imagination is limitless, so are His ways of bringing His children into maturity!

# THE TEST OF PROMOTION

By Joyce Myers and Frank Damazio

**Joyce Meyer**

Do you feel like you're going through a time of testing in your life? Are you struggling with a situation you're tempted to just avoid, ignore or run away from because it's too hard to face head-on and overcome?

We all go through hard times and have to make the choice to either trust God to help us deal with them and get through them or give up and give in to them. But if we give up, we won't experience God's best for us. We won't get promoted in any area of life.

## PREREQUISITE FOR THE TEST

God only knows what it took to get me from where I started to where I am today. It was hard to come out of the mess I came out of, being abused for so many years, and to let God change my attitudes and teach me all the things I try to teach people from God's Word. Trust me, everything took longer than I thought it would—and it was a lot harder than I ever thought it would be.

I went through so many things that, looking back now, I think, *How in the world did I do that and get through it all?* But I can tell you that I am grateful for every single thing I went through, because in the process I learned so many things that developed my character and prepared me to be a leader in ministry today. And the truth is, if I had never learned those lessons, I would not be—nor should I be—in the position that I'm in today.

I clearly recall the day God spoke to my heart and said, "Joyce, I always want you to remember this: However many people I let you help, that's as many people as you can hurt." I had zero business being in a position of leadership until I passed my tests, became rooted in my relationship with Christ and developed the character needed to keep me there.

Whenever I see a young person quickly promoted to a key position of leadership, it concerns me, because if you don't have the character to go with the kind of attention that comes with leadership, all you're going to do is create a mess. You see, God promotes us after we pass our tests—not when we run away from them, ignore them or avoid them.

God is faithful to help us do what we need to do to pass our tests when we keep our eyes on Him and trust Him. And just as He's faithful to us, we need to be faithful too.

## WHO'S FIT FOR A PROMOTION?

In 1 Timothy 3:10, the apostle Paul tells Timothy how to determine who is fit to be a leader: “Let them also be tried and investigated and proved first; then, if they turn out to be above reproach, let them serve” (AMP). You build trust in someone when you see how they respond to different situations over time and are tried through various circumstances.

The truth is, the only way you’re really going to know what you will do is to go through some things and be faithful. Stick with things, don’t give up and run away, and don’t blame everyone else for your problems.

Faithful men and women of God humble themselves under the mighty hand of God and trust Him to promote them when He knows they are ready for it (1 Pet. 5:6).

Now, that sounds really spiritual, so I want to make it practical: You’re going to be under some human authority that you probably don’t think always treats you right and that you probably don’t always agree with. And God is going to ask you to serve faithfully in that position with a good attitude even when you’re told no and you disagree.

But Proverbs 28:20 says, “A faithful man shall abound with blessings.” It’s important for us to be excellent and to do the best we can in every area of our lives so we can “abound with blessings” from God.

So be faithful during your tests, right where you are. If you will do what God is telling you to do—faithfully—then there’s no person on earth and no devil in hell that can keep you from the destiny He has planned for your life. God will promote you when you pass your test!

*Frank Damazio*

## THE TEST OF PROMOTION

- Promotion does not come from man but from God, and it comes according to one’s unique and divine calling. God calls and exalts leaders, man does not.
- Every leader must know his own place of ministry, and stay in it!
- So must every leader accept the place of ministry which God has given him (and from time to time gives him) in His vineyard. Much strife, jealousy and hurt feelings could be avoided if God’s leaders would just find their ministries and stay within their boundaries. Every leader must be satisfied with being only that which God intended him to be.
- No matter what a person’s religious or spiritual position is in the Church, he still must obey all of God’s moral and ethical laws.

- If someone has a call of God upon his or her life, God will exalt that person in His due season.
- A man must have a divine call and a divine, charismatic ability to preach or teach before he can succeed in ministry.
- Only God can call a person into the ministry. And if God has called, a person's gift will be recognized and he will not have to strive or struggle to gain notice.
- A man of God does not need to declare his abilities to other people. Others will be able to see them clearly by themselves. A leader should seek no position except one of humility before the face of the Lord.
- A true leader need never fear that God has forgotten him. He can be assured that as he gives himself to character development, God will expand his ministry.
- In the same way, every leader can develop a servant's heart, a righteous life and a broken spirit before the Lord – and then trust the Lord to fulfill the ministry to which He called him. God exalts ministry at the proper time. May all leaders, with trust and contentment in God, wait patiently for God to bring His will to pass in their lives and ministries.

## WEEK 3 ASSIGNMENTS

- Read Theology of Spiritual Leadership
- Read Spiritual Leadership
- Read Colossians 1 and 2 in a study Bible.
- Submit a 3-5 page paper (typed) reflecting your understanding of Paul's leadership model in Colossians 1 as outlined in the assigned reading. Include in your paper, your thoughts regarding Paul's description of the biblical model for the "character" of a spiritual leader described in Colossians 2. How do you see yourself and your character as a spiritual leader in light of this biblical model? What challenges do you see in you? What changes, if any, do you feel you need to make? Explain why?
- You will receive a link via email to take your DISC Personality Profile online and download your DISC text by Owen Allen entitled The Specific Action Personality System.

# THEOLOGY OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

It is imperative that we go back to the Word to discover True Biblical Principles.

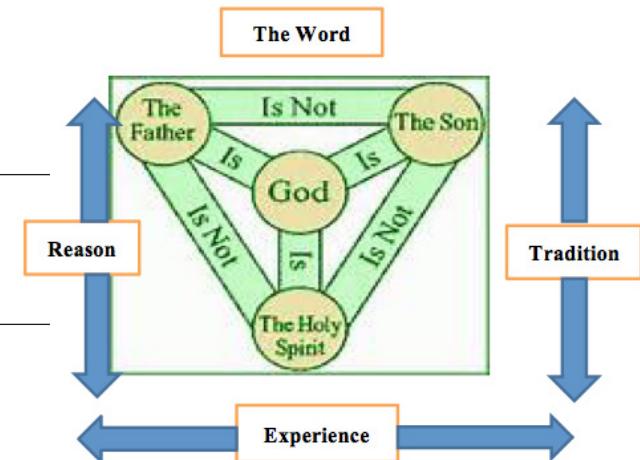
- The Word informs
- Reason and Tradition – responds to the Word

God's Word is not rational, but it is reasonable

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## THE TRIUNE OF GOD THE WORD INFORMS OUR TRADITION

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Relationships in the Trinity are:

- Objective
- Subjective
- Social Relationships

All 3 Gods

- The Father is not the Son
- The Son is not the Holy Spirit
- The Son is not the Father

We need to re-educate people on the paraclete.

- The Son can talk about the Father
- The Father is the Leader
- The Father can talk about the Son
- The Holy Spirit speaks of the Son, not of himself

***The Perfect Love, Perfect Communication, Perfect Understanding, Perfect Purpose, Perfect Offices.***

John 14 - Indivisible, in separable, recognizable. We can distinguish from each other. It's not just one person. How can they say "We" if there is just "One" person.

Our problem today is who is in charge? We don't understand when we don't have clear Leadership.

Spiritual Leadership flows from our understanding of God, how he delegates our responsibilities to each one of us. "Why He chose me, I will never know."

### **Two issues that are the core of Leadership today:**

1. We have gotten sidetrack on methods and not the character of the Leader.
2. Have a life free of defects as possible. God expects the best of us. Keep our guard of when it comes to our character.

Character isn't dependent on our dress, but the way we dress shows our character.

Leaders need to get back to Who God is and What He expects of us. We need to work on our character, not just Doing things, but Being who we are to be for God. We can't hide behind the concept that we are only human.

Theology is that we might Know God. God reveals His word and his will to us. My theology must be based on the Word.

### ***We want to be Leaders, but are we good Followers?***

**We musts become BEING, before DOING.**

We make the mistake of wanting to Do First instead of BEING. Evangelism and Discipline is a lifestyle together. Dr. Chan's story – Just One Word – "DIE" Intentional disciplining and intentional Love. According to Dr. Chan, The closest to heaven for him was when he was on his knees.

You can't have Being without Doing. Character is not produced by our Doing, it's produced by our Being. If I focus too much on the Doing, I will forget the Being. Christ is In us, we In Him, not He is Near us or we are Near Him.

We can grow in our Being and grow in our Doing.

As Leaders, we must make sure we are grounding our ministry in God. Man is Horizontal - God is Vertical.

As Leaders, we must be grounded in what it really means to be Spiritual Leaders. What far goes beyond the why. What now- does it imply that I should do. Is there a pattern to follow, look for the principle to make sure I am not following someone's Doing.

In our leadership, we are to serve others. As we serve God we must serve others. Servant-leader- to be a leader is to truly to be a servant. Servant is part of leader. We are building God's kingdom- we served while we lead, as we lead through our leading. Serving while leading, leading through serving.

Jesus is the supreme model of the Servant-Leader. He is a man among men. Being and Doing.

What is our relationship with Jesus? Vertical or Horizontal? Which is the real base, cause for leadership? Which is the effect of leadership? If our character is not modeled after Christ, it will not do much for our leadership. What is the right attitude of the leader? We must be both Leaders and Followers. Paul said, *follow me as I follow Christ.*

### **Paul's leadership model in Colossians 1**

- His Appeal- 1:9-14 ( inverse order)
- His Apex 1:15-18- on Christ Himself, why we lead
- His Aim 1:19-23 (including redemption's essential, fundamental goal)
- His Attitude-1:24-27
- His Approach & Ambition-1:28-29

We are perfect in Christ, not in our minds, and not for others. God knows everything; he knows our limitations. If we are not growing and doing what God wants us to do, we need to ask God , Why?

Perfect means to be Fully in God at every stage of our life, we are not to stay in only One Stage in our life.

As we follow the biblical model, we need to ask ourselves where are we? We don't need to always be approaching and never ending. You can be a complete adult at 40.

The Character of the spiritual leader: Biblical Model

### **Colossians 2**

- Christ, our foundation 2:3-8
- Christ, our Completion 2:9-10
- Christ, our Purification 2:11
- Christ, our Redemption 2:12-13
- Christ, our Liberation 2:14-15(16-17)

### **Colossians 3**

- Put off all manifestations of sin
- Put on the new man, put on love (God's love)
- Let the new God rule
- Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...

The problems in leadership are the problems of the flesh, not dying to self.

Character - Peace of God - His peace within that rules our heart; there is no rebellion within us.

Peace with God - we have peace with God, no issues between me and God.

## **The Theology of Spiritual Leadership continues:**

The leader's practice...verbs in the imperative mood 1& 2 Tim and Titus  
(giving and doing)

1 Tim 1:3 Charge some... teach no other doctrine (charge means to instruct)

1:4....not give in to fables

2:1,8...pray

4:6...instruct

4:7...reject...fables; exercise yourself

4:12...be an example...in love, faith, purity

1 Tim. 4:13...give attention

4:14...do not neglect

4:15..meditate...give yourself

4:16...take heed to yourself and to the doctrine...

5:1...do not rebuke, but exhort...

5:3...honor widows...command...etc.

To be the leader he wants us to be, we must die...

"Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord"

1 Tim. 5:21...observe these things without prejudice...no partiality

5:22...no haste in ordaining, do not share in others' sins...keep yourself pure

5:23...use a little medicine when necessary

6:2...Teach and exhort

5:11...Flee (pride, envy, strife, etc.)...pursue righteousness, godliness, faith

### ***Leader's qualifications***

- Bishop (elder) - overseer
- Blameless
- A one-woman –man

- Temperate
- Sober-minded
- Good behavior
- Hospitable
- Able to teach
- Gentle
- Rules his own house well
- Has a good testimony among non-believers
- Not given to wine
- Not violent
- Not greedy for money
- Not quarrelsome
- Not covetous
- Not a novice- (not a beginner)

### ***Deacon (servant)***

- Reverent
- Tested first
- Blameless
- Husband of one wife
- Rule their families well
- Not double tongue

### ***Deaconess***

- Reverent
- Not a slanderer
- Temperate
- Faithful in all things

### ***The “BE” imperative character first for Timothy as his duties***

1 Tim 3:2... BE blameless

4:6...if you instruct...you will BE a good minister

4:12... BE an example

2 Tim 1:8...do NOT BE ashamed

2:1...BE strong (be the leader you need to be - get rid of timidity)

2:15...BE diligent to present yourself approved

2:24...BE gentle to all, able to teach, patient

4:5... BE watchful

4:9...BE diligent to come (to minister)

2 Tim 1:6...stir up the gift of God...

1:8...Share with me...

1:13...Hold fast

2:2...Commit the things you have heard to faithful men

2:3...Endure hardship

2:7...Consider what I say

2:8...Remember...

### ***The Mind of Christ - every Christian can have the mind of Christ***

Integrity would be ONE Word used for pastors today in reference to character.

What should be the theological core of us as leaders today? Integrity

What do I do with what I have learned, how will I use what I have learned? I need to be prepared Now. Lord how are you preparing me with the hunger power in the world.

- Nugget - A simple heart is a heart turned in on itself.

**Study the BE commands in Timothy**

As a Leader - What is your spirit, my spirit, what is my attitude?

Nugget - Lord, the diler of bread, He supplies all our needs. We submit to God, a benevolent Godly dictator is the best there is.

Nugget- Paul said women should teach. Be submit to rulers and authority , obedient, speak evil of no one, courtesy to all people.

Nugget- How are we going to put into practice what God wants us to do as Leaders of the church?

Nugget- We should preach what God tells us to preach.

Nugget- Being and Doing is not either or, it is both and. We have to show who we are.

Nugget- Review Tim. and Titus as examples of good leaders.

Nugget- As Leaders- We are not going to change the system until we change the heart of the people.

Nugget- Works, being, civil, being responsible; one of the things that caused the early church to grow, they took care of the sick slaves during the early church years. Mother Theresa, said that God called her to a mission of mercy.

Nugget- We must do what God called us to do and We must be obedient to what God called us to.

Nugget- Always go back to what is God telling you to do when it comes to giving to someone or a cause.

Nugget- When we rest in trust, complete confidence in God, we don't have to struggle with what we would normally struggle with because we completely trust God. Conquer yourself, fully opening yourself that God has forgiven you and you accept that.

#### ***Five things we can do in order to be an effective leader, by Ken Stevenson***

1. Become an influencer
2. Serve others
3. Communicate clearly
4. Cultivate relationships
5. Model spiritual excellence

We cannot lead others further than we have been ourselves, quote by John Maxwell (Ken Stevenson used from John Maxwell).

Nugget- Don't comprise, be committed to what God has instructed you to do.

Nugget - What we do will always flow out of who we are.

Nugget - What ministers should share is what comes out of their lives.

Nugget - An adult Christian knows how to feed themselves, not babies

Nugget - Accounting is headed for bankruptcy - prayer-less-ness, lower energy, less time in the word, gloom, unhealthy attracting to the opposite sex, inability to deal with personal temptation.

Nugget - Leadership is enhanced with more relationship with God. Leaders focus too much on doing vs developing spiritual dept.

Nugget - If we are to stay strong, we need to stay aware of our enemies. Cross-source of our salvation, our lives must be based on what Christ did, not us.

Nugget - The more we accomplish, the more our abilities are recognized; the more we need to rely on God. Resist the temptation of what we do as to who we are.

Nugget – from scriptures in the book of Gal. 6

**Pour into others**

**Each one share; bare his own load (proper self- perception)**

**Plant seeds in the proper soil**

**Preserver in difficult times- (perseverance is what it takes to win); when you feel the most like quitting, don't. When you battle the flesh in the flesh, you will not win. You will not win by self –effort; you must use the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Nugget - Prayer, witness, worship, exposure to the word, yes there is a Holy Spirit.

Nugget - Make your heart a vacuum and the spirit will pour in.

Nugget - If Christ is not love of all your heart, He is not Love at all.

### ***Seven things to pray for:***

1. Anointed servants of the lord
2. Hearts motives pure
3. Not fear men but the Lord
4. Boldly claim the truth of His word
5. God will encourage us in our ministry
6. Those who listen will tremble
7. Ears to hear and hearts to respond to what God says to his servant

Read Ps 45 prayerfully and devotionally you will see the interpretation of the Songs of Solomon; we learn intimacy from Songs of Solomon, giving of myself.

Make yourself available, open, giving and receiving in order to be experience intimacy.

We cultivate intimacy person to person.

Nugget - To remember about the snow flake, the snow flake was always there, just had to cut away what was not the part of the snow flake - God also cuts away what is not of Him in us. God does the cutting, we do the submitting. The potter doesn't tell the clay.

Nugget - Everything he uses to shape and mold us is contributed to what we will be.

Nugget - Being has to bare fruit; the doing.

Nugget - Prayer is the battle, not preparation for the battle.

Nugget - The secret weapon is Prayer, not the armor.

Nugget - Prayer is God's power. Our prayer life is the key to our Leadership

Nugget - Don't measure others by what you do; that does not make you more spiritual than the other person.

Nugget - It's important to know what you believe and live it out.

Nugget - Heb. 13:12- forgiveness, heart purity, holiness; Heb 13:13; (vs 17 use as a teaching for opportunity/privilege) Test someones privilege, you will see their character immediately depending on how they use it or abuse it. (In order to find the person's character, give them a privilege)

Nugget – Always keep in mind -What is my theology going to look like in everyday life, and how will I apply my theology?

Nugget - If we are to be good followers, we'll be good leaders, because we are followers of Christ; as we follow Christ, then we can be the leaders he wants us to be. We emulate Christ's character. To be able to command, one must know how to obey. We are always followers by following Jesus. We are leaders and also followers.

Nugget - We can be childlike but not childish or foolish

Nugget - Hebrews- a pattern for leadership

Nugget - Teach Integrity/Character

Actor, audience, and promoter - God is the audience, congregation is the actor, the worship leader is the prompter. When you lead worship, you are not leading when you are on the stage with the spot light with your eyes closed. Sing to Jesus, not the people.

# SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

By Henry T. & Richard Blackaby

Spiritual leadership is based on the Holy Spirit and character. Without the Holy Spirit's guiding, empowering work, people may hold leadership positions, but they will not be spiritual leaders. The Holy Spirit will not confirm their authority with their people. Without godly character it is impossible to be a spiritual leader.

Position, Power, and Personality are all misconceived sources of influence.

People, who use political or unethical means to acquire positions, lack the integrity necessary to maintain the respect of those they lead. Those yearning for recognition and approval from others rarely find that positions of authority fill the void because they have sought worldly remedy for a spiritual problem. Oswald Sanders asked, "Should it not be the office that seeks the man, rather than the man the office?"

Some leaders influence others by the use of Power/ force and manipulation. Spiritual dictatorship can be the most oppressive form of tyranny. Some Christian leaders believe God delegates his authority to leaders, obligating followers to submit unquestionably as if they were obeying God himself. Although God chooses to work through leaders to accomplish his purpose, obeying a leader is not necessarily equal to obeying God. There is no substitute for a personal relationship with God as he exercises his lordship directly over his followers.

Insecure leaders find it much simpler to label their opponents as unspiritual or rebellious than to examine the truth of their critic's words.

Personality: People with charisma and winsome natures naturally attract a following. An engaging personality alone is not enough to constitute spiritual leadership. Personality without purpose and charm without competence are recipes for disaster. Glamorous figureheads make a great first impression, but without spiritual depth they do not leave lasting results (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

Specific characteristics confirm the legitimacy of a spiritual leader. The following are:

## LEGITIMATE SOURCES OF INFLUENCE

God's Authentication- the first and most important of these is God's authentication. The greatest leader in Old Testament history was Moses, but he was not naturally gifted as a leader. Moses' accomplishments as a spiritual leader came from the depths of his relationship with God, not from the strength of his personality. "Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). God's methods of authenticating his leaders are effective and convincing. Leaders who grow preoccupied with defending their actions and reputation display an acute lack of faith; they do not trust God to authenticate them as spiritual leaders. Joshua could lead the Hebrew nation with absolute assurance of the Lord's presence and know his success

would come from God. There is no greater source of influence for spiritual leaders than the manifest presence of God in their lives. Whenever Samuel prophesied, God guaranteed that his words came to pass. This unmistakable authority was an awesome confirmation from God. God bestowed wisdom on Deborah that people would travel great distances to the hill country of Ephraim to seek her judgment. Deborah counseled Balak, Israel's commanding officer that God would give his forces victory over their oppressors. Balak recognized God's dynamic presence in her life so much that he asked her to accompany him in a battle; he simply would not go without her. This is the pattern of true spiritual leadership. When leaders pursue praise and respect from others, they may achieve their goal, but they also have their reward. Those who seek God's affirmation enjoy true and lasting honor (Gal. 1:10). Charles Finney with God's powerful presence in his life had been too overwhelming to ignore that a factory owner asked him to preach to his employees and tell them how they might find peace for their souls.

Christian leaders must evaluate their lives to see whether God is confirming their leadership. A leader is proven valid when God fulfills his promises to the leader and the leader's organization. Second, God will vindicate a leader's reputation over time. Third, God's presence in a leader transformed lives. Fourth, true spiritual leaders will show evidence of total personal submission to God, and they will lead their people to trust God implicitly to accept God-sized assignments. Fifth, unmistakably mark of God's work in leaders' lives is that they act like Christ. A person is truly a spiritual leader when others are moved to be more like Christ.

### ***Character/Integrity***

According to Blackaby, leadership experts agree that character, or integrity, is foundational to business and leadership. I would agree with this statement. According to study completed by Kouzes and Posner the number one trait has consistently been honesty. Employees have counted honesty in their leader as more important than vision, competence, accomplishments, and the ability to inspire others. People choose to follow leaders they trust. I would agree with this statement because once the trust broken, there is nothing left. When people see their leader stretching the truth or strategically glossing over problems, they lose confidence in their leader. In secular and Christian societies integrity is paramount in a leader's life. Followers must wholeheartedly be convinced of their leader's integrity. Integrity means being consistent in one's behavior under every circumstance, including unguarded moments. If leaders are normally peaceable and well - mannered but throw violent temper tantrums when things go wrong, their lives lack integrity. If leaders appear honest and moral in public but discard those standards in private, their lives lack integrity.

The definitive measure of a leader's success is whether they move their people from where they are to where God wants them to be. The mark of a leader's success is whether they accomplished God's will. Warren Bennis stated experience is not the end factor; it is merely an avenue to reveal and develop character.

Preparation for leadership involves training. Leaders who make the effort to obtain proper training are not only better prepared for their leadership role: they have more credibility with those they lead. The way people handle their preparation for leadership

is a strong indicator of what kind of leaders they will eventually be. Paul and Moses spent considerable time learning to think. This is the contribution formal education gives to leaders. The ability to think will hold leaders to good stead regardless of what new or un-foreseen challenges they encounter .

Henry and Richard Blackaby noted that “spiritual leadership is based on character and the working of the Holy Spirit.” The recitation of both variables suggests that spiritual leadership is attained both through the internal and external merits of the leader himself (i.e., character) and through the manifest spiritual power and authority of the Holy Spirit. The former may lend itself to empirical verification; however, the latter is more amorphous and elusive.

J. Oswald Sanders stated, to pray in the Spirit is important for two reasons:

1. The Holy Spirit is the sphere and atmosphere of the Christian’s life. When we are not praying in the Spirit, we are praying in the physical realm (the mind) which is a product of our own thinking and not of the Spirit’s teaching
2. We are to give ourselves wholly to prayer, praying in the power of the Spirit. Spiritual leaders should experience praying in the Spirit as part of their daily walk. The Holy Spirit releases supernatural resources

A few other points concerning prayer and spiritual leaders are that praying to God is our way of getting answers. Additionally, prayer is a divine ordinance; God commanded that we pray. Finally, through prayer, we can know the will of God. The goal of prayer is the ear of God. Sanders says to move people, a leader must be able to move God since God has made it clear that He moves people in response to prayer. Prevailing prayer that moves people is the outcome of a right relationship with God.

Sanders declares every leader who is granted spiritual authority can expect tests, temptations and trials. Further he notes that such trials and temptations serve to purify and clarify leadership. In other words, as I say to others all the time – these test and trials occur to make us stronger and equip us to help others.

#### **List of scriptures for job description for leadership by Tony Morgan**

- Encourage others (Rom 14:19)
- Set an example with your speech, life, and faith (1 Tim. 4:12)
- Remain pure (1 Tim. 4:12)
- Embrace humility and gentleness (Eph. 4:2)
- Promote peace and unity (Eph. 4:3)
- Avoid arguments and quarreling (2 Tim. 2:24)
- Gently instruct others (2 Tim. 2:25)
- Maintain Emotional Control (Titus 2:6)
- Demonstrate integrity in your actions and speech (Titus 2:7-8)
- Live your life above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2)

With the right focus on Jesus as the greatest leader of all time and a firm foundation in Scripture, you will gain significant clarity and experience leadership success that will impact your life and everyone with whom you come in contact.

- Biblical leaders can't be anything but servant leaders (1 Pet. 5:2-3/NIV)
- Matt. 20:25-28 (NIV) – Jesus is teaching a distinction between a “style” of leadership that is authoritative and one that is focused on serving others.

## **HEADLEY, ANTHONY J., REFRAMING YOUR MINISTRY**

Reframing begins with putting a situation or concept in a new light. It means to revisit or change thinking, feelings and actions.

It takes a mature or self-assured minister who is not only committed to God but obedient to God's instructions in order to stand on what He has heard from God and not be intimidated by the congregants. God's instructions are clear for they are written in the Bible.

Headley suggests that there are a few benefits to reframing ministry:

- Rediscovered understanding of the nature and practice of ministry
- Reframing ministry would have evident positive emotional consequences
- Reframing of ministry would have implications for practice
- Reframing of ministry can potentially help focus on priorities in ministry

These are principles that Headley suggests may serve to help reframe ministry:

- The power of speech
- Boundaries which bring order from chaos
- Balance and rhythm in the creative process
- Rest as an essential part of creativity

Headley addresses the need for balance in several areas and he suggests balance is the key. His recommended balance touches on the management of stress, avoiding burnout or recovering from it. The following outlines the key areas of concern:

- Self (intimacy with God through the Spirit)
- Family
- Groups
- Congregation
- Ministry beyond one's congregation

All of the areas touch on the spiritual, mental, physical and emotional make up of a minister.

According to Headley, the very nature of the reframed or new model for ministry look like the following:

- It is consistent with human identity (my well-being is essential)
- It embraces principles of creative activity (these relate to my speech, utilizing boundaries at every level, determining a balance and getting needed rest from activities)
- It is consistent with Jesus' approach (Jesus made a place for circles of discipleship. His ministry started with retreat and solitude followed by His moving into community with His disciples and ministry to needy people)
- It views ministry as multidimensional (not only does ministry involve other-centered activities; it also includes self-care and family care)
- It is not selfish
- It is not rigid, but fluid
- It minimizes stress
- It avoids burnout
- It is not rigid, but fluid
- It minimizes stress

#### ***Additional Reading of Leadership Characteristics from Holden Leadership Center***

##### **Proactive vs. Reactive**

The exceptional leader is always thinking three steps ahead. Working to master his/her own environment with the goal of avoiding problems before they arise.

##### **Flexible/Adaptable**

How do you handle yourself in unexpected or uncomfortable situations? An effective leader will adapt to new surroundings and situations, doing his/her best to adjust.

##### **A Good Communicator**

As a leader, one must listen...a lot! You must be willing to work to understand the needs and desires of others. A good leader asks many questions, considers all options, and leads in the right direction.

##### **Respectful**

Treating others with respect will ultimately earn respect.

##### **Quiet Confidence**

Be sure of yourself with humble intentions.

### **Enthusiastic**

Excitement is contagious. When a leader is motivated and excited about the cause people will be more inclined to follow.

### **Open-Minded**

Work to consider all options when making decisions. A strong leader will evaluate the input from all interested parties and work for the betterment of the whole.

### **Resourceful**

Utilize the resources available to you. If you don't know the answer to something find out by asking questions. A leader must create access to information.

### **Rewarding**

An exceptional leader will recognize the efforts of others and reinforce those actions. We all enjoy being recognized for our actions!

### **Well Educated**

Knowledge is power. Work to be well educated on community policies, procedures, organizational norms, etc. Further, your knowledge of issues and information will only increase your success in leading others.

### **Open to Change**

A leader will take into account all points of view and will be willing to change a policy, program, cultural tradition that is out-dated, or no longer beneficial to the group as a whole.

### **Interested in Feedback**

How do people feel about your leadership skill set? How can you improve? These are important questions that a leader needs to constantly ask the chapter. View feedback as a gift to improve.

### **Evaluative**

Evaluation of events and programs is essential for an organization/group to improve and progress. An exceptional leader will constantly evaluate and change programs and policies that are not working.

### **Organized**

Are you prepared for meetings, presentations, events and confident that people around you are prepared and organized as well?

### **Consistent**

Confidence and respect cannot be attained without your leadership being consistent. People must have confidence that their opinions and thoughts will be heard and taken into consideration.

### **Delegator**

An exceptional leader realizes that he/she cannot accomplish everything on his own. A leader will know the talents and interests of people around him/her, thus delegating tasks accordingly.

### **Initiative**

A leader should work to be the motivator, an initiator. He/she must be a key element in the planning and implementing of new ideas, programs, policies, events, etc.

In conclusion, good character is important in any leadership role whether it be a secular or spiritual environment it is necessary for the best end result for the team or organization. The theological core of us as leaders today is Integrity. Character is not produced by our Doing, it's produced by our Being. As a Leader it is imperative to remember that Being and Doing is not either or, it is both. Being has to bear Fruit; the Doing. In our leadership, we are to serve others. As we serve God we must serve others. Theology is that we might Know God. As a Leader, I must "DIE."

## WEEK 4 ASSIGNMENTS

- Read Understanding the Holy Spirit
- Read Knowledge of The Holy
- Submit 2-3 pages of your integrative reflections on the assigned reading of “Understanding the Holy Spirit”. Include any experiences you may have had as a leader.

# UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY SPIRIT

*The Purpose of the Holy Spirit*

WEEK

4

## INTRODUCTION

The Holy Spirit promised by the Lord Jesus was not only for today. He came to “abide with you forever” (John 14:16).

**Thesis:** In order to have the power of the Holy Spirit operating within you, you must be a Spirit Filled Believer and allow the Holy Spirit to freely use you as He will, not as you will.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### *Recognizing His Purpose*

The ministry of the Holy Ghost according to Pastor Benny Hinn in his book (*Welcome Holy Spirit*), makes it possible for us to do the things God has called us to do. When the Holy Ghost does not operate freely within us, it will be impossible for us to fully realize all of our potential in Christ. The Holy Ghost’s ministry is a “Revealer.” He reveals the plan of God in the earth, unveils the plan of redemption, the Father, the Son, Jesus Christ and through these revelations that the other well-known facets of His ministry, Comforter, Guide, and Teacher come into view.

When the Spirit reveals Jesus as “the Healer” the result is comfort to you and when He reveals God’s plan to you, guidance is the result. The Holy Spirit takes many different forms, but the overall ministry of the Holy Spirit is one of enabling and revealing , which empowers us to become world changers. When Jesus said, “Ye shall receive power,” He used the Greek word *dunamis*, which means “miracle working power.” This is the kind of power available through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, power that shakes and changes your home, your neighborhood and your community. Many spirit- filled, born again Christians who seem to have a big power void in their lives in many instances is due to their lack of understanding or appreciating the role of the Holy Spirit. They lack the realization of the fact that His mission is empowerment. You will not draw from the power of the Holy Ghost when you do not understand such power is at your disposal.

The power of the Holy Spirit is more than just for miracles, healings, words of wisdom and knowledge, but also for sharing the Gospel with the lost and dying. The Holy Spirit equips us as listed in 1Cor. 12:8-11: *“To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another he gives the gift of special knowledge. The Spirit gives special faith to another, and to someone else he gives the power to heal the sick. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and to another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to know whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit*

*that is speaking. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, and another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts. He decides which gift each person should have.”*

## RECEIVING HIS PRESENCE

There are many non-charismatic, or non-Pentecostal, believers who contend they got all of the Holy Spirit there is to get the moment they were born again. They deny the need for “the baptism of the Holy Ghost.” The Bibles teaches that a person does receive a measure of the Holy Spirit at the moment of the new birth. The Holy Spirit is the agent of rebirth and sanctification (purifying and setting apart).

A person having a measure of the Spirit is not the same as having the fullness of the Spirit. “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Ephesians 4:7). The gift of Christ is the Holy Spirit. In John 14:16 Jesus says, *“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever...”* According to Ephesians 4:7, every believer is given a measure of the Holy Spirit. But is that all the believer should expect to receive? Not according to God’s infallible Word. In Acts 8:5, the apostle Philip goes to Samaria and preaches and many were born again as a result. In Acts 8:14-16 specially in verse 14- “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them.)” This is biblical evidence of the need to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit after being born again.

The Samaritans were clearly born again even though the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them. Confirmed in Acts 19, there Paul comes across some new Christian believers in Ephesus. These people had been born again through the ministry of Apollos. In Acts 19:1-2 Paul testifies that these are believers and yet asks them if they have received the Holy Spirit. Paul considered these to be two separate and distinct experiences. There is a fullness of the Holy Ghost that is obtainable by every believer. It opens a reservoir of power to us that isn’t available any other way. If you desire the fullness of the Holy Spirit, there is no tarrying involved as was within the Pentecostal church environment, Jesus said, *“Just Ask”*. *“Ask, and it shall be given you,”* (Matt.7: 7)

The Bible declares tongues to be a valid manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:4 records the very first instance of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost: They were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. In Acts 19:6, when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. In Acts 10:45-46, they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard

them speak with tongues, magnify God. Acts 8:17-19 and Acts 9:17-18 gives us strong reason to believe that tongues were evidenced there as well. When you look at the entire witness of the New Testament, it's difficult to escape the conviction that where the outpouring of the Holy Ghost is, speaking in tongues are present also. You cannot separate them. They go hand in hand. It's a clear case of cause and effect.

The scriptures describe tongues as a language that you do not know or understand with your natural mind. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. (1 Cor. 14:14) It also indicates that it can be a language of mankind or of angels. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels... (1 Cor. 13:1). When you speak in tongues you are speaking divine mysteries (1 Cor. 14:2), you are saying something only God can understand. We speak the "hidden wisdom" of God or the plan of God in the earth. This is one important reason for speaking in tongues. It keeps God's plans for us concealed from Satan and keeps the devil from trying to thwart the plans God has for us. You can pray the plan of God for your life as you speak in tongues and God will reveal the plans to you, Spirit to Spirit. (1Cor. 2:9,10 and 1Cor. 12,13). As you pray in the Holy Spirit (in tongues), you are praying out God's plan for your life. It enables Him to bring vision and direction to your heart. Tongues are also invaluable when you don't know what or how you should pray (Rom 8:26). Speaking in tongues bring about rest and refreshing to you like few other things can. It's a supernatural rest that recharges your spiritual batteries. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself. (1Cor. 14:4)

Speaking in tongues is an act of your will. God will not override your will. You are a free, moral agent, and you must take the initiative if you are going to speak in tongues. All you need to do is simply say, "Lord, I want the fullness of Your Holy Spirit." Then start praying, but not in words that you understand. Simply exercise your will to make an utterance and allow the Holy Spirit to shape it. It may not sound like much at first. It may only come as two or three syllables uttered over and over. The Holy Spirit will develop your prayer language as you yield yourself to Him. (Mac Hammond, "Water Wind & Fire")

## THE UNIQUE, DIVINE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

### *How We Know the Spirit Is a Person*

Jesus refused to speak of the Comforter (the blessed Holy Spirit) as an "it." The word for "spirit" in Greek (*pneuma*) would normally take the pronoun "it" but Jesus showed the personhood of the Holy Spirit by speaking of "He" instead: "When *He*, the Spirit of truth, has come, *He* will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

- The Holy Spirit has an intellect – We cannot fathom the things that God has prepared for our future, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For *the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God*" (1Cor. 2:10). God's Spirit has all knowledge, but even so He searches the depth and magnitude of the

Father's plans. And He shares that knowledge with us. "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?" He's not merely a Revealer of truth, but also a being who Himself *knows* the truth. He prays for us, searches the heart and He has a mind (the ideas of thought, feeling, and purpose).

- The Holy Spirit has a will – Christ placed the Holy Spirit in charge of the Church. He has a will of His own and has decision-making responsibilities on earth. Paul said, "*The same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills*" (1 Cor. 12:11).
- The Holy Spirit has emotions – Love is the character of the Holy Spirit. Apostle Paul wrote "*Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me*" (Rom. 15:30 KJV). The Holy Spirit can be grieved by our actions and our wrong attitudes. We can cause Him pain and reproach when we fail to live a true Christian life.
- The Holy Spirit can speak – While the believers at Antioch were worshipping the Lord, "the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2). It is worship that invites His presence, worship that sets the stage for Him to speak to us and through us.
- The Holy Spirit can be insulted – When we fail to appreciate the significance of Christ's death on the cross, we insult the Holy Spirit. Insulting the Holy Spirit will result in losing His presence or the anointing.
- The Holy Spirit can be lied to – Ananias and Sapphira lied when they sold a piece of property and pretended that they had given the entire amount to the Lord. Death struck both after sinning against God by lying to the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit can be blasphemed – Jesus said in (Matt. 12:31, 32), "*Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men . . . either in this age or in the age to come.*" "*He who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation*" (Mark 3:29). In 1 Tim. 1:13, Paul's rejection of Christ and his persecution of the Church was *accidental* as opposed to *willful*. Paul said "*Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*"
- The Holy Spirit can be resisted – The children of Israel were making a golden calf, rejecting God and Aaron while Moses was on Mt. Sinai receiving the Law. In Gen. 6:3, God said "*My Spirit shall not strive with man forever.*"
- The Holy Spirit can be quenched – Unbelievers *resists* the Holy Spirit by rejecting the message of the gospel and refusing to allow the Holy Spirit to work in his life. Believers *quench* a flame that has already started to burn. As believers when we quench the Holy Spirit we deny Him the opportunity to bless and touch our lives and to touch other lives through us.

### **The Holy Spirit Is Divine**

The Holy Spirit is Omnipresent- present everywhere as in (Ps. 139:7-10).

The Holy Spirit is Omniscient – all knowing as in (Ps. 139:1-4).

The Holy Spirit knows about the things of God and all about you.

The Holy Spirit is Omnipotent – all powerful as demonstrated in the following:

- Creation- bringing the universe from nothingness
- Animation - bringing life from non-life
- Resurrection -bringing life from death
- The Holy Spirit is Eternal – He has always been, He is, and always will be. He is without beginning or end. He was sent to earth to empower believers after the ascension of Christ.

The Holy Spirit is *Spirit* and not flesh, he does not have a body, He is Holy and not common or defiled. He is termed Holy because He is holy in himself and not evil. The following are several of the Names and titles of the Holy Spirit:

### **The Spirit of God**

The Spirit of God name is associated with *power, prophecy, and guidance*. In Gen. 1:2 it was the Spirit of God who was hovering over the face of the waters. The Spirit of God came upon Saul and caused him to prophesy (1 Sam. 10:10). The Spirit of God came upon Zechariah and enabled him to proclaim the Word of the Lord (2 Chron. 24:20). Ezekiel's vision of the restoration of Israel was given by the Spirit of God in Ezek. 11:24. Jesus healed a possessed man who was blind and deaf and the Pharisees accused Him of using the power of Satan to perform such a miracle. The Lord Jesus, who knew their thoughts, declared that He "*cast out demons by the Spirit of God*" (Matt. 12:28). He is also the Spirit of *guidance* in Rom. 8:14, "*As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.*"

### **The Spirit of the Lord**

We worship him as the Spirit of the Yahweh. The Spirit of the "I AM". In the story of Gideon with the army of 300 men whose only weapons were a lamp and a trumpet it was "the Spirit of the Lord" that led Gideon to the glorious victory. Isaiah 59:19 says, "*When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.*"

### ***My Spirit***

In the scripture Joel 2:28 God declared through Joel that in the last days “I will pour out *My Spirit* on all flesh.” In Genesis 6:3 God warned humankind to heed the Holy Spirit by saying “*My Spirit* shall not always strive with man.”

### ***The Spirit of the Living God***

In 2Cor. 3:3 the Holy Spirit makes His Word live and His children “living epistles.” A person miraculously transformed by the Spirit of the living God is a living epistle, a walking and breathing testimonial to the power of the living God in the world today.

### ***The Power of the Highest***

The impossible becomes possible when “the power of the Highest” comes. When Mary learned from the angel Gabriel that she would bear the Messiah and wanted to know how, Gabriel informed her “*the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that the Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God*” (Luke 1:35).

### ***The Spirit of the Lord***

Inspired the human authors of Scripture: “for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). Scriptures focuses on Jesus Christ. “*The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*” (Rev. 19:10).

### ***The Spirit of Jesus Christ***

Joy comes from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus wanted our joy to be complete (John 16:24) and prayed for the Father to send another Helper to abide with us and make our joy complete. The Holy Spirit that the Lord Jesus prayed for brings the joy that the Savior wanted each of us to have. Joy comes through the Spirit of Jesus Christ regardless of our condition.

### ***The Spirit of His Son***

In Gal. 4:6 “God has sent forth the *Spirit of His Son* into our hearts, crying, “Abba Father.”

## THE PRESENCE AND POWER

### ***The Holy Spirit Opens Heaven***

The work of the Holy Spirit is inward, upward and outward. The Holy Spirit brings you into a new relationship with God and prepares you for service. When you welcome the Holy Spirit, He opens the portals of heaven and ushers you into the presence of the Father.

### ***The Holy Spirit Brings You Into God's Presence***

When the Holy Spirit begins to do His work any barriers between you and the Lord are removed. Suddenly you are close to Him. Some people have described it as “being lifted into the heavenlies.” Others say, “I feel His presence surround me right where I am.” Moses was able to endure the wilderness because God told him, “*My presence will go with you, and I will give your rest*” (Ex. 33:14).

### ***The Holy Spirit Helps In Prayer***

The scripture Jude 20 states “*building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.*” J. Oswald Sanders stated “The Spirit links Himself with us in our praying and pours His supplications into our own.” We may master the technique of prayer and understand its philosophy, we may have unlimited confidence in the veracity and validity of the promises concerning prayer. We may plead them earnestly. But if we ignore the part played by the Holy Spirit, we have failed to use the master key.” (J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*).

### ***The Holy Spirit Inspires Us To Worship***

The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to worship. Phil. 3:3 states “*For it is we who are circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh*”. The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us.

### ***The Holy Spirit Leads Us To Give Thanks***

When you are walking with the Holy Spirit, He is constantly prompting you to say, “*Thank you, Lord.*” When the Holy Spirit is in control, you’ll be able to give thanks all the time, and for everything that comes your way, even the things that are not pleasure. “*In everything give thanks, for that is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*” (1Thess. 5:18). When The Third Person of the Trinity is at work in our lives we must remember He must not become the object of our praise and thanksgiving. We are instructed to recognize the Father and the Son as the source of all good things. We thank them through the Holy Spirit.

## ***The Holy Spirit Gives Us Power***

Jesus told His disciples to tarry in the city of Jerusalem “until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Jesus clarified this when He promised that they would “receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:8). Peter was changed from a coward who had denied the Lord to a fearless preacher who saw crowds of 3,000 and 5,000 come to Christ. Paul prayed for believers to accept the fact that they would “be strengthened with might through His Spirit” (Eph. 3:16). (Benny Hinn, *Welcome Holy Spirit*)

## ***The Gifts of the Holy Spirit***

1. Wisdom – desire for the things of God, and to direct our whole life and all our actions to His honor and glory.
2. Understanding –enable us to know more clearly the mysteries of faith
3. Counsel – warn us of the deceits of the devil, and of the dangers to salvation
4. Fortitude – strengthen us to do the will of God in all things
5. Knowledge – enable us to discover the will of God in all things
6. Piety – love God as a Father, and obey Him because we love Him

Fear of the Lord – have a dread of sin and fear of offending God

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are meaningless without the fruit of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 13:1-3). The greatest response we can offer the Giver of gifts is putting the gifts into action. Peter says, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). No gift is more important than the other. “The function of a local church should be to expect, identify and awaken the varied gifts that sleep within the community of believers. When all gifts are affirmed under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and in the context of mutual love, each gift is important and no gift becomes an aberration.” (Howard Snyder, *The Problem of Wineskins*)

In reference to the Gifts of the Spirit, many people make the mistake of lumping together speaking with tongues with the gift of divers kinds of tongues, one of the nine gifts of the Spirit recorded in 1Cor. 12. They are not the same manifestation; yet some people and churches say that speaking with tongues and the gift of tongues are one and the same, and use that as an excuse to get out of doing what the Word if God declares. In 1 Cor. 12:4-11 Paul is talking about the gift of different or divers kinds of tongues. The gift of tongues is for public assembly, and should always be accompanied by the companion gift of interpretation of tongues. The rare exception to this is when God speaks to an individual through the person doing the speaking. In other words, one person will speak with the gift of tongues, but to the person, to whom the message is addressed, it will be in a language he or she will understand. Paul says, “To one is given the word of wisdom.” That means the word of wisdom is not given to everyone. Neither is any of the other gifts

of the Spirit, including the gift of divers kinds of tongues. In 1 Cor. 12:28 Paul describes the ministry gifts, Apostles, prophets, teachers, which are all people, miracles gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues are tools that equip the people to stand in the offices of apostle, prophets, evangelist, pastor and teacher. The gifts of the Spirit are not for everyone in the Body of Christ, they are for the ministry gifts God places in the Church, nevertheless, every person in the Body of Christ who is filled with the Spirit may on occasion be used by the Spirit in any one of the manifestations of these nine gifts.

Speaking with tongues is also for your personal spiritual enrichment. It does not need an interpretation like the gift of tongues because it is simply you speaking to God. The difference between speaking with tongues and the gifts of tongues is that speaking with tongues is man talking to God; it goes from earth to heaven. The gift of tongues comes from heaven to earth because it is God speaking through man to other men. (Dr. Frederick K. C. Price, *Gifts of the Spirit*)

# SPIRITUAL EXCELLENCE: EXPERIENCING THE HOLY SPIRIT

4

The primary thing that the Church need for Spiritual excellence is being filled with the Spirit of God. God's will is that we live entirely and unceasingly under the control of the Holy Spirit. Without being filled with the Spirit, it is impossible for an individual Christian or church to ever live or work as God desires. In the life and experience of Christians, this blessing is little used and little searched for. God waits to give us this blessing, and in our faith we may expect it with the greatest confidence. The self-life and the world hinder and usurp the place that Christ ought to occupy. We cannot be filled with the Spirit until we are prepared to yield ourselves to be led by the Lord Jesus, to forsake and sacrifice everything for this pearl of great price. (Andrew Murray, *Experiencing the Holy Spirit*)

### ***The Blessing Secured: If you want to have a healthy life***

The Holy Spirit comes with tremendous emotions and with a blessed awareness. With some people, God will touch you, with others it comes in a gentle filling of the whole being with the presence and the power of God by His Spirit. In order to receive this blessing come to God and give yourself up as an empty vessel and trust God to fill you, God will do His own work.

Author, Andrew Murray states in reference to “*The Holy Spirit*” there are four steps by which a man can attain the blessing of being “filled with the Spirit”, he must say the following:

1. “I must have it”
2. “I may have it”
3. “I will have it”
4. “Thank God, I shall have it”

### ***A Love Through The Spirit: The work of the Holy Spirit***

Love comes through the Holy Spirit. In and through Him, the Father begets the Son. The Holy Spirit is the love that is their living bond of union. When Christ met the Father in glory after His resurrection, the Holy Spirit began to flow. The Father gave the Spirit to the Son, and the Spirit flowed down from the Father through the Son to the disciples. The Holy Spirit brings to us the love of God as a heavenly reality, as a divine life, into our hearts. We received the blessed assurance that our hearts can be filled with the love of God in the power of the Holy Ghost. In order to perfect the love of God in you, you must yield your whole heart, wait for the Holy Spirit of God and look to Jesus through whom the Spirit comes and whom the Spirit will reveal.

# BAPTIZED BY THE SPIRIT: A MIGHTY BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST

4

In the words of Charles Finney, who had completed an interview and had returned to his room and took a seat by the fireplace a “mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost fell upon him. Without any exception of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended on me in a manner that seemed to go through my, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed, I could not express it any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can recall distinctly that it seemed to fan me like immense wings.”

“No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love; and I do not know but I should say, literally bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me and over me and over me, one after the other until I recollect I cried out ‘I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me.’ I said, ‘Lord I cannot bear it any more.’ Yet I had no fear of death” (*Finney, Autobiography*, p. 22).

Later, a church choir member, knocking on his door, found him loudly weeping and asked if he was sick or in pain. Eventually able to speak, Finney said, “No, but so happy that I cannot live.”

Finney experienced the depth of the incision, the crisis of the heart, over a period of a few days. With others, it took longer, for the heart surgery that was needed was different. (Peter J. Madden, *The Secret of Wigglesworth's Power*)

The secret of Smith Wigglesworth's anointing was faith, the rock of brokenness, and the fire of the Holy Spirit. The central and supreme factor in his life, upon which these were based, was the depth of the outworking of the Cross in his life. This was the factor that removed Wigglesworth (the natural man) from view, so that only the new man, formed by God and joined intimately with Him, could be seen. We attain this through seeking the same faith and depth of revelation and manifestation of the nature of Christ that Wigglesworth had and seek the level of the infilling of the Holy Spirit that he experienced. The power of the Holy Spirit that Wigglesworth demonstrated was power that brought phenomenal healing to the sick, divine health in his own body, conviction of sin and real repentance to those around him without a word being spoken by him. To walk in the power that Wigglesworth walked in is to live in the fullness of the “inner man” (Eph. 3:16). It is to bear witness to the “testimony of Jesus,” which only the “new man” (Eph. 4:24) is able to bear witness to. Our desire to be filled with God's power must be married to both a passion for Christ likeness and a longing that only Christ will be seen in us. (Peter J. Madden, *The Secret of Wigglesworth's Power*)

Being filled with the Spirit is a command of God as it is not to be drunk with wine which is the phrase in Eph. 5:18-21 that immediately precedes it. If we are not cleansed by the Blood of Christ and filled with God's Spirit, we are disobeying God. To be filled with the Spirit is not optional, but obligatory on every Christian. "Be filled" is in the passive voice. It is not fill yourself, but be filled. It is something that is done to us, not something we can do ourselves. This implies that all we have to offer is emptiness. If only we were more content to take that position before God, we would be more often filled; instead of which, we are all the time making attempts to come other than as empty sinners and to meet our own needs, when we should be letting Him do it.

Being filled with the Spirit is not an attainment, but an 'obtainment,' obtained through simple faith by those who know and acknowledge their emptiness. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is not just for super-saints who by their consecration and devotedness may be deemed to have qualified, but also for sinners and failures who have learned to repent and who see the perfect, present cleansing available to them in the Blood of Jesus. 'It is of faith that it might be by grace that the promise might be sure to all the seed' (Rom. 4:16), not only to saints of high attainments, but to feeble, failing people as well. There is no need for self-improvement (Rom. 9:32), no need to wait for Him, any longer than it takes us to be willing to call sin, sin and come to the Cross with it. The Holy Spirit has already been given and because of that, all may be filled and filled now.

Our need for a continuous filling with the Spirit is matched by the continuous cleansing from sin, which the Blood of Christ imparts. 1 John 1:7 has another hidden present continuous tenses. It should read, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light...the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son goes on cleansing us from all sin.' This continuous cleansing is not automatic; it only goes on cleansing as we go on walking in the light or go on saying 'yes' to what that light reveals, which means go on repenting. (Roy Hession, *Holy Spirit Be Filled Now*)

The unique experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit joins us to the body of Christ, governs us, as well as leads us. We receive the mind of Christ, our tongues are controlled and the baptism of the Holy Spirit produces a total transformation in our lives. His presence flows like rivers of living water inside our being. In order to have a successful life, we need the Holy Spirit, the Breath of Life, who teaches us.

*"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." (Eph. 1: 13-14)*

Receiving the Holy Spirit makes us children of God which is the best gift we can receive from God. In Luke 11:11-13, even though good fathers make mistakes, they treat their children well. How much better our perfect heavenly Father treats his children. The most important gift he could ever give us is the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4) whom he

promised to give all believers after his death, resurrection, and return to heaven (John 15:26).

It is impossible to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit if we allow our bodies to sin.

Romans 6:13 says, “*And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.*” (Cesar Castellanos, *The Ladder Of Success*)

Cesar Castellano says in his book *The Ladder Of Success*, there are three fundamental steps to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

- Be sure that your life has been completely sanctified with the blood of Christ
- Whole-heartedly ask the Son to baptize you with His Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.
- Persevere in prayer believing; do not be discouraged. Persevere until you have received the fullness of the Spirit flowing through your life.

The Holy Spirit is capable of changing any situation. Many people shun an anointed atmosphere because they know that it will challenge them to change. Preferring to stay where the power of God is not moving, they are never challenged, convicted, or transformed. People do some things because they lack the presence of Jesus in their lives. The Holy Ghost makes you aware that He is watching your every move to deter you from evil. (T.D. Jakes, *The Influence of the Holy Spirit*)

According to writer, Evangelists Brenda Gittens in her article in reference to being “*Empowered By His Spirit,*” in the Old Testament, there are many examples of where the Spirit of God would often come upon people, so that they could perform or accomplish specific duties or tasks. Example in Judges 14:6 “*At that moment the Spirit of the LORD powerfully took control of him, and he ripped the lion's jaws apart with his bare hands. He did it as easily as if it were a young goat.*”

All of those moments and experiences were special, but the Spirit of the Lord almost never remained upon someone indefinitely. Samson shut the lion’s mouth, triumphed over the Philistines because God’s Spirit empowered him (Judges 15:14-20), and he became the judge of Israel for twenty years and the Spirit gave Samson the strength and ability to subdue great numbers of his enemies and to accomplish great victories.

In the New Testament after Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help His followers, things changed. Peter replied, “*Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you and to your children, and even to the Gentiles-all who have been called by the Lord our God.*” (Acts 2:38-39). We no longer have to wait for His Spirit to come upon us, the Holy Spirit lives and dwells in

all believers and worshipers. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to resist the devil, accomplish, and perform great things for God. We have the privilege to be the temple of the Holy Spirit.

*"And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will."* (Rom. 8:26-27).

## HOW TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Speaking in tongues originates, not in your mind but in your spirit, inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is a way of releasing your spirit in free worship to God, without having the worship pass through the limiting bottleneck of your understanding. It is prayer in the Spirit, not prayer with the understanding.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues is not designed to do anything for your intellect. It is a spiritual experience, designed to liberate your spirit in worship and to move you into a new dimension of Christian experience which the mind or intellect cannot normally accept. Miracles never make sense to the natural mind. Neither does speaking in tongues. The Holy Spirit will give you words and syllables in the language He wants you to pray in. The Holy Spirit is real, He is supernatural with unlimited vocabulary. (Don Basham, *Ministering The Baptism In The Holy Spirit*)

Pastor Kenneth Copeland describes how to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the following manner: When you receive Jesus Christ as Lord of your life, a spiritual death takes place and you become a new creature in Christ. Without the Holy Spirit, the new life is impossible. God's desire and plan is that you receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is received by faith. When you ask in faith, the Holy Spirit comes to live in you and when you are filled with the Holy Spirit you speak in tongues as in the book of Acts.

The Holy Spirit was sent to be our helper and when we pray in tongues the Holy Spirit searches the heart and prays through you the perfect will of God (Rom. 8:26-27). You utter the secret truths and hidden things, which are not known to the understanding of your mind (1 Cor. 14:2).

When praying in tongues, you are speaking with an unknown tongue, which is the voice of your heart. Speaking in a known tongue is the voice of the human mind (unless one of the vocal gifts of the nine gifts of the Spirit is in operation). The Holy Spirit of God will give you utterance, the same as your mind gives you thoughts to speak (Acts 2:4). To speak in tongues, you must operate with the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul said in

1 Cor. 14:14. “*For if I pray in an (unknown) tongue, my spirit (by the Holy Spirit within me) prays, but my mind is unproductive...*” (The Amplified Bible). Paul was doing the speaking. Ask the Holy Spirit to take charge of your tongue, then yield your tongue to His use. You cannot speak in your own language and tongues at the same time, just as you cannot speak with English and French at the same time. When your voice and tongue begin forming syllables around the expression that your heart desires to release, you will also speak in tongues. It will be your tongue, your breath, your vocal cords and you will be actively forming words. You will supply the sounds, but the Holy Spirit will supply the words unknown to you. It may seem awkward to you at first, but continue. Like a child learning to speak, you will grow as you continue to use your tongue when you pray.

As you seek the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, you need not wait to get a word from God about it, you already have his Word, nor do you need to wait around for the Spirit. The Spirit of God entered His ministry on the Day of Pentecost and He has been here ever since. He has never left.

Don’t worry about being deceived and ending up with something that is from the devil. When you ask your heavenly Father for one of His promises, as the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, you can be confident the gift given is from God, not Satan. Luke 11:13 says, “... *how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*” As an example, Pastor Kenneth Copeland shares the following words one can repeat if you wanted to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

“Heavenly Father, I am a believer. I am Your child and You are my Father. Jesus is my Lord. I believe with all my heart that Your Word is true. “Your Word says if I will ask, I will receive the Holy Spirit. So in the Name of Jesus Christ, my Lord, I am asking You to fill me to overflowing with Your precious Holy Spirit Jesus, baptize me in the Holy Spirit. “Because of Your Word, I believe that I now receive and I thank You got it. I believe the Holy Spirit is within me and, by faith, I accept it.” “Now, Holy Spirit, rise up within me as I praise God. I fully expect to peak with other tongues, as You give me the utterance.” Now begin giving sound to the expression in your heart. Speak and hear the Holy Spirit speaking through you.

You have just been baptized in the Holy Spirit and you have been endued with power.  
([www.kcm.org/how to receive baptism holy spirit](http://www.kcm.org/how to receive baptism holy spirit))

God is looking for believers who have the heart of a servant because the Anointing of the Holy Spirit works in this life through people only. A believer who has a heart full of faith, a mind to plan and study, an ear to listen to the voice of the Spirit, a willingness to pray without ceasing, and hands that are willing to work, always attract the power of the Holy Spirit. (Dr. James C. Hash, Sr. *Divine Power Plays Against the Strategies of Satan*).

## PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

St. Augustine was Bishop of Hippo in North Africa in the 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> century. Except for the writers of the New Testament, no one has had more influence than Augustine in establishing Christian belief and practice. The prayer to the Holy Spirit invites God to work within our will to make us desire God and to empower us to fulfill that desire. Augustine was particularly aware of our human frailty and he believed we needed God's strength to do God's will.

## PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

*By SAINT AUGUSTINE Of HIPPO*

“Breath in me, O Holy Spirit,  
that my thoughts may all be holy.  
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my  
work, too, may be holy.  
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I  
Love but what is holy.  
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to  
defend all that is holy.  
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that  
I always may be holy.” Amen.

## CONCLUSION

The secret of Smith Wigglesworth's anointing was faith, the rock of brokenness, and the fire of the Holy Spirit.

I believe that in order for us to walk in the power of God, to do what He has called us to do, we should not simply say that we are believers that attend church on Sunday morning and maybe attend Bible Study on Wednesday nights, and no evidence of the power of the Holy Ghost working through us. I believe that we must have faith, brokenness, a healthy daily diet of the word of God (the Bible), an ear to hear the voice of the Spirit, praying without ceasing and allow the Holy Ghost to freely move through us not for ourselves but, for others.

# KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY

## PREFACE

True religion confronts earth with heaven and brings eternity to bear upon time. The messenger of Christ, though he speaks from God, must also, as the Quakers used to say, "speak to the condition" of his hearers; otherwise he will speak a language known only to himself. His message must be not only timeless but timely. He must speak to his own generation.

The message of this book does not grow out of these times but it is appropriate to them. It is called forth by a condition which has existed in the Church for some years and is steadily growing worse. I refer to the loss of the concept of majesty from the popular religious mind. The Church has surrendered her once lofty concept of God and has substituted for it one so low, so ignoble, as to be utterly unworthy of thinking, worshipping men. This she has done not deliberately, but little by little and without her knowledge; and her very unawareness only makes her situation all the more tragic.

The low view of God entertained almost universally among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us. A whole new philosophy of the Christian life has resulted from this one basic error in our religious thinking.

With our loss of the sense of majesty has come the further loss of religious awe and consciousness of the divine Presence. We have lost our spirit of worship and our ability to withdraw inwardly to meet God in adoring silence. Modern Christianity is simply not producing the kind of Christian who can appreciate or experience the life in the Spirit. The words, "Be still, and know that I am God," mean next to nothing to the self-confident, bustling worshipper in this middle period of the twentieth century.

This loss of the concept of majesty has come just when the forces of religion are making dramatic gains and the churches are more prosperous than at any time within the past several hundred years. But the alarming thing is that our gains are mostly external and our losses wholly internal; and since it is the quality of our religion that is affected by internal conditions, it may be that our supposed gains are but losses spread over a wider field.

The only way to recoup our spiritual losses is to go back to the cause of them and make such corrections as the truth warrants. The decline of the knowledge of the holy has brought on our troubles. A rediscovery of the majesty of God will go a long way toward

curing them. It is impossible to keep our moral practices sound and our inward attitudes right while our idea of God is erroneous or inadequate. If we would bring back spiritual power to our lives, we must begin to think of God more nearly as He is.

As my humble contribution to a better understanding of the Majesty in the heavens I offer this reverent study of the attributes of God. Were Christians today reading such works as those of Augustine or Anselm a book like this would have no reason for being. But such illuminated masters are known to modern Christians only by name. Publishers dutifully reprint their books and in due time these appear on the shelves of our studies. But the whole trouble lies right there: they remain on the shelves. The current religious mood makes the reading of them virtually impossible even for educated Christians.

Apparently not many Christians will wade through hundreds of pages of heavy religious matter requiring sustained concentration. Such books remind too many persons of the secular classics they were forced to read while they were in school and they turn away from them with a feeling of discouragement.

For that reason an effort such as this may be not without some beneficial effect. Since this book is neither esoteric nor technical, and since it is written in the language of worship with no pretension to elegant literary style, perhaps some persons may be drawn to read it. While I believe that nothing will be found here contrary to sound Christian theology, I yet write not for professional theologians but for plain persons whose hearts stir them up to seek after God Himself.

It is my hope that this small book may contribute somewhat to the promotion of personal heart religion among us; and should a few persons by reading it be encouraged to begin the practice of reverent meditation on the being of God, that will more than repay the labor required to produce it.

A. W. Tozer

# CHAPTER 1

*Why We Must Think Rightly About God*

# 4

*O, Lord God Almighty, not the God of the philosophers and the wise but the God of the prophets and apostles; and better than all, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, may I express Thee unblamed?*

*They that know Thee not may call upon Thee as other than Thou art, and so worship not Thee but a creature of their own fancy; therefore enlighten our minds that we may know Thee as Thou art, so that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily praise Thee.  
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.**

The history of mankind will probably show that no people has ever risen above its religion, and man's spiritual history will positively demonstrate that no religion has ever been greater than its idea of God. Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like. We tend by a secret law of the soul to move toward our mental image of God. This is true not only of the individual Christian, but of the company of Christians that composes the Church. Always the most revealing thing about the Church is her idea of God, just as her most significant message is what she says about Him or leaves unsaid, for her silence is often more eloquent than her speech. She can never escape the self-disclosure of her witness concerning God.

Were we able to extract from any man a complete answer to the question, "What comes into your mind when you think about God?" we might predict with certainty the spiritual future of that man. Were we able to know exactly what our most influential religious leaders think of God today, we might be able with some precision to foretell where the Church will stand tomorrow.

Without doubt, the mightiest thought the mind can entertain is the thought of God, and the weightiest word in any language is its word for God. Thought and speech are God's gifts to creatures made in His image; these are intimately associated with Him and impossible apart from Him. It is highly significant that the first word was the Word: "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God." We may speak because God spoke. In Him word and idea are indivisible.

That our idea of God corresponds as nearly as possible to the true being of God is of immense importance to us. Compared with our actual thoughts about Him, our creedal statements are of little consequence. Our real idea of God may lie buried under the rubbish of conventional religious notions and may require an intelligent and vigorous search before it is finally unearthed and exposed for what it is. Only after an ordeal of painful self-probing are we likely to discover what we actually believe about God.

A right conception of God is basic not only to systematic theology but to practical Christian living as well. It is to worship what the foundation is to the temple; where it is inadequate or out of plumb the whole structure must sooner or later collapse. I believe there is scarcely an error in doctrine or a failure in applying Christian ethics that cannot be traced finally to imperfect and ignoble thoughts about God.

It is my opinion that the Christian conception of God current in these middle years of the twentieth century is so decadent as to be utterly beneath the dignity of the Most High God and actually to constitute for professed believers something amounting to a moral calamity.

All the problems of heaven and earth, though they were to confront us together and at once, would be nothing compared with the overwhelming problem of God: That He is; what He is like; and what we as moral beings must do about Him.

The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of ten thousand temporal problems, for he sees at once that these have to do with matters which at the most cannot concern him for very long; but even if the multiple burdens of time may be lifted from him, the one mighty single burden of eternity begins to press down upon him with a weight more crushing than all the woes of the world piled one upon another. That mighty burden is his obligation to God. It includes an instant and lifelong duty to love God with every power of mind and soul, to obey Him perfectly, and to worship Him acceptably. And when the man's laboring conscience tells him that he has done none of these things, but has from childhood been guilty of foul revolt against the Majesty in the heavens, the inner pressure of self-accusation may become too heavy to bear.

The gospel can lift this destroying burden from the mind, give beauty for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. But unless the weight of the burden is felt the gospel can mean nothing to the man; and until he sees a vision of God high and lifted up, there will be no woe and no burden. Low views of God destroy the gospel for all who hold them.

Among the sins to which the human heart is prone, hardly any other is more hateful to God than idolatry, for idolatry is at bottom a libel on His character. The idolatrous heart assumes that God is other than He is - in itself a monstrous sin - and substitutes for the true God one made after its own likeness. Always this God will conform to the image of the one who created it and will be base or pure, cruel or kind, according to the moral state of the mind from which it emerges.

A god begotten in the shadows of a fallen heart will quite naturally be no true likeness of the true God.

"Thou thoughtest," said the Lord to the wicked man in the psalm, "that I was altogether such as one as thyself." Surely this must be a serious affront to the Most High God before whom cherubim and seraphim continually do cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth."

Let us beware lest we in our pride accept the erroneous notion that idolatry consists only in kneeling before visible objects of adoration, and that civilized peoples are therefore free from it. The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him. It begins in the mind and may be present where no overt act of worship has taken place.

"When they knew God," wrote Paul, "they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

Then followed the worship of idols fashioned after the likeness of men and birds and beasts and creeping things. But this series of degrading acts began in the mind. Wrong ideas about God are not only the fountain from which the polluted waters of idolatry flow; they are themselves idolatrous. The idolater simply imagines things about God and acts as if they were true.

Perverted notions about God soon rot the religion in which they appear. The long career of Israel demonstrates this clearly enough, and the history of the Church confirms it. So necessary to the Church is a lofty concept of God that when that concept in any measure declines, the Church with her worship and her moral standards declines along with it. The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its high opinion of God.

Before the Christian Church goes into eclipse anywhere there must first be a corrupting of her simple basic theology. She simply gets a wrong answer to the question, "What is God like?" and goes on from there. Though she may continue to cling to a sound nominal creed, her practical working creed has become false. The masses of her adherents come to believe that God is different from what He actually is; and that is heresy of the most insidious and deadly kind.

The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him - and of her. In all her prayers and labors this should have first place. We do the greatest service to the next generation of Christians by passing on to them undimmed and undiminished that noble concept of God which we received from our Hebrew and Christian fathers of generations past. This will prove of greater value to them than anything that art or science can devise.

*O, God of Bethel, by whose hand Thy people still are fed;  
Who through this weary pilgrimage Hast all our fathers led!  
Our vows, our prayers we now present  
Before Thy throne of grace: God of our fathers! be the God Of their  
succeeding race.*

**Philip Doddridge**

**CHAPTER 2***God Incomprehensible***4**

*Lord, how great is our dilemma! In Thy Presence silence best becomes us, but love inflames our hearts and constrains us to speak.*

*Were we to hold our peace the stones would cry out; yet if we speak, what shall we say? Teach us to know that we cannot know, for the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Let faith support us where reason fails, and we shall think because we believe, not in order that we may believe.*

*In Jesus' name. Amen.*

**The child, the philosopher, and the religionist have all one question: “What is God like?”**

This book is an attempt to answer that question. Yet at the outset I must acknowledge that it cannot be answered except to say that God is not like anything; that is, He is not exactly like anything or anybody.

We learn by using what we already know as a bridge over which we pass to the unknown. It is not possible for the mind to crash suddenly past the familiar into the totally unfamiliar. Even the most vigorous and daring mind is unable to create something out of nothing by a spontaneous act of imagination. Those strange beings that populate the world of mythology and superstition are not pure creations of fancy. The imagination created them by taking the ordinary inhabitants of earth and air and sea and extending their familiar forms beyond their normal boundaries, or by mixing the forms of two or more so as to produce something new. However beautiful or grotesque these may be, their prototypes can always be identified. They are like something we already know.

The effort of inspired men to express the ineffable has placed a great strain upon both thought and language in the Holy Scriptures. These being often a revelation of a world above nature, and the minds for which they were written being a part of nature, the writers are compelled to use a great many “like” words to make themselves understood.

When the Spirit would acquaint us with something that lies beyond the field of our knowledge, He tells us that this thing is like something we already know, but He is always careful to phrase His description so as to save us from slavish literalism. For example, when the prophet Ezekiel saw heaven opened and beheld visions of God, he found himself looking at that which he had no language to describe. What he was seeing was wholly different from anything he had ever known before, so he fell back upon the language of resemblance. “As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire.”

The nearer he approaches to the burning throne the less sure his words become: "And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it.... This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord."

Strange as this language is, it still does not create the impression of unreality. One gathers that the whole scene is very real but entirely alien to anything men know on earth. So, in order to convey an idea of what he sees, the prophet must employ such words as "likeness," "appearance," "as it were," and "the likeness of the appearance." Even the throne becomes "the appearance of a throne" and He that sits upon it, though like a man, is so unlike one that He can be described only as "the likeness of the appearance of a man."

When the Scripture states that man was made in the image of God, we dare not add to that statement an idea from our own head and make it mean "in the exact image." To do so is to make man a replica of God, and that is to lose the unicity of God and end with no God at all. It is to break down the wall, infinitely high, that separates That-which-is- God from that-which-is-not-God. To think of creature and Creator as alike in essential being is to rob God of most of His attributes and reduce Him to the status of a creature. It is, for instance, to rob Him of His infinitude: there cannot be two unlimited substances in the universe. It is to take away His sovereignty: there cannot be two absolutely free beings in the universe, for sooner or later two completely free wills must collide. These attributes, to mention no more, require that there be but one to whom they belong.

When we try to imagine what God is like we must of necessity use that-which-is-not- God as the raw material for our minds to work on; hence whatever we visualize God to be, He is not, for we have constructed our image out of that which He has made and what He has made is not God. If we insist upon trying to imagine Him, we end with an idol, made not with hands but with thoughts; and an idol of the mind is as offensive to God as an idol of the hand.

"The intellect knoweth that it is ignorant of Thee," said Nicholas of Cusa, "because it knoweth Thou canst not be known, unless the unknowable could be known, and the invisible beheld, and the inaccessible attained."

"If anyone should set forth any concept by which Thou canst be conceived," says Nicholas again, "I know that that concept is not a concept of Thee, for every concept is ended in the wall of Paradise.... So too, if any were to tell of the understanding of Thee, wishing to supply a means whereby Thou mightest be understood, this man is yet far from Thee.... forasmuch as Thou art absolute above all the concepts which any man can frame."

Left to ourselves we tend immediately to reduce God to manageable terms. We want to get Him where we can use Him, or at least know where He is when we need Him. We want a God we can in some measure control. We need the feeling of security that comes from knowing what God is like, and what He is like is of course a composite of all the religious pictures we have seen, all the best people we have known or heard about, and all the sublime ideas we have entertained.

If all this sounds strange to modern ears, it is only because we have for a full half century taken God for granted. The glory of God has not been revealed to this generation of men. The God of contemporary Christianity is only slightly superior to the gods of Greece and Rome, if indeed He is not actually inferior to them in that He is weak and helpless while they at least had power.

If what we conceive God to be He is not, how then shall we think of Him? If He is indeed incomprehensible, as the Creed declares Him to be, and unapproachable, as Paul says He is, how can we Christians satisfy our longing after Him? The hopeful words,

“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace,” still stand after the passing of the centuries; but how shall we acquaint ourselves with One who eludes all the straining efforts of mind and heart? And how shall we be held accountable to know what cannot be known? “Canst thou by searching find out God?” asks Zophar the Naamathite; “canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?”

“Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son,” said our Lord, “and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” The Gospel according to John reveals the helplessness of the human mind before the great Mystery which is God, and Paul in First Corinthians teaches that God can be known only as the Holy Spirit performs in the seeking heart an act of self-disclosure.

The yearning to know What cannot be known, to comprehend the Incomprehensible, to touch and taste the Unapproachable, arises from the image of God in the nature of man. Deep calleth unto deep, and though polluted and landlocked by the mighty disaster theologians call the Fall, the soul senses its origin and longs to return to its Source. How can this be realized?

The answer of the Bible is simply “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In Christ and by Christ, God effects complete self-disclosure, although He shows Himself not to reason but to faith and love. Faith is an organ of knowledge, and love an organ of experience. God came to us in the incarnation; in atonement He reconciled us to Himself, and by faith and love we enter and lay hold on Him.

“Verily God is of infinite greatness,” says Christ’s enraptured troubadour, Richard Rolle; “more than we can think; ... unknowable by created things; and can never be comprehended by us as He is in Himself. But even here and now, whenever the heart begins to burn with a desire for God, she is made able to receive the uncreated light

and, inspired and fulfilled by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, she tastes the joys of heaven. She transcends all visible things and is raised to the sweetness of eternal life.... Herein truly is perfect love; when all the intent of the mind, all the secret working of the heart, is lifted up into the love of God."

That God can be known by the soul in tender personal experience while remaining infinitely aloof from the curious eyes of reason constitutes a paradox best described as Darkness to the intellect But sunshine to the heart. Frederick W. Faber

The author of the celebrated little work *The Cloud of Unknowing* develops this thesis throughout his book. In approaching God, he says, the seeker discovers that the divine Being dwells in obscurity, hidden behind a cloud of unknowing; nevertheless he should not be discouraged but set his will with a naked intent unto God. This cloud is between the seeker and God so that he may never see God clearly by the light of understanding nor feel Him in the emotions. But by the mercy of God faith can break through into His Presence if the seeker but believe the Word and press on.

Michael de Molinos, the Spanish saint, taught the same thing. In his *Spiritual Guide* he says that God will take the soul by the hand and lead her through the way of pure faith, "and causing the understanding to leave behind all considerations and reasonings He draws her forward.... Thus He causes her by means of a simple and obscure knowledge of faith to aspire only to her Bridegroom upon the wings of love."

For these and similar teachings Molinos was condemned as a heretic by the Inquisition and sentenced to life imprisonment. He soon died in prison, but the truth he taught can never die. Speaking of the Christian soul he says: "Let her suppose that all the whole world and the most refined conceptions of the wisest intellects can tell her nothing, and that the goodness and beauty of her Beloved infinitely surpass all their knowledge, being persuaded that all creatures are too rude to inform her and to conduct her to the true knowledge of God.... She ought then to go forward with her love, leaving all her understanding behind. Let her love God as He is in Himself, and not as her imagination says He is, and pictures Him."

"What is God like?" If by that question we mean "What is God like in Himself?" there is no answer. If we mean "What has God disclosed about Himself that the reverent reason can comprehend?" there is, I believe, an answer both full and satisfying. For while the name of God is secret and His essential nature incomprehensible, He in condescending love has by revelation declared certain things to be true of Himself. These we call His attributes.

*Sovereign Father, heavenly King,  
Thee we now presume to sing;  
Glad thine attributes confess,  
Glorious all, and numberless.*

Charles Wesley

## CHAPTER 3

*A Divine Attribute: Something True About God*

4

*Majesty unspeakable, my soul desires to behold Thee. I cry to Thee from the dust. Yet when I inquire after Thy name it is secret. Thou art hidden in the light which no man can approach unto. What Thou art cannot be thought or uttered, for Thy glory is ineffable.*

*Still, prophet and psalmist, apostle and saint have encouraged me to believe that I may in some measure know Thee. Therefore, I pray, whatever of Thyself Thou hast been pleased to disclose, help me to search out as treasure more precious than rubies or the merchandise of fine gold: for with Thee shall I live when the stars of the twilight are no more and the heavens have vanished away and only Thou remainest. Amen.*

The study of the attributes of God, far from being dull and heavy, may for the enlightened Christian be a sweet and absorbing spiritual exercise. To the soul that is athirst for God, nothing could be more delightful.

*Only to sit and think of God, Oh what a joy it is! To  
think the thought, to breath the Name  
Earth has no higher bliss.*

**Frederick W. Faber**

It would seem to be necessary before proceeding further to define the word attribute as it is used in this volume. It is not used in its philosophical sense nor confined to its strictest theological meaning. By it is meant simply whatever may be correctly ascribed to God. For the purpose of this book an attribute of God is whatever God has in any way revealed as being true of Himself.

And this brings us to the question of the number of the divine attributes. Religious thinkers have differed about this. Some have insisted that there are seven, but Faber sang of the “God of a thousand attributes,” and Charles Wesley exclaimed, Glory thine attributes confess, Glorious all and numberless.

True, these men were worshiping, not counting; but we might be wise to follow the insight of the enraptured heart rather than the more cautious reasonings of the theological mind. If an attribute is something that is true of God, we may as well not try to enumerate them. Furthermore, to this meditation on the being of God the number of the attributes is not important, for only a limited few will be mentioned here.

If an attribute is something true of God, it is also something that we can conceive as being true of Him. God, being infinite, must possess attributes about which we can know. An attribute, as we can know it, is a mental concept, an intellectual response

to God's self-revelation. It is an answer to a question, the reply God makes to our interrogation concerning himself.

What is God like? What kind of God is He? How may we expect Him to act toward us and toward all created things? Such questions are not merely academic. They touch the far-in reaches of the human spirit, and their answers affect life and character and destiny.

When asked in reverence and their answers sought in humility, these are questions that cannot but be pleasing to our Father which art in heaven. "For He willeth that we be occupied in knowing and loving," wrote Julian of Norwich, "till the time that we shall be fulfilled in heaven.... For of all things the beholding and the loving of the Maker maketh the soul to seem less in his own sight, and most filleth him with reverent dread and true meekness; with plenty of charity for his fellow Christians. "To our questions God has provided answers; not all the answers, certainly, but enough to satisfy our intellects and ravish our hearts. These answers He has provided in nature, in the Scriptures, and in the person of His Son.

The idea that God reveals Himself in the creation is not held with much vigor by modern Christians; but it is, nevertheless, set forth in the inspired Word, especially in the writings of David and Isaiah in the Old Testament and in Paul's Epistle to the Romans in the New. In the Holy Scriptures the revelation is clearer:

The heavens declare Thy glory, Lord, In every star Thy wisdom shines;  
But when our eyes behold Thy Word, We read Thy name in fairer lines. Isaac Watts  
And it is a sacred and indispensable part of the Christian message that the full sun-blaze of revelation came at the incarnation when the Eternal Word became flesh to dwell among us.

Though God in this threefold revelation has provided answers to our questions concerning Him, the answers by no means lie on the surface. They must be sought by prayer, by long meditation on the written Word, and by earnest and well-disciplined labor. However brightly the light may shine, it can be seen only by those who are spiritually prepared to receive it.

***"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."***

If we would think accurately about the attributes of God, we must learn to reject certain words that are sure to come crowding into our minds - such words as trait, characteristic, quality, words which are proper and necessary when we are considering created beings but altogether inappropriate when we are thinking about God. We must break ourselves of the habit of thinking of the Creator as we think of His creatures. It is probably impossible to think without words, but if we permit ourselves to think with the wrong words, we shall soon be entertaining erroneous thoughts; for words, which are given us for the expression of thought, have a habit of going beyond their proper

bounds and determining the content of thought. "As nothing is more easy than to think," says Thomas Traherne, "so nothing is more difficult than to think well." If we ever think well it should be when we think of God.

A man is the sum of his parts and his character the sum of the traits that compose it. These traits vary from man to man and may from time to time vary from themselves within the same man. Human character is not constant because the traits or qualities that constitute it are unstable. These come and go, burn low or glow with great intensity throughout our lives. Thus a man who is kind and considerate at thirty may be cruel and churlish at fifty. Such a change is possible because man is made; he is in a very real sense a composition; he is the sum of the traits that make up his character.

We naturally and correctly think of man as a work wrought by the divine Intelligence. He is both created and made. How he was created lies undisclosed among the secrets of God; how he was brought from no- being to being, from nothing to something is not known and may never be known to any but the One who brought him forth. How God made him, however, is less of a secret, and while we know only a small portion of the whole truth, we do know that man possesses a body, a soul, and a spirit; we know that he has memory, reason, will, intelligence, sensation, and we know that to give these meaning he has the wondrous gift of consciousness. We know, too, that these, together with various qualities of temperament, compose his total human self.

These are gifts from God arranged by infinite wisdom, notes that make up the score of creation's loftiest symphony, threads that compose the master tapestry of the universe. But in all this we are thinking creature-thoughts and using creature-words to express them. Neither such thoughts nor such words are appropriate to the Deity. "The Father is made of none," says the Athanasian Creed, "neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son: not made nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding." God exists in Himself and of Himself. His being He owes to no one. His substance is indivisible. He has no parts but is single in His unitary being.

The doctrine of the divine unity means not only that there is but one God; it means also that God is simple, uncomplex, one with Himself. The harmony of His being is the result not of a perfect balance of parts but of the absence of parts. Between His attributes no contradiction can exist. He need not suspend one to exercise another, for in Him all His attributes are one. All of God does all that God does; He does not divide himself to perform a work, but works in the total unity of His being.

An attribute, then, is a part of God. It is how God is, and as far as the reasoning mind can go, we may say that it is what God is, though, as I have tried to explain, exactly what He is He cannot tell us. Of what God is conscious when He is conscious of self, only He knows. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Only to an equal could God communicate the mystery of His Godhead; and to think of God as having an equal is to fall into an intellectual absurdity.

The divine attributes are what we know to be true of God. He does not possess them as qualities; they are how God is as He reveals Himself to His creatures. Love, for instance, is not something God has and which may grow or diminish or cease to be. His love is the way God is, and when He loves He is simply being Himself. And so with the other attributes.

*One God! one Majesty!  
There is no God but Thee!  
Unbounded, unextended Unity!  
Unfathomable Sea!  
All life is out of Thee,  
and Thy life is Thy blissful Unity.*

**Frederick W. Faber**

**CHAPTER 4***The Holy Trinity***4**

*God of our fathers, enthroned in light, how rich, how musical is the tongue of England! Yet when we attempt to speak forth Thy wonders, our words how poor they seem and our speech how unmelodious. When we consider the fearful mystery of Thy Triune Godhead we lay our hand upon our mouth. Before that burning bush we ask not to understand, but only that we may fitly adore Thee, One God in Persons Three. Amen.*

To meditate on the three Persons of the Godhead is to walk in thought through the garden eastward in Eden and to tread on holy ground. Our sincerest effort to grasp the incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity must remain forever futile, and only by deepest reverence can it be saved from actual presumption.

Some persons who reject all they cannot explain have denied that God is a Trinity. Subjecting the Most High to their cold, level-eyed scrutiny, they conclude that it is impossible that he could be both One and Three. These forget that their whole life is enshrouded in mystery. They fall to consider that any real explanation of even the simplest phenomenon in nature lies hidden in obscurity and can no more be explained than can the mystery of the Godhead.

Every man lives by faith, the nonbeliever as well as the saint; the one by faith in natural laws and the other by faith in God. Every man throughout his entire life constantly accepts without understanding. The most learned sage can be reduced to silence with one simple question, "What?" The answer to that question lies forever in the abyss of unknowing beyond any man's ability to discover. "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof" but mortal man never.

Thomas Carlyle, following Plato, pictures a man, a deep pagan thinker, who had grown to maturity in some hidden cave and is brought out suddenly to see the sun rise. "What would his wonder be," exclaims Carlyle, "his rapt astonishment at the sight we daily witness with indifference! With the free, open sense of a child, yet with the ripe faculty of a man, his whole heart would be kindled by that sight.... This green flowery rock-built earth, the trees, the mountains, rivers, many-sounding seas; that great deep sea of azure that swims overhead; the winds sweeping through it; the black cloud fashioning itself together, now pouring out fire, now hail and rain; what is it? Ay, what? At bottom we do not yet know; we can never know at all."

How different are we who have grown used to it, who have become jaded with a satiety of wonder. "It is not by our superior insight that we escape the difficulty," says Carlyle, "it is by our superior levity, our inattention, our want of insight. It is by not thinking that

we cease to wonder at it.... We call that fire of the black thundercloud electricity, and lecture learnedly about it, and grind the like of it out of glass and silk: but what is it? Whence comes it? Whither goes it? Science has done much for us; but it is a poor science that would hide from us the great deep sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on which all science swims as a mere superficial film. This world, after all our science and sciences, is still a miracle; wonderful, inscrutable, magical and more, to whosoever will think of it."

These penetrating, almost prophetic, words were written more than a century ago, but not all the breath-taking advances of science and technology since that time have invalidated one word or rendered obsolete as much as one period or comma. Still we do not know. We save face by repeating frivolously the popular jargon of science. We harness the mighty energy that rushes through our world; we subject it to fingertip control in our cars and our kitchens; we make it work for us like Aladdin's jinn, but still we do not know what it is. Secularism, materialism, and the intrusive presence of things have put out the light in our souls and turned us into a generation of zombies. We cover our deep ignorance with words, but we are ashamed to wonder, we are afraid to whisper "mystery."

The Church has not hesitated to teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Without pretending to understand, she has given her witness, she has repeated what the Holy Scriptures teach. Some deny that the Scriptures teach the Trinity of the Godhead on the ground that the whole idea of trinity in unity is a contradiction in terms; but since we cannot understand the fall of a leaf by the roadside or the hatching of a robin's egg in the nest yonder, why should the Trinity be a problem to us? "We think more loftily of God," says Michael de Molinos, "by knowing that He is incomprehensible, and above our understanding, than by conceiving Him under any image, and creature beauty, according to our rude understanding."

Not all who called themselves Christians through the centuries were Trinitarians, but as the presence of God in the fiery pillar glowed above the camp of Israel throughout the wilderness journey, saying to all the world, "These are My people," so belief in the Trinity has since the days of the apostles shone above the Church of the Firstborn as she journeyed down the years. Purity and power have followed this faith. Under this banner have gone forth apostles, fathers, martyrs, mystics, hymnists, reformers, revivalists, and the seal of divine approval has rested on their lives and their labors. However they may have differed on minor matters, the doctrine of the Trinity bound them together.

What God declares the believing heart confesses without the need of further proof. Indeed, to seek proof is to admit doubt, and to obtain proof is to render faith superfluous. Everyone who possesses the gift of faith will recognize the wisdom of those daring words of one of the early Church fathers: "I believe that Christ died for me because it is incredible; I believe that he rose from the dead because it is impossible."

That was the attitude of Abraham, who against all evidence waxed strong in faith, giving glory to God. It was the attitude of Anselm, "the second Augustine," one of the greatest thinkers of the Christian era, who held that faith must precede all effort to understand. Reflection upon revealed truth naturally follows the advent of faith, but faith comes first to the hearing ear, not to the cogitating mind. The believing man does not ponder the Word and arrive at faith by a process of reasoning, nor does he seek confirmation of faith from philosophy or science. His cry is, "O earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar."

Is this to dismiss scholarship as valueless in the sphere of revealed religion? By no means. The scholar has a vitally important task to perform within a carefully prescribed precinct. His task is to guarantee the purity of the text, to get as close as possible to the Word as originally given. He may compare Scripture with Scripture until he has discovered the true meaning of the text. But right there his authority ends. He must never sit in judgment upon what is written. He dare not bring the meaning of the Word before the bar of his reason. He dare not commend or condemn the Word as reasonable or unreasonable, scientific or unscientific. After the meaning is discovered, that meaning judges him; never does he judge it.

The doctrine of the Trinity is truth for the heart. The spirit of man alone can enter through the veil and penetrate into that Holy of Holies. "Let me seek Thee in longing," pleaded Anselm, "let me long for Thee in seeking; let me find Thee in love, and love Thee in finding." Love and faith are at home in the mystery of the Godhead. Let reason kneel in reverence outside.

Christ did not hesitate to use the plural form when speaking of Himself along with the Father and the Spirit. "We will come unto him and make our abode with him." Yet again He said, "I and my Father are one." It is most important that we think of God as Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance. Only so may we think rightly of God and in a manner worthy of Him and of our own souls.

It was our Lord's claim to equality with the Father that outraged the religionists of His day and led at last to His crucifixion. The attack on the doctrine of the Trinity two centuries later by Arius and others was also aimed at Christ's claim to deity. During the Arian controversy 318 Church fathers (many of them maimed and scarred by the physical violence suffered in earlier persecutions) met at Nicaea and adopted a statement of faith, one section of which runs:

*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
The only-begotten Son of God,  
Begotten of Him before all ages,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
Very God of Very God,  
Begotten, not made,  
Being of one substance with the Father,  
By whom all things were made.*

For more than sixteen hundred years this has stood as the final test of orthodoxy, as well it should, for it condenses in theological language the teaching of the New Testament concerning the position of the Son in the Godhead.

The Nicene Creed also pays tribute to the Holy Spirit as being Himself God and equal to the Father and the Son:

*I believe in the Holy Spirit The Lord  
and giver of life,  
Which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with  
the Father and Son together  
Is worshipped and glorified.*

Apart from the question of whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone or from the Father and the Son, this tenet of the ancient creed has been held by the Eastern and Western branches of the Church and by all but a tiny minority of Christians.

The authors of the Athanasian Creed spelled out with great care the relation of the three Persons to each other, filling in the gaps in human thought as far as they were able while staying within the bounds of the inspired Word. "In this Trinity," runs the Creed, "nothing is before or after, nothing is greater or less: but all three Persons coeternal, together and equal."

How do these words harmonize with the saying of Jesus, "My Father is greater than I"? Those old theologians knew, and wrote into the Creed, "Equal to His Father, as touching His Godhead; less than the Father, as touching His manhood," and this interpretation commends itself to every serious-minded seeker after truth in a region where the light is all but blinding.

To redeem mankind the Eternal Son did not leave the bosom of the Father; while walking among men He referred to Himself as "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father," and spoke of Himself again as "the Son of man which is in heaven." We grant mystery here, but not confusion. In His incarnation the son veiled His deity, but He did not void it. The unity of the Godhead made it impossible that He should surrender anything of His deity. When He took upon Him the nature of man, He did not degrade Himself or become even for a time less than He had been before. God can never become less than Himself. For God to become anything that He has not been is unthinkable.

The Persons of the Godhead, being one, have one will. They work always together, and never one smallest act is done by one without the instant acquiescence of the other two. Every act of God is accomplished by the Trinity in Unity. Here, of course, we are being driven by necessity to conceive of God in human terms. We are thinking of God by analogy with man, and the result must fall short of ultimate truth; yet if we are to think of God at all, we must do it by adapting creature-thoughts and creature-words to the Creator. It is a real if understandable error to conceive of the Persons of the Godhead as conferring with one another and reaching

agreement by interchange of thought as humans do. It has always seemed to me that Milton introduces an element of weakness into his celebrated Paradise Lost when he presents the Persons of the Godhead conversing with each other about the redemption of the human race.

When the Son of God walked the earth as the Son of Man, He spoke often to the Father and the Father answered Him again; as the Son of Man, He now intercedes with God for His people. The dialogue involving the Father and the Son recorded in the Scriptures is always to be understood as being between the Eternal Father and the Man Christ Jesus. That instant, immediate communion between the Persons of the Godhead which has been from all eternity knows not sound nor effort nor motion.

*Amid the eternal silences  
None heard but He who always spake, And  
the silence was unbroken.  
O marvellous! O worshipful! No  
song or sound is heard,  
But everywhere and every hour In love,  
in wisdom, and in power,  
The Father speaks His dear Eternal Word.*

**Frederick W. Faber**

A popular belief among Christians divide the work of God between the three Persons, giving a specific part to each, as, for instance, creation to the Father, redemption to the Son, and regeneration to the Holy Spirit. This is partly true but not wholly so, for God cannot so divide Himself that one Person works while another is inactive. In the Scriptures the three Persons are shown to act in harmonious unity in all the mighty works that are wrought throughout the universe.

In the Holy Scriptures the work of creation is attributed to the Father (Gen. 1:1), to the Son (Col. 1:16), and to the Holy Spirit (Job. 26:13 and Ps. 104:30). The incarnation is shown to have been accomplished by the three Persons in full accord (Luke 1: 35), though only the Son became flesh to dwell among us. At Christ's baptism the Son came up out of the water, the Spirit descended upon Him and the Father's voice spoke from heaven (Matt. 3:16, 17). Probably the most beautiful description of the work of atonement is found in Hebrews 9:14, where it is stated that Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God; and there we behold the three persons operating together.

The resurrection of Christ is likewise attributed variously to the Father (Acts 2:32), to the Son (John 10:17-18), and to the Holy Spirit (Rom. 1:4). The salvation of the individual man is shown by the apostle Peter to be the work of all three Persons of the Godhead (1 Pet. 1:2), and the indwelling of the Christian man's soul is said to be by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-23).

The doctrine of the Trinity, as I have said before, is truth for the heart. The fact that it cannot be satisfactorily explained, instead of being against it, is in its favor. Such a truth had to be revealed; no one could have imagined it.

*O Blessed Trinity!  
O simplest Majesty! O Three in One!  
Thou art for ever God alone.  
Holy Trinity! Blessed equal Three.  
One God, we praise Thee.*

**Frederick W. Faber**

**CHAPTER 5***The Self-existence of God***4**

*Lord of all being! Thou alone canst affirm I AM THAT I AM; yet we who are made in Thine image may each one repeat “I am,” so confessing that we derive from Thee and that our words are but an echo of Thine own. We acknowledge Thee to be the great Original of which we through Thy goodness are grateful if imperfect copies. We worship Thee, O Father Everlasting. Amen.*

“God has no origin,” said Novatian and it is precisely this concept of no-origin which distinguishes That-which-is-God from whatever is not God.

Origin is a word that can apply only to things created. When we think of anything that has origin we are not thinking of God. God is self-existent, while all created things necessarily originated somewhere at some time. Aside from God, nothing is self-caused.

By our effort to discover the origin of things we confess our belief that everything was made by Someone who was made of none. By familiar experience we are taught that everything “came from” something else. Whatever exists must have had a cause that antedates it and was at least equal to it, since the lesser cannot produce the greater. Any person or thing may be at once both caused and the cause of someone or something else; and so, back to the One who is the cause of all but is Himself caused by none.

The child by his question, “Where did God come from?” is unwittingly acknowledging his creaturehood. Already the concept of cause and source and origin is firmly fixed in his mind. He knows that everything around him came from something other than itself, and he simply extends that concept upward to God. The little philosopher is thinking in true creature-idiom and, allowing for his lack of basic information, he is reasoning correctly. He must be told that God has no origin, and he will find this hard to grasp since it introduces a category with which he is wholly unfamiliar and contradicts the bent toward origin-seeking so deeply ingrained in all intelligent beings, a bent that impels them to probe ever back and back toward undiscovered beginnings.

To think steadily of that to which the idea of origin cannot apply is not easy, if indeed it is possible at all. Just as under certain conditions a tiny point of light can be seen, not by looking directly at it but by focusing the eyes slightly to one side, so it is with the idea of the Uncreated.

When we try to focus our thought upon One who is pure uncreated being we may, see nothing at all, for He dwelleth in light that no man can approach unto. Only by faith

and love are we able to glimpse Him as he passes by our shelter in the cleft of the rock. "And although this knowledge is very cloudy, vague and general," says Michael de Molinos, being supernatural, it produces a far more clear and perfect cognition of God than any sensible or particular apprehension that can be formed in this life; since all corporeal and sensible images are immeasurably remote from God."

The human mind, being created, has an understandable uneasiness about the Uncreated. We do not find it comfortable to allow for the presence of One who is wholly outside of the circle of our familiar knowledge. We tend to be disquieted by the thought of One who does not account to us for His being, who is responsible to no one, who is self-existent, self-dependent and self-sufficient.

Philosophy and science have not always been friendly toward the idea of God, the reason being that they are dedicated to the task of accounting for things and are impatient with anything that refuses to give an account of itself. The philosopher and the scientist will admit that there is much that they do not know; but that is quite another thing from admitting that there is something which they can never know, which indeed they have no technique for discovering.

To admit that there is One who lies beyond us, who exists outside of all our categories, who will not be dismissed with a name, who will not appear before the bar of our reason, nor submit to our curious inquiries: this requires a great deal of humility, more than most of us possess, so we save face by thinking God down to our level, or at least down to where we can manage Him. Yet how He eludes us! For He is everywhere while He is nowhere, for "where" has to do with matter and space, and God is independent of both. He is unaffected by time or motion, is wholly self-dependent and owes nothing to the worlds His hands have made.

*Timeless, spaceless, single, lonely, Yet sublimely Three,  
Thou art grandly, always, only God is Unity!  
Lone in grandeur, lone in glory,  
Who shall tell Thy wondrous story? Awful Trinity!*

**Frederick W. Faber**

It is not a cheerful thought that millions of us who live in a land of Bibles, who belong to churches and labor to promote the Christian religion, may yet pass our whole life on this earth without once having thought or tried to think seriously about the being of God. Few of us have let our hearts gaze in wonder at the I AM, the self-existent Self back of which no creature can think. Such thoughts are too painful for us. We prefer to think where it will do more good - about how to build a better mousetrap, for instance, or how to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. And for this we are now paying a too heavy price in the secularization of our religion and the decay of our inner lives.

Perhaps some sincere but puzzled Christian may at this juncture wish to inquire about the practicality of such concepts as I am trying to set forth here. "What bearing does this have on my life?" he may ask.

"What possible meaning can the self-existence of God have for me and others like me in a world such as this and in times such as these?"

To this I reply that, because we are the handiwork of God, it follows that all our problems and their solutions are theological. Some knowledge of what kind of God it is that operates the universe is indispensable to a sound philosophy of life and a sane outlook on the world scene.

The much-quoted advice of Alexander Pope, Know then thyself, presume not God to scan: The proper study of mankind is man, if followed literally would destroy any possibility of man's ever knowing himself in any but the most superficial way. We can never know who or what we are till we know at least something of what God is. For this reason the self-existence of God is not a wisp of dry doctrine, academic and remote; it is in fact as near as our breath and as practical as the latest surgical technique.

For reasons known only to Himself, God honored man above all other beings by creating him in His own image. And let it be understood that the divine image in man is not a poetic fancy, not an idea born of religious longing. It is a solid theological fact, taught plainly throughout the Sacred Scriptures and recognized by the Church as a truth necessary to a right understanding of the Christian faith.

Man is a created being, a derived and contingent self, who of himself possesses nothing but is dependent each moment for his existence upon the One who created him after His own likeness. The fact of God is necessary to the fact of man. Think God away and man has no ground of existence.

That God is everything and man nothing is a basic tenet of Christian faith and devotion; and here the teachings of Christianity coincide with those of the more advanced and philosophical religions of the East. Man for all his genius is but an echo of the original Voice, a reflection of the uncreated Light. As a sunbeam perishes when cut off from the sun, so man apart from God would pass back into the void of nothingness from which he first leaped at the creative call.

Not man only, but everything that exists came out of and is dependent upon the continuing creative impulse. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... All things were made by him and without him was not any thing made that was made." That is how John explains it, and with him agrees the apostle Paul: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and

by him all things consist." To this witness the writer to the Hebrews adds his voice, testifying of Christ that He is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His Person, and that He upholds all things by the word of His power.

In this utter dependence of all things upon the creative will of God lies the possibility for both holiness and sin. One of the marks of God's image in man is his ability to exercise moral choice. The teaching of Christianity is that man chose to be independent of God and confirmed his choice by deliberately disobeying a divine command. This act violated the relationship that normally existed between God and His creature; it rejected God as the ground of existence and threw man back upon himself. Thereafter he became not a planet revolving around the central Sun, but a sun in his own right, around which everything else must revolve.

A more positive assertion of selfhood could not be imagined than those words of God to Moses: I AM THAT I AM. Everything God is, everything that is God, is set forth in that unqualified declaration of independent being. Yet in God, self is not sin but the quintessence of all possible goodness, holiness and truth.

The natural man is a sinner because and only because he challenges God's selfhood in relation to his own. In all else he may willingly accept the sovereignty of God; in his own life he rejects it. For him, God's dominion ends where his begins. For him, self becomes Self, and in this he unconsciously imitates Lucifer, that fallen son of the morning who said in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High."

Yet so subtle is self that scarcely anyone is conscious of its presence. Because man is born a rebel, he is unaware that he is one. His constant assertion of self, as far as he thinks of it at all, appears to him a perfectly normal thing. He is willing to share himself, sometimes even to sacrifice himself for a desired end, but never to dethrone himself. No matter how far down the scale of social acceptance he may slide, he is still in his own eyes a king on a throne, and no one, not even God, can take that throne from him.

Sin has many manifestations but its essence is one. A moral being, created to worship before the throne of God, sits on the throne of his own selfhood and from that elevated position declares, "I AM." That is sin in its concentrated essence; yet because it is natural it appears to be good. It is only when in the gospel the soul is brought before the face of the Most Holy One without the protective shield of ignorance that the frightful moral incongruity is brought home to the conscience. In the language of evangelism the man who is thus confronted by the fiery presence of Almighty God is said to be under conviction. Christ referred to this when He said of the Spirit whom He would send to the world, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

The earliest fulfilment of these words of Christ was at Pentecost after Peter had preached the first great Christian sermon. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked

in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" This "What shall we do?" is the deep heart cry of every man who suddenly realizes that he is a usurper and sits on a stolen throne. However painful, it is precisely this acute moral consternation that produces true repentance and makes a robust Christian after the penitent has been dethroned and has found forgiveness and peace through the gospel.

"Purity of heart is to will one thing," said Kierkegaard, and we may with equal truth turn this about and declare, "The essence of sin is to will one thing," for to set our will against the will of God is to dethrone God and make ourselves supreme in the little kingdom of Mansoul. This is sin at its evil root. Sins may multiply like the sands by the seashore, but they are yet one. Sins are because sin is. This is the rationale behind the much maligned doctrine of natural depravity which holds that the independent man can do nothing but sin and that his good deeds are really not good at all. His best religious works God rejects as He rejected the offering of Cain. Only when he has restored his stolen throne to God are his works acceptable.

The struggle of the Christian man to be good while the bent toward self-assertion still lives within him as a kind of unconscious moral reflex is vividly described by the apostle Paul in the seventh chapter of his Roman Epistle; and his testimony is in full accord with the teaching of the prophets. Eight hundred years before the advent of Christ the prophet Isaiah identified sin as rebellion against the will of God and the assertion of the right of each man to choose for himself the way he shall go. "All we like sheep have gone astray," he said, "we have turned every one to his own way," and I believe that no more accurate description of sin has ever been given.

The witness of the saints has been in full harmony with prophet and apostle, that an inward principle of self lies at the source of human conduct, turning everything men do into evil. To save us completely Christ must reverse the bent of our nature; He must plant a new principle within us so that our subsequent conduct will spring out of a desire to promote the honor of God and the good of our fellow men. The old self-sins must die, and the only instrument by which they can be slain is the Cross. "If any man come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," said our Lord, and years later the victorious Paul could say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

*My God, shall sin its power maintain  
And in my soul defiant live!  
"Tis not enough that Thou forgive,  
The cross must rise and self be slain.  
O God of love, Thy power disclose:  
"Tis not enough that Christ should rise,  
I, too, must seek the brightening skies,  
And rise from death, as Christ arose.*

#### Greek hymn

**CHAPTER 6***The Self-sufficiency of God***4**

*Teach us, O God, that nothing is necessary to Thee. Were anything necessary to Thee that thing would be the measure of Thine imperfection: and how could we worship one who is imperfect? If nothing is necessary to Thee, then no one is necessary, and if no one, then not we. Thou dost seek us though Thou does not need us. We seek Thee because we need Thee, for in Thee we live and move and have our being. Amen*

"The Father hath life in himself," said our Lord, and it is characteristic of His teaching that He thus in a brief sentence sets forth truth so lofty as to the transcend the highest reaches of human thought. God, He said, is self-sufficient; He is what He is in Himself, in the final meaning of those words.

Whatever God is, and all that God is, He is in Himself. All life is in and from God, whether it be the lowest form of unconscious life or the highly self-conscious, intelligent life of a seraph. No creature has life in itself; all life is a gift from God.

The life of God, conversely, is not a gift from another. Were there another from whom God could receive the gift of life, or indeed any gift whatever, that other would be God in fact. An elementary but correct way to think of God is as the One who contains all, who gives all that is given, but who Himself can receive nothing that He has not first given. To admit the existence of a need in God is to admit incompleteness in the divine Being.

Need is a creature - word and cannot be spoken of the Creator. God has a voluntary relation to everything He has made, but He has no necessary relation to anything outside of Himself. His interest in His creatures arises from His sovereign good pleasure, not from any need those creatures can supply nor from any completeness they can bring to Him who is complete in Himself.

Again we must reverse the familiar flow of our thoughts and try to understand that which is unique, that which stands alone as being true in this situation and nowhere else. Our common habits of thought allow for the existence of need among created things. Nothing is complete in itself but requires something outside itself in order to exist. All breathing things need air; every organism needs food and water. Take air and water from the earth and all life would perish instantly. It may be stated as all axiom that to stay alive every created thing needs some other created thing and all things need God. To God alone nothing is necessary.

The river grows larger by its tributaries, but where is the tributary that can enlarge the One out of whom came everything and to whose infinite fullness all creation owes its being?

*Unfathomable Sea: all life  
is out of Thee,  
And Thy life is Thy blissful Unity.*

**Frederick W. Faber**

The problem of why God created the universe still troubles thinking men; but if we cannot know why, we can at least know that He did not bring His worlds into being to meet some unfulfilled need in Himself, as a man might build a house to shelter him against the winter cold or plant a field of corn to provide him with necessary food. The word necessary is wholly foreign to God.

Since He is the Being supreme over all, it follows that God cannot be elevated. Nothing is above Him, nothing beyond Him. Any motion in His direction is elevation for the creature; away from Him, descent. He holds His position out of Himself and by leave of none. As no one can promote Him, so no one can degrade Him. It is written that He upholds all things by the word of His power. How can He be raised or supported by the things He upholds?

Were all human beings suddenly to become blind, still the sun would shine by day and the stars by night, for these owe nothing to the millions who benefit from their light. So, were every man on earth to become atheist, it could not affect God in any way. He is what He is in Himself without regard to any other. To believe in Him adds nothing to His perfections; to doubt Him takes nothing away.

Almighty God, just because He is almighty, needs no support. The picture of a nervous, ingratiating God fawning over men to win their favor is not a pleasant one; yet if we look at the popular conception of God that is precisely what we see. Twentieth century Christianity has put God on charity. So lofty is our opinion of ourselves that we find it quite easy, not to say enjoyable, to believe that we are necessary to God. But the truth is that God is not greater for our being, nor would He be less if we did not exist. That we do exist is altogether of God's free determination, not by our desert nor by divine necessity.

Probably the hardest thought of all for our natural egotism to entertain is that God does not need our help. We commonly represent Him as a busy, eager, somewhat frustrated Father hurrying about seeking help to carry out His benevolent plan to bring peace and salvation to the world, but, as said the Lady Julian, "I saw truly that God doeth all-thing, be it never so little." The God who worketh all things surely needs no help and no helpers.

Too many missionary appeals are based upon this fancied frustration of Almighty God. An effective speaker can easily excite pity in his listeners, not only for the heathen but for the God who has tried so hard and so long to save them and has failed for want of support. I fear that thousands of younger persons enter Christian service from no higher

motive than to help deliver God from the embarrassing situation His love has gotten Him into and His limited abilities seem unable to get Him out of. Add to this a certain degree of commendable idealism and a fair amount of compassion for the underprivileged and you have the true drive behind much Christian activity today.

Again, God needs no defenders. He is the eternal Undefended. To communicate with us in all idiom we can understand, God in the Scriptures makes full use of military terms; but surely it was never intended that we should think of the throne of the Majesty on high as being under siege, with Michael and his hosts or some other heavenly beings defending it from stormy overthrow. So to think is to misunderstand everything the Bible would tell us about God. Neither Judaism nor Christianity could approve such puerile notions. A God who must be defended is one who can help us only while someone is helping Him. We may count upon Him only if He wins in the cosmic seesaw battle between right and wrong. Such a God could not command the respect of intelligent men; He could only excite their pity.

To be right we must think worthily of God. It is morally imperative that we purge from our minds all ignoble concepts of the Deity and let Him be the God in our minds that He is in His universe. The Christian religion has to do with God and man, but its focal point is God, not man. Man's only claim to importance is that he was created in the divine image; in himself he is nothing.

The psalmists and prophets of the Scriptures refer sad scorn to weak man whose breath is in his nostrils, who grows up like the grass in the morning only to be cut down and wither before the setting of the sun. That God exists for himself and man for the glory of God is the emphatic teaching of the Bible. The high honor of God is first in heaven as it must yet be in earth.

From all this we may begin to understand why the Holy Scriptures have so much to say about the vital place of faith and why they brand unbelief as a deadly sin. Among all created beings, not one dare trust it itself. God alone trusts in himself; all other beings must trust in Him. Unbelief is actually perverted faith, for it puts its trust not in the living God but in dying men. The unbeliever denies the self-sufficiency of God and usurps attributes that are not his. This dual sin dishonors God and ultimately destroys the soul of the man.

In His love and pity God came to us as Christ. This has been the consistent position of the Church from the days of the apostles. It is fixed for Christian belief in the doctrine of the incarnation of the Eternal Son. In recent times, however, this has come to mean something different from, and less than, what it meant to the early church. The Man Jesus as He appeared in the flesh has been equated with the Godhead and all His human weaknesses and limitations attributed to the Deity. The truth is that the Man who walked among us was a demonstration, not of unveiled deity but of perfect humanity. The awful majesty of the Godhead was mercifully sheathed in the soft envelope of Human nature to protect mankind. "Go down," God told Moses on the mountain,

"charge the people, less they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish"; and later, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."

Christians today appear to know Christ only after the flesh. They try to achieve communion with Him by divesting Him of His burning holiness and unapproachable majesty, the very attributes He veiled while on earth but assumed in fullness of glory upon His ascension to the Father's right hand. The Christ of popular Christianity has a weak smile and a halo. He has become Someone-up-There who likes people, at least some people, and these are grateful but not too impressed. If they need Him, He also needs them.

Let us not imagine that the truth of the divine self-sufficiency will paralyse Christian activity. Rather it will stimulate all holy endeavor. This truth, while a needed rebuke to human self-confidence, will when viewed in its Biblical perspective lift from our minds the exhausting load of mortality and encourage us to take the easy yoke of Christ and spend ourselves in Spirit-inspired toil for the honor of God and the good of mankind. For the blessed news is that the God who needs no one has in sovereign condescension set Himself to work by and in and through His obedient children. If all this appears self-contradictory - Amen, be it so. The various elements of truth stand in perpetual antithesis, sometimes requiring us to believe apparent opposites while we wait for the moment when we shall know as we are known. Then truth which now appears to be in conflict with itself will arise in shining unity and it will be seen that the conflict has not been in the truth but in our sin-damaged minds.

In the meanwhile our inner fulfilment lies in loving obedience to the commandments of Christ and the inspired admonitions of His apostles. "It is God which worketh in you." He needs no one, but when faith is present He works through anyone. Two statements are in this sentence and a healthy spiritual life requires that we accept both. For a full generation the first has been in almost total eclipse, and that to our deep spiritual injury.

*Fountain of good,  
all blessing flows From Thee;  
no want Thy fulness knows;  
What but Thyself canst Thou desire?  
Yet, self-sufficient as Thou art,  
Thou dost desire my worthless heart.  
This, only this, dost Thou require.*

**Johann Scheffler**

**CHAPTER 7***The Eternity of God***4**

*This day our hearts approve with gladness what our reason can never fully comprehend, even Thine eternity, O Ancient of Days. Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, mine Holy One? We worship Thee, the Father Everlasting, whose years shall have no end; and Thee, the love-begotten Son whose goings forth have been ever of old; we also acknowledge and adore Thee, Eternal Spirit, who before the foundation of the world didst live and love in coequal glory with the Father and the Son.*

Enlarge and purify the mansions of our souls that they may be fit habitations for Thy Spirit, who dost prefer before all temples the upright heart and pure. Amen.

The concept of everlastingness runs like a lofty mountain range throughout the entire Bible and looms large in orthodox Hebrew and Christian thought. Were we to reject the concept, it would be altogether impossible for us to think again the thoughts of prophets and apostles, so full were they of the long dreams of eternity.

Because the word everlasting is sometimes used by the sacred writers to mean no more than long-lasting (as “the everlasting hills”), some persons have argued that the concept of unending existence was not in the minds of the writers when they used the word but was supplied later by the theologians. This is of course a serious error, and, as far as I can see, has no ground in serious scholarship. It has been used by certain teachers as an escape from the doctrine of eternal punishment. These reject the eternity of moral retribution, and to be consistent they are forced to weaken the whole idea of endlessness. This is not the only instance where an attempt was made to slay a truth to keep it quiet lest it appear as a material witness against an error.

The truth is that if the Bible did not teach that God possessed endless being in the ultimate meaning of that term, we would be compelled to infer it from His other attributes, and if the Holy Scriptures had no word for absolute everlastingness, it would be necessary for us to coin one to express the concept, for it is assumed, implied, and generally taken for granted everywhere throughout the inspired Scriptures. The idea of endlessness is to the kingdom of God what carbon is to the kingdom of nature. As carbon is present almost everywhere, as it is an essential element in all living matter and supplies all life with energy, so the concept of everlastingness is necessary to give meaning to any Christian doctrine. Indeed I know of no tenet of the Christian creed that could retain its significance if the idea of eternity were extracted from it.

“From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God,” said Moses in the Spirit. “From the vanishing point to the vanishing point” would be another way to say it quite in keeping with the words as Moses used them. The mind looks backward in time till the dim past vanishes, then turns and looks into the future till thought and imagination collapses from exhaustion: and God is at both points, unaffected by either.

Time marks the beginning of created existence, and because God never began to exist it can have no application to Him. "Began" is a time-word, and it can have no personal meaning for the high and lofty

*One that inhabited eternity.  
No age can heap its outward years on Thee;  
Dear God! Thou art; Thyself, Thine own eternity.* Frederick F. Faber

Because God lives in an everlasting now, He has no past and no future. When time-words occur in the Scriptures they refer to our time, not to His. When the four living creatures before the throne cry day and night, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come," they are identifying God with the flow of creature-life with its familiar three tenses; and this is right and good, for God has sovereignly willed so to identify Himself. But since God is uncreated, He is not himself affected by that succession of consecutive changes we call time.

God dwells in eternity but time dwells in God. He has already lived all our tomorrows as He has lived all our yesterdays. An illustration offered by C. S. Lewis may help us here. He suggests that we think of a sheet of paper infinitely extended. That would be eternity. Then on that paper draw a short line to represent time. As the line begins and ends on that infinite expanse, so time began in God and will end in Him.

That God appears at time's beginning is not too difficult to comprehend, but that He appears at the beginning and end of time simultaneously is not so easy to grasp; yet it is true. Time is known to us by a succession of events. It is the way we account for consecutive changes in the universe. Changes take place not all at once but in succession, one after the other, and it is the relation of "after" to "before" that gives us our idea of time. We wait for the sun to move from east to west or for the hour hand to move around the face of the clock, but God is not compelled so to wait. For Him everything that will happen has already happened.

This is why God can say, "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning." He sees the end and the beginning in one view. "For infinite duration, which is eternity's self, includeth all succession," says Nicholas of Cusa, "and all which seemeth to us to be in succession existeth not posterior to Thy concept, which is eternity.... Thus, because Thou art God almighty, Thou dwellest within the wall of Paradise, and this wall is that coincidence where later is one with earlier, where the end is one with the beginning, where Alpha and Omega are the same.... For NOW and THEN coincide in the circle of the wall of Paradise. But, O my God, the Absolute and Eternal, it is beyond the present and the past that Thou dost exist and utter speech."

When He was a very old man, Moses wrote the psalm from which I have quoted earlier in this chapter. In it he celebrates the eternity of God. To him this truth is a solid theological fact as firm and hard as that Mount Sinai with which he was so familiar, and for him it had two practical meanings: since God is eternal, He can be and continue forever to be the one safe home for His time-driven children. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." The second thought is less comforting: God's eternity is so long and our years on earth are so few, how shall we establish the work of

our hands? How shall we escape the abrasive action of events that would wear us out and destroy us? God fills and dominates the psalm, so it is to Him that Moses makes his plaintive appeal, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." May the knowledge of Thy eternity not be wasted on me!

We who live in this nervous age would be wise to meditate on our lives and our days long and often before the face of God and on the edge of eternity. For we are made for eternity as certainly as we are made for time, and as responsible moral beings we must deal with both.

"He hath set eternity in their heart," said the Preacher, and I think he here sets forth both the glory and the misery of men. To be made for eternity and forced to dwell in time is for mankind a tragedy of huge proportions. All within us cries for life and permanence, and everything around us reminds us of mortality and change. Yet that God has made us of the stuff of eternity is both a glory and a prophecy yet to be fulfilled.

I hope it will not be found unduly repetitious if I return again to that important pillar of Christian theology, the image of God in man. The marks of the divine image have been so obscured by sin that they are not easy to identify, but is it not reasonable to believe that one mark may be man's insatiable craving for immortality?

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust: Thou madest man, he knows not why; He thinks he was not made to die And Thou hast made him: Thou art just.

So reasons Tennyson, and the deepest instincts of the normal human heart agree with him. The ancient image of God whispers within every man of everlasting hope; somewhere he will continue to exist. Still he cannot rejoice, for the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world troubles his conscience, frightening him with proofs of guilt and evidences of coming death. So is he ground between the upper millstone of hope and the nether stone of fear.

Just here the sweet relevancy of the Christian message appears. "Jesus Christ ... hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." So wrote the greatest Christian of them all just before he went out to meet his executioner. God's eternity and man's mortality join to persuade us that faith in Jesus Christ is not optional. For every man it must be Christ or eternal tragedy. Out of eternity our Lord came into time to rescue His human brethren whose moral folly had made them not only fools of the passing world but slaves of sin and death as well.

*Brief life is here our portion,  
Brief sorrow, short-lived care;  
The life that knows no ending,  
The tearless life is there.  
There God, our King and Portion,  
In fullness of His grace,  
We then shall see forever,  
And worship face to face.*

**Bernard of Cluny**

**CHAPTER 8***God's Infinitude***4**

*Our Heavenly Father: Let us see Thy glory, if it must be from the shelter of the cleft rock and from beneath the protection of Thy covering hand. Whatever the cost to us in loss of friends or goods or length of days let us know Thee as Thou art, that we may adore Thee as we should. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

The world is evil, the times are waxing late, and the glory of God has departed from the church as the fiery cloud once lifted from the door of the Temple in the sight of Ezekiel the prophet.

The God of Abraham has withdrawn His conscious Presence from us, and another God whom our fathers knew not is making himself at home among us. This God we have made and because we have made him we can understand him; because we have created him he can never surprise us, never overwhelm us, nor astonish us, nor transcend us.

The God of glory sometimes revealed Himself like a sun to warm and bless, indeed, but often to astonish, overwhelm, and blind before He healed and bestowed permanent sight. This God of our fathers wills to be the God of their succeeding race. We have only to prepare Him a habitation in love and faith and humility. We have but to want Him badly enough, and He will come and manifest Himself to us.

Shall we allow a saintly and thoughtful man to exhort us? Hear Anselm; or better still, heed his words:

Up now, slight man! Flee for a little while thy occupations; hide thyself for a time from thy disturbing thoughts. Cast aside now thy burdensome cares, and put away thy toilsome business. Yield room for some little time to God, and rest for a little time in Him. Enter the inner chamber of thy mind; shut out all thoughts save that of God and such as can aid thee in seeking Him. Speak now, my whole heart! Speak now to God, saying, I seek Thy face; Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

Of all that can be thought or said about God, His Infinitude is the most difficult to grasp. Even to try to conceive of it would appear to be self-contradictory, for such conceptualization requires us to undertake something which we know at the outset we can never accomplish. Yet we must try, for the Holy Scriptures teach that God is infinite and, if we accept His other attributes, we must of necessity accept this one too.

From the effort to understand, we must not turn back because the way is difficult and there are no mechanical aids for the ascent. The view is better farther up and the

journey is not one for the feet but for the heart. Let us seek, therefore, such “trances of thought and mountings of the mind” as God may be pleased to grant us, knowing that the Lord often pours eyesight on the blind and whispers to babes and sucklings truths never dreamed of by the wise and prudent. Now the blind must see and the deaf hear. Now we must expect to receive the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places.

Infinitude, of course, means limitlessness, and it is obviously impossible for a limited mind to grasp the Unlimited. In this chapter I am compelled to think one step short of that about which I am writing, and the reader must of necessity think a degree under that about which he is trying to think. O, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

The reason for our dilemma has been suggested before. We are trying to envision a mode of being altogether foreign to us, and wholly unlike anything we have known in our familiar world of matter, space, and time.

“Here, and in all our meditations upon the qualities and content of God,” writes Novatian, “we pass beyond our power of fit conception, nor can human eloquence put forth a power commensurate with His greatness. At the contemplation and utterance of His majesty all eloquence is rightly dumb, all mental effort is feeble. For God is greater than mind itself. His greatness cannot be conceived. Nay, could we conceive of His greatness He would be less than the human mind which could form the conception.

He is greater than all language, and no statement can express Him. Indeed, if any statement could express Him, He would be less than human speech which could by such statement comprehend and gather up all that He is. All our thoughts about Him will be less than He, and our loftiest utterances will be trivialities in comparison with Him.”

Unfortunately the word infinite has not always been held to its precise meaning, but has been used carelessly to mean simply much or a great deal, as when we say that an artist takes infinite pains with his picture or a teacher shows infinite patience with her class. Properly, the word can be used of no created thing, and of no one but God. Hence, to argue about whether or not space is infinite is to play with words. Infinitude can belong to but One. There can be no second.

When we say that God is infinite we mean that He knows no bounds. Whatever God is and all that God is, He is without limit. And here again we must break away from the popular meaning of words. “Unlimited wealth” and “boundless energy” are further examples of the misuse of words. Of course no wealth is unlimited and no energy boundless unless we are speaking of the wealth and energy of God.

Again, to say that God is infinite is to say that He is measureless. Measurement is the way created things have of accounting for themselves. It describes limitations,

imperfections, and cannot apply to God. Weight describes the gravitational pull of the earth upon material bodies; distance describes intervals between bodies in space; length means extension in space, and there are other familiar measurements such as those for liquid, energy, sound, light, and numbers for pluralities. We also try to measure abstract qualities, and speak of great or little faith, high or low intelligence, large or meager talents.

It is not plain that all this does not and cannot apply to God? It is the way we see the works of His hands, but not the way we see Him. He is above all this, outside of it, beyond it. Our concepts of measurement embrace mountains and men, atoms and stars, gravity, energy, numbers, speed, but never God. We cannot speak of measure or amount or size or weight and at the same time be speaking of God, for these tell of degrees and there are no degrees in God. All that He is He is without growth or addition or development. Nothing in God is less or more, or large or small. He is what He is in Himself, without qualifying thought or word. He is simply God.

In the awful abyss of the divine Being may lie attributes of which we know nothing and which can have no meaning for us, just as the attributes of mercy and grace can have no personal meaning for seraphim or cherubim. These holy beings may know of these qualities in God but be unable to feel them sympathetically for the reason that they have not sinned and so do not call forth God's mercy and grace. So there may be, and I believe there surely are, other aspects of God's essential being which He has not revealed even to His ransomed and Spirit-illuminated children. These hidden facets of God's nature concern His relation to none but Himself. They are like the far side of the moon, which we know is there but which has never been explored and has no immediate meaning for men on earth. There is no reason for us to try to discover what has not been revealed. It is enough to know that God is God.

*Thine own Self forever filling With  
self-kindled flame,  
In Thyself Thou art distilling  
Unctions without name!  
Without worshipping of creatures, Without veiling of Thy features, God always  
the same!*

**Frederick W. Faber**

But God's infinitude belongs to us and is made known to us for our everlasting profit. Yet, just what does it mean to us beyond the mere wonder of thinking about it? Much every way, and more as we come to know ourselves and God better. Because God's nature is infinite, everything that flows out of it is infinite also. We poor human creatures are constantly being frustrated by limitations imposed upon us from without and within.

The days of the years of our lives are few, and swifter than a weaver's shuttle. Life is a short and fevered rehearsal for a concert we cannot stay to give. Just when we

appear to have attained some proficiency we are forced to lay our instruments down. There is simply not time enough to think, to become, to perform what the constitution of our natures indicates we are capable of.

How completely satisfying to turn from our limitations to a God who has none. Eternal years lie in His heart. For Him time does not pass, it remains; and those who are in Christ share with Him all the riches of limitless time and endless years. God never hurries. There are no deadlines against which He must work. Only to know this is to quiet our spirits and relax our nerves. For those out of Christ, time is a devouring beast; before the sons of the new creation time crouches and purrs and licks their hands. The foe of the old human race becomes the friend of the new, and the stars in their courses fight for the man God delights to honor. This we may learn from the divine infinitude.

But there is more. God's gifts in nature have their limitations. They are finite because they have been created, but the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus is as limitless as God. The Christian man possesses God's own life and shares His infinitude with Him. In God there is life enough for all and time enough to enjoy it. Whatever is possessed of natural life runs through its cycle from birth to death and ceases to be, but the life of God returns upon itself and ceases never. And this is life eternal: to know the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

The mercy of God is infinite too, and the man who has felt the grinding pain of inward guilt knows that this is more than academic. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Abounding sin is the terror of the world, but abounding grace is the hope of mankind. However sin may abound it still has its limits, for it is the product of finite minds and hearts; but God's much more" introduces us to infinitude. Against our deep creature-sickness stands God's infinite ability to cure.

The Christian witness through the centuries has been that "God so loved the world . . ."; it remains for us to see that love in the light of God's infinitude. His love is measureless. It is more: it is boundless. It has no bounds because it is not a thing but a facet of the essential nature of God. His love is something He is, and because He is infinite that love can enfold the whole created world in itself and have room for ten thousand times ten thousand worlds beside.

*This, this is the God we adore,  
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend, Whose love is as great as His power, And  
neither knows measure nor end.  
"Tis Jesus, the first and the last,  
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home; We praise Him for all that is past,  
And trust Him for all that's to come.*

**Joseph Hart**

**CHAPTER 9***The Immutability of God***4**

*O Christ our Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. As conies to their rock, so have we run to Thee for safety; as birds from their wanderings, so have we flown to Thee for peace. Chance and change are busy in our little world of nature and men, but in Thee we find no变ableness nor shadow of turning. We rest in Thee without fear or doubt and face our tomorrows without anxiety. Amen.*

The immutability of God is among those attributes less difficult to understand, but to grasp it we must discipline ourselves to sort out the usual thoughts with which we think of created things from the rarer ones that arise when we try to lay hold of whatever may be comprehended of God.

To say that God is immutable is to say that He never differs from Himself. The concept of a growing or developing God is not found in the Scriptures. It seems to me impossible to think of God as varying from Himself in any way. Here is why:

For a moral being to change it would be necessary that the change be in one of three directions. He must go from better to worse or from worse to better; or, granted that the moral quality remain stable, he must change within himself, as from miniature to mature or from one order of being to another. It should be clear that God can move in none of these directions. His perfections forever rule out any such possibility.

God cannot change for the better. Since He is perfectly holy, He has never been less holy than He is now and can never be holier than He is and has always been. Neither can God change for the worse. Any deterioration within the unspeakably holy nature of God is impossible. Indeed I believe it impossible even to think of such a thing, for the moment we attempt to do so, the object about which we are thinking is no longer God but something else and someone less than He. The one of whom we are thinking may be a great and awesome creature, but because he is a creature he cannot be the self-existent Creator.

As there can be no mutation in the moral character of God, so there can be none within the divine essence. The being of God is unique in the only proper meaning of that word; that is, His being is other than and different from all other beings. We have seen how God differs from His creatures in being self-existent, self-sufficient, and eternal. By virtue of these attributes God is God and not some other being. One who can suffer any slightest degree of change is neither self-existent, self-sufficient, nor eternal, and so is not God. Only a being composed of parts may change, for change is basically a shift in the relation of the parts of a whole or the admission of some foreign element into the

original composition. Since God is self-existent, He is not composed. There are in Him no parts to be altered. And since He is self-sufficient, nothing can enter His being from without.

"Whatever is composed of parts," says Anselm, "is not altogether one, but is in some sort plural, and diverse from itself, and either in fact or in concept is capable of dissolution. But these things are alien to Thee, than whom nothing better can be conceived of. Hence, there are no parts in Thee Lord., nor art Thou more than one. But Thou art so truly a unitary being, and so identical with Thyself, that in no respect art Thou unlike Thyself, rather Thou art unity itself, indivisible by any conception."

"All that God is He has always been, and all that He has been and is He will ever be." Nothing that God has ever said about Himself will be modified; nothing the inspired prophets and apostles have said about Him will be rescinded. His immutability guarantees this.

The immutability of God appears in its most perfect beauty when viewed against the mutability of men. In God no change is possible; in men change is impossible to escape. Neither the man is fixed nor his world, but he and it are in constant flux. Each man appears for a little while to laugh and weep, to work and play, and then to go to make room for those who shall follow him in the never-ending cycle.

Certain poets have found a morbid pleasure in the law of impermanence and have sung in a minor key the song of perpetual change. Omar the tentmaker was one who sang with pathos and humor of mutation and mortality, the twin diseases that afflict mankind. "Don't slap that clay around so roughly," he exhorts the potter, "that may be your grandfather's dust you make so free with". "When you lift the cup to drink red wine," he reminds the reveler, "you may be kissing the lips of some beauty dead long ago."

This note of sweet sorrow expressed with gentle humor gives a radiant beauty to his quatrains but, however beautiful, the whole long poem is sick, sick unto death. Like the bird charmed by the serpent that would devour it, the poet is fascinated by the enemy that is destroying him and all men and every generation of men.

The sacred writers, too, face up to man's mutability, but they are healthy men and there is a wholesome strength in their words. They have found the cure for the great sickness. God, they say changes not. The law of mutation belongs to a fallen world, but God is immutable, and in Him men of faith find at last eternal permanence. In the meanwhile change works for the children of the kingdom, not against them. The changes that occur in them are wrought by the hand of the in-living Spirit. "But we all," says the apostle, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

In a world of change and decay not even the man of faith can be completely happy. Instinctively he seeks the unchanging and is bereaved at the passing of dear familiar things.

*O Lord! my heart is sick,  
Sick of this everlasting change;  
And life runs tediously quick  
Through its unresting race and varied range:  
Change finds no likeness to itself in Thee  
And wakes no echo in Thy mute Eternity.*

**Frederick W. Faber**

These words of Faber find sympathetic response in every heart; yet much as we may deplore the lack of stability in all earthly things, in a fallen world such as this the very ability to change is a golden treasure, a gift from God of such fabulous worth as to call for constant thanksgiving. For human beings the whole possibility of redemption lies in their ability to change.

To move across from one sort of person to another is the essence of repentance: the liar becomes truthful, the thief honest, the lewd pure, the proud humble. The whole moral texture of the life is altered. The thoughts, the desires, the affections are transformed, and the man is no longer what he had been before. So radical is this change that the apostle calls the man that used to be "the old man" and the man that now is "the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

Yet the change is deeper and more basic than any external acts can reveal, for it includes also the reception of life of another and higher quality. The old man, even at his best, possesses only the life of Adam: the new man has the life of God. And this is more than a mere manner of speaking; it is quite literally true. When God infuses eternal life into the spirit of a man, the man becomes a member of a new and higher order of being.

In the working out of His redemptive processes the unchanging God makes full use of change and through a succession of changes arrives at permanence at last. In the Book of Hebrews this is shown most clearly.

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second," is a kind of summation of the teaching of that remarkable book. The old covenant, as something provisional, was abolished, and the new and everlasting covenant took its place.

The blood of goats and bulls lost its significance when the blood of the Paschal Lamb was shed. The law, the altar, the priesthood - all were temporary and subject to change; now the eternal law of God is engraven forever on the living, sensitive stuff of which the human soul is composed. The ancient sanctuary is no more, but the new sanctuary is eternal in the heavens and there the Son of God has His eternal priesthood.

Here we see that God uses change as a lowly servant to bless His redeemed household, but He Himself is outside of the law of mutation and is unaffected by any changes that occur in the universe.

*And all things as they change proclaim  
The Lord eternally the same.* Charles Wesley

Again the question of use arises. “Of what use to me is, the knowledge that God is immutable?” someone asks. “Is not the whole thing mere metaphysical speculation? Something that might bring a certain satisfaction to persons of a particular type of mind but can have no real significance for practical men?”

If by “practical men” we mean unbelieving men engrossed in secular affairs and indifferent to the claims of Christ, the welfare of their own souls, or the interests of the world to come, then for them such a book as this can have no meaning at all; nor, unfortunately, can any other book that takes religion seriously. But while such men may be in the majority, they do not by any means compose the whole of the population.

There are still the seven thousand who have not bowed their knees to Baal. These believe they were created to worship God and to enjoy His presence forever, and they are eager to learn all they can about the God with whom they expect to spend eternity.

In this world where men forget us, change their attitude toward us as their private interests dictate, and revise their opinion of us for the slightest cause, is it not a source of wondrous strength to know that the God with whom we have to do changes not? That His attitude toward us now is the same as it was in eternity past and will be in eternity to come?

What peace it brings to the Christian’s heart to realize that our Heavenly Father never differs from Himself. Incoming to Him at any time we need not wonder whether we shall find Him in a receptive mood. He is always receptive to misery and need, as well as to love and faith. He does not keep office hours nor set aside periods when He will see no one. Neither does He change His mind about anything. Today, this moment, He feels toward His creatures, toward babies, toward the sick, the fallen, the sinful, exactly as He did when He sent His only-begotten Son into the world to die for mankind.

God never changes moods or cools off in His affections or loses enthusiasm. His attitude toward sin is now the same as it was when He drove out the sinful man from the eastward garden, and His attitude toward the sinner the same as when He stretched forth His hands and cried, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

God will not compromise and He need not be coaxed. He cannot be persuaded to alter His Word nor talked into answering selfish prayer. In all our efforts to find God, to please

Him, to commune with Him, we should remember that all change must be on our part. "I am the Lord, I change not." We have but to meet His clearly stated terms, bring our lives into accord with His revealed will, and His infinite power will become instantly operative toward us in the manner set forth through the gospel in the Scriptures of truth.

*Fountain of being! Source of Good! Immutable Thou dost remain! Nor  
can the shadow of a change  
Obscure the glories of Thy reign.  
Earth may with all her powers dissolve,  
If such the great Creator will; But Thou for ever art the same, I AM is Thy  
memorial still. From Walker's Collection*

## CHAPTER 10

*The Divine Omniscience*

4

*Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising and art acquainted with all my ways. I can inform Thee of nothing and it is vain to try to hide anything from Thee. In the light of Thy perfect knowledge I would be as artless as a little child. Help me to put away all care, for Thou knowest the way that I take and when Thou hast tried me I shall come forth as gold. Amen.*

To say that God is omniscient is to say that He possesses perfect knowledge and therefore has no need to learn. But it is more: it is to say that God has never learned and cannot learn.

The Scriptures teach that God has never learned from anyone. “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to Him the way of understanding?”

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?” These rhetorical questions put by the prophet and the apostle Paul declare that God has never learned.

From there it is only a step to the conclusion that God cannot learn. Could God at any time or in any manner receive into His mind knowledge that He did not possess and had not possessed from eternity, He would be imperfect and less than himself. To think of a God who must sit at the feet of a teacher, even though that teacher be an archangel or a seraph, is to think of someone other than the Most High God, maker of heaven and earth.

This negative approach to the divine omniscience is, I believe, quite justified in the circumstances. Since our intellectual knowledge of God is so small and obscure, we can sometimes gain considerable advantage in our struggle to understand what God is like by the simple expedient of thinking what He is not like. So far in this examination of the attributes of God we have been driven to the free use of negatives. We have seen that God had no origin, that He had no beginning, that He requires no helpers, that He suffers no change, and that in His essential being there are no limitations.

This method of trying to make men see what God is like by showing them what He is not like is used also by the inspired writers in the Holy Scriptures. “Hast thou not

known? hast thou not heard," cries Isaiah, "that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" And that abrupt statement by God Himself, "I am the Lord, I change not," tells us more about the divine omniscience than could be told in a ten-thousand word treatise, were all negatives arbitrarily ruled out. God's eternal truthfulness is stated negatively by the apostle Paul, "God... cannot lie"; and when the angel asserted that "with God nothing shall be impossible," the two negatives add up to a ringing positive.

That God is omniscient is not only taught in the Scriptures, it must be inferred also from all else that is taught concerning Him. God perfectly knows Himself and, being the source and author of all things, it follows that He knows all that can be known. And this He knows instantly and with a fullness of perfection that includes every possible item of knowledge concerning everything that exists or could have existed anywhere in the universe at any time in the past or that may exist in the centuries or ages yet unborn.

God knows instantly and effortlessly all matter and all matters, all mind and every mind, all spirit and all spirits, all being and every being, all creaturehood and all creatures, every plurality and all pluralities, all law and every law, all relations, all causes, all thoughts, all mysteries, all enigmas, all feeling, all desires, every unuttered secret, all thrones and dominions, all personalities, all things visible and invisible in heaven and in earth, motion, space, time, life, death, good, evil, heaven, and hell.

Because God knows all things perfectly, He knows no thing better than any other thing, but all things equally well. He never discovers anything. He is never surprised, never amazed. He never wonders about anything nor (except when drawing men out for their own good) does He seek information or ask questions.

God is self-existent and self-contained and knows what no creature can ever know - Himself, perfectly.

"The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Only the Infinite can know the infinite.

In the divine omniscience we see set forth against each other the terror and fascination of the Godhead. That God knows each person through and through can be a cause of shaking fear to the man that has something to hide - some unforsaken sin, some secret crime committed against man or God. The unblessed soul may well tremble that God knows the flimsiness of every pretext and never accepts the poor excuses given for sinful conduct, since He knows perfectly the real reason for it. "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." How frightful a thing to see the sons of Adam seeking to hide among the trees of another garden. But where shall they hide? "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?... If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day."

And to us who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us in the gospel, how unutterably sweet is the knowledge that our Heavenly Father knows us completely. No talebearer can inform on us, no enemy can make an accusation stick; no forgotten skeleton can come tumbling out of some hidden closet to abash us and expose our past; no unsuspected weakness in our characters can come to light to turn God away from us, since He knew us utterly before we knew Him and called us to Himself in the full knowledge of everything that was against us. “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”

Our Father in heaven knows our frame and remembers that we are dust. He knew our inborn treachery, and for His own sake engaged to save us (Isa. 48:8-11). His only begotten Son, when He walked among us, felt our pains in their naked intensity of anguish. His knowledge of our afflictions and adversities is more than theoretic; it is personal, warm, and compassionate. Whatever may befall us, God knows and cares as no one else can.

*He doth give His joy to all; He becomes an infant small; He becomes a man of woe; He doth feel the sorrow too.*

*Think not thou canst sigh a sigh And thy Maker is not by;*

*Think not thou canst weep a tear And thy Maker is not near.*

*O! He gives to us His joy*

*That our griefs He may destroy; Till our grief is fled and gone He doth sit by us and moan.*

**William Blake**

**CHAPTER 11***The Wisdom of God***4**

*Thou, O Christ, who wert tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, make us strong to overcome the desire to be wise and to be reputed wise by others as ignorant as ourselves. We turn from our wisdom as well as from our folly and flee to Thee, the wisdom of God and the power of God. Amen.*

In this brief study of the divine wisdom we begin with faith in God. Following our usual pattern, we shall not seek to understand in order that we may believe, but to believe in order that we may understand. Hence, we shall not seek for proof that God is wise. The unbelieving mind would not be convinced by any proof and the worshipping heart needs none.

“Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever,” cried Daniel the prophet, “for wisdom and might are his: . . . he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.” The believing man responds to this, and to the angelic chant, “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.” It never occurs to such a man that God should furnish proof of His wisdom or His power. Is it not enough that He is God?

When Christian theology declares that God is wise, it means vastly more than it says or can say, for it tries to make a comparatively weak word bear an incomprehensible plentitude of meaning that threatens to tear it apart and crush it under the sheer weight of the idea. “His understanding is infinite,” says the psalmist. It is nothing less than infinitude that theology is here laboring to express.

Since the word infinite describes what is unique, it can have no modifiers. We do not say “more unique” or “very infinite.” Before infinitude we stand silent.

There is indeed a secondary, created wisdom which God has given in measure to His creatures as their highest good may require; but the wisdom of any creature or of all creatures, when set against the boundless wisdom of God, is pathetically small. For this reason the apostle is accurate when he refers to God as “only wise” That is, God is wise in Himself, and all the shining wisdom of men or angels is but a reflection of that uncreated effulgence which streams from the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

The idea of God as infinitely wise is at the root of all truth. It is a datum of belief necessary to the soundness of all other beliefs about God. Being what He is without

regard to creatures, God is of course unaffected by our opinions of Him, but our moral sanity requires that we attribute to the maker and sustainer of the universe a wisdom entirely perfect. To refuse to do this is to betray the very thing in us that distinguishes us from the beasts.

In the Holy Scriptures wisdom, when used of God and good men, always carries a strong moral connotation. It is conceived as being pure, loving, and good. Wisdom that is mere shrewdness is often attributed to evil men, but such wisdom is treacherous and false. These two kinds of wisdom are in perpetual conflict. Indeed, when seen from the lofty peak of Sinai or Calvary, the whole history of the world is discovered to be but a contest between the wisdom of God and the cunning of Satan and fallen men. The outcome of the contest is not in doubt. The imperfect must fall before the perfect at last. God has warned that He will take the wise in their own craftiness and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Wisdom, among other things, is the ability to devise perfect ends and to achieve those ends by the most perfect means. It sees the end from the beginning, so there can be no need to guess or conjecture. Wisdom sees everything in focus, each in proper relation to all, and is thus able to work toward predestined goals with flawless precision.

All God's acts are done in perfect wisdom, first for His own glory, and then for the highest good of the greatest number for the longest time. And all His acts are as pure as they are wise, and as good as they are wise and pure. Not only could His acts not be better done: a better way to do them could not be imagined. An infinitely wise God must work in a manner not to be improved upon by finite creatures.

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth is full of Thy riches!

Without the creation, the wisdom of God would have remained forever locked in the boundless abyss of the divine nature. God brought His creatures into being that He might enjoy them and they rejoice in Him.

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Many through the centuries have declared themselves unable to believe in the basic wisdom of a world wherein so much appears to be so wrong. Voltaire in his Candide introduces a determined optimist, whom he calls Dr. Pangloss, and into his mouth puts all the arguments for the "best-of-all-possible-worlds" philosophy. Of course the French cynic took keen delight in placing the old professor in situations that made his philosophy look ridiculous.

But the Christian view of life is altogether more realistic than that of Dr. Pangloss with his "sufficient reason." It is that this is not at the moment the best of all possible worlds, but one lying under the shadow of a huge calamity, the Fall of man.

The inspired writers insist that the whole creation now groans and travails under the mighty shock of the Fall. They do not attempt to supply "sufficient reasons"; they assert that the "creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." No effort here to justify the ways of God with men; just a simple declaration of fact. The being of God is its own defense.

But there is hope in all our tears. When the hour of Christ's triumph arrives, the suffering world will be brought out into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. For men of the new creation the golden age is not past but future, and when it is ushered in, a wondering universe will see that God has indeed abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. In the meantime we rest our hope in the only wise God, our Saviour, and wait with patience the slow development of His benign purposes.

In spite of tears and pain and death we believe that the God who made us all is infinitely wise and good. As Abraham staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving the glory to God, and was fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able to perform, so do we base our hope in God alone and hope against hope till the day breaks. We rest in what God is. I believe that this alone is true faith. Any faith that must be supported by the evidence of the senses is not real faith.

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The testimony of faith is that, no matter how things look in this fallen world, all God's acts are wrought in perfect wisdom. The incarnation of the Eternal Son in human flesh was one of God's mighty deeds, and we may be sure that this awesome deed was done with a perfection possible only to the Infinite. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.

Atonement too was accomplished with the same flawless skill that marks all of God's acts. However little we understand it all, we know that Christ's expiatory work perfectly reconciled God and men and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Our concern is not to explain but to proclaim. Indeed I wonder whether God could make us understand all that happened there at the cross. According to the apostle Peter not even angels know, however eagerly they may desire to look into these things.

The operation of the gospel, the new birth, the coming of the divine Spirit into human nature, the ultimate overthrow of evil, and the final establishment of Christ's righteous kingdom - all these have flowed and do flow out of God's infinite fullness of wisdom. The sharpest eyes of the honest watcher in the blest company above cannot discover a flaw in the ways of God in bringing all this to fruition, nor can the pooled wisdom of seraphim and cherubim suggest how an improvement might be made in the divine procedure. "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."

It is vitally important that we hold the truth of God's infinite wisdom as a tenet of our creed; but this is not enough. We must by the exercise of faith and by prayer bring it into the practical world of our day-by-day experience.

To believe actively that our Heavenly Father constantly spreads around us providential circumstances that work for our present good and our everlasting well-being brings to the soul a veritable benediction. Most of us go through life praying a little, planning a little, jockeying for position, hoping but never being quite certain of anything, and always secretly afraid that we will miss the way. This is a tragic waste of truth and never gives rest to the heart.

There is a better way. It is to repudiate our own wisdom and take instead the infinite wisdom of God. Our insistence upon seeing ahead is natural enough, but it is a real hindrance to our spiritual progress. God has charged himself with full responsibility for our eternal happiness and stands ready to take over the management of our lives the moment we turn in faith to Him.

Here is His promise: "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

*Let Him lead the blindfold onwards, Love needs not to know;  
Children whom the Father leadeth  
Ask not where they go.  
Though the path be all unknown, Over moors and mountains lone.*

#### **Gerhard Teersteegen**

God constantly encourages us to trust Him in the dark. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel."

It is heartening to learn how many of God's mighty deeds were done in secret, away from the prying eyes of men or angles.

When God created the heavens and the earth, darkness was upon the face of the deep. When the Eternal Son became flesh, He was carried for a time in the darkness of the sweet virgin's womb. When He died for the life of the world, it was in the darkness, seen by no one at the last. When He arose from the dead, it was , 'very early in the morning."

No one saw Him rise. It is as if God were saying, "What I am is all that need matter to you, for there lie your hope and your peace. I will do what I will do, and it will all come to

light at last, but how I do it is My secret. Trust Me, and be not afraid."

*With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare,  
the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of  
God to achieve it, what do we lack?  
Surely we are the most favored of all creatures.  
In all our Maker's grand designs, Omnipotence, with wisdom, shines; His works,  
through all this wondrous frame, Declare the glory of His Name.*

**Thomas Blacklock**

**CHAPTER 12***The Omnipotence of God***4**

*Our Heavenly Father, we have heard Thee say, “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” But unless Thou dost enable us by the exceeding greatness of Thy power how can we who are by nature weak and sinful walk in a perfect way?*

*Grant that we may learn to lay hold on the working of the mighty power which wrought in Christ when Thou didst raise Him from the dead and set Him at Thine own right hand in the heavenly places. Amen.*

In the time of his vision John the Revelator heard as it were the voice of a great multitude and as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thunderings sounding throughout the universe, and what the voice proclaimed was the sovereignty and omnipotence of God: “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Sovereignty and omnipotence must go together. One cannot exist without the other. To reign, God must have power, and to reign sovereignly, He must have all power. And that is what omnipotent means, having all power. The word derives from the Latin and is identical in meaning with the more familiar almighty which we have from the Anglo-Saxon. This latter word occurs fifty-six times in our English Bible and is never used of anyone but God. He alone is almighty.

God possesses what no creature can: an incomprehensible plenitude of power, a potency that is absolute. This we know by divine revelation, but once known, it is recognized as being in full accord with reason. Grant that God is infinite and self-existent and we see at once that He must be all-powerful as well, and reason kneels to worship before the divine omnipotence.

“Power belongeth unto God,” says the psalmist, and Paul the apostle declares that nature itself gives evidence of the eternal power of the Godhead (Rom 1:20). From this knowledge we reason to the omnipotence of God this way: God has power. Since God is also infinite, whatever He has must be without limit; therefore God has limitless power, He is omnipotent. We see further that God the self-existent Creator is the source of all the power there is, and since a source must be at least equal to anything that emanates from it, God is of necessity equal to all the power there is, and this is to say again that He is omnipotent.

God has delegated power to His creatures, but being self-sufficient, He cannot relinquish anything of His perfections and, power being one of them, He has never surrendered the least iota of His power. He gives but He does not give away. All that He gives remains His own and returns to Him again. Forever He must remain what He has forever been, the Lord God omnipotent.

One cannot long read the Scriptures sympathetically without noticing the radical disparity between the outlook of men of the Bible and that of modern men. We are today suffering from a secularized mentality. Where the sacred writers saw God, we see the laws of nature. Their world was fully populated; ours is all but empty. Their world was alive and personal; ours is impersonal and dead. God ruled their world; ours is ruled by the laws of nature and we are always once removed from the presence of God.

And what are these laws of nature that have displaced God in the minds of millions? Law has two meanings. One is all external rule enforced by authority, such as the common rule against robbery and assault. The word is also used to denote the uniform way things act in the universe, but this second use of the word is erroneous. What we see in nature is simply the paths God's power and wisdom take through creation. Properly these are phenomena, not laws, but we call them laws by analogy with the arbitrary laws of society.

Science observes how the power of God operates, discovers a regular pattern somewhere and fixes it as a "law." The uniformity of God's activities in His creation enables the scientist to predict the course of natural phenomena.

The trustworthiness of God's behavior in His world is the foundation of all scientific truth. Upon it the scientist rests his faith and from there he goes on to achieve great and useful things in such fields as those of navigation, chemistry, agriculture, and the medical arts.

Religion on the other hand, goes back of the nature of God. It is concerned not with the footprints of God along the paths of creation, but with the One who treads those paths. Religion is interested primarily in the One who is the source of all things, the master of every phenomenon.

For this One philosophy has various names, the most horrendous that I have seen being that supplied by Rudolph Otto: "The absolute, the gigantic, never-resting active world stress." The Christian delights to remember that this "world stress" once said "I AM" and the greatest teacher of them all directed His disciples to address Him as a person:

"When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." The men of the Bible everywhere communed with this "gigantic absolute" in language as personal as speech affords, and with Him prophet and saint walked in a rapture of devotion, warm intimate and deeply satisfying.

Omnipotence is not a name given to the sum of all power, but an attribute of a personal God we Christians believe to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and of all who believe on Him to life eternal. The worshipping man finds this knowledge a source of wonderful strength for his inner life. His faith rises to take the great leap upward into the fellowship of Him who can do whatever He wills to do, for whom nothing is hard or difficult because He possesses power absolute.

Since He has at His command all the power in the universe, the Lord God omnipotent can do anything as easily as anything else. All His acts are done without effort. He expends no energy that must be replenished. His self-sufficiency makes it unnecessary for Him to look outside of Himself for a renewal of strength. All the power required to do all that He wills to do lies in undiminished fullness in His own infinite being.

The Presbyterian pastor A. B. Simpson, approaching middle age, broken in health, deeply despondent and ready to quit the ministry, chanced to hear the simple Negro spiritual, Nothing is too hard for Jesus, No man can work like Him.

Its message sped like an arrow to his heart, carrying faith and hope and life for body and soul. He sought a place of retirement and after a season alone with God arose to his feet completely cured, and went forth in fullness of joy to found what has since become one of the largest foreign missionary societies in the world. For thirty-five years after this encounter with God, he labored prodigiously in the service of Christ. His faith in God of limitless power gave him all the strength he needed to carry on.

*Almighty One! I bend in the dust before Thee;  
Even so veiled cherubs bend;  
In calm and still devotion I adore Thee,  
All-wise, all-present friend Thou to the earth its emerald robe hast given,  
Or curtained it in sow;  
And the bright sun, and the soft moon in heaven,  
Before Thy presence bow.*

**Sir John Bowring**

**CHAPTER 13***The Divine Transcendence***4**

*O Lord our Lord, there is none like Thee in heaven above or in the earth beneath. Thine is the greatness and the dignity and the majesty. All that is in the heaven and the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, O God, and Thou art exalted as head over all. Amen.*

When we speak of God as transcendent we mean of course that He is exalted far above the created universe, so far above that human thought cannot imagine it.

To think accurately about this, however, we must keep in mind that “far above” does not here refer to physical distance from the earth but to quality of being. We are concerned not with location in space nor with mere altitude, but with life.

God is spirit, and to Him magnitude and distance have no meaning. To us they are useful as analogies and illustrations, so God refers to them constantly when speaking down to our limited understanding. The words of God as found in Isaiah, “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,” give a distinct impression of altitude, but that is because we who dwell in a world of matter, space, and time tend to think in material terms and can grasp abstract ideas only when they are identified in some way with material things. In its struggle to free itself from the tyranny of the natural world, the human heart must learn to translate upward the language the Spirit uses to instruct us.

It is spirit that gives significance to matter and apart from spirit nothing has any value at last. A little child strays from a party of sightseers and becomes lost on a mountain, and immediately the whole mental perspective of the members of the party is changed. Rapt admiration for the grandeur of nature gives way to acute distress for the lost child. The group spreads out over the mountainside anxiously calling the child’s name and searching eagerly into every secluded spot where the little one might chance to be hidden.

What brought about this sudden change? The tree-clad mountain is still there towering into the clouds in breath-taking beauty, but no one notices it now. All attention is focused upon the search for a curly-haired little girl not yet two years old and weighing less than thirty pounds. Though so new and so small, she is more precious to parents and friends than all the huge bulk of the vast and ancient mountain they had been admiring a few minutes before. And in their judgment the whole civilized world concurs, for the little girl can love and laugh and speak and pray, and the mountain cannot. It is the child’s quality of being that gives it worth.

Yet we must not compare the being of God with any other as we just now compared the mountain with the child. We must not think of God as highest in an ascending order

of beings, starting with the single cell and going on up from the fish to the bird to the animal to man to angel to cherub to God. This would be to grant God eminence, even pre-eminence, but that is not enough; we must grant Him transcendence in the fullest meaning of that word.

Forever God stands apart, in light unapproachable. He is as high above an archangel as above a caterpillar, for the gulf that separates the archangel from the caterpillar is but finite, while the gulf between God and the archangel is infinite. The caterpillar and the archangel, though far removed from each other in the scale of created things, are nevertheless one in that they are alike created. They both belong in the category of that-which-is-not-God and are separated from God by infinitude itself.

Reticence and compulsion forever contend within the heart that would speak of God.

*How shall polluted mortals dare  
To sing Thy glory or Thy grace?  
Beneath Thy feet we lie afar,  
And see but shadows of Thy face.*

**Isaac Watts**

Yet we console ourselves with the knowledge that it is God Him-self who puts it in our hearts to seek Him and makes it possible in some measure to know Him, and He is pleased with even the feeblest effort to make Him known.

If some watcher or holy one who has spent his glad centuries by the sea of fire were to come to earth, how meaningless to him would be the ceaseless chatter of the busy tribes of men. How strange to him and how empty would sound the, flat, stale and profitless words heard in the average pulpit from week to week.

And were such a one to speak on earth would he not speak of God? Would he not charm and fascinate his hearers with rapturous descriptions of the Godhead? And after hearing him could we ever again consent to listen to anything less than theology, the doctrine of God? Would we not thereafter demand of those who would presume to teach us that they speak to us from the mount of divine vision or remain silent altogether?

When the psalmist saw the transgression of the wicked his heart told him how it could be. "There is no fear of God before his eyes," he explained, and in so saying revealed to us the psychology of sin. When men no longer fear God, they transgress His laws without hesitation. The fear of consequences is not deterrent when the fear of God is gone.

In olden days men of faith were said to "walk in the fear of God" and to "serve the Lord with fear." However intimate their communion with God, however bold their prayers, at the base of their religious life was the conception of God as awesome and dreadful. This

idea of God transcendent rims through the whole Bible and gives color and tone to the character of the saints.

This fear of God was more than a natural apprehension of danger; it was a nonrational dread, an acute feeling of personal insufficiency in the presence of God the Almighty. Wherever God appeared to men in Bible times the results were the same - an overwhelming sense of terror and dismay, a wrenching sensation of sinfulness and guilt.

When God spoke, Abram stretched himself upon the ground to listen. When Moses saw the Lord in the burning bush, he hid his face in fear to look upon God. Isalah's vision of God wrung from him the cry, "Woe is me!" and the confession, "I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."

Daniel's encounter with God was probably the most dreadful and wonderful of them all. The prophet lifted up his eyes and saw One whose "body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." "I Daniel alone saw the vision" he afterwards wrote, "for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground."

These experiences show that a vision of the divine transcendence soon ends all controversy between the man and his God. The fight goes out of the man and he is ready with the conquered Saul to ask meekly, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Conversely, the self-assurance of modern Christians, the basic levity present in so many of our religious gatherings, the shocking disrespect shown for the Person of God, are evidence enough of deep blindness of heart.

Many call themselves by the name of Christ, talk much about God, and pray to Him sometimes, but evidently do not know who He is. "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life," but this healing fear is today hardly found among Christian men.

Once in conversation with his friend Eckermann, the poet Goethe turned to thoughts of religion and spoke of the abuse of the divine name.

"People treat it," he said, "as if that incomprehensible and most high Being, who is even beyond the reach of thought, were only their equal. Otherwise they would not say 'the Lord God, the dear God, the good God.' This expression becomes to them, especially to the clergy, who have it daily in their mouths, a mere phrase, a barren name,

to which no thought whatever is attached. If they were impressed by His greatness they would be dumb, and through veneration unwilling to name Him.

*Lord of all being, throned afar,  
They glory flames from sun and star;  
Center and soul of every sphere, Yet to each loving heart how near!  
Lord of all life, below, above,  
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,  
Before Thy ever-blazing throne  
We ask no luster of our own.*

**Oliver Wendell Holmes**

**CHAPTER 14***God's Omnipresence***4**

*Our Father, we know that Thou art present with us, but our knowledge is but a figure and shadow of truth and has little of the spiritual savor and inward sweetness such knowledge should afford. This is for us a great loss and the cause of much weakness of heart. Help us to make at once such amendment of life as is necessary before we can experience the true meaning of the words "In thy presence is fulness of joy." Amen.*

The word present, of course, means here, close to, next to, and the prefix omni gives it universality. God is everywhere here, close to everything, next to everyone.

Few other truths are taught in the Scriptures with as great clarity as the doctrine of the divine omnipresence. Those passages supporting this truth are so plain that it would take considerable effort to misunderstand them. They declare that God is immanent in His creation, that there is no place in heaven or earth or hell where men may hide from His presence. They teach that God is at once far off and near, and that in Him men move and live and have their being. And what is equally convincing is that they everywhere compel us to assume that God is omnipresent to account for other facts they tell us about Him.

For instance, the Scriptures teach that God is infinite. This means that His being knows no limits. Therefore there can be no limit to His presence; He is omnipresent. In His infinitude He surrounds the finite creation and contains it. There is no place beyond Him for anything to be.

God is our environment as the sea is to the fish and the air to the bird. "God is over all things," wrote Hildebert of Lavardin, "under all things; outside all; within but not enclosed; without but not excluded; above but not raised up; below but not depressed; wholly above, presiding; wholly beneath, sustaining; wholly within, filling."

The belief that God is present within His universe cannot be held in isolation. It has practical implications in many areas of theological thought and bears directly upon certain religious problems, such, for instance, as the nature of the world. Thinking men of almost every age and culture have been concerned with the question of what kind of world this is. Is it a material world running by itself, or is it spiritual and run by unseen powers? Does this interlocking system explain itself or does its secret lie in mystery? Does the stream of existence begin and end in itself? Or is its source higher up and farther back in the hills?

Christian theology claims to have the answer to these questions. It does not speculate

nor offer an opinion but presents its "Thus saith the Lord" as its authority. It declares positively that the world is spiritual: it originated in spirit, flows out of spirit, is spiritual in essence, and is meaningless apart from the Spirit that inhabits it.

The doctrine of the divine omnipresence personalizes man's relation to the universe in which he finds himself. This great central truth gives meaning to all truths and imparts supreme value to all his little life. God is present, near him, next to him, and this God sees him and knows him through and thorough.

At this point faith begins, and while it may go on to include a thousand other wonderful truths, these all refer back to the truth that God is and God is here. "He that cometh to God", says the Book of Hebrews, "must believe that he is" And Christ Himself said, "Ye believe in God, Believe also..." What ever "also" may be added to the elementary belief in God is superstructure, and regardless of the heights to which it may rise, it continues to rest solidly upon the original foundation.

The teachings of the New Testament is that God created the world by the Logos, the Word, and the Word is identified with the second person of the Godhead who was present in the world even before He became incarnate in human nature. The Word made all things and remained in His creation to uphold and sustain it and be at the same time a moral light enabling every man to distinguish good from evil.

The universe operates as an orderly system, not by impersonal laws but by the creative voice of the immanent and universal Presence, the Logos.

Canon W. G. Holmes of India told of seeing Hindu worshipers tapping on trees and stones and whispering "Are you there? Are you there?" to the god they hoped might reside within.

In complete humility the instructed Christian brings the answer to that question. God is indeed there. He is there as He is here and everywhere, not confined to tree or stone, but free in the universe, near to everything, next to everyone, and through Jesus Christ immediately accessible to every loving heart. The doctrine of the divine omnipresence decides this forever.

This truth is to the convinced Christian a source of deep comfort in sorrow and of steadfast assurance in all the varied experiences of his life. To him "the practice of the presence of God" consists not of protecting an imaginary object from within his own mind and then seeking to realize its presence; it is rather to recognize the real presence of the One whom all sound theology declares to be already there, an objective entity, existing apart from any apprehension of Him on the part of His creatures. The resultant experience is not visionary but real.

The certainty that God is always near us, present in all parts of His world, closer to us than our thoughts, should maintain us in a state of high moral happiness most of the time. But not all the time. It would be less than honest to promise every believer

continual jubilee and less than realistic to expect it. As a child may cry out in pain even when sheltered in its mother's arms, so a Christian may sometimes know what it is to suffer even in the conscious presence of God. Though "alway rejoicing," Paul admitted that he was sometimes sorrowful, and for our sakes Christ experienced strong crying and tears though He never left the bosom of the Father (John 1:18).

But all will be well. In a world like this tears have their therapeutic effects. The healing balm distilled from the garments of the enfolding Presence cures our ills before they become fatal. The knowledge that we are never alone calms the troubled sea of our lives and speaks peace to our souls.

That God is here both Scripture and reason declare. It remains only for us to learn to realize this in conscious experience. A sentence from a letter by Dr. Allen Fleece sums up the testimony of many others:

*"The knowledge that God is present is blessed, but to feel His presence is nothing less than sheer happiness."*

*God reveals His presence: Let us now adore Him, And with awe appear before Him.*

*Him alone, God we own; He's our Lord and Saviour, Praise His name forever.*

*God Himself is with us: Whom the angelic legions Serve with awe in heavenly regions.*

**Gerhard Tersteegen**

## CHAPTER 15

*The Faithfulness of God*

4

*It is a good thing to give thanks unto Thee and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High, to show forth Thy loving-kindness in the morning and Thy faithfulness every night. As Thy Son while on earth was loyal to Thee, His Heavenly Father, so now in heaven He is faithful to us, His earthly brethren; and in this knowledge we press on with every confident hope for all the years and centuries yet to come. Amen.*

As emphasized earlier, God's attributes are not isolated traits of His character but facets of His unitary being. They are not things-in-themselves; they are, rather, thoughts by which we think of God aspects of a perfect whole, names given to whatever we know to be true of the Godhead.

To have a correct understanding of the attributes it is necessary that we see them all as one. We can think of them separately but they cannot be separated. "All attributes assigned to God cannot differ in reality, by reason of the perfect simplicity of God, although we in divers ways use of God divers words," says Nicholas of Cusa. "Whence, although we attribute to God sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch, sense, reason and intellect, and so forth, according to the divers significations of each word, yet in Him sight is not other than hearing, or tasting, or smelling, or touching, or feeling, or understanding. And so all theology is said to be established in a circle, because any one of His attributes is affirmed of another."

In studying any attribute, the essential oneness of all the attributes soon becomes apparent. We see, for instance, that if God is self-existent He must be also self-sufficient; and if He has power He, being infinite, must have all power. If He possesses knowledge, His infinitude assures us that He possesses all knowledge. Similarly, His immutability presuppose His faithfulness. If He is unchanging, it follows that He could not be unfaithful, since that would require Him to change.

Any failure within the divine character would argue imperfection and, since God is perfect, it could not occur. Thus the attributes explain each other and prove that they are but glimpes the mind enjoys of the absolutely perfect Godhead.

All of God's acts are consistent with all of His attributes. No attribute contradicts the other, but all harmonize and blend into each other in the infinite abyss of the Godhead. All that God does agrees with all that God is and being and doing are one in Him.

The familiar picture of God as often torn between His justice and His mercy is altogether false to the facts. To think of God as inclining first toward one and then toward another of His attributes is to imagine a God who is unsure of Himself, frustrated and

emotionally unstable, which of course is to say that the one of whom we are thinking is not the true God at all but a weak, mental reflection of Him badly out of focus.

God being who He is, cannot cease to be what He is, and being what He is, He cannot act out of character with Himself. He is at once faithful and immutable, so all His words and acts must be and remain faithful. Men become unfaithful out of desire, fear, weakness, loss of interest, or because of some strong influence from without. Obviously none of these forces can affect God in any way. He is His own reason for all He is and does. He cannot be compelled from without, but ever speaks and acts from within Himself by His own sovereign will as it pleases Him.

I think it might be demonstrated that almost every heresy that has afflicted the church through the years has arisen from believing about God things that are not true, or from overemphasizing certain true things so as to obscure other things equally true. To magnify any attribute to the exclusion of another is to head straight for one of the dismal swamps of theology; and yet we are all constantly tempted to do just that.

For instance, the Bible teaches that God is love, some have interpreted this in such a way as virtually to deny that He is just, which the Bible also teaches. Others press the Biblical doctrine of God's goodness so far that it is made to contradict his holiness. Or they make His compassion cancel out His truth. Still others understand the sovereignty of God in a way that destroys or at least greatly diminishes His goodness and love.

We can hold a correct view of truth only by daring to believe everything God has said about Himself. It is a grave responsibility that a man takes upon himself when he seeks to edit out of God's self-revelation such features as he in his ignorance deems objectionable. Blindness in part must surely fall upon any of us presumptuous enough to attempt such a thing. And it is wholly uncalled for. We need not fear to let the truth stand as it is written. There is no conflict among the divine attributes. God's being is unitary. He cannot divide Himself and act at a given time from one of His attributes while the rest remain inactive. All that God is must accord with all that God does. Justice must be present in mercy, and love in judgment. And so with all the divine attributes.

The faithfulness of God is a datum of sound theology but to the believer it becomes far more than that: it passes through the processes of the understanding and goes on to become nourishing food for the soul. For the Scriptures not only teach truth, they show also its uses for mankind.

The inspired writers were men of like passion with us, dwelling in the midst of life. What they learned about God became to them a sword, a shield, a hammer; it became their life motivation, their good hope, and their confident expectation. From the objective facts of theology their hearts made how many thousand joyous deductions and personal applications! The Book of Psalms rings with glad thanksgiving for the

faithfulness of God. The New Testament takes up the theme and celebrates the loyalty of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; and in the Apocalypse Christ is seen astride a white horse riding toward His triumph, and the names He bears are Faithful and True.

Christian song, too, celebrates the attributes of God, and among them the divine faithfulness. In our hymnody, at its best, the attributes become the wellspring from which flow rivers of joyous melody. Some old hymnbooks may yet be found in which the hymns have no names; a line in italics above each one indicates theme, and the worshiping heart cannot but rejoice in what it finds: "God's glorious perfections celebrated." "Wisdom, Majesty and goodness." "Omniscience." "Omnipotence and immutability." "Glory, mercy and grace." These are few samples taken from a hymnbook published 1849, but everyone familiar with Christian hymnody knows that the stream of sacred song takes its rise far back in the early years of the Church's existence. From the beginning belief in the perfection of God brought sweet assurance to believing men and taught the ages to sing.

Upon God's faithfulness rests our whole hope of future blessedness. Only as He is faithful will His covenants stand and His promises be honoured. Only as we have complete assurance that He is faithful may we live in peace and look forward with assurance to the life to come.

Every heart can make its own application of this and draw from it such conclusions as the truth suggests and its own needs bring into focus. The tempted, the anxious, the fearful, the discouraged may all find new hope and good cheer in the knowledge that out Heavenly Father is faithful. He will ever be true to His pledged word. The hard-pressed sons of the covenant may be sure that He will never remove His loving-kindness from them nor suffer His faithfulness to fail.

*Happy the man whose hopes rely  
On Israel's God; He made the sky, And earth and seas, with all their  
train; His truth forever stands secure;  
He saves the oppressed, He feeds the poor, And none shall find His  
promises vain.*

**Isaac Watts**

**CHAPTER 16***The Goodness of God***4**

*Do good in Thy good pleasure unto us, O Lord. Act toward us not as we deserve but as it becomes Thee, being the God Thou art. So shall we have nothing to fear in this world or in that which is to come. Amen.*

The word good means so many things to so many persons that this brief study of the divine goodness begins with a definition. The meaning may be arrived at only by the use of a number of synonyms, going out from and returning by different paths to the same place.

When Christian theology says that God is good, it is not the same as saying that He is righteous or holy. The holiness of God is trumpeted from the heavens and re-echoed on earth by saints and sages wherever God has revealed Himself to men; however, we are not at this time considering His holiness but His goodness, which is quite another thing.

The goodness of God is that which disposes Him to be kind, cordial, benevolent, and full of good will toward men. He is tenderhearted and of quick sympathy, and His unfailing attitude toward all moral beings is open, frank, and friendly. By His nature He is inclined to bestow blessedness and He takes holy pleasure in the happiness of His people.

That God is good is taught or implied on every page of the Bible and must be received as an article of faith as impregnable as the throne of God. It is a foundation stone for all sound thought about God and is necessary to moral sanity. To allow that God could be other than good is to deny the validity of all thought and end ill the negation of every moral judgment. If God is not good, then there can be no distinction between kindness and cruelty, and heaven can be hell and hell, heaven.

The goodness of God is the drive behind all the blessings He daily bestows upon us. God created us because He felt good in His heart and He redeemed us for the same reason.

Julian of Norwich, who lived six hundred years ago, saw clearly that the ground of all blessedness is the goodness of God. Chapter six of her incredibly beautiful and perceptive little classic, *Revelations of Divine Love*, begins, "This showing was made to learn our souls to cleave wisely to the goodness of God." Then she lists some of the mighty deeds God has wrought in our behalf, and after each one she adds "of His goodness."

She saw that all our religious activities and every means of grace, however right and useful they may be, are nothing until we understand that the unmerited, spontaneous goodness of God is back of all arid underneath all His acts.

Divine goodness, as one of God's attributes, is self-caused, infinite, perfect, and eternal. Since God is immutable He never varies in the intensity of His loving-kindness. He has never been kinder than He now is, nor will He ever be less kind. He is no respecter of persons but makes His sun to shine on the evil as well as on the good, and sends His rain on the just and on the unjust. The cause of His goodness is in Himself, the recipients of His goodness are all His beneficiaries without merit and without recompense.

With this agrees reason, and the moral wisdom that knows itself runs to acknowledge that there can be no merit in human conduct, not even in the purest and the best. Always God's goodness is the ground of our expectation. Repentance, though necessary, is not meritorious but a condition for receiving the gracious gift of pardon which God gives of His goodness.

Prayer is not itself meritorious. It lays God under no obligation nor puts Him in debt to any. He hears prayer because He is good, and for no other reason. Nor is faith meritorious; it is simply confidence in the goodness of God, and the lack of it is a reflection upon God's holy character.

The whole outlook of mankind might be changed if we could all believe that we dwell under a friendly sky and that the God of heaven, though exalted in power and majesty is eager to be friends with us.

But sin has made us timid and self-conscious, as well it might. Years of rebellion against God have bred in us, a fear that cannot be overcome in a day. The captured rebel does not enter willingly the presence of the king he has so long fought unsuccessfully to overthrow. But if he is truly penitent he may come, trusting only in the loving-kindness of his Lord, and the past will not be held against him. Meister Eckhart encourages us to remember that, when we return to God, even if our sins were as great in number as all mankind's put together, still God would not count them against us, but would have as much confidence in us as if we had never sinned.

Now someone who in spite of his past sins honestly wants to become reconciled to God may cautiously inquire, "If I come to God, how will He act toward me? What kind of disposition has He? What will I find Him to be like?" The answer is that He will be found to be exactly like Jesus. "He that hath seen me," said Jesus, "hath seen the Father."

Christ walked with men on earth that He might show them what God is like and make known the true nature of God to a race that had wrong ideas about Him. This was only one of the things He did while here in the flesh, but this He did with beautiful perfection.

From Him we learn how God acts toward people. The hypocritical, the basically insincere, will find Him cold and aloof, as they once found Jesus; but the penitent will find Him merciful; the self-condemned will find Him generous and kind. To the frightened He is friendly, to the poor in spirit He is forgiving, to the ignorant, considerate; to the weak, gentle; to the stranger, hospitable.

By our own attitudes we may determine our reception by Him. Though the kindness of God is an infinite, overflowing fountain of cordiality, God will not force His attention upon us. If we would be welcomed as the Prodigal was, we must come as the Prodigal came; and when we so come, even though the Pharisees and the legalists sulk without, there will be a feast of welcome within, and music and dancing as the Father takes His child again to His heart. The greatness of God rouses fear within us, but His goodness encourages us not to be afraid of Him. To fear and not be afraid - that is the paradox of faith.

*O God, my hope, my heavenly rest,  
My all of happiness below,  
Grant my importunate request,  
To me, to me, Thy goodness show;  
Thy beatific face display,  
The brightness of eternal day.  
Before my faith's enlightened eyes,  
Make all Thy gracious goodness pass;  
Thy goodness is the sight I prize: might I see Thy smiling face:  
They nature in my soul proclaim, Reveal Thy love, Thy glorious name.*

**Charles Wesley**

# CHAPTER 17

*The Justice of God*

# 4

*Our Father, we love Thee for Thy justice. We acknowledge that Thy judgments are true and righteous altogether. Thy justice upholds the order of the universe and guarantees the safety of all who put their trust in Thee. We live because Thou art just - and merciful. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, righteous in all Thy ways and holy in all Thy works. Amen.*

In the inspired Scriptures justice and righteousness are scarcely to be distinguished from each other. The same word in the original becomes in English justice or righteousness, almost, one would suspect, at the whim of the translator.

The Old Testament asserts God's justice in language clear and full, and as beautiful as may be found anywhere in the literature of mankind. When the destruction of Sodom was announced, Abraham interceded for the righteous within the city, reminding God that he knew He would act like Himself in the human emergency. "That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

The concept of God held by the psalmists and prophets of Israel was that of an all-powerful ruler, high and lifted up, reigning in equity. "Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Of the long-awaited Messiah it was prophesied that when He came He should judge the people with righteousness and the poor with judgment.

Holy men of tender compassion, outraged by the inequity of the world's rulers, prayed, "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; a God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud. Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?" And this is to be understood not as a plea for personal vengeance but as a longing to see moral equity prevail in human society.

Such men as David and Daniel acknowledged their own un-righteousness in contrast to the righteousness of God, and as result their penitential prayers gained great power and effectiveness. "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces." And when the long-withheld judgment of God begins to fall upon the world, John sees the victorious saints standing upon a sea of glass mingled with fire. In their hands they hold harps of God; the song they sing is the song of Moses and the Lamb, and the theme of their song is the divine justice.

"Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou alone art holy: for all nations I shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

Justice embodies the idea of moral equity, and iniquity is the exact opposite; it is in-equity, the absence of equality from human thoughts and acts. Judgment is the application of equity to moral situations and may be favorable or unfavorable according to whether the one under examination has been equitable or in-equitable in heart and conduct.

It is sometimes said, "Justice requires God to do this," referring to some act we know He will perform. This is an error of thinking as well as of speaking, for it postulates a principle of justice outside of God which compels Him to act in a certain way. Of course there is no such principle. If there were it would be superior to God, for only a superior power can compel obedience.

The truth is that there is not and can never be anything outside of the nature of God which can move Him in the least degree. All God's reasons come from within His uncreated being. Nothing has entered the being of God from eternity, nothing has been removed, and nothing has been changed.

Justice, when used of God, is a name we give to the way God is, nothing more; and when God acts justly He is not doing so to conform to an independent criterion, but simply acting like Himself in a given situation. As gold is an element in itself and can never change nor compromise but is gold wherever it is found, so God is God, always, only, fully God, and can never be other than He is. Everything in the universe is good to the degree it conforms to the nature of God and evil as it fails to do so. God is His own self-existent principle of moral equity, and when He sentences evil men or rewards the righteous, He simply acts like Himself from within, uninfluenced by anything that is not Himself.

All this seems, but only seems, to destroy the hope of justification for the returning sinner. The Christian philosopher and saint, Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, sought a solution to the apparent contradiction between the justice and the mercy of God. "How dost Thou spare the wicked," he inquired of God, "if Thou art all just and supremely just?" Then he looked straight at God for the answer, for he knew that it lies in what God is.

Anselm's findings may be paraphrased this way: God's being is unitary; it is not composed of a number of parts working harmoniously, but simply one. There is nothing in His justice which forbids the exercise of His mercy. To think of God as we sometimes think of a court where a kindly judge, compelled by law sentences a man to death with tears and apologies, is to think in a manner wholly unworthy of the true God. God is never at cross-purposes with Himself.

No attribute of God is in conflict with another. God's compassion flows out of His goodness, and goodness without justice is not goodness. God spares us because He is good, but He could not be good if He were not just. When God punishes the wicked, Anselm concludes, it is just because it is consistent with their deserts; and when He spares the wicked it is just because it is compatible with His goodness; so God does what becomes Him as the supremely good God. This is reason seeking to understand, not that it may believe but because it already believes.

A simpler and more familiar solution for the problem of how God can be just and still justify the unjust is found in the Christian doctrine of redemption. It is that, through the work of Christ in atonement, justice is not violated but satisfied when God spares a sinner. Redemptive theology teaches that mercy does not become effective toward a man until justice has done its work. The just penalty for sin was exacted when Christ our Substitute died for us on the cross. However unpleasant this may sound to the ear of the natural man, it has ever been sweet to the ear of faith. Millions have been morally and spiritually transformed by this message, have lived lives of great moral power, and died at last peacefully trusting in it.

This message of justice discharged and mercy operative is more than a pleasant theological theory; it announces a fact made necessary by our deep human need. Because of our sin we are all under sentence of death, a judgment which resulted when justice confronted our moral situation. When infinite equity encountered our chronic and willful in-equity, there was violent war between the two, a war which God won and must always win. But when the penitent sinner casts himself upon Christ for salvation, the moral situation is reversed. Justice confronts the changed situation and pronounces the believing man just.

Thus justice actually goes over to the side of God's trusting children. This is the meaning of those daring words of the apostle John: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But God's justice stands forever against the sinner in utter severity. The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions. It hushes their fears and allows them to practice all pleasant forms of iniquity while death draws every day nearer and the command to repent goes unregarded. As responsible moral beings we dare not so trifle with our eternal future.

*Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
"Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.  
Bold shall I stand in Thy great day; For who ought to my charge shall  
lay? Fully absolved through these I am  
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.*

**Count N. L. von Zinzendorf**

# CHAPTER 18

*The Mercy of God*

4

Holy Father, Thy wisdom excites our admiration, Thy power fills us with fear, Thy omnipresence turns every spot of earth into holy ground; but how shall we thank Thee enough for Thy mercy which comes down to the lowest part of our need to give us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and for the spirit of heaviness a garment of praise?

We bless and magnify Thy mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.  
When through the blood of the everlasting covenant we children of the shadows reach at last our home in the light, we shall have a thousand strings to our harps, but the sweetest may well be the one tuned to sound forth most perfectly the mercy of God.

For what right will we have to be there? Did we not by our sins take part in that unholy rebellion which rashly sought to dethrone the glorious King of creation? And did we not in times past walk according to the course of this world, according to the evil prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience? And did we not all at once live in the lusts of our flesh? And were we not by nature the children of wrath, even as others?

But we who were one time enemies and alienated in our minds through wicked works shall then see God face to face and His name shall be in our foreheads. We who earned banishment shall enjoy communion; we who deserve the pains of hell shall know the bliss of heaven. And all through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us.

*When all Thy mercies, O my God, My rising soul surveys, Transported with the view, I'm lost In wonder, love, and praise.*

**Joseph Addison**

Mercy is an attribute of God, an infinite and inexhaustible energy within the divine nature which disposes God to be actively compassionate. Both the Old and the New Testaments proclaim the mercy of God, but the Old has more than four times as much to say about it as the New.

We should banish from our minds forever the common but erroneous notion that justice and judgment characterize the God of Israel, while mercy and grace belong to the Lord of the Church. Actually there is in principle no difference between the Old Testament and the New.

In the New Testament Scriptures there is a fuller development of redemptive truth, but one God speaks in both dispensations, and what He speaks agrees with what He is. Wherever and whenever God appears to men, He acts like Himself. Whether in the Garden of Eden or the Garden of Gethsemane, God is merciful as well as just.

He has always dealt in mercy with mankind and will always deal in justice when His mercy is despised. Thus He did in antediluvian times; thus when Christ walked among men; thus He is doing today and will continue always to do for no other reason than that He is God. If we could remember that the divine mercy is not a temporary mood but an attribute of God's eternal being, we would no longer fear that it will someday cease to be.

Mercy never began to be, but from eternity was; so it will never cease to be. It will never be more since it is itself infinite; and it will never be less because the infinite cannot suffer diminution. Nothing that has occurred or will occur in heaven or earth or hell can change the tender mercies of our God. Forever His mercy stands, a boundless, overwhelming immensity of divine pity and compassion.

As judgment is God's justice confronting moral inequity, so mercy is the goodness of God confronting human suffering and guilt. Were there no guilt in the world, no pain and no tears, God would yet be infinitely merciful; but His mercy might well remain hidden in His heart, unknown to the created universe.

No voice would be raised to celebrate the mercy of which none felt the need. It is human misery and sin that call forth the divine mercy.

"Kyrie eleison! Christe eleison!" the Church has pleaded through the centuries; but if I mistake not I hear in the voice of her pleading a note of sadness and despair. Her plaintive cry, so often repeated in that tone of resigned dejection, compels one to infer that she is praying for a boon she never actually expects to receive. She may go on dutifully to sing of the greatness of God and to recite the creed times beyond number, but her plea for mercy sounds like a forlorn hope and no more, as if mercy were a heavenly gift to be longed for but never really enjoyed.

Could our failure to capture the pure joy of mercy consciously experienced be the result of our unbelief or our ignorance, or both? It was so once in Israel. "I bear them record," Paul testified of Israel, "that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." They failed because there was at least one thing they did not know, one thing that would have made the difference.

And of Israel in the wilderness the Hebrew writer says, "But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." To receive mercy we must first know that God is merciful. And it is not enough to believe that He once showed mercy to Noah or Abraham or David and will again show mercy in some happy future day. We must believe that God's mercy is boundless, free and, through Jesus Christ our Lord, available to us now in our present situation.

We may plead for mercy for a lifetime in unbelief, and at the end of our days be still no more than sadly hopeful that we shall somewhere, sometime, receive it. This is to starve to death just outside the banquet hall in which we have been warmly invited.

Or we may, if we will, lay hold on the mercy of God by faith, enter the hall, and sit down with the bold and avid souls who will not allow diffidence and unbelief to keep them from the feast of fat things prepared for them.

*Arise, my soul, arise; Shake off thy guilty fears;  
The bleeding Sacrifice In my behalf appears:  
Before the throne my Surety stands,  
My name is written on His hands.  
My God is reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear:  
He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear:  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And “Father, Abba, Father,” cry.*

**Charles Wesley**

**CHAPTER 19***The Grace of God***4**

*God of all grace, whose thoughts toward us are ever thoughts of peace and not of evil, give us hearts to believe that we are accepted in the Beloved; and give us minds to admire that perfection of moral wisdom which found a way to preserve the integrity of heaven and yet receive us there.*

*We are astonished and marvel that one so holy and dread should invite us into Thy banqueting house and cause love to be the banner over us. We can not express the gratitude we feel, but look Thou on our hearts and read it there. Amen.*

In God mercy and grace are one; but as they reach us they are seen as two, related but not identical.

As mercy is God's goodness confronting human misery and guilt, so grace is His goodness directed toward human debt and demerit. It is by His grace that God imputes merit where none previously existed and declares no debt to be where one had been before.

Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits upon the undeserving. It is a self-existent principle inherent in the divine nature and appears to us as a self-caused propensity to pity the wretched, spare the guilty, welcome the outcast, and bring into favor those who were before under just disapprobation. Its use to us sinful men is to save us and to make us sit together in heavenly places to demonstrate to the ages the exceeding riches of God's kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

We benefit eternally by God's being just what He is. Because He is what He is, He lifts up our heads out of the prison house, changes our prison garments for royal robes, and makes us to eat bread continually before Him all the days of our lives.

Grace takes its rise far back in the heart of God, in the awful and incomprehensible abyss of His holy being; but the channel through which it flows out to men is Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. The apostle Paul, who beyond all others is the exponent of grace in redemption, never disassociates God's grace from God's crucified Son. Always in his teachings the two are found together, organically one and inseparable.

A full and fair summation of Paul's teaching on this subject is found in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory

of his grace, where in he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

John also in the Gospel that bears his name identifies Christ as the medium through which grace reaches mankind: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

But right here it is easy to miss the path and go far astray from the truth; and some have done this. They have compelled this verse to stand by itself, unrelated to other Scriptures bearing on the doctrine of grace, and have made it teach that Moses knew only law and Christ knows only grace. So the Old Testament is made to be a book of law and the New Testament a book of grace. The truth is quite otherwise.

The law was given to men through Moses, but it did not originate with Moses. It had existed in the heart of God from before the foundation of the world. On Mount Sinai it became the legal code for the nation of Israel; but the moral principles it embodies are eternal. There never was a time when the law did not represent the will of God for mankind nor a time when the violation of it did not bring its own penalty, though God was patient and sometimes "winked" at wrongdoing because of the ignorance of the people. Paul's close-knit arguments in the third and fifth chapters of his Epistle to the Romans make this very clear.

The spring of Christian morality is the love of Christ, not the law of Moses; nevertheless there has been no abrogation of the principles of morality contained in the law. No privileged class exists exempt from that righteousness which the law enjoins.

The Old Testament is indeed a book of law, but not of law only. Before the great flood Noah "found grace in the eyes of the Lord," and after the law was given God said to Moses, "Thou hast found grace in my sight." And how could it be otherwise? God will always be Himself, and grace is an attribute of His holy being. He can no more hide His grace than the sun can hide its brightness. Men may flee from the sunlight to dark and musty caves of the earth, but they cannot put out the sun. So men may in any dispensation despise the grace of God, but they cannot extinguish it.

Had the Old Testament times been times of stern, unbending law alone the whole complexion of the early world would have been vastly less cheerful than we find it to be in the ancient writings. There could have been no Abraham, friend of God; no David, man after God's own heart; no Samuel, no Isaiah, no Daniel. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews, that Westminster Abbey of the spiritually great of the Old Testament, would stand dark and tenantless. Grace made sainthood possible in Old Testament days just as it does today.

No one was ever saved other than by grace, from Abel to the present moment. Since mankind was banished from the east-ward Garden, none has ever returned to the divine

favor except through the sheer goodness of God. And wherever grace found any man it was always by Jesus Christ. Grace indeed came by Jesus Christ, but it did not wait for His birth in the manger or His death on the cross before it became operative.

Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The first man in human history to be reinstated in the fellowship of God came through faith in Christ. In olden times men looked forward to Christ's redeeming work; in later times they gaze back upon it, but always they came and they come by grace, through faith.

We must keep in mind also that the grace of God is infinite and eternal. As it had no beginning, so it can have no end, and being an attribute of God, it is as boundless as infinitude.

Instead of straining to comprehend this as a theological truth, it would be better and simpler to compare God's grace with our need. We can never know the enormity of our sin, neither is it necessary that we should. What we can know is that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

To "abound" in sin: that is the worst and the most we could or can do. The word abound defines the limit of our finite abilities; and although we feel our iniquities rise over us like a mountain, the mountain, nevertheless, has definable boundaries: it is so large, so high, it weighs only this certain amount and no more. But who shall define the limitless grace of God? Its "much more" plunges our thoughts into infinitude and confounds them there. All thanks be to God for grace abounding.

We who feel ourselves alienated from the fellowship of God can now raise our discouraged heads and look up. Through the virtues of Christ's atoning death the cause of our banishment has been removed. We may return as the Prodigal returned, and be welcome. As we approach the Garden, our home before the Fall, the flaming sword is withdrawn. The keepers of the tree of life stand aside when they see a son of grace approaching.

*Return, O wanderer, now return, And seek thy Father's face;  
Those new desires which in thee burn Were kindled by His grace.  
Return, O wanderer, now return, And wipe the falling tear: Thy Father  
calls, - no longer mourn;  
'Tis love invites thee near*

**William Benco Collyer**

**CHAPTER 20***The Love of God***4**

*Our Father which art in heaven, we Thy children are often troubled in mind, hearing within us at once the affirmations of faith and the accusations of conscience. We are sure that there is in us nothing that could attract the love of One as holy and as just as Thou art. Yet Thou hast declared Thine unchanging love for us in Christ Jesus. If nothing in us can win Thy love, nothing in the universe can prevent Thee from loving us.*

*Thy love is uncaused and undeserved. Thou art Thyself the reason for the love wherewith we are loved. Help us to believe the intensity, the eternity of the love that has found us. Then love will cast out fear; and our troubled hearts will be at peace, trusting not in what we are but in what Thou hast declared Thyself to be. Amen.*

The apostle John, by the Spirit, wrote, “God is love,” and some have taken his words to be a definitive statement concerning the essential nature of God. This is a great error. John was by those words stating a fact, but he was not offering a definition.

Equating love with God is a major mistake which has produced much unsound religious philosophy and has brought forth a spate of vaporous poetry completely out of accord with the Holy Scriptures and altogether of another climate from that of historic Christianity.

Had the apostle declared that love is what God is, we would be forced to infer that God is what love is. If literally God is love, then literally love is God, and we are in all duty bound to worship love as the only God there is. If love is equal to God then God is only equal to love, and God and love are identical. Thus we destroy the concept of personality in God and deny outright all His attributes save one, and that one we substitute for God.

The God we have left is not the God of Israel; He is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; He is not the God of the prophets and the apostles; He is not the God of the saints and reformers and martyrs, nor yet the God of the theologians and hymnists of the church.

For our souls’ sake we must learn to understand the Scriptures. We must escape the slavery of words and give loyal adherence to meanings instead. Words should express ideas, not originate them. We say that God is love; we say that God is light; we say that Christ is truth; and we mean the words to be understood in much the same way that words are understood when we say of a man, “He is kindness itself.” By so saying we are not stating that kindness and the man are identical, and no one understands our words in that sense.

The words "God is love" mean that love is an essential attribute of God. Love is something true of God but it is not God. It expresses the way God is in His unitary being, as do the words holiness, justice, faithfulness and truth. Because God is immutable He always acts like Himself, and because He is a unity He never suspends one of His attributes in order to exercise another.

From God's other known attributes we may learn much about His love. We can know, for instance, that because God is self-existent, His love had no beginning; because He is eternal, His love can have no end; because He is infinite, it has no limit; because He is holy, it is the quintessence of all spotless purity; because He is immense, His love is an incomprehensibly vast, bottomless, shoreless sea before which we kneel in joyful silence and from which the loftiest eloquence retreats confused and abashed.

Yet if we would know God and for other's sake tell what we know, we must try to speak of His love. All Christians have tried, but none has ever done it very well. I can no more do justice to that awesome and wonder-filled theme than a child can grasp a star. Still, by reaching toward the star the child may call attention to it and even indicate the direction one must look to see it.

So, as I stretch my heart toward the high, shilling love of God, someone who has not before known about it may be encouraged to look up and have hope.

We do not know, and we may never know, what love is, but we can know how it manifests itself, and that is enough for us here. First we see it showing itself as good will. Love wills the good of all and never wills harm or evil to any. This explains the words of the apostle John: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear."

Fear is the painful emotion that arises at the thought that we may be harmed or made to suffer. This fear persists while we are subject to the will of someone who does not desire our well-being. The moment we come under the protection of one of good will, fear is cast out. A child lost in a crowded store is full of fear because it sees the strangers around it as enemies. In its mother's arms a moment later all the terror subsides. The known good will of the mother casts out fear.

The world is full of enemies, and as long as we are subject to the possibility of harm from these enemies, fear is inevitable. The effort to conquer fear without removing the causes is altogether futile. The heart is wiser than the apostles of tranquillity. As long as we are in the hands of chance, as long as we look for hope to the law of averages, as long as we must trust for survival to our ability to outthink or outmaneuver the enemy, we have every good reason to be afraid. And fear hath torment.

To know that love is of God and to enter into the secret place leaning upon the arm of the Beloved - this and only this can cast out fear. Let a man become convinced that nothing can harm him and instantly for him all fear goes out of the universe. The nervous reflex, the natural revulsion to physical pain may be felt sometimes, but the deep torment of fear is gone forever.

God is love and God is sovereign. His love disposes Him to desire our everlasting welfare and His sovereignty enables Him to secure it. Nothing can hurt a good man. The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still His kingdom is forever. Martin Luther God's love tells us that He is friendly and His Word assures us that He is our friend and wants us to be His friends. No man with a trace of humility would first think that he is a friend of God; but the idea did not originate with men. Abraham would never have said, "I am God's friend," but God Himself said that Abraham was His friend. The disciples might well have hesitated to claim friendship with Christ, but Christ said to them, "Ye are my friends."

Modesty may demur at so rash a thought, but audacious faith dares to believe the Word and claim friendship with God. We do God more honor by believing what He has said about Himself and having the courage to come boldly to the throne of grace than by hiding in self-conscious humility among the trees of the garden.

Love is also an emotional identification. It considers nothing its own but gives all freely to the object of its affection. We see this constantly in our world of men and women. A young mother, thin and tired, nurses at her breast a plump and healthy baby, and far from complaining, the mother gazes down at her child with eyes shining with happiness and pride.

Acts of self-sacrifice are common to love. Christ said of Himself, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

It is a strange and beautiful eccentricity of the free God that He has allowed His heart to be emotionally identified with men. Self-sufficient as He is, He wants our love and will not be satisfied till He gets it. Free as He is, He has let His heart be bound to us forever. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. "For our soul is so specially loved of Him that is highest," says Julian of Norwich, "that it overpasseth the knowing of all creatures: that is to say, there is no creature that is made that may know how much and how sweetly and how tenderly our Maker loveth us.

And therefore we may with grace and His help stand in spiritual beholding, with everlasting marvel of this high, overpassing, inestimable Love that Almighty God hath to us of His Goodness."

Another characteristic of love is that it takes pleasure in its object. God enjoys His creation. The apostle John says frankly that God's purpose in creation was His own pleasure. God is happy in His love for all that He has made. We cannot miss the feeling of pleasure in God's delighted references to His handiwork. Psalm 104 is a divinely inspired nature poem almost rhapsodic in its happiness, and the delight of God is felt throughout it.

"The glory of the Lord shall endure forever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works."

The Lord takes peculiar pleasure in His saints. Many think of God as far removed, gloomy and mightily displeased with everything, gazing down in a mood of fixed apathy upon a world in which He has long ago lost interest; but this is to think erroneously. True, God hates sin and can never look with pleasure upon iniquity, but where men seek to do God's will He responds in genuine affection.

Christ in His atonement has removed the bar to the divine fellowship. Now in Christ all believing souls are objects of God's delight. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."

According to the Book of Job, God's work of creation was done to musical accompaniment. "Where wast thou," God asks, "when I laid the foundations of the earth. . . when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" John Dryden carried the idea a bit further than this, but not, perhaps, too far to be true:

From harmony, from heavenly harmony, This universal frame began:

*When nature underneath a heap Of jarring atoms lay,  
And could not heave her head,  
The tuneful voice was heard from high,  
"Arise, ye more than dead!"  
Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry,  
In order to their stations leap, And Music's power obey.  
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
This universal frame began: From harmony to harmony  
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,  
The diapason closing full in Man.*

From "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day"

Music is both an expression and a source of pleasure, and the pleasure that is purest and nearest to God is the pleasure of love.

Hell is a place of no pleasure because there is no love there. Heaven is full of music because it is the place where the pleasures of holy love abound. Earth is the place where the pleasures of love are mixed with pain, for sin is here, and hate and ill will. In such a world as ours love must sometimes suffer, as Christ suffered in giving Himself for His own. But we have the certain promise that the causes of sorrow will finally be abolished and the new face enjoy forever a world of selfless, perfect love.

It is of the nature of love that it cannot lie quiescent. It is active, creative, and benign. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were sinners, Christ died for us." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." So it must be where

love is; love must ever give to its own, whatever the cost. The apostles rebuked the young churches sharply because a few of their members had forgotten this and had allowed their love to spend itself in personal enjoyment while their brethren were in need.

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" So wrote that John who has been known to the centuries as "the Beloved."

The love of God is one of the great realities of the universe, a pillar upon which the hope of the world rests. But it is a personal, intimate thing, too. God does not love populations, He loves people. He loves not masses, but men. He loves us all with a mighty love that has no beginning and can have no end.

In Christian experience there is a highly satisfying love content that distinguishes it from all other religions and elevates it to heights far beyond even the purest and noblest philosophy. This love content is more than a thing; it is God Himself in the midst of His Church singing over His people. True Christian joy is the heart's harmonious response to the Lord's song of love.

*Thou hidden love of God, whose height, Whose depth unfathomed, no  
man knows, I see from far Thy beauteous light,  
Inly I sigh for Thy repose;  
My heart is pained, nor can it be At rest till it finds rest in Thee.*

**Gerhard Tersteegen**

**CHAPTER 21***The Holiness of God***4**

*Glory be to God on high. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, for Thy great glory. Lord, I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me which I knew not. I heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee and I abhor myself in dust and ashes. O Lord, I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.*

*But while I was musing the fire burned. Lord, I must speak of Thee, lest by my silence I offend against the generation of Thy children. Behold, Thou has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. O Lord, forsake me not. Let me show forth Thy strength unto this generation and Thy power to everyone that is to come. Raise up prophets and seers in Thy Church who shall magnify Thy glory and through Thine almighty Spirit restore to Thy people the knowledge of the holy. Amen.*

The moral shock suffered by us through our mighty break with the high will of heaven has left us all with a permanent trauma affecting every part of our nature. There is disease both in ourselves and in our environment.

The sudden realization of his personal depravity came like a stroke from heaven upon the trembling heart of Isaiah at the moment when he had his revolutionary vision of the holiness of God. His pain-filled cry,

“Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts,” expresses the feeling of every man who has discovered himself under his disguises and has been confronted with an inward sight of the holy whiteness that is God. Such an experience cannot but be emotionally violent.

Until we have seen ourselves as God see us, we are not likely to be much disturbed over conditions around us as long as they do not get so far out of hand as to threaten our comfortable way of life. We have learned to live with unholiness and have come to look upon it as the natural and expected thing. We are not disappointed that we do not find all truth in our teachers of faith, fulness in our politicians or complete honesty in our merchants or full trustworthiness in our friends That we may continue to exist we make such laws as are necessary to protect us from our fellow men and let it go at that.

Neither the writer nor the reader of these words is qualified to appreciate the holiness of God. Quite literally a new channel must be cut through the desert of our minds to allow the sweet waters of truth that will heal our great sickness to flow in. We cannot grasp

the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of.

God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.

Only the Spirit of the Holy One can impart to the human spirit the knowledge of the holy. Yet as electric power flows only through a conductor, so the Spirit flows through truth and must find same measure of truth in the mind before He can illuminate the heart. Faith wakes at the voice of truth but responds to no other sound. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Theological knowledge is the medium through which the Spirit flows into the human heart, yet there must be humble penitence in the heart before truth can produce faith. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth.

It is possible to have same truth in the mind without having the Spirit in the heart, but it is never possible to have the Spirit apart from truth.

In his penetrating study of the holy, Rudolf Otto makes a strong case for the presence in the human mind of something he names the "numinous," by which, apparently, he means a sense that there is in the world a vague, incomprehensible Something, the Mysterium Tremendum, the awesome Mystery, surrounding and enfolding the universe. This is an It, an awful Thing, and can never be intellectually conceived, only sensed and felt in the depths of the human spirit.

It remains as a permanent religious instinct, a feeling for that unnamed, undiscoverable Presence that "runs quicksilverlike through creation's veins" and sometimes stuns the mind by confronting it with a supernatural, suprarational manifestation of itself. The man thus confronted is brought down and overwhelmed and can only tremble and be silent.

This nonrational dread, this feeling for the uncreated Mystery in the world, is back of all religion. The pure religion of the Bible, no less than the basest animism of the naked tribesman, exists only because this basic instinct is present in human nature. Of course, the difference between the religion of an Isaiah or a Paul and that of the animist is that one has truth and the other has not; he has only the "numinous" instinct. He feels after an unknown God, but an Isaiah and a Paul have found the true God through His own self-disclosure in the inspired Scriptures.

The feeling for mystery, even for the Great Mystery, is basic in human nature and indispensable to religious faith, but it is not enough. Because of it men may whisper, "That awful Thing," but they do not cry, "Mine Holy One!" In the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures God carries forward His self-revelation and gives it personality and moral content.

This awful Presence is shown to be not a Thing but a moral Being with all the warm qualities of genuine personality. More than this, He is the absolute quintessence of moral excellence, infinitely perfect in righteousness, purity, rectitude, and incomprehensible holiness. And in all this He is uncreated, self-sufficient and beyond the power of human thought to conceive or human speech to utter.

Through the self-revelation of God in the Scriptures and the illumination of the Holy Spirit the Christian gains everything and loses nothing. To his idea of God there are added the twin concepts of personality and moral character, but there remains the original sense of wonder and fear in the presence of the world-filling Mystery. Today his heart may leap up with the happy cry, "Abba Father, my Lord and my God!" Tomorrow he may kneel with the delighted trembling to admire and adore the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.

Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy. God is holy and He has made holiness the moral condition necessary to the health of His universe. Sin's temporary presence in the world only accents this. Whatever is holy is healthy; evil is a moral sickness that must end ultimately in death. The formation of the language itself suggests this, the English word holy deriving from the Anglo-Saxon halig, hal, meaning, "well, whole."

Since God's first concern for His universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness, whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation God must destroy whatever would destroy it. When He arises to put down iniquity and save the world from irreparable moral collapse, He is said to be angry. Every wrathful judgment in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation.

The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health of the creation are inseparably united. God's wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the polio that take the life of her child.

God is holy with an absolute holiness that knows no degrees, and this He cannot impart to His creatures. But there is a relative and contingent holiness which He shares with angels and seraphim in heaven and with redeemed men on earth as their preparation for heaven. This holiness God can and does impart to His children. He shares it with them by imputation and by impartation, and because He has made it available to them through the blood of the Lamb, He requires it of them. To Israel first and later to His Church God spoke, saying, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." He did not say "Be ye as holy as I am holy," for that would be to demand of us absolute holiness, something that belongs to God alone.

Before the uncreated fire of God's holiness angels veil their faces. Yea, the heavens are not clean, and the stars are not pure in His sight. No honest man can say "I am holy," but neither is any honest man willing to ignore the solemn words of the inspired writer, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Caught in this dilemma, what are we Christians to do? We must like Moses cover ourselves with faith and humility while we steal a quick look at the God whom no man can see and live. The broken and the contrite heart He will not despise. We must hide our unholiness in the wounds of Christ as Moses hid himself in the cleft of the rock while the glory of God passed by. We must take refuge from God in God. Above all we must believe that God sees us perfect in His Son while

He disciplines and chastens and purges us that we may be partakers of His holiness. By faith and obedience, by constant meditation on the holiness of God, by loving righteousness and hating iniquity, by a growing acquaintance with the Spirit of holiness, we can acclimate ourselves to the fellowship of the saints on earth and prepare ourselves for the eternal companionship of God and the saints above. Thus, as they say when humble believers meet, we will have a heaven to go to heaven in.

*How dread are Thine eternal years, O everlasting Lord! By prostrate  
spirits day and night  
Incessantly adored!  
How beautiful, how beautiful The sight of Thee must be,  
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power, And awful purity!  
Oh how I fear Thee, living God! With deepest, tenderest fears, And  
worship Thee with trembling hope, And penitential tears.*

**Frederick W. Faber**

**CHAPTER 22***The Sovereignty of God***4**

*Who wouldst not fear Thee, O Lord God of Hosts, most high and most terrible? For Thou art Lord alone. Thou has made heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all things that are therein, and in Thy hand is the soul of every living thing, Thou sittest king upon the flood; yea, Thou sittest king forever. Thou art a great king over all the earth. Thou art clothed with strength; honor and majesty are before Thee. Amen.*

God's sovereignty is the attribute by which He rules His entire creation, and to be sovereign God must be all-knowing, all-powerful, and absolutely free. The reasons are these:

Were there even one datum of knowledge, however small, un-known to God, His rule would break down at that point. To be Lord over all the creation, He must possess all knowledge. And were God lacking one infinitesimal modicum of power, that lack would end His reign and undo His kingdom; that one stray atom of power would belong to someone else and God would be a limited ruler and hence not sovereign.

Furthermore, His sovereignty requires that He be absolutely free, which means simply that He must be free to do whatever He wills to do anywhere at any time to carry out His eternal purpose in every single detail without interference. Were He less than free He must be less than sovereign.

To grasp the idea of unqualified freedom requires a vigorous effort of the mind. We are not psychologically conditioned to understand freedom except in its imperfect forms. Our concepts of it have been shaped in a world where no absolute freedom exists. Here each natural object is dependent upon many other objects, and that dependence limits its freedom.

Wordsworth at the beginning of his "Prelude" rejoiced that he had escaped the city where he had long been pent up and was "now free, free as a bird to settle where I will." But to be free a bird is not to be free at all. The naturalist knows that the supposedly free bird actually lives its entire life in a cage made of fears, hungers, and instincts; it is limited by weather conditions, varying air pressures, the local food supply, predatory beasts, and that strangest of all bonds, the irresistible compulsion to stay within the small plot of land and air assigned it by birdland comity. The freest bird is, along with every other created thing, held in constant check by a net of necessity. Only God is free.

God is said to be absolutely free because no one and no thing can hinder Him or compel Him or stop Him. He is able to do as He pleases always, everywhere, forever. To be thus free means also that He must possess universal authority. That He has

unlimited power we know from the Scriptures and may deduce from certain other of His attributes. But what about His authority?

Even to discuss the authority of Almighty God seems a bit meaningless, and to question it would be absurd. Can we imagine the Lord God of Hosts having to request permission of anyone or to apply for anything to a higher body? To whom would God go for permission? Who is higher than the Highest? Who is mightier than the Almighty? Whose position antedates that of the Eternal? At whose throne would God kneel? Where is the greater one to whom He must appeal? "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."

The sovereignty of God is a fact well established in the Scriptures and declared aloud by the logic of truth. But admittedly it raises certain problems which have not to this time been satisfactorily solved: These are mainly two. The first is the presence in the creation of those things which God cannot approve, such as evil, pain, and death. If God is sovereign He could have prevented their coming into existence. Why did He not do so?

The Zend-Avesta, sacred book of Zoroastrianism, loftiest of the great non-Biblical religions, got around this difficulty neatly enough by postulating a theological dualism. There were two Gods, Ormazd and Ahriman, and these between them created the world. The good Ormazd made all good things and the evil Ahriman made the rest. It was quite simple. Ormazd had no sovereignty to worry about, and apparently did not mind sharing his prerogatives with another.

For the Christian this explanation will not do, for it flatly contradicts the truth taught so emphatically throughout the whole Bible, that there is one God and that He alone created the heaven and the earth and all the things that are therein. God's attributes are such as to make impossible the existence of another God. The Christian admits that he does not have the final answer to the riddle of permitted evil. But he knows what that answer is not. And he knows that the Zend-Avesta does not have it either.

While a complete explanation of the origin of sin eludes us, there are a few things we do know. In His sovereign wisdom God has permitted evil to exist in carefully restricted areas of His creation, a kind of fugitive outlaw whose activities are temporary and limited in scope. In doing this God has acted according to His infinite wisdom and goodness. More than that no one knows at present; and more than that no one needs to know. The name of God is sufficient guarantee of the perfection of His works.

Another real problem created by the doctrine of the divine sovereignty has to do with the will of man. If God rules His universe by His sovereign decrees, how is it possible for man to exercise free choice? And if he can not exercise freedom of choice, how can he be held responsible for his conduct? Is he not a mere puppet whose actions are determined by a behind-the-scenes God who pulls the strings as it pleases Him?

The attempt to answer these questions has divided the Christian church neatly into two camps which have borne the names of two distinguished theologians, Jacobus Arminius and John Calvin. Most Christians are content to get into one camp or the other and deny either sovereignty to God or free will to man. It appears possible, however, to reconcile these two positions without doing violence to either, although the effort that follows may prove deficient to partisans of one camp or the other.

Here is my view: God sovereignly decreed that man should be free to exercise moral choice, and man from the beginning has fulfilled that decree by making his choice between good and evil. When he chooses to do evil, he does not thereby countervail the sovereign will of God but fulfills it, inasmuch as the eternal decree decided not which choice the man should make but that he should be free to make it. If in His absolute freedom God has willed to give man limited freedom, who is there to stay His hand or say, "What doest thou?" Man's will is free because God is sovereign. A God less than sovereign could not bestow moral freedom upon His creatures. He would be afraid to do so.

Perhaps a homely illustration might help us to understand. An ocean liner leaves New York bound for Liverpool. Its destination has been determined by proper authorities. Nothing can change it. This is at least a faint picture of sovereignty.

On board the liner are several scores of passengers. These are not in chains, neither are their activities determined for them by decree. They are completely free to move about as they will.

They eat, sleep, play, lounge about on the deck, read, talk, altogether as they please; but all the while the great liner is carrying them steadily onward toward a predetermined port.

Both freedom and sovereignty are present here and they do not contradict each other. So it is, I believe, with man's freedom and the sovereignty of God. The mighty liner of God's sovereign design keeps its steady course over the sea of history. God moves undisturbed and unhindered toward the fulfillment of those eternal purposes which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. We do not know all that is included in those purposes, but enough has been disclosed to furnish us with a broad outline of things to come and to give us good hope and firm assurance of future well-being. We know that God will fulfill every promise made to the prophets; we know that sinners will some day be cleansed out of the earth; we know that a ransomed company will enter into the joy of God and that the righteous will shine forth in the kingdom of their Father; we know that God's perfections will yet receive universal acclamation, that all created intelligences will own Jesus Christ Lord to the glory of God the Father, that the present imperfect order will be done away, and a new heaven and a new earth be established forever.

Toward all this God is moving with infinite wisdom and perfect precision of action. No one can dissuade Him from His purposes; nothing turn Him aside from His plans. Since He is omniscient, there can be no unforeseen circumstances, no accidents. As He is

sovereign, there can be no countermaned orders, no breakdown in authority; and as He is omnipotent, there can be no want of power to achieve His chosen ends. God is sufficient unto Himself for all these things.

In the meanwhile things are not as smooth as this quick outline might suggest. The mystery of iniquity doth already work. Within the broad field of God's sovereign, permissive will the deadly conflict of good with evil continues with increasing fury. God will yet have His way in the whirlwind and the storm, but the storm and the whirlwind are here, and as responsible beings we must make our choice in the present moral situation.

Certain things have been decreed by the free determination of God, and one of these is the law of choice and consequences. God has decreed that all who willingly commit themselves to His Son Jesus Christ in the obedience of faith shall receive eternal life and become sons of God. He has also decreed that all who love darkness and continue in rebellion against the high authority of heaven shall remain in a state of spiritual alienation and suffer eternal death at last.

Reducing the whole matter to individual terms, we arrive at some vital and highly personal conclusions. In the moral conflict now raging around us whoever is on God's side is on the winning side and can not lose; whoever is on the other side is on the losing side and can not win. Here there is no chance, no gamble. There is freedom to choose which side we shall be on but no freedom to negotiate the results of the choice once it is made. By the mercy of God we may repent a wrong choice and alter the consequences by making a new and right choice. Beyond that we can not go.

The whole matter of moral choice centers around Jesus Christ. Christ stated it plainly: "He that is not with me is against me," and "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." The gospel message embodies three distinct elements: an announcement, a command, and a call. It announces the good news of redemption accomplished in mercy; it commands all men everywhere to repent and it calls all men to surrender to the terms of grace by believing on Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

We must all choose whether we will obey the gospel or turn away in unbelief and reject its authority. Our choice is our own, but the consequences of the choice have already been determined by the sovereign will of God, and from this there is no appeal.

The Lord descended from above,  
And bowed the heavens most high,  
And underneath  
His feet He cast The darkness of the sky.

*On cherubim and seraphim Full royally He rode,  
And on the wings of mighty winds Came flying all abroad.  
He sat serene upon the floods, Their fury to restrain;  
And He, as sovereign Lord and King, For evermore shall reign. Psalm  
paraphrase,*  
**Thomas Sternhold**

## CHAPTER 23

*The Open Secret*

4

When viewed from the perspective of eternity, the most critical need of this hour may well be that the Church should be brought back from her long Babylonian captivity and the name of God be glorified in her again as of old. Yet we must not think of the Church as an anonymous body, a mystical religious abstraction. We Christians are the Church and whatever we do is what the Church is doing. The matter, therefore, is for each of us a personal one. Any forward step in the Church must begin with the individual.

What can we plain Christians do to bring back the departed glory? Is there some secret we may learn? Is there a formula for personal revival we can apply to the present situation, to our own situation? The answer to these questions is yes.

Yet the answer may easily disappoint some persons, for it is anything but profound. I bring no esoteric cryptogram, no mystic code to be painfully deciphered. I appeal to no hidden law of the unconscious, no occult knowledge meant only for the few. The secret is an open one which the wayfaring man may read. It is simply the old and ever new counsel: Acquaint thyself with God. To regain her lost power the Church must see heaven opened and have a transforming vision of God.

But the God we must see is not the utilitarian God who is having such a run of popularity today, whose chief claim to men's attention is His ability to bring them success in their various undertakings and who for that reason is being cajoled and flattered by everyone who wants a favor. The God we must learn to know is the Majesty in the heavens, God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, the only wise God, our Saviour. He it is that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, who stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in, who bringeth out His starry host by number and calleth them all by name through the greatness of His power, who seeth the works of man as vanity, who putteth no confidence in princes and asks no counsel of kings.

Knowledge of such a Being cannot be gained by study alone. It comes by a wisdom the natural man knows nothing of, neither can know, because it is spiritually discerned. To know God is at once the easiest and the most difficult thing in the world. It is easy because the knowledge is not won by hard mental toil, but is something freely given. As sunlight falls free on the open field, so the knowledge of the holy God is a free gift to men who are open to receive it.

But this knowledge is difficult because there are conditions to be met and the obstinate nature of fallen man does not take kindly to them.

Let me present a brief summary of these conditions as taught by the Bible and repeated through the centuries by the holiest, sweetest saints the world has ever known:

First, we must forsake our sins. The belief that a holy God cannot be known by men of confirmed evil lives is not new to the Christian religion. The Hebrew book, The Wisdom of Solomon, which antedates Christianity by many years, has the following passage:

"Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth: think of the Lord with a good heart, and in simplicity of heart seek him. For he will be found of them that tempt him not; and sheweth himself unto such as do not distrust him. For foward thoughts separate from God and his power, when it is tried, reproveth the unwise. For unto a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter; nor dwell in the body that is subject to sin."

For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding, and will not abide when unrighteousness cometh in." This same thought is found in various sayings throughout the inspired Scriptures, the best known probably being the words of Christ, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Second, there must be an utter committal of the whole life to Christ in faith. This is what it means to "believe in Christ."

It involves a volitional and emotional attachment to Him accompanied by a firm purpose to obey Him in all things. This requires that we keep His commandments, carry our cross, and love God and our fellow men.

Third, there must be a reckoning of ourselves to have died unto sin and to be alive unto God in Christ Jesus, followed by a throwing open of the entire personality to the inflow of the Holy Spirit. Then we must practice whatever self-discipline is required to walk in the Spirit, and trample under our feet the lusts of the flesh.

Fourth, we must boldly repudiate the cheap values of the fallen world and become completely detached in spirit from everything that unbelieving men set their hearts upon, allowing ourselves only the simplest enjoyments of nature which God has bestowed alike upon the just and the unjust.

Fifth, we must practice the art of long and loving meditation upon the majesty of God. This will take some effort, for the concept of majesty has all but disappeared from the human race. The focal point of man's interest is now himself. Humanism in its various forms has displaced theology as the key to the understanding of life. When the nineteenth-century poet Swinburne wrote, "Glory to Man in the highest! for man is the master of things," he gave to the modern world its new Te Deum. All this must be reversed by a deliberate act of the will and kept so by a patient effort of the mind.

God is a Person and can be known in increasing degrees of intimate acquaintance as we prepare our hearts for the wonder. It may be necessary for us to alter our former

beliefs about God as the glory that gilds the Sacred Scriptures dawns over our interior lives. We may also need to break quietly and graciously with the lifeless textualism that prevails among the gospel churches, and to protest the frivolous character of much that passes for Christianity among us. By this we may for the time lose friends and gain a passing reputation for being holier-than-thou; but no man who permits the expectation of unpleasant consequences to influence him in a matter like this is fit for the kingdom of God.

Sixth, as the knowledge of God becomes more wonderful, greater service to our fellow men will become for us imperative. This blessed knowledge is not given to be enjoyed selfishly. The more perfectly we know God the more we will feel the desire to translate the new-found knowledge into deeds of mercy toward suffering humanity. The God who gave all to us will continue to give all through us as we come to know Him better.

Thus far we have considered the individual's personal relation to God, but like the ointment of a man's right hand, which by its fragrance "betrayeth itself", any intensified knowledge of God will soon begin to affect those around us in the Christian community. And we must seek purposefully to share our increasing light with the fellow members of the household of God.

This we can best do by keeping the majesty of God in full focus in all our public services. Not only our private prayers should be filled with God, by our witnessing, our singing, our preaching, our writing should center around the Person of our holy, holy Lord and extol continually the greatness of His dignity and power. There is a glorified Man on the right hand of the Majesty in heaven faithfully representing us there. We are left for a season among men; let us faithfully represent Him here.

**Knowledge of the Holy — A.W. Tozer**

## **WEEK 5 ASSIGNMENTS**

**Prior to class, please complete the following:**

- Read The Heart Qualifications of Leadership (Servant Leaders)
- Share in a 2-3 page integrative reflection paper, your views on the heart qualifications of a leader. Include an experience where you may have exhibited leadership from the heart or simply leadership because of the position you were assigned to.
- Complete and submit Spiritual Journal.
- Please print out your DISC profile in color and bring it to the “face-to-face” final class. Online students may submit questions prior to the final class for clarity of DISC interpretations.
- Local students attend face-to-face classes. Online students can watch the recorded face-to-face classes 1 week after the class date

# THE HEART QUALIFICATIONS OF LEADERSHIP

by Frank Damazio

WEEK

5

At some point in your service to the Church – the body of Christ – whatever the nature of your own ministry calling, you will probably be called to act in a leadership role. Will you qualify? Will you be ready for one of the greatest adventures of a lifetime?

While God is committed to helping you grow in faith, your level of cooperation is the releasing factor that leads to a qualified heart. He is looking for people He can trust, people who share His own heart's love and concern for the Church. He is looking for people with heart.

What does God mean when He asks His people to give Him their hearts? To the Western mind, the word "heart" may generally mean the emotional feelings of a person. To the ancient Hebrew mind, however, the meaning of "heart" encompassed not only a person's emotions, but also his spiritual, mental and physical life. The Hebrews viewed the human as a total unit, and the word "heart" was understood in that context.

The heart is the seat of one's collective energies and the focus of personal life. The heart is the very throne upon which life itself sits. In relating this to ministry, when the Lord asks for a person's heart, He wants that person to be involved in the Lord's work from the very core of his or her being.

Leadership that comes from the heart brings forth courage when faced with great challenges. It brings fortitude to reach inside and give our best when we are faced with great odds. Heart arouses deep appreciation for the dedication and commitment others have for the vision.

Here are seven practical characteristics of leaders who have connected their heart to God's heart and His vision.

1. Models the heart for God and for the vision
2. Inspires a shared vision
3. Challenges the process when process lacks
4. Enables others to act
5. Encourages the heart of others
6. Has compassion for the lost
7. Loves the House of God

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