

THE MAKING OF AN APOSTOLIC PEOPLE

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Introduction

"The church is now crying out for the restoration of authentic apostolic ministry. We are praying for restoration and declaring it prophetically. God's people are coming out of holes and prison houses. A new liberty is coming to the church. A new freedom in ministry is being released through the restoration of apostolic ministry". *John Eckhardt; Moving On The Apostolic, p. 28.*

With the present restoration of the apostolic ministry comes the greatest privilege of all times - the privilege of being raised up as apostolic people. The authenticity of a movement is directly related to the effectiveness of its leader. Likewise, the effectiveness of a leader is measured and validated by his or her ability to raise genuine followers that are consumed by the truth that is being restored and proclaimed.

True apostles and apostolic churches have within them God given ability, grace and anointing to raise a mighty apostolic people. But how does it happen? And where does it begin? How do you make apostolic people out of ordinary disciples?

It is the purpose of this book to reveal the process by which apostolic people emerge. What does it mean to be called by God? What happens when we respond to the call of God? These and other questions will be addressed in this book.

Before we think about serving the Lord, we have to accept Christ's call for discipleship. His call to discipleship is a call to be a student, follower and imitator of Christ's teachings and ministry. Just as He called the original twelve disciples, Christ's call to His people today still echoes: "Follow me." And those who respond to this call and lay down their lives for a life of true discipleship are the ones He chooses to remodel and reshape "into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make" (Jeremiah 18:4).

It is this time of remodeling, reshaping and preparation that I call "the process." It is a time of learning and training, of being reformed to fit the use of the potter. No one can enter into a fruitful apostolic anointing and ministry without going through this time of preparation. Those who patiently go through this time of training will, in due season, be sent out as apostolic people to impact and reclaim a territory for the kingdom of God.

You see, there are three phases into this whole divine process. First there is the call to true discipleship. Next there is the process of learning

and training. And then comes the commission into a mighty apostolic ministry.

"And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons" (Mark 3:13-15).

Notice the divine order: First, "...He called to Him... ". Next is the preparation or process which includes training and impartation, "...that they might be with Him...". Then they were commissioned, "...that He might send them out...".

Knowing that we have been called to be sent out is a key step in our journey. It is most common, however, for us to eagerly desire to be sent out right away. But often God has another plan: "...that we might be with Him..." before He send us forth. It is our responsibility to understand the ways of God and surrender with total submission. Then and only then can we emerge into what God wants us to become.

This process is Jesus' evolutionary model of the call to discipleship. When we are obedient to submit to His wisdom and follow His steps, He remodels us to be revolutionary. We're reshaped to become a mighty force for the kingdom of God in our region.

Chapter One

Defining The Apostolic Call

"And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted" (Mark 3:13).

True discipleship is foundational to ministry. The call to discipleship precedes the call to the ministry. Many people confuse these two. As a result of this misconception they enter into the ministry prematurely. Christ's desire and call for all believers is that they might first be His disciples. Those who take seriously this call to discipleship will, by divine arrangement, enter into Christ's "school of apostleship." In this school they learn all the necessary ingredients for their future ministry.

There are Christians in the church today that do not know the taste of true discipleship. In other words, many are those who experience the saving knowledge of Christ, but few enter into the realm of true discipleship. This fact was evident in Christ's earthly ministry. Many followed Christ for different reasons. His true disciples, however, were few in number. Likewise, there still are those who are in the church who have never experienced the life changing power of genuine discipleship.

The following study will show us several kinds of motives in the hearts of people that claim to be followers of Christ. It happened then and it is happening now.

Those Who Leave Everything and Follow Him

"And immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him." (Matthew 4:22)

True disciples are the ones that leave all and follow Him. This "leaving the boat" is also symbolic of leaving old models, paradigms and thought processes behind to and humbling ourselves to follow Him. This is what it means to be a true disciple! A true disciple hears Christ's call and follow Him without turning from it to the right or to the left.

The men who fished by the Sea of Galilee are the prototype for those Jesus calls to true discipleship. They left their fishing nets and boats, which was the source of their income. They left their father (their protection) immediately to follow Jesus. This is what it means to be a true disciple: forsaking everything and following Jesus. A true disciple is, therefore, one that is willing to pay the price to leave everything that would hinder him from following Christ. These disciples can join with Peter and declare, "we have left all and followed You" (Matthew 19:27).

Those Who Follow Him Astonished At His Teaching

"And so it was when Jesus had ended those sayings, that people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him" (Matthew 7:28 - 8:1)

This is another type of people that follow Christ, people who were astonished by His teaching. These are the ones that would follow Jesus just because the teaching of the bible is interesting and entertaining enough to keep them around church. These people are like the Israelites in the days of the prophet Ezekiel:

"As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you besides the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, every one saying to his brother, 'please come and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord.' So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with

their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them" (Ezekiel 33:30-32)

Those Who Look Back In The Middle Of Their Journey

"Then another of His disciples said to Him, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. But Jesus said to Him, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead'" (Matthew 8:21-22)

This disciple is among those who look back in the middle of their journey. Remember, this one was not just another follower; he was a disciple of Christ. But now we see him tempted to withdraw from his discipleship commitment for a while. In the middle of his discipleship journey, a family concern diverted his attention and commitment to follow Christ.

A true disciple does not change his mind with every new circumstance. Instead, he is focused, decisive and determined to follow Christ. Understanding the meaning and the depth of our commitment to a life of discipleship is the key to gain strength.

"No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62)

Those Who Follow Him To Receive Healing

"And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there" (Matthew 19:2)

These ones followed Him to get healed. Worshipping the gift instead of the giver of the gift is another sign of shallow commitment. Some people are out there just because they need healing. It is interesting to note that God uses His healing power to draw people's attention so

they can hear the Gospel. However, we must never forget the fact that God's desire for mankind is much bigger than just getting healed.

God wants a relationship with us. His ultimate desire is to make us His own so that He can teach us, train us and send us out to reach out to the dying world. People follow Christ for all kinds of reasons, including healing, but nothing is hidden from His sight.

"The Lord knows those who are His"
(2 Timothy 2:19)

Those Who Follow Him Because They Have Been Healed

"So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him" (Matthew 20:34)

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road" (Mark 10:52)

On the above mentioned verses Jesus said to the blind man, "Go your way" after He had healed him. However, he began to follow Him. Notice that He was not a disciple before he received healing. We also do not have any record of him being a disciple afterwards. He followed Christ just because he got healed.

Some people would not be seen around church, had not Christ healed them. It is true that people have received genuine life changing experience as a result of healing. It is also true, however, that there are people who would only follow Christ as long as they stay healed. Their commitment to Christ is directly connected with their being healed and staying healthy.

A true disciple, however, will follow Christ faithfully whether he is healed or not. His business is not with the healing, but with the healer. Like Peter, we need to cling to Christ and say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

Those Who Follow Him To Join The Crowd

"And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, 'who is this?'"
(Matthew 21:10)

This instance shows us that people gathered around Jesus until the whole city was moved. More people came fascinated by the crowd already gathered. One of the most common characteristics of the human race is a curiosity about crowds. People tend to want to mingle with a crowd even when they don't know the direction the crowd is going. People continually thronged and pressed Jesus while He was here on earth. Some followed him with a desire to know Him, but others just to join the crowd.

A true disciple is one that would follow Christ even when the whole world turns against Him. When all fails, that genuine man of God presses on saying, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Those Who Follow Him For A Debate

"When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way"
(Matthew 22:22)

These Pharisees were following Christ simply for a debate, to entangle Him in His talk. On one side of the camp are those that are honest and genuine people that desire the milk of the Word. On the other side, however, are those that are out there to create argument and confusion in the body of Christ. These people have the energy to argue and debate every issue in the church. They are always questioning something, not to gain a better understanding, but with the wrong attitude. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day they will soon depart, for they are counterfeit and false disciples.

"Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matthew 23:28)

Those Who Follow Him Bound By The Love Of Money

"But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions"
(Mark 10:22)

This young ruler was willing to follow Him until a very sensitive issue was raised - this issue of money. This is a very difficult and complex bondage. No man can serve God and money at the same time. The easiest way to measure the love that we have for God is to search our attitude towards money. It is impossible to harbor the love of money in our lives and follow Christ at the same time.

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13)

Those Who Follow Him To See Signs

" . . . a great multitude, when they heard how many things He was doing, came to Him" (Mark 3:8)

"Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased"
(John 6:2)

These are the types of those who follow Him looking after miracles. Christ's plan and purpose for those who follow Him is eternal, not temporal. Some people limit God by going after temporary things. We must remember that miracles followed the apostles as they followed Christ and preached His Word faithfully. The disciples did not follow miracles. When we follow miracles, miracles cannot follow us.

It is simply against the law of nature for two things to follow each other at the same time. The correct order, therefore, is to follow Christ so that miracles and signs can follow us. It is a noble thing to desire and pray for miracles. But Christ must come first. It has become common in

our days to see people going place to place, from conference to conference looking just for miracles.

They never become members of a congregation to be discipled and grounded and established in Christ. They simply don't know Christ in a way that a true disciple should know Him. The fact that they never submit to any local church leadership is a sign that they are not in submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

A genuine disciple fixes his eyes on the cross:

"For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:22)

Those Who Follow Him Hypocritically

"Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them" (Mark 14:10)

Judah is a prime example of those who follow Christ hypocritically. Judas was once a follower of Jesus. He was going to be sent, but instead he went! He must have been playing false the whole time. He must have been hypocritical all along the way.

He is numbered among the kinds of people that claim to be Christians and yet in need of deliverance from some bondage. Oh, how God wants to deliver these people! God's word warns us to be "looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled" (Hebrew 12:15).

Those Who Follow Him From Afar

"But Peter followed at a distance" (Luke 22:54)

Peter was one of the most committed disciples, following Christ everywhere He went. But now, we see him acting like a stranger, following Christ at a distance, until the Holy Spirit convicted him. This

kind of wavering commitment is not a mark of true discipleship. For a true disciple will follow Christ in season or out of season.

"Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him" (Hebrew 10:38)

Those Who Follow Him Until A Hard Saying

"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more" (John 6:66)

Some people cannot take a strong and hard saying at all. They will follow Christ as long as the preacher preaches nice sermons, not rebuking them or correcting them. These kinds of people would not take any challenging sermon. They would turn deaf ears to messages that call for sacrificial services or any other challenging expressions that would demand their undivided commitment. A faithful disciple is one who loves to hear what the Spirit says to the church. Unbelieving people cannot do that. "Because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers, and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables (Timothy 4:3b-4).

Let us ponder this question as we wrap up this chapter: Who is a true disciple? Christ said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). "If anyone desires to come after Me" means that being a disciple of Christ is a matter of choice. The phrase, "Let him deny himself" reveals the fact that the real enemy of discipleship is self. The expression, "take up his cross" tells us that there is a price to pay. Jesus spoke these words to His disciples, not to some outsiders. Let's remember that our calling, first and foremost, is this: "called to be saints" (Romans 1:7).

Before we are called to be "sent ones" we are called to be "saint ones". That is a call to total submission to the Lord. In our endeavor to follow Christ with total submission there are principles that we need to understand that will affect our following.

Dr. Jonathan David offers us the following key principles.

- Our revelation of who He is:
We need to know by revelation who He is.

- Our relationship with Him:
We need to choose the type of relationship we want with Him.
- Our renewing of commitment to Him:
We need to covenant our selves in an ongoing fashion.
- Our responsibility to His will:
We need to carry the burden of the Lord.
- Our repentance from dead works:
We need to yield our selves to the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification
- Our realization of His Words:
We need to understand truth in its context and how it is meant to be applied in our daily lives.
- Our recognition of Him: we need to honor Him and consider Him worthy above all things and all men.

(Jonathan David, Apostolic Strategies Affecting nations, P. 147)

Chapter Two

The Apostolic School

"That they might be with Him"
(Mark 3:14)

Once a Christian has decided to be genuinely committed to a life of discipleship, God will automatically begin to prepare that disciple for the ministry. Christ, after He had called those He Himself wanted, taught them many unforgettable, life changing lessons. These lessons were indeed critical for their future ministry. The twelve disciples had to go through this period that we call "the process" - time of remodeling and refining. The disciples had to spend more than three years with Him being trained, challenged and changed. This same principle applies today.

We are people of the end times. We have a lot to accomplish before we can finish "all that Jesus began both to do and teach" (Acts 1:1). It is all done by the grace of God, but it takes some preparation.

Anyone who desires to be sent and used by God needs to understand the importance of going through this time of preparation, impartation and training. Men of God both in Old and New Testament times underwent the same process of spiritual evolution. The principle of spiritual evolution still exists today.

Speaking of this time of preparation, Oswald Chambers wrote, "Each one of us has a counterpart somewhere in the experiences of these three men of God. In the cases of Abraham, the valley of humiliation lasted thirteen years; of Moses, forty years; of Isaiah, a few minutes. No two of us are alike; each one stands alone before God" (Oswald Chambers, So Send I You; Workmen Of God, page 32).

To really understand the truth about this time of preparation, impartation and training in the wilderness, we must discern the spiritual principles at work in the lives of the twelve disciples. These twelve men had to learn the entire foundation of ministry during only three years of preparation. Jesus was in the business of making apostles (sent ones) out of disciples. Let us look and study some of the most important lessons that the disciples had to learn during those three years of walking and talking with their Master, Jesus Christ. Let's remember as we study these points that we also have to learn these lessons before we receive our commissioning in ministry.

Jesus has left us an outline of lessons we have to learn prior to our being sent out.

Lesson # 1

"Why are you fearful?" (Matthew 8:26)

The disciples had to learn this important lesson before they entered into the ministry. Jesus was a man who knew no fear. And He wants to teach His chosen ones how to be courageous and defeat fear. Ministry and fear don't go together. Remember that the disciples had to learn this lesson before they were commissioned. Those who exhibit fear in their lives once they are in the ministry only show that they have not been well prepared prior to their entrance into the ministry. Fear of people; fear of failure; fear of rejection . . . are signs that Christ's school of preparation has not been attended becomingly. Fear has no place in the lives of those who have lived with Jesus enough to be taught by Him. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (1 Timothy 1:7).

Lesson # 2

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Matthew 9:12).

Jesus, during His earthly ministry, was known for His close association with sinners. By doing so, He demonstrated the fact that Christianity is not about religion, but about relationship. A physician will fail to accomplish his purposes if he resides an area where there are no

sick people at all. Likewise, God's sent ones are sent to those who are poor, weak, sick and in darkness. Often times, however, Christians are seen having a hard time mingling with unbelievers. Contrary to that, Christ said, "You are the salt of the earth . . . you are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14).

Aubrey Malphurs: "The primary problem is that most active Christians have, over a period of time, insulated and thus isolated themselves from lost people." According to him the two most common reasons why Christians isolate themselves from unbelievers are: "Christians aren't comfortable around non-Christians, and Christians expect lost people to behave like saved people" (Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, Pages 208-209).

Lesson # 3

"You give them something to eat" (Matthew 14:16).

This is called "the school of accountability." In the natural world, children may have a chance to survive without parents. Exactly the opposite happens in the spiritual realm. God's children must be fed both the milk and the meat of the Word needed for their growth. This responsibility is upon the shoulders of those who are sent by God. Those who have learned the lessons needed and are truly sent by God do not have any other agenda or motive behind what they are doing. Their sole purpose in life is to feed God's flock. That is why God wants to train us before He sends us: to purge and purify our motives so that we are totally given to "prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). Christ's call still echoes, "Feed My lambs . . . Tend my sheep . . . Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17).

Lesson # 4

"Why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31).

The spiritual world operates by faith and faith alone. God's sent ones must be people of faith and not doubt. Sometimes the things God would want us to do and the circumstances around us do not harmonize. It is then that doubt can find its way into our lives and creep in to cause us sink like Peter did. To avoid this pitfall, it is very crucial that we be

with Jesus during our time of preparation to receive impartation and training to build our faith through the Word of God. We cannot go out and save the unbelieving world unless we are believers ourselves. We must learn to believe. Remember that Christ gave this important lesson to His disciples before He sent them out to preach with apostolic power. "Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (John 20:27).

Lesson # 5

"His face shone like the sun" (Matthew 17:2).

When Jesus revealed His glory to Peter, James and John, they did not want to leave that mountain. In fact, Peter suggested that they should make three tabernacles - one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah. The impact of His revealed glory was so convincing that they did not even care to make a place for themselves. These disciples learned to see the glory of Jesus for themselves. That is what I call "the glory in the closet." If we want to see His glory in our ministry, we must first learn to experience it in our closet.

We must be visited by His glory personally before it hits our ministry. Do we have that private life of prayer? Are we experiencing the life changing glory of God in our closet? If the glory cannot find its way into our closet, it cannot come to our ministry. The private encounter with the Lord must come before public manifestation of His glory. "Restore us O God; cause Your face to shine, and we shall be saved" (Psalm 80:3).

Lesson # 6

"Lest we offend them" (Matthew 17:26).

Learning to care for other people's level of understanding is another major lesson the disciples learned from their Master during their time of preparation. Walking and behaving wisely among the brethren is a sign of maturity. When we become mature and wise in the things of God, we will refrain from saying things like "As long as the Lord is pleased with me I don't care about people." Jesus was assertive, but gentle-hearted at the same time. His whole life was given to finish the work of the One who sent Him, but He also knew that God's master plan includes man.

You may love the Lord and serve Him well, "yet if your brother is grieved because of [you], . . . you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy . . . the one for whom Christ died." (Romans 14:15).

Lesson # 7

"Yet it shall not be so among you" (Matthew 20:26).

The mother of Zebedees' sons came to Jesus to beg for positions for her sons. Jesus used that opportunity to teach the disciples a very crucial lesson. Some say that the indignation of the other ten disciples was due to their own desire for the position. That explains why Jesus' response was addresses to all of them: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you." Oh, what a lesson! Only God decides position and placement in His kingdom. God wants to free His people of worldly ambition. Some people are driven by an uncontrollable desire for power and control in the ministry. That is the way and manner of the world. God's way is meekness and humility. "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6).

Lesson # 8

"Could you not watch with Me for one hour?" (Mathew 26:40).

This is a call for diligence. Some people mistakenly think that they will be diligent once they get into the ministry. But the time to be watchful and diligent must come prior to entering the ministry. When we practice watchfulness before we even get into any challenging situation, victory becomes a reality, not a matter of chance. We cannot sit back and relax, thinking that it is not time to watch and pray because we are not really involved in an intensive ministry. Prayer, fasting, the Word, fellowship and other spiritual practices must be exercised on a daily basis. Some people pray only when they enter into temptation. But Jesus said, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation." The time to watch and pray is now. We cannot wait until things happen and try to change them afterwards. We are called to be strong and make things happen. "Awake, you who sleep" (Ephesians 5:14).

Lesson # 9

"Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while" (Matthew 6:31).

The easiest way to wither away spiritually is to work without ceasing. The apostles once gathered to Jesus and began to tell Him "both what they had done and what they had taught." His answer was plain and simple: "Rest." This was indeed a strong lesson for the apostles. Both the bible and past experience teach us that one has to give his body a rest after ministering. We will be more fruitful when we give ourselves a chance to recuperate by being still and quiet. To serve God effectively, we have to know God. And to know God we have to rest. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).

Lesson # 10

"You do not know what manner of spirit you are of" (Luke 9:55).

James and John requested Jesus to bring judgment upon the Samaritan village that refused to respond to His message. His loving response was quite a lesson for all that were around Jesus. God's people must learn to discern and test spirits. Judgmental and critical spirit is one of the most common spirits that operates among the brethren. The manner of spirit that is given to the people of God, however, is that of love, compassion and mercy. There should be no room for judging one another. It saddens the heart of God to see His servants motivated by any other spirit that is contrary to the Holy Spirit. "Therefore let us not judge one another anymore" (Romans 14:13).

Lesson # 11

"Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you" (Luke 10:20).

When we miss our purpose and become out of focus, we can be preoccupied with success so much that it becomes the only source of joy we have in life. That was exactly the situation with the seventy when

they return to Jesus with joy. They rejoiced because demons were subject to them. Their joy was based on the fact that they had success in their ministry. Jesus, knowing their situation, challenged them that they should rejoice only because their names are written in heaven. Jesus should be our primary source of joy. Achievements in the ministry, being accepted by others and other successes are good, but basing our joy upon these things can be destructive. The reason is that there are times that things do not go the way we want them to, causing our feelings to go up and down. The solution: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

Lesson # 12

"But one thing is needed" (Luke 10:42).

When asked in what area of ministry they want to get involved, some Christians will begin to name endless areas of ministries. But Christ said, "One thing is needed." Disregarding this truth can lead us into countless involvement. Like Martha, we may be worried and troubled about many things, to please God with this and that. Worrying about everything and trying to do many things to please God will not accomplish any thing. Mary commendably chose the good part, which is to sit under the feet of Jesus. When we choose the same part, God will do marvelous things on our behalf. "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

As we close this chapter, let's remember that our calling is first and foremost a call for discipleship. But it never stops there. God's ultimate desire is to teach us, train us and make us apostolic people of destiny. God urges every man and woman of God to evangelize and make disciples. Notice that Jesus did not command His apostles to make Christians, but to make disciples. We must be in the business of making disciples out of Christians. It is then God's part to call people into an apostolic ministry. "And you also will bear witness [the commission], because you have been with me [the process] from the beginning" (John 15:27).

This time of preparation, impartation and training called "the process" then, is a time to be with Christ in drinking His cup. As explained previously, once we respond to the call for discipleship and commit our lives to go wherever Jesus would take us, we will

immediately enter into this period of preparation to be remodeled and reformed. God begins to make us again! There are, however, many hindrances to this time of preparation. Many are called, but few have the determination and the wisdom to pass through this time of preparation. Our next chapter deals with the enemies of our progression.

Chapter Three

Dislodging The Hindrance

In the last two chapters we dealt with the issue of our call. We defined our calling as a call for discipleship, which is followed by a time of preparation we termed "the process", which is a time of preparation. Any reader will understandably ask at this point, "How long this time of preparation will take?"

Here are some practical suggestions in the words of Ralph Mahoney: "There is no set length of time. Moses was in preparation forty years on the backside of the desert tending his father-in-law Jethro's sheep. Only fourteen years after his conversion, Paul was released and sent out as a leader (Acts 13:1-3). However, in Paul's case there were many years of training in the Scriptures, before his conversion. From the time of his dreams until he became Prime Minister of Egypt thirteen years of Joseph's life had passed."

According to Ralph Mahoney there are two things that will determine the length of time that will take God to prepare you:

- 1) The magnitude and nature of the ministry God has prepared for you
- 2) The way you respond to His dealing as He prepares you.

Explaining God's part he says, "How much God wants to accomplish through you and how much you want to accomplish for God determine the intensity of His dealing. The same thing is true in the world. A person can be a good auto mechanic with only a few years of school, but you can't be a medical doctor or surgeon without many years of intense, hard preparation and schooling. If you want God to use you in a prominent and powerful ministry with lots of miracles and authority, the time of your preparation will be long and painful. The greater your responsibility will be, the more severe your preparation. It takes a lot

more heat to refine a vessel made of gold for God's honor than it does to make an earthen vessel, for common use".

Regarding our response he explains, "The second factor is your response to God's dealings as He prepares you. If you are slow to learn what God teaches you, this will lengthen the time and severity of preparation. The blacksmith must apply a heavy hammer and a lot of heat to sharpen the hard, inflexible iron. The jeweler need only apply modest amounts of pressure to shape the more pliable gold. The secret is to be responsive, pliable and obedient to the Lord. When He brings a lesson into your life learn quickly. Don't balk or be stubborn" (Ralph Mahoney, *The Making of A Leader*, p. 76-77).

Satan's desire is to confuse our understanding so that we do not conceive the depth of our calling and the destiny God has for us. He will use every means available to do that. If the devil cannot abort our vision, he will do anything in his power to delay the birth and maturity of our vision. Here are some of the hindrances that will delay our preparation.

Self-centeredness

A self-centered person cannot live for God. He is concerned and preoccupied with his own agenda. His will is more important than God's will. He insists on having his own way, and not giving right-of-way to the will of God. He is always defending his own right. He does not mind being a cause for disunity or division in the house of God as long as he gets what he wants. It is very important to remember that one of the hindrances that the devil uses to block the road to our destiny is selfishness.

It will be difficult for a man of God to successfully go through his God-ordained seasons of preparation with this ungodly behavior controlling his life. Selfishness makes the short journey long and the process too complicated. Self-denial is a prerequisite for accurate completion of our seasons of preparation.

"If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mathew 16:24)

Distorted Self-image

When God calls us into a life of discipleship, He shows us the potential we have in a flash, which is a momentary view of the things we can do for God. It is a glimpse of the hope of our calling. Jesus' call to the four fishermen recorded in Matthew 4:19 reveals this fact. "Follow Me..." He said extending His call to them, and then He gave them a glimpse of what they can become, "...and I will make you fishers of men." That is what He does even today. When He calls us He plants a vision within our hearts. Uncertainty occurs when the things God is speaking to us and showing us appears bigger than what we think we can do. That misconception can trigger a feeling of unworthiness and poor self-image. Let us not forget, however, that God's plan for us is big enough to challenge us to a point where we have to depend on Him to accomplish it, but small enough to be executed within the dimension of God's grace given to us. So, "Do not say, 'I am a youth' . . . do not be afraid . . ." (Jeremiah 1:7-8).

Resistance

Another way to extend our God-ordained time of preparation is by resisting the things God allows us to go through. God has His own arrangement of how things should go in the lives of His called ones. He orchestrates the very circumstances they go through. Questioning every unpleasant circumstance with "why me?" and resisting their refining purposes can defeat the purposes of God. Resisting will delay the set time for our activation into the ministry.

Consider this. "A person watching a butterfly trying to escape from its pupal shell has to resist the urge to help. Entomologists tell us that if we help a butterfly out of its chrysalis, it will be unable to fly; in fact, our act of 'kindness' will consign the poor thing to an early grave. The very act of struggling is the means by which the winged creature is equipped to fly. As it twists and turns in its heroic effort to extricate itself, blood begins to be pumped into the wings; once out, the wings expand and usually within an hour the little creature is airborne" (Barney Coombs, *Apostles Today*, p. 149).

Oh, how God longs to see us humble ourselves before Him and allow Him to "make every thing beautiful in His time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). "And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character; and character hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

Not Knowing Christ

Not knowing Christ in a way a true disciple should know Him is a major hindrance for our ministry walk and fulfillment. To follow the voice of the Shepherd, one has to know the Shepherd. Our journey to know Christ is a never-ending process. The more we know Him, the greater our readiness to obey His will. To know Him we need to spend enough time with Him and enter into a place of intimacy by reading His word, praying and fasting. Many know about Christ but they don't know Christ Himself. Few are those who really know Christ and walk in the fullness of life that comes as a result of knowing who Christ really is. Let our prayer be "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection" (Philippians 3:10).

Listening To People Rather Than To Christ

As we allow the calling of God to develop in our lives, it is inevitable that we begin to share with others our burning desire to serve God. But sometimes, even those whom we consider to be spiritual may utter words of unbelief and discouragement. We should be alert to this and never allow those negative words to devastate us. We need to be very careful not to allow what people think about our calling to overshadow our conviction and dedication to God.

The call we have received is a high calling and deserves to be guarded at any cost. We should take our stand and say with the psalmist, "God has spoken once, twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God" (Psalm 62:11).

Trying To Learn From Other Sources

Some people mistakenly think that to be prepared for the ministry, all they have to do is just go to a bible school and get as many degrees as possible. Others follow anointed preachers wherever they go as a way of preparing themselves for the ministry. These and other similar practices can be good and profitable. When we compare them, however, with the way Christ Himself teaches His called ones, these and other ways of learning amount to nothing.

The deep things of God that we desperately need for our particular ministry can only be learned by living with Christ and going through the circumstances He ordained for us. We must be willing to go through the Lord's "school of suffering" until we know that He is our only hope. Many withdraw from their commitment thinking that it takes too much to follow their God-given vision. Hear the words of the Lord your God:

"And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teacher will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand and whenever you turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:20-21)

The Spirit Of The Age

We are living in an age of hastiness. Things are getting faster and faster. It is a generation that promises us fast food, quick cash, and a degree in a few months. People used to work hard to get good, quality things, but that is not the case any longer.

We want good results, but we do not want to sacrifice the time and the energy needed for it. We want good food, but never take the time to cook it. We wish we have a good marriage, but never take time to pray and seek God's will, nor do we take enough time to get to know each other. The degrees that used to take four to five years to earn can now be completed in much less time. In short, instead of taking the necessary time to get quality things, the spirit of this age is urging people to do it quick.

If we are not watchful, this same spirit can easily creep into the church. We want God to use us but are not willing to pay the least price required for that. We want to be great preachers, but we want it to happen overnight. We want our church to exalt and promote us, but we are not faithful enough to be promoted into position. We want to be loved, but are not willing to develop a loveable character. These are signs of the spirit of the age.

Let us, therefore, take time to learn from our Lord, for we "shall not go out with haste." (Is. 52:12).

Unholy Lifestyle

Ungodly character is another enemy of our progression. A true disciple is one that practices godliness, which is measured by keeping His Word and abstaining from the practices and willing sinfulness. Some Christians find it much easier to disobey God than to offend people. And that is a clear indication of how shallow they are in their commitment to the calling of God. Transgression is an enemy of progression.

"If you abide in My Word, you are My disciples indeed" (John 8:31)

Being A Disciple Of People

Some people are more faithful to a man made institution than Christ. To others their denominational creed comes before God. Yet others revere people more than Christ. Just as the Pharisees who challenged the blind man Jesus healed bluntly said, "You are His disciples, but we are Moses' disciples" (John 9:28), there are Christians today that are open about their being disciplined by someone other than Christ. Are you Jesus' disciple or the disciple of another?

"For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10)

Self-Glorification

Know-it-all, have-it-all, and can-do-it-all attitude hinders God's plan in ones life. And unless we pull these thoughts down and bring them under the control of the Holy Spirit, being sent out by God becomes just an illusion. A Christian with a true discipleship commitment is one that is willing to decrease so that Christ may increase. The very purpose of going through the seasons of preparation is to clear every wicked intent of the heart and have our motives purified by His Word.

"But he who glories, let him glory in the Lord. For not he who commends himself is

approved, but whom the Lord commends" (2
Corinthians 10:17-18)

Unwillingness To Pay The Price

What is it that we love more than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Following Christ is a costly call. A man of God can be tempted during his seasons of preparation by the things he values the most in his life like family, friends and earthly possessions. Then, when a choice has to be made between God and those seemingly more important things, a dilemma occurs. This choice is not a hard choice for those who have given their lives to the Lord without any reservation.

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26)

Hatred

A Christian who hates others because of their racial background, way of thinking, social status and economical standing has a lot of work to do before being sent out by God. God never endorses hatred. God is love therefore God promotes love. Love is a sign of a true disciple of Christ.

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35)

In summary, the above mentioned points are some of the most common hindrances of our progression as we follow Christ to reach our destiny. Let us be careful not to stretch the time set by God for our training by living a careless and undisciplined lifestyle. And let us remember that those who take the call of God very seriously and walk with Him in humility will advance from the time of preparation to the time of promotion in due season.

"These are the ones who follow the Lamb
wherever He goes" (Revelation 14:4)

Chapter Four

Passing The Test – Part One

So far we have clearly studied some very fundamental truths in the area of God's call. We have defined what a true call is and stated that the call for discipleship precedes the call for ministry. Those that are serious about their call for a true life of discipleship will then be ushered by God's divine arrangement into what I call "the apostolic school." In that school they learn all they have to learn to be what God wants them to be.

We also have covered some potential hindrances that may come to delay the process that leads to our destiny. In this chapter we will dig deeper and study the next phase. Now that God's chosen servant has learned some important and foundational lessons, it is time for God to test the very intent and spirit of that person.

The most common way God uses to test people's inner motives is by putting them under another ministry gift for a season to test the spirit. In this manner God's chosen one is evaluated whether the spiritual lessons he has learned have indeed become a part of him. This, although it is a part of the training, is also a test.

We are living in an age where people refuse to be put under other seasoned men of God for a purpose of learning and training. "I am called by God," some say, " And I don't need to be under anybody's leadership." Then they leave a church or a ministry so they can function "independently". This is a rejection of the ways of God. It is one thing to leave by carefully following the gentle leading of the Holy Spirit. It is entirely another to wrongly reject God's will and walk in rebellion.

Apostolic people are people of purpose. Because they know their identity and destiny, they are not afraid to be submitted to others. They know that in due season God will raise them up and take them to where they belong. Apostolic people are people of great insight and

understanding. They have an amazing comprehension of the timing and seasons of God. They know how to walk in humility and in wisdom, always striving to show themselves blameless. Those who walk in pride, however, exhibit immaturity and blemishes in their characters.

The following biblical insights will help those who are willing to learn the importance of submission under authority for a time of learning.

Joshua Under Moses: The Spirit of Loyalty

Joshua was a man that was chosen to victoriously lead the people of God to the promise land. God anointed Joshua before the death of Moses (Deuteronomy 3:28; 34:9). Joshua had felt the power and the anointing of God and had received the calling of God long before Moses' death. Yet, he faithfully remained under the leadership of Moses until God took Moses.

Joshua's loyalty was indeed impressive. In Exodus 17 we see Joshua battling with the enemy while Moses', Hur's and Aaron's job description was: "Just lift your hands up." When his leader Moses stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights Joshua remained near the mountain the whole time (Exodus 24:12).

Moses was a busy man, with thousands of murmuring "church members" demanding his time, energy and attention. Besides his shepherding and prophetic ministry, he was the only lawmaker and the president of the nation of Israel. As political leader of Israel, Moses had a diplomatic burden. Moses was busy going from place to place "and he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle" (Exodus 33:11). What a loyal and faithful servant!

It has become a common thing to see men and women of God dropping and abandoning their loyalty when they "feel" the anointing and the calling of God in their lives. It is always important to remember that there is a time set for us to go through submission under the authority and oversight of someone appointed by God. That is indeed an opportunity to show our loyalty. If we have enough faith to be anointed and appointed by God, we must also show that through faithfulness to God's appointed person for a season in our lives.

Samuel Under Eli: A Teachable Spirit

In the days of Eli the Word of the Lord was hard to find. It was a time when, even Eli, the man who was regarded as the man of God, was numb both spiritually and physically. Samuel was a young boy called during this time of difficulty. Just as Joshua was anointed long before Moses died, Samuel was anointed and began to hear the voice of the Lord before the fall of Eli (1 Samuel 2:35). Humanly speaking, Samuel had all the right to rise up against Eli and obliterate his office. Samuel, however, was a man with a real teachable spirit. He continued to humble himself and remain under the tutelage of Eli.

Even when his leader, Eli, was not in tune with God any longer, Samuel continued to serve the Lord under his leadership (1 Samuel 3:1). He remained teachable and ready to ask and learn (1 Samuel 3:9-10). Even when God pronounced words of judgment upon Eli, Samuel remained calm and did not utter a single word against his downfallen leader (1 Samuel 3:15).

We need to understand that being anointed by God does not mean knowing everything. This is a trap many men and women of God had fallen into. When God begins to speak to them and pour out His power upon them, then they mistakenly begin to think that they have got it all, thereby losing their teachable spirit.

Apostolic people are teachable people. The twelve apostles of the New Testament, as we have studied on a previous chapter, were people with tremendous teachable spirit. They never had any problem sitting under the feet of Jesus. Timothy, Titus and other men of God are among those that should be mentioned as examples for their teachable and submissive spirit as they sit and wait under a man of God for their time and season.

David Under Saul: The Spirit Of Respect

When Saul was a king doing great exploits for God, David was just a young boy. As a young boy God's desire was towards David. He was a young man destined to take the place of Saul. David was anointed long before Saul was totally cast aside by God (1 Samuel 16). However, he did not lose his respect he had for Saul just because he was anointed and God's will has been confirmed to him.

When a distressing spirit troubled Saul, David was the one who came to help ease his distress by playing harp (1 Samuel 16). Even when Saul rose against David with jealous and persecuted him, David walked

with flawless humility and continued to respect Saul as a man of God (1 Samuel 17-22). These and other ways of David's dealing with Saul clearly show that David was indeed a man of integrity that continued to honor and respect the man set before him.

Apostolic people walk with a very distinct vision and a clear apostolic understanding in their lives. That sense of purposefulness and being on a mission gives them the understanding and the grace to submit under the man of God and honor him no matter what.

Elisha Under Elijah: The Spirit Of Double Portion

Elisha was a man that served Elijah for a number of years. He has seen God's hand mightily moving upon the life of Elijah. He was a man that had a lot of testimonies. Then the time came for God to take up Elijah into heaven. And it was God's desire to impart the anointing that was upon Elijah's life to Elisha. Remember that Elisha was anointed before Elijah was taken away (1 Kings 19:19), but Elisha was submissive until the last day of Elijah's departure. Then Elisha had the honor of receiving Elijah's mantle. In fact, he received the double portion of Elijah's anointing. What made him eligible for this?

Although it was God's divine choice that qualified Elisha for this double portion spirit, Elisha himself had a part to play in this. He was committed enough to follow Elijah leaving everything behind (1 Kings 19:20-21). The very word that says, "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matthew 10:41) was fulfilled in the life of Elisha.

When we submit ourselves to the man of God to a point where we give up everything and follow and serve the purposes of God, we get the honor of receiving the double portion. That is the key to unlock the door of double portion impartation.

Gehazi Under Elisha: Lack of Self-restraint

Joshua's faithfulness to Moses gave him the promotion in due season. Samuel's meekness to keep a teachable spirit in a seemingly impossible situation elevated him into a higher level. David's determination to continue to honor Saul even when God left him advanced him into a higher degree of promotion. Elisha forsook everything to be with the man of God, Elijah. As a result he received

great reward. All these men of God passed the test of being under another person until their season has come. They knew what it takes to get to where God wanted to take them.

Gehazi, however, had a different story. He was a man that lacked the quality that takes to receive the reward that comes in God's time. He lusted after material possessions (2 Kings 5:20-24). His problem was not that he received something. The problem was the motive behind his desire to go after it and the timing. "Is it time to receive?" was Elisha's challenging question. He also lied to the man of God (2 Kings 5:25). He took what was not of his and lied to cover that up.

We don't have any record of Gehazi's repentance. He was rebellious from the beginning to the end. One thing Gehazi left us is the lesson that if we want God to raise us up in his own timing, we need to learn to wait upon Him as we submit to the man of God set over us.

Chapter Five

Passing The Test - Part Two

"For if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing, but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it" (Acts 5:38-39)

We are living in an age in which countless false ministers have risen, deceiving many. One of the ways to discern the true from the false is through the gift of the Holy Spirit. But many times people have to pass different kinds of tests before their ministry can become as influential as God wants it to be. Being called by God, going through that time of preparation we called the process, and finally being sent out and commissioned into the ministry does not guarantee automatic success. There are tests to be passed. These tests will determine our authenticity. They will test the very foundations of our claim and purpose.

One of the marks of the apostolic people God is raising today is that they will have the wisdom and the strength to pass every hurdle to accomplish the things God has called them to do.

"How are apostles [and apostolic people] to be distinguished from other ministries? This is an important consideration for a number of reasons.

First there will be those who would falsely claim this ministry for themselves and cause havoc among the uninformed of the church.

Second, there will be those called to the ministry who are not yet prepared to assume the role. To avoid damaging these developing but immature apostles and the church, these ministries will need to test their maturity before the Lord to avoid presumption and impatience. Third, there will also be those who are ready to assume their place in service, and the church must be able to recognize these mature ministries" (Roger

Sapp, *The Last Apostles on Earth*, p. 26). With this truth in mind, let's now look at the different kinds of tests apostolic people must pass.

You Will Be Tested By People

"But let these also first be tested; then let them serve . . ." (1 Timothy 3:10)

This is a test of character and authenticity. This is a tough test that only apostolic people can pass. Apostolic people have divine capability within them to pass this test. They know God has called them to the ministry. When people tell them they are not real, the apostolic spirit within them will remind them that they have been called and sent by God for a specific purpose. People are the primary test we have to pass before we can move any further. People will question our claim, our calling, our vision and even our very existence.

The apostle Paul had to go through this type of test and passed it. "And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26).

You see Paul was so dramatically changed in his life that he wanted to go out and join the disciples to preach the gospel with them. But they doubted his authenticity. But Paul was so genuine and strong in his conviction that he pressed on and continued to speak boldly in the name of Jesus. Some people will test us when they talk against us. They will try to find ways to ensnare us. The revelation God has given us will be talked about. They will not give us time to prove ourselves. It is the nature of the human race to label people without knowing them. However, opposition, gossip and even being a target of envious people is no match to the apostolic strength that God is pouring upon His people in these last days.

Others will test us when they examine and scrutinize us. They want some time to really discern our motives and understand us. If we are apostolic, we will not be afraid of people examining our very existence. Apostolic people do not get nervous when people are in doubt of their calling. Instead, they continue with their journey to show themselves approved.

You Will Be Tested By Your Own Heart

"Examine yourself as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5)

This is a test of purity and truthfulness. People will fail this test when their heart is not right with God. God has given us this thing called conscience. What conscience does for us is reveal any hidden thing that is in our heart. The word of God says, "...our heart condemns us..." (1 John 3:20). There is an emptiness that comes as a result of living a life of hypocrisy. Some people cannot stand this emptiness and cease to function to their fullest potential.

There is also a condemnation that comes to ones' life as a result of hidden sin. This also has a weakening power. When one allows these and other ungodly behaviors to creep in his heart, he will fail the test and will be hindered from moving forward with in apostolic power available for him. What Saint John is saying is that if there is any spot in our lives, we will be condemned by our own heart, thereby loosing confidence toward God. On the contrary, if our life is blameless, there will be no sense of condemnation in our heart, which means that we have confidence toward God.

Apostolic people are people that lead a life that is transparent. They are honest with themselves, with others and with God. They know that they are sent by God and that they have kept the faith. That awareness gives them such a confident heart that they grow stronger every day. People that run around with all kinds of condemnation in their heart are weak people. Their spirit man has become weakened. They don't carry any strength in their ministry. Therefore, they will not last long in their ministry. The condemnation in their heart will be so severe that they give up.

Leading double lifestyle brings a feeling of emptiness in ones life. Hidden sin causes feeling of guilt and shame, draining ones strength.

You Will Be Tested By Satan

"For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted

you, and our labor might be in vain"
(1 Thessalonians 3:5)

This is a test that is unleashed by the evil agents of Satan himself. The devil never wants to see the people of God reach their potential. The most damaging thing that can happen to his kingdom is when the people of God rise up and take their God given mandate as the last day apostolic army. He will use any method to discourage those who have a strong apostolic call in their lives.

Three ranks of demons try to strategize together against the apostolic anointing. These ranks are

Breakthrough-resisting demons - These are demons that resist people from moving into their breakthrough. These are the kind of demons that work hard to prevent regional conferences and other apostolic events that will impact regions and territories with the Kingdom of God. They will fight until the last minute to confuse, discourage and even stop God's people. Many people fail this test. When they are tested and resisted by these demons, too many people give up. Apostolic people have the strength and the anointing to move forward regardless of how hard these demons resist.

Backlash demons - Once the breakthrough-resisting demons are defeated, they will send a message to the backlash demons. The message goes something like this: "We could not stop these apostolic people from breaking through, make sure to retaliate and trouble every one of those that are involved in this great breakthrough."

Persecution, sickness and other kinds of demonic attacks are unleashed upon men and women of God and their families. After every breakthrough there is an attack from the enemy. But again, apostolic people do have the grace and the boldness to resist and overcome any demon that comes to attack in retaliation. The story, however, does not end here. We have to watch for those spirits that continue to wage war against God's apostolic army to quench the fire that was ignited as a result of the breakthrough. Remember that even "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" before He entered into His apostolic ministry (Matthew. 4:1).

You Will Be Tested By Your Own Desire

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed" (James. 1:14)

True apostolic people are people of total surrender. They have no desire but God's. Their will is consumed by God's will. Their whole being wants to please their Master. Apostles and apostolic people are people of destiny and they are determined to remove any desire that may cause them to withdraw. Countless anointed men and women of God throughout the centuries have missed God's best for their life just because they have allowed their desires to consume them. They are quick to forget that they don't deserve what they have received from God, even though it was God Who elevated them and honored them with position.

Soon, they begin to look for ungodly ways of getting richer and richer (1 Timothy. 6:9). Others have failed this test by seeking their own glory instead of God's. Still others harbor youthful lust in their lives, thereby allowing their fleshly desire to stifle their potential. True apostles and apostolic people have the grace to overcome all these hindrances and move forward offensively to further the kingdom of God.

You Will Be Tested By Fire

"In this you greatly rejoice, for now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter. 1:6-7)

When we study the lives of the early apostles we find that they were strong in their conviction. No trial, no persecution, no pressure could move them away from their God-given mandate. They were tested in every way a human being can be tested, but they persevered and passed all tests.

This is another mark of apostolic people, that trial and tribulation have no disabling power over them. Many fail this test of fire. It takes the

unshakable conviction that one has been sent with all the resources of heaven to overcome this test.

"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you" (1 Peter 4:12)

To be tested by fire means to be refined and purified. Job says,

"But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10)

After fiery trials and tests, apostolic people always come forth with victory.

You Will Be Tested By The Promise Of God

"Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him" (Psalm 105:19)

Joseph was tested by the promise he had received from God. Joseph was an Old Testament type of the apostolic. God gave him a vision and sent him out to be a blessing for many. With that vision was a promise, and that promise tested Joseph.

Abraham was a man with a mission from God. He was a man that was sent forth by God. He was also an Old Testament shadow of the apostolic grace. When God sent Abraham, He sent him with a purpose and also with a promise. Abraham had to patiently endure to receive the promises of God

"And so, after he [Abraham] had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Heb. 6:15)

That is a real test that many people had failed. At times the promise of God seems so far away that we feel like giving it all up. So many

unfulfilled promises had fallen to the ground because God's people could not bear with the pressure that often comes as a result of following God. To avoid such failure, we need to wait patiently until we receive God's promise. After we receive the promise we need to wait patiently until we receive the fulfillment of that promise. God will never fail us. As we wait for God's prophetic word spoken upon our lives we need to continue to wage war according to the prophetic words given to us.

You Will Be Tested By Pride

"For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends" (2 Corinthians 10:18)

Apostolic people get their approval from the one who sent them, Jesus Christ. They do not seek to be accepted using humanly wisdom. Nor do they think too highly of themselves. They are humble people ready to suffer anything for His names' sake. There is this true humility that comes from knowing that our Sender has given us all things and that we have been sent by Him and that He alone brings fulfillment of destiny.

That was Jesus' motive when He washed the feet of the disciples

"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded" (John 13:3-5)

Apostolic people know that they are sent by God, and that God is their portion. They also know that they have everything they need to accomplish God's will. Apostolic people are humble people, always ready to give God the honor.

Chapter Six

Identifying Biblical Foundations

"When the whirlwind passes by, the wicked is no more, but the righteous has an everlasting foundation" (Proverbs 10:25)

The apostolic anointing is a foundational anointing. It grounds people. For every problem, God has the answer. For every snare, God has a way of escape. And for every test and trial, God has His own way of grounding His people. In this section we will talk about biblical foundations of God's people. These are strong foundations in which God wants to set His people.

The Foundation Of The Rock

"Behold I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily" (Isaiah 28:16)

This is a strong foundation that is available for the called ones of God. This foundation is Jesus. Those who believe that He is their source and that He alone can keep them from falling will stand through the storm and through the most difficult situations in their lives and ministry.

Some believe in people that have the wealth to fund their ministry. Others believe in their educational background as a source of foundation to build their life and ministry upon. Still others believe in another minister's promise to promote them.

But all of these foundations are destined to crumble without Jesus. He is the rock of our salvation and the only sure foundation we need to

depend on. Unless we learn to totally depend on Him the core of our foundation will be shaken by every wind that comes our way.

True apostolic people know that Christ and Christ alone is their foundation. They know He sends them and that He will provide everything they need to fulfill their calling. When other ministries are shaken around them, theirs will continue getting stronger and stronger.

The Foundation Of The Word

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock" (Matthew 7:24-25)

This is a foundation of being built upon the principles of the Word of God. Apostolic anointing is foundational and that foundation is found within the Word of God. It was through the twelve apostles that profound word of divine inspiration given to the church of Jesus Christ. We are surely built upon the foundation of the apostles that are sent by God to teach us and ground us in the Word of God.

Intellectual capability, worldly wisdom and all kinds of humanistic mindsets cannot establish our life and ministries. Only the Word of the Lord has the power to situate and establish us so that we are not shaken easily. The principles of the Word gives us a principled lifestyle, which in turn will give us the wisdom, the power and the stability to withstand every storm send our way by the enemy.

The Foundation Of Personal Vision

"And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20)

What the apostle Paul is saying here is that he has his own vision that he received from the Lord. And as he pursues the fulfillment of that

vision, he made it his aim that he should not build upon another's foundation or vision. The distinctiveness of his calling would not allow him to build on another man's foundation. The truth here is that every person that claims to have a mission and a vision from God must build out of a strong personal vision and conviction.

Apostolic people have within them a driving force, a vision, that urges them to impel forward into new territories and boundaries of the enemy to labor, dig and plant new things for God. They are not moved by what they see and by what they feel. They are the strongest force in the kingdom of God to bring new technologies and release fresh anointing wherever they go. They are not out there to fight over members and argue with other visionaries about everything. They are too busy to do that. They are full of vision so much that they know a lifetime ministry would not fulfill it. So they are always preparing and mentoring someone under them so they can pass the vision on.

The Foundation Of Wisdom

"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it"
(1 Corinthians 3:10)

"Wisdom has built her house" (Proverbs 9:1)

Where there is wisdom there is a strong foundation. Countless powerful men and women of God have unfulfilled potential because of the lack of wisdom in their lives and ministries. These are the last days. We are witnessing the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that God's Spirit will be poured upon all flesh.

More and more people are receiving the call of God in their lives. It is tragic, however, to see many men of God fall short of the fulfillment of their destiny. Lack of wisdom is a major problem. We need God's wisdom to deal with arising situations. We need God's wisdom to handle people. We need God's wisdom to handle prosperity and abundance. We need wisdom to continue with the same momentum as when we first received the call. Wisdom is indeed a powerful tool to ensure lasting effect.

The Foundation Of The Apostles And The Prophets

"Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone" (Ephesians 2:20)

There are many people that reject these two foundational offices set by Jesus Christ Himself. They believe that God can raise evangelists, pastors and teachers, but that the days of the apostles and the prophets are over. However, exactly the opposite is the truth. In fact, the bible teaches us that we have been built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. This particular verse has profound implication. The word "apostle" means "one that is sent." Now, being built on the foundation of the apostles means that we know that God has sent us. It brings a whole new mind set within us.

We will begin to really know that we are indeed sent ones. This "sent one" mentality brings a strong sense of purpose. It doesn't matter where we are, we know that God has sent us. Troubles, difficult circumstances, persecution and other kinds of adversities will begin to take other meanings: they are all coming to help me in my journey to fulfill the calling of God that is upon my life. I am sent! I am here for a purpose. So nothing will move me because I am not here by accident. Oh, what a way of life!

The word "prophet" can mean "to be the mouth for God". To be built on the foundation of the prophets means that we know that we have a message for our generation. We are not out there to echo other philosophies and man made theology. We are apostolic people, sent by God to prophetically speak the purposes and counsels of God.

The Foundation Of Love

"That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God"
(Ephesians 3:17-19)

In 1 Corinthians chapter 13 Paul explains that love is the prerequisite for any effective ministry. Any labor, claim or ministry that is done in the name of Jesus is a waste of time if not done in love. Love is a strong foundation that our life and ministry should be built upon.

Many ministries and churches, although their existence was in the perfect will of God, have crumbled just because love was missing in the composition of the foundation. People that do not know how to keep the unity of the spirit in love are causes of destruction.

Apostolic people are people of strong character. They are people of love. The very nature of the Apostle of our confession, Jesus, is love. God is love and every thing that represents Him must reflect His love nature. God was motivated by love when He sent His only Son Jesus to die for the sin of the world. Love was the force that moved Jesus with compassion to heal the sick, cast out demons and feed those that were hungry. Love, therefore, should be the motivation behind every ministry and the ultimate goal of our every move.

The Foundation Of Holiness

"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His, and let everyone who name the name of Christ depart from iniquity'" (2 Tim 2:19)

Nothing will make our ministry as effective as walking in holiness. It is impossible to see God work in our lives without holiness. A life of strong and impeccable character is a mark of true apostle. Ministries and ministry figures that had very impressive beginnings have crumbled as a result of lack of holiness.

Apostles and apostolic people, however, have gone through enough time of preparation to receive impartation of this crucial ingredient called holiness. They will not compromise in any thing, nor do they harbor any hidden sin in their lives. They are transparent, full of exemplary conduct and trustworthy. As a result their ministry is as solid as a rock, never shaken by anything.

The foundation of holiness is indeed a sure foundation that would give us a ministry that would have lasting impact on our church, community and nation.

Chapter Seven

The Birth Of The Apostolic

"And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, 'Behold this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:33-35)

This portion of scripture speaks about the birth of Jesus Christ, Who is "... *the Apostle and the high priest of our confession...*" (Hebrew 3:1). The apostolic ministry and anointing was born when Jesus Christ was born. Jesus was an Apostle because He was sent by His Father with a purpose and mission to accomplish. The birth of Jesus means the birth of an Apostle.

Likewise, the birth of Jesus (who is an Apostle) means the birth of the Apostolic. So His birth brought great apostolic movement and released great grace here on earth. By studying the above-mentioned prophetic word given by Simeon at the birth of Jesus, we will get some insights on what to expect when the apostolic is birthed. In other words, what happened when He was born will give us some insights on what will happen when the apostolic is born in our lives, our churches and our nations. Let us explore some truth in this area.

The Apostolic Separates the Genuine from the Phony

"Behold this Child is destined for the
fall and rising of many in Israel"

Just as the birth of Jesus Christ came in time to separate the hypocrite Pharisees from those who earnestly wanted God, the birth of the apostolic today does the same. There is confusion in the church today. There are countless ministries today that claim to have a revelation from God that it has become so hard to discern who is who. The apostolic, however, comes to clear the mess. Those who have to fall will fall and those who have to rise will rise.

The apostolic will put a distinctive mark upon those who give themselves to be established in the present truth. The apostolic anointing is an anointing of excellence. Those who receive it will excel and rise above all others. Times of confusion and uncertainty will be over. The apostolic will release clarity.

The Apostolic is a Sign

"And for a sign which will be spoken
against"

Apostles are not just "the new minister in the block." They are not like those ministers that come and go. They come to stay. They are placed in the church by divine arrangement to be raised up an army for the work of the Lord and activate people of that region into the ministry. They are movers and shakers. When they are revealed, they will come as a sign to the nation. People can't help but speak against them. There is something about the apostolic that provokes fearful discussion among the Christian community.

Apostolic people cannot settle with the average. They are people with tremendous breakthrough anointing to rise up as signs and wonders. They do not just perform signs and wonders they are signs and wonders themselves.

The Apostolic Triggers Persecution

"Yes, a sword will pierce through your own
soul also"

Being an instrument by God to bring the apostolic movement into a church or a nation means being a target for severe persecution. I believe that the present apostolic reformation movement will suffer more persecution than any other movements that were instruments for past restoration of certain truths. The apostolic call is a call for a final battle. We are living in the last days.

Just as the church began with mighty apostolic power and authority, once again it will demonstrate tremendous apostolic power and authority. It will not be easy, however, to those who want to be on the cutting edge of this reformation; a sword will pierce through their soul. They will be targets of groundless accusation, severe persecution and subtle and overt demonic attack. However, that is no match to the grace God released upon his apostles and apostolic army. They will come out victorious.

The Apostolic is Strong in Discernment

"That the thoughts of many hearts may
be revealed"

One of the things the apostolic accomplish in the body of Christ is that it releases an anointing to discern. Apostolic people are people of great discerning endowment. Soulless and demonic motives are destined to melt before apostolic anointing. Wolves with sheep clothing will be exposed. The presence of real apostles will challenge the very claim and existence of false apostles and self-appointed ministers.

Hidden agendas and humanistic ways of doing the ministry will be viewed as such. People with wrong motives will either repent or leave. God will remove every stumbling stone out of the way so that God's final plan may come into completion. There will be no stone that will be left unturned. Once again God himself will purify His house and put things in order. Welcome to the apostolic!

Conclusion

"The old order of things are passed away"

Every time God restores a certain truth into the body of Christ He comes to His people with new visitation. Just as John saw a new heaven and a new earth, the church will begin to experience such newness, because "the old order of things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4, NIV). The new apostolic reformation is likened to the restoration Jesus brought when He came to this world two thousand years ago to abolish the old order of things and introduce the greatest reformation of all times. Yes, this apostolic reformation comes to initiate and sustain "a more excellent ministry . . . a better covenant . . . on better promises" (Hebrew 8:6). It is currently circling the whole earth taking the church of Jesus Christ into a new level of ministry. It is becoming an established truth ushering and paving the way for the soon return of Jesus Christ. Yes it will surpass all obstacles and persecutions. It will be a might force on this earth to bring the church back to its former foundation and glory - the foundation and the glory of the apostles and the prophets.

God is doing a new thing and is calling His people to come up higher with Him into a new level of understanding and anointing. As we hearken to what the Spirit is saying to the church today and walk with total surrender, we will begin to see the greatest harvest of all times.

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the holy calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house" (Hebrew 3:1-2).

Faithfulness to Him who appointed us is our holy calling!

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