

# REFORMERS

## Life

Unlocking the Destiny of a Generation

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in the Small Things of Life

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Baca Experience

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# MANNA FROM *His* PRESENCE

## AVOID EMBRACING STRONGHOLDS

"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

—2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NIV)

**S**trongholds of the mind are some of the most dangerous weapons that the enemy uses against the Believer, irrespective of the Believer's status. The mind is a component of our soul. When strongholds take residence in our minds, it controls our life. As your mind goes, so goes your life. The picture of our mind is often the picture of our life. You cannot tolerate, harbor or live with a stronghold. It will eventually destroy your life.

If you want to be free from every stronghold of the enemy in your life, you have to understand that there are two kinds of strongholds: rational strongholds and irrational strongholds. The rational stronghold are the most difficult to deal with because they usually make sense. Paul refers to these rational strongholds when he says 'casting down imaginations...' The word imagination is taken from the Greek word 'logismos', which is where we get the word 'logic' as in 'logical thinking'. Thank God for a good sound mind, but even a sound mind must be submitted to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, your mind will develop a stronghold of natural reasoning that starts to dictate all kinds of lies to your life. I call these rational strongholds.

The reason they are called rational strongholds is because they are

strongholds of the mind that make sense. You see, your logical mind will always try to talk you out of obeying God. In fact, if you don't take charge of your mind, it will begin to completely dominate and control your obedience to God. It will tell you that you can't afford to obey the Lord and that it isn't a good time to step out in faith. Your natural mind will come up with a whole host of logical reasons to explain why you shouldn't do what the Spirit of God is telling you to do.

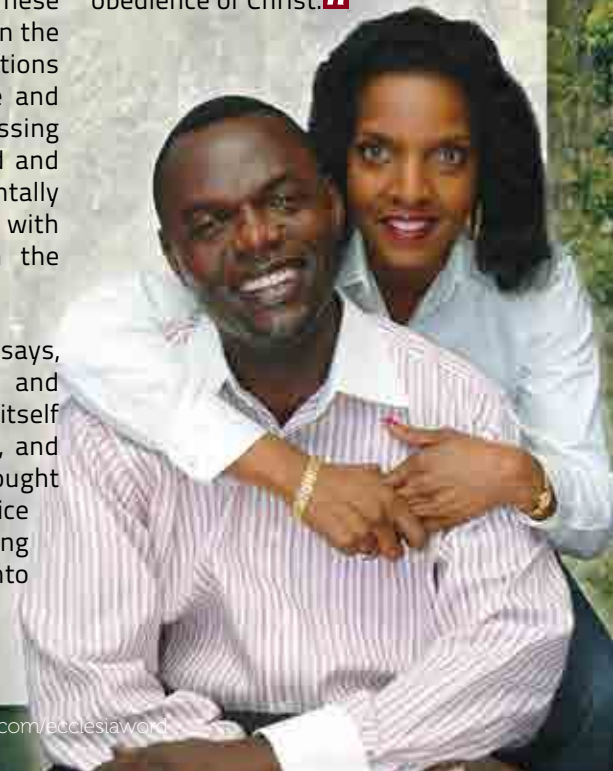
Secondly, there are irrational strongholds. These primarily have to do with completely irrational fears, worries, concerns and thoughts, such as, a fear or thought of terminal disease, a fear or thought of death, failure, rejection, and so forth. These types of irrational strongholds in the mind, emotions and imaginations will normally play their course and then dissipate. But if harassing thoughts persists in your mind and insist on controlling you mentally and emotionally, you must deal with them straight forwardly with the word of God.

In II Corinthians 10:15. Paul says, 'Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' Notice that Paul didn't say one thing about bringing the devil into

captivity. Rather, he tells us to take every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The devil tries to invade your life through lies that he plants in your mind. If you don't take your thoughts captive, it will be just a matter of time before the devil starts using those lies to create mental and emotional strongholds, for the purpose of keeping you in bondage. But if you take your thoughts captive, then your thoughts cannot take you captive.

Whether the strongholds are rational or irrational, you can take authority over them and cast them down. So, quit listening to every lie that the devil tries to sink into your mind, and start taking those thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ. **R**

*Mrs. John & Vickie Tetsola*





# REFORMERS

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Unlocking the Destiny of a Generation

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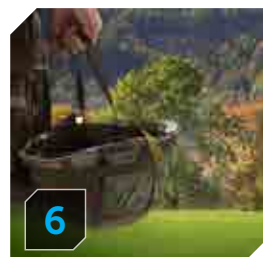
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#### PURPOSE

**Reformers Life magazine** provides the highest balanced quality spiritual food for the Kings household, to solidify and strengthen the local church, to strengthen present and future leaders and thereby create a forum for leaders to serve the Lord together in order to see authentic apostolic ministry restored upon the earth.

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# Practicing FAITHFULNESS IN THE SMALL THINGS OF Life

And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

Luke 19:17 KJV

**By Dr. John A. Tetsola**

For who hath despised the day of small things?...

Zechariah 4:10a KJV

**T**he great things of destiny spring out of the small things you do every day. Faithfulness and consistency in small things will eventually bring you to your place of destiny. Be faithful in the small things like following orders, being obedient, fulfilling your responsibilities, using your little gift or big gift, or whatever it may be. Being faithful with that little bit will turn into an awesome unbelievable great thing in the future. But if you mess up and neglect the little things you won't get the great things God has for you. In 1 John 3, the Bible says. 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be...' This tells

me that even though every one of us is in the plan of God, we don't all know what our destiny is going to be because destiny is an unfolding thing.

Most times in our lives we get so infatuated and drawn away with the big things that we overlook and undervalue the small things. God's wisdom covers the great and the small things in our lives. We must understand that the destiny God has for us emerges from the small things. It doesn't come quickly. Many believers will miss a great destiny because they put little value on the small things God has put in their lives

## The Adamic Flaw

It is easy to be discouraged when you look at where you are going and where you are. Until you realize and achieve the great things God

has for you, don't despise the importance of small things. That means don't undervalue, take for granted, or count as unimportant the small things. There is something in the Adamic nature of man that comes from the devil that seems to despise little things. We live in a society and culture that honors the biggest, the richest, the most powerful, the largest, the fastest, the thinnest, and the prettiest. That is not scriptural, yet that is what we do in our culture. We honor the big and powerful.

If a group of preachers get together, they are like dogs sniffing each other to find out what they have. They ask questions like, 'How many members do you pull in on a Sunday? How many cars do you have?' Or, 'What kind of car do you drive? Do you have an airplane? Who sews your suits?' We have this mindset that if a thing is not big or large, it cannot

be significant. If it doesn't look powerful, it cannot have an impact. What you must understand is that







the great things that have impact and significance came out of little seeds that other people undervalued and took for granted, that were watered faithfully, excellently, and consistently over a period of time.

There is always an element in our human nature that plays down, belittles, and undervalues something that God might be right now in your midst. My encouragement to you is that you recognize whatever you are involved in is God's noble plan for you today. It isn't the finish line. But if it is God's plan for you to work at McDonald's or unload a freight truck at a local department store, to mow lawns, or whatever it might be, if that is what He has

given you for today, that is God's noble kingdom work. It is not insignificant. It is the passport to your destiny and you must treat it as such. I desire to see faith come back to God's people which not only gives them a sense of destiny for great things, but puts back appreciation for the little things that they are doing right now.

### Enjoying The Little Things

Sometimes before great and mighty things take place in your life, you will have to change diapers, vacuum the church carpets, or clean the bathroom. And if you don't have a great appreciation for whatever you are doing, the devil can use your lack of appreciation to make you move out of your place of responsibility. For every demonstration of God that comes out of a destiny, there is a discipline you have to go through. And if you fail the discipline, you don't get the destiny. If you can't sit where the usher tells you to sit, you are not going to go anywhere in life. If you can't pass that little test, you are going to be a rebel in a great big thing. That little thing which has to do with not being able to take an order is exactly what will destroy the great thing God has for your destiny. God never starts anybody at the top anywhere in the Bible. For every call that

is awaiting commission, there is a college to attend. For every promise of a promised land you receive when you are in Egypt, there is a wilderness to go through that works character in you, so that when you come out of the wilderness into your destiny, you are on time. God's never wasting a moment with your life, not even if you are on a minimum wage job. If you can't find God in cleaning the bathroom, driving your man of God, vacuuming the carpet, or arranging the chairs in your church, you won't find God in a big thing. If you can't find God in the place he has you right now, you won't be able to find Him somewhere else. Great things of destiny spring out the little things in life.

'For every call that is awaiting commission, there is a college to attend. For every promise of a promised land you receive, there is a wilderness to go through that works character in you.'

### Don't Undervalue Your Place

For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Luke 19:26 KJV

Luke chapter 19 verses twelve to twenty-six is the parable of the pound. Each ser-

vant in Scripture was given a pound. One of the servants hid his pound. What he actually said was, 'I can't pay off a bill with this,' so he undervalued and took for granted what was given to him. This can be an attitude toward a job, relationships, church, position, marriage, or responsibilities in our lives. This servant is hopeful of great things. He wanted to rule and reign with the kings, but instead of valuing the little pound that he had, he did not use it. The other servants took their one talent and brought forth more. Here is what Jesus did. He translated their faithfulness in that little pound into kingdom authority. Out of faithfulness with one pound, he gave them ten cities to rule. If you strongly understand this principle, you will not be frustrated with yourself when you think of your destiny that has not yet been revealed. What you need to understand is that right where you are today, you can be occupied in

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# A PARTNER'S HARVEST

**"Not that I seek or am eager for [your] gift, but I do seek and am eager for the fruit which increases to your credit [the harvest of blessings that is accumulating to your account]."**

- Philippians 4:17 AMP

**P**artnership is about more than commitment. It is also about our unlimited supply of Holy Ghost power. And the combination of commitment and power in ministry knits the church together and makes it an unstoppable force. The anointing in partnership reveals God's plan for the success of the church in the last days. A partnership is defined as "a relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility, as for the achievement of a specified goal." Healthy God-given partnership always gives the individual involved the ability to do more than they could ever dream of doing on their own. Notice he says, "...fruit which increases to your credit."

These Philippian believers multiplied their efforts in reaching and teaching



souls by sowing finances into Paul's life and ministry through partnership. They gave that which is temporal, thereby converting it to the eternal. In the process, it is multiplied as well! When you enter into this type of partnership,

Paul says you will have a "harvest of blessing that is accumulating to your account..." This includes your heavenly account.

As you partner with Ecclesia Word Ministries International, you join with us as we touch others through our many outreaches. Here is the exciting news: the more you invest, the greater your reward. Know this, God does not judge the gift so much by the amount, but by your faithfulness to sow. God the Father is looking for quality gifts of the heart. He loves and blesses our obedience. Discover how partnership truly releases the flow of His anointing power, by being a partner with this ministry today. **R**

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# This is Your Day

God loves you no matter who you are and no matter what your past is. God loves you so much that He gave His one and only begotten Son for you. The Bible tells us that "...whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." If you would like to receive Jesus into your life, pray the following prayer out loud and mean it from your heart.

## Prayer of Salvation

Heavenly Father, I come to You admitting that I am a sinner. Right now, I choose to turn away from sin, and I ask You to cleanse me of all unrighteousness. I believe that Your Son, Jesus, died on the cross to take away my sins. I also believe that He rose again from the dead so that I might be forgiven of my sins and made righteous through faith in Him. I call upon the name of Jesus Christ and confess Him to be the Savior and Lord of my life. Jesus, I choose to follow You and ask that You fill me with the power of the Holy Spirit. I declare that right now, I am free from sin and full of the righteousness of God. I am saved in Jesus name. Amen





## DEALING WITH LEADERSHIP STRESS AND PRESSURE

**H**ow a leader handles the stress and pressure that comes into his life plays a role in his success or defeat in ministry. Stress and pressure can get to you. Every leader reacts to stress and anxiety differently, depending in part on his personality style, his history, and the type of situation he or she is dealing with. Your spiritual connection and growth is one of the best ways for you to combat this challenge that is part of every leader's life. Jesus taught His staff how to handle pressure. "...[Come] away by yourselves to a

deserted place, and rest a while" (Mk. 6:31, AMP). There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and His apostles didn't even have time to eat.

Even for Jesus, life seemed to be out of control. The pressure and stress that He experienced were far more significant than any we will face. Yet He didn't make bad decisions, react impulsively, or go into out of control verbiage. He held steady, remained calm, and maintained His balance..

### How Was Jesus Able To Do This?

There are a couple of key principles that enabled Jesus to live this way and maintain a steady, calm and balanced life. Let's look at a couple of these principles and see what we can learn.

**Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."**

John 8:12 NLT

- First, He knew Himself. On at least eighteen occasions, Jesus informed people of who He was privately. He understood His gifts, His purpose and what He was to do. If you're not certain of who you are, you will let others fit you into their mold. You will also permit the stress of the day to get to you and prompt you to make unwise decisions.

**I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.**

John 5:30 KJV

- Second, He knew His boss. Jesus understood the rules, who He was serving, and what He needed to do. While He listened to His followers, He didn't permit other voices, people's opinions, or the 'whiners' to push Him into their wishes. He didn't fear rejection. He made clear decisions knowing that He wouldn't please everyone. Jesus did nothing without consulting the Father.

**Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.**

John 8:14 KJV

- Third, He was goal oriented. Jesus recognized where He came from and where He was going. Leaders understand that if they don't set goals, someone else will persuade them to follow their goals. Vision and goals will enable you to overcome the pressures of outside voices. When you procrastinate and don't determine where you are going, you will end up working for those you are asked to lead.

**Early the next morning Jesus went out to an isolated place. The crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them. But he replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too, because that is why I was sent."**

Luke 4:42-43 NLT

- Fourth, He was focused. Even though the crowds begged Jesus not to leave them. Jesus' commitment was, "I must preach the Good News of the kingdom of God in other places too, because

that is why I was sent." Jesus knew how to listen with compassion, but He did not let the other voices keep Him from His primary purpose and assignment. Leaders always hear the concerns of the day, but they have to know how to quickly prioritize and stay on course. As a leader, you must always understand that you can only fight one battle at a time and you must pick your battles carefully.

**Then he appointed twelve of them and called them his apostles. They were to accompany him, and he would send them out to preach,**

Mark 3:14 NLT

- Fifth, He practiced delegation properly. He selected twelve disciples to be His regular companions. No man is an island. If you try to lead and live life alone, the tension would be too much to handle. The necessity of delegation is part of what great leaders understand. The larger your organization or church becomes, the

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# The Blessing of the Baca Experience

And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, hBlessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

Psalms 84: 5-12 KJV

By Dr. John A. Tetsola

**I** believe that this year is very critical in the season of the Church. I believe that it is a season that demands extreme carefulness in how and what we build. This is a year that not only demands accuracy in the Spirit, but it also demands that we build according to divine strategy. I believe very strongly that we, the Church, are about to experience a great surge of the manifestations of what the Holy Spirit has deposited and imparted in us which has lain dormant for so long.

Because of the awesomeness of this season and the demand for extreme carefulness, many will be

confronted with what I call the 'Baca Experience.' Out of these experiences will come a manifestation of the purpose of God. As you read on, allow me to share with you what these 'Baca Experiences' are all about.

Several months ago the Spirit of the Lord began to really open up my spirit concerning this experience. He allowed me to see long lines and rows of soldiers of different ranks in the realm of the Spirit. I saw generals, captains, lieutenants, and even the lowest army ranks walking through a valley. Their journey did not seem easy or comfortable. Despite the odds stacked against them, they were able to cross the

valley. Then the Lord said to me, 'Son, hear My Word. Just as My soldiers are walking through these valleys that seem uncomfortable, so also will My leaders and people in this season pass through the Valley of Baca in their own lives.'

In the Bible, the word 'Baca' has two meanings which are interrelated. The first meaning refers to 'tears and sorrow.' It implies deep inner anguish and weeping. The second meaning refers to 'mulberry trees.' The mulberry tree has a unique characteristic. When the wind blows and the pressure begins to mount upon the tree, the trunk begins to 'bleed' until it forms a pool where

thirsty animals can come and drink. When we go through the Valley of Baca we may shed tears, but our tears should form a pool of wisdom from which others can drink. If we become bitter, we will affect others with our resentment. You can go through devastating experiences and become hostile towards God and angry towards men. But this is not the purpose of the Valley of Baca. The Valley of Baca is to make





you. What may seem to be a time of total despair is actually designed to be the time of watering the dry places of your life, church, ministry and vision. What God will do in Baca is to take the tears that you shed over your life, vision, ministry, dream or family and form a 'pond' for ministering to others.

In other words, He makes you compassionate and produces tenderness in you from which others may come and drink.

Every one of

us will, at some time in our lives, go through a Valley of Baca. It's a time of remaking. It's a time when you come to the end of yourself. It's a time when all light is occluded from your dark tunnel of disappointment. It's a time when it seems like your vision is not going to manifest. And it's a time when it seems like there is no growth or increase in what you're doing and all hell has broken loose. The Baca experience comes when God allows you to be stripped until you throw yourself at His feet begging for mercy, and tears stream until you cannot control them anymore. They are not tears that you can really explain to anyone. I think it's closest to the words 'hurt love.' When you come to the point of bleeding and the dark of night has arrived, and when you hear voices of opposition ringing in your ears, God says, 'I don't want you to stay down. You are destined to pass through Baca.' It may come through the death of a loved one. It may come through the pain of being unsuccessful in ministry. It may come through persecution or character assassination. It may come through the discouragement of not seeing the vision or the promise of God for your life quickly coming to pass. Whatever way it comes child of God, hear the Word of the Lord. Baca is a means

to an end, not an end in itself. Baca is one of those potholes destined to be filled with victories. Every Baca experience, pain, trial or persecution is an alarm clock to let you know that your baby is about to be birthed!

### The Attitude Of Baca

In Baca, God allows you through His Spirit to see yourself and how displeasing sin is to Him. For every Baca experience, God has an established attitude in which He has ordained for us to operate. As long as we operate in God's attitude, Baca will become one of those trophies displayed in the galleries of our spiritual walk.

While in Baca, it's very easy to wrap yourself up and say, 'See me? I've been hurt!' One of the worst mistakes that you can ever make while in Baca is to operate in self-pity. Self-pity will keep you in Baca! Never pitch your tent in Baca. Stop sitting under the juniper tree depressed and discouraged. The strong man comes out of Baca without being bitter. The strong man knows that the Lord is your strength. The Bible says that the man with a good heart comes through Baca. It did not say the man with a perfect heart. It says the man with a good heart. The blessed man leaves something in Baca. He does not leave in bitterness. He does not leave resentful. He does not leave with hurt feelings. He walks

out strong. He comes out leaving all residue behind.

Although Baca means 'weeping, tears and sorrows,' it also means 'the mulberry tree.' This balsam like shrub produces large fruit. When this shrub is plucked, the fruit immediately begins to drop. Not only do the leaves drop, but the fruit drops also. After a while people come by and desire the fruit, making an ever flowing river out of that which was once broken.

**By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**

**And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;**

**And patience, experience; and experience, hope:**

**And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.**

Romans 5:2-5 KJV

The only attitude God expects us to display in Baca is to glory in the experiences that Baca produces. This might sound crazy to some Christians, but God expects us to glory in the troubles and experiences that Baca produces. Why? Because glorying in our tribulation, trouble and predicaments of Baca will produce patience and unswerving endurance in the face of that which will challenge our faith. You can't be successful in Baca if you

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kingdom life until that big thing that you are waiting for unfolds. Your destiny tomorrow depends on your faithfulness and obedience with whatever God has put in your hand today. What you have in your hand is enough for what God called you to do right now. Be faithful with it and God will increase it.

## Faithfulness Is Translated Into Authority

If you are truly faithful over the opportunities that you are given, God will translate them into authority. This comes little by little. Often in churches you have the groups that want to manifest their gifting, yet they are not faithful in their attendance to services and in their responsibilities in the house of God. The people who should be truly ministering in the local church ought to be people who are faithful to the local assembly. Ministering is more than talking. It involves impartation, and impartation doesn't just come out of saying good words. It comes out of righteous living. It comes out of commitment and covenant. You don't need people who are not faithful to stand on a pulpit to impart. The men who fought with Abraham against his enemies in Genesis 14 were men who were raised in his house and not outsiders. They were not people who were unfaithful. These were men who believed in Abraham and in

his vision. The Bible says, "To obey is better than sacrifice." The principle here is, if you learn to live a life of obedience to God, you will not have a need to sacrifice. Sacrifice is only made for sin. God prefers that we obey Him rather than stand up to preach revelations without a lifestyle to back it.

You have to learn to understand that what you have today, whether it is a talent, an ability or a resource, is the spring-board to launch you into your tomorrow if you learn to remain faithful with it. If all you have in your church are twenty members, preach to them with passion as if you had a thousand members. Let your tomorrow's vision be infectious of your today's resources. Settle down where you have been placed and in what you have been given, and work it faithfully and excellently. If there is anything out there for you, it is only going to come to you through the highway of faithfulness. Life always springs forth from what is microscopic in nature. True life is nourished in darkness.

## Strategies To Working The Small Things In Life

There are some key principles and strategies which, when embraced and practiced, will enable you to be prepared and to become conscious of your destiny, even in the embracing and

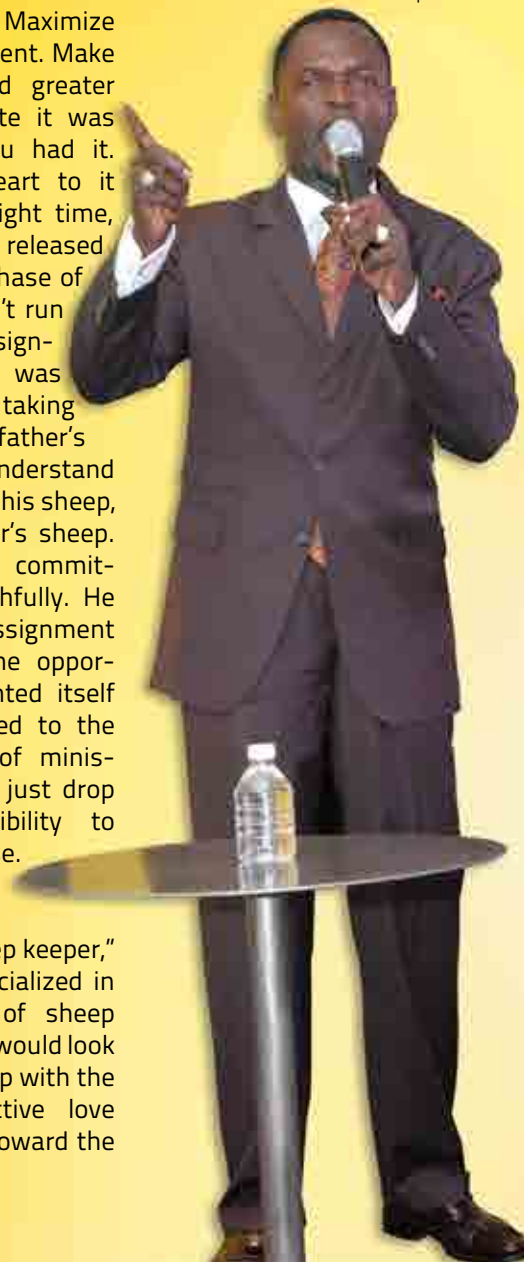
working of the little things of your life.

▪ **First, never run from the place of your first assignment unless you're released.** Dig your heels into every assignment you are given and don't let it go until you have been genuinely released from the assignment or responsibility. Often the desire to be great and popular causes is to prematurely leave the place of our assignment, hoping to arrive at a new destination overnight. Maximize your assignment. Make it better and greater than the state it was in before you had it. Give your heart to it and at the right time, you will be released to the next phase of ministry. Don't run from your assignment. David was faithful in taking care of his father's sheep. Understand that it wasn't his sheep, but his father's sheep. And yet he committed to it faithfully. He loved his assignment and when the opportunity presented itself to be released to the next phase of ministry, he didn't just drop his responsibility to anyone else.

He made sure that he found "a sheep keeper," one who specialized in taking care of sheep and one who would look over the sheep with the same protective love that he had toward the

sheep. David valued the responsibility he was given so much that even when the opportunity presented itself to be promoted, he did not neglect his present responsibility to run his future desire. He made sure that his previous assignment was sound, well handled, and intact before accomplishing any other thing in his future. David never ran or rushed from the place of his first assignment until he was released by his

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# Leadership Café

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more you will need to equip, delegate and empower people. Every leader makes decisions a little differently. The people you delegate responsibilities to will not make decisions exactly like you. But when properly instructed and carefully managed, they will call the shots that are in the best interest of the ministry and organization.

**Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray.**

Mark 1:35 NLT

▪ Sixth, He prayed, took time to think, and found small moments of solitude. All leaders are busy. Time management is critical. Solitude is something we crave. All of us have seven days in each week. Jesus understood the importance of getting alone daily and praying. Leaders can communicate to God about the pressure of the day and the stress they feel all around them. They can gain wisdom about how to organize and prioritize their day, read the Bible and understand accurate advice

about how to live their lives.

**Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat.**

Mark 6:31 NLT

▪ Finally, He learned to enjoy life. Jesus told His disciples, "Let's get away from the crowds for a while and rest." A day off, a vacation and some evenings

free are all designed to give you energy, fresh perspective and to help you think creatively. If you don't find ways to enjoy your life and get away from the crowd for a while and rest, you will burn out. Bad decisions often come out of times of being too tired. Leaders can decide to do the wrong thing just because they want relief from the pressure. The antidote? Plan rest and plan relaxation. Put your vacation days aside to think and also set aside family times on your schedule before anyone else fills in those times. **R**

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Continued from p. 7

don't allow patience to have its full course in you. In patience we employ the service of experience. Then experience, when developed, will produce maturity of character and integrity in us which will, in turn, employ the service of hope which shines the rays of light in our dark tunnel signaling that victory is here. Look at the string of benefits that our glorying in God produces! On the other hand, if we refuse to adhere to God's attitude in Baca, then every Baca experience in our life will become an end in itself instead of being a means to an end.

### Don't Be Amazed In Baca

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on

***"Many of us want to have power with God and know God in a deeper way, but the problem is, you are a size six and He is a size twelve."***

their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

I Peter 4:12-14 KJV

Again, we see God's required attitude. The Bible says that we ought not to think of our experience in Baca as a strange thing. In other words, we should not be amazed and bewildered by the ordeal which is taking place to test our quality. Look at what I Peter 4:14 says. It says that if we be reproached for the name of Christ, and not just because of some stupid thing that we brought upon ourselves, the Bible says that we should be happy. Why? Because then the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us.

The fiery trials, persecutions and troubles produce nothing, until they first produce rejoicing. They must evoke cries of 'Hallelujah! I love You, Lord! Thank You Jesus!' When King James had the Scripture translated in 1611, remember that it was in light

of his culture. The word 'rejoice' here means 'to leap, to jump, and to spin wildly.' It also means 'to dance.' During the Dark Ages, King James could not imagine rejoicing. It was not realistic. But that is what God expects from us during our Baca experience - leaping, jumping for joy, spinning wildly and dancing in the face of the pain and challenge of our experiences.

Many times we go on our knees and say, 'Oh God, send me a new anointing. Back me when I preach. Watch over my words to perform them. Let signs and wonders follow the Word. Let it work for me like it worked for the apostles. Give me what Paul had. Give me what Jesus had.' But when God starts moving in the process of bringing that anointing, we back up on God because it was not what we wanted. We didn't anticipate the price tag attached to our request. We begin to say, 'Why did you do this to me God?'

### The Enlargement Produced By Baca

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

Psalms 4:1 KJV

Let's look at God's required attitude in a different light. David said that he was 'enlarged in distress.' Many of us want to have power with God and know God in a deeper way, but the problem is, you are a size six and He is a size twelve. We have to stretch the size six to fit the size twelve. How does the stretching occur? It occurs through the Baca experience - tribulation, persecution, trials, tests, pain and affliction. You ask, 'What's going on?' Well, you are being stretched to fit the size of God. The reason for the great success of coming through Baca is that it will cause you to become a praying man, a faithful man, a protected man, and a clean man fit and ready for the Master's use. **R**

## NUGGETS of WISDOM

An understanding leader is able to accept short term inconvenience for long-term improvements, being adjustable and flexible.

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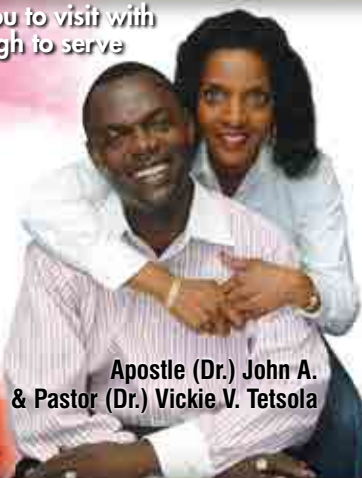
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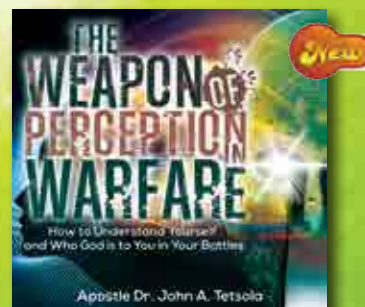
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# What's Wrong With Grace?

**Why a distorted message of grace is the church's greatest crisis today and how we must respond?**

**By Mike Bickle**

**T**he most powerful, significant and liberating message ever given to the human race is the gospel of grace. The Christian life is established on the foundation of this wonderful truth, which emphasizes what Christ did for us on the cross and what the Holy Spirit does in us in our daily life. Paul's dramatic declaration that we have become new creations in Christ has vast implications for our lives: 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away...all things have become new...that we [our spirit] might become the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Cor. 5:17-21).

The 'he' that is a new creation is our spirit man. We possess the very righteousness of God in our spirit (v.21). This describes our new legal position in Christ—how God sees and relates to us. In Christ, all things have become new pertaining to our spirit. This includes being fully accepted by God,

receiving the authority to use the name of Jesus and possessing the indwelling Holy Spirit—all of which enable us to resist sin, sickness and Satan; to walk in victory; and to release the works of God through prayer. The old things that passed away under this legal shift include no longer being under the penalty of sin nor being dominated by the power of sin.

So what's the problem if we've been given such freedom as new creations? Unfortunately, man's natural tendency to distort truth gets in the way. And when it comes to a truth as fundamental and crucial as grace, that distortion has far-reaching implications. In short, it can become the central crisis of an entire generation.

The apostle Jude confronted the great spiritual crisis of his day when he exhorted believers to contend earnestly for the 'faith' or for the message of grace originally delivered

to them through the first apostles. In Jude 3-4, he writes: 'I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed...ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness.'

Think about this: Within one generation after Jesus' resurrection, it was already necessary to contend for the grace message. That's how key this battle over the grace message is and always has been since Jesus' definitive work on the cross.

Jude warned of certain men who crept into the fellowship of the church unnoticed—that is, their error went unnoticed by most of the leaders and the people. These men turned the message of grace into a message of lewdness or one that affirmed various compromises, even sexual immorality. These men with persuasive teaching abili-

ties twisted what the Bible said about grace, thus empowering many to confidently continue in sinful activities without feeling any urgency to repent.

Undoubtedly, these teachers of error appeared outwardly to live godly, but in their private lives they refused to repent of various lusts. Instead, they justified their ungodly habits by distorting the message of grace to accommodate their lifestyles.





The result was devastating, as many in the church concluded that it was acceptable for them also to live with similar compromises because these popular teachers were justifying this sort of lifestyle with various Bible verses. In reality, they took these verses out of context of the broader New Testament message, which called believers to live in wholehearted love for Jesus as evidenced by seeking to live in obedience to Him (John 14:15, 21).

The same is true with hyper-grace teachers today. They choose to emphasize only God's love and forgiveness while practically ignoring Jesus' call for His people to walk in wholehearted commitment to the Lord. They preach mostly on forgiveness without repentance and on receiving God's blessing on their circumstances without any conditions. The truth is, it's glorious that we are freely forgiven by Jesus and that He blesses our circumstances; but these truths are in context to seeking to live in a real relationship with Him and in agreement with His leadership and Word.

Jude's exhortation is a significant warning for the body of Christ today. When the grace message is distorted, everything else in one's spiritual life becomes blurred. In fact, there is no spiritual battle more significant in the church today than contending to keep the grace message faithful to Scripture.

Sadly, some believers aren't even aware of this spiritual crisis regarding a diluted grace message. They must wake up to the emergency at hand—because today, as we contend for the spirit of truth, we are fighting for the very soul of a generation.

It's easier in today's world for teachers to creep in unnoticed, as Jude said, because of television and the Internet. Some contemporary teachers distorting the message of grace come from high-profile ministries whose very popularity gives them a false sense of credibility. We must not receive a ministry because it's attractive and popular; we should only receive it if it's faithful to the truth.

Paul prophesied of a time when many who profess loyalty to Jesus would fall to unsound doctrine: '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 teaches; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables' (2Tim. 4:3-4).

These people aren't willing to embrace the challenges of a lifestyle of obedience to Jesus as emphasized by the sound teaching in the New Testament. Instead, they have 'itching ears' to hear messages that affirm their sinful desires. They want to feel comfortable in their relationship with God, even as they continue to boldly walk out their sinful lusts.

By isolating Bible verses about God's blessing and forgiveness from the larger context of the New Testament's call to love Jesus with obedience, they affirm the lustful desires of their hearers. One famous TV preacher went so far as to say that there is no longer a need for a believer to repent because Jesus' work on the cross did that for them. He obviously overlooked the fact that Jesus repeatedly called born-again believers to repent for yielding to various compromises (see Rev. 2:5, 16, 21-22; 3:3, 19).

### Grace: The Power to Love and Obey Jesus

If countless sincere believers have already succumbed to the rising tide of this distorted grace message, how can we stand through the crisis? It starts by remaining grounded in biblical truth. We must approach the biblical grace message through the lens of God calling us to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30).

The Lord wants us to love Him in a wholehearted way because that's how He loves us—with all of His heart, mind and strength. This mutual relationship of wholehearted love between a believer and the Lord is foundational to the kingdom. In fact, this is the very way that the Father loves the Son—with all of His heart. The Son loves the Father and the Spirit loves the Father and Son in this

way too. Oh, the glorious mystery of one God in three persons who delight in Their relationship of wholehearted love for each other (see John 3:35; 5:20; 14:31; 15:9; 17:23, 26)! God's plan from the foundation of the earth was to redeem people so that they could participate in this loving fellowship that the three persons of the Trinity enjoy.

The core reality of the grace message is to empower us to walk with God in a relationship of wholehearted love. Jesus called this 'the first commandment' (Mark 12:30). Thus, the Holy Spirit's first agenda is to establish the first commandment in first place in the church. This must also be our first agenda. Wholehearted love is to be 'first' in our response to God because it is how the Father relates to the Son and how the Godhead relates to us. We must see grace through the lens of this quality of love. To think of grace without it being anchored in the first commandment is to be aiming at the wrong target. Thus, we distort the grace message when we do not interpret it through the lens of the first commandment. We must love Jesus on His terms, and He defined loving God in terms of a spirit of obedience to His commandments (see John 14:15, 21, 23).

There's no such thing as loving Jesus without seeking to obey His Word. Some seek to love God on the terms of a humanistic culture that has no reference to obeying the Word.

Continued on bottom of p. 14





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But loving and seeking to obey Jesus are synonymous. All of His commands are based in His love. Thus, the biblical message of grace teaches us to live righteous and to deny ungodliness as the way of expressing our love to God. Titus 2:11-12 says, ‘The grace of God...has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly.’

If you hear a teaching on grace that doesn’t call you to deny ungodliness, it’s not a biblical grace message—it’s a distorted one.

## Legal Position vs. Living Condition

As we correctly view the grace message through the lens of the first commandment, we can also begin to understand the difference between our legal position before God and our ongoing living condition as a response to what Jesus has done. Not only is there a key difference between these two, it’s often the element that hyper-grace adherents conveniently overlook.

Our legal position is what Jesus accomplished for us on cross, while our living condition is what Jesus requires of us in our response to Him. In our

legal position, we stand before God by possessing His righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21). Our legal standing before God is so glorious that it will never be improved upon—not even with the perfection of a resurrected body—because we received Christ’s very own righteousness. Our legal position relates to receiving His righteousness instantly on the day that we are born again.

Our living condition, on the other hand, relates to growing in righteousness progressively as our mind is renewed, causing our behavior and emotions to be transformed by the Holy Spirit in us.

The gospel is the good news about receiving God’s righteousness and can be

seen in three tenses:

1. **Justification:** our legal position—past tense, focused on our spirit
2. **Sanctification:** our living condition—present tense, focused on our soul
3. **Glorification:** our eternal exaltation—future tense, focused on our body

One-third of our salvation is complete (the salvation of our spirit), but the other two parts are not yet complete in our experience (the salvation of soul

Continued on p. 19





# RESOURCES TO HELP STRENGTHEN AND BUILD STRONG LOCAL CHURCHES

## THE ANOINTING OF THE SECOND BEST

When we talk about the second best anointing, we are talking about the supportive role anointing that rests upon men and women who serve leadership in a ministry, a church, or on a team. For every successful leader in Scripture, there were always second best men who stood firmly behind them without dissension and competition to undergird the assignments of God. Everyone is not called to be the captain or chief. Some are called into the supportive role, and yet, are anointed to accomplish the purposes of God.

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The lack of Discipline and Correction in the believer's life can cause them to pay an enormous price. God's corrective measures are always engulfed with a sense that we truly belong to Him. The Bible tells us that it is through the work of discipline and correction that God proves to us that He loves us and that we belong to Him. Correction and Discipline are ordained by God.



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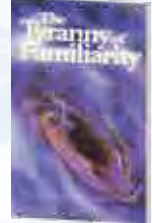
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This has been the heart cry of all pastors. That God will bring to them men that will receive their "heart" and "spirit" to accomplish the vision of God. There is a reward, not just in heaven, but here on earth as well, for those who know that God has linked them to a pastor and who have stayed faithful to their pastor even through times of adversity. This book deals with the pastor's heart. It deals with how to receive and maintain the pastor's heart, how to lose the pastor's heart, raising armor bearers around the pastor, understanding your pastor's voice and much more...



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This book deals with the true importance of the Diaconate to the local church, the relationship of the Diaconate to the Shepherd and then reveals biblically the selection and appointment process of true Deacons. It is a must book for the Body of Christ today.



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The spirit of betrayal is the number one cause of division and splits in the local church. This spirit destroys the very core of that which annexes, which is covenant. The enemy goes to work in a church through undermining loyalty. Betrayal does not begin overnight. It is a process. It is an ongoing leaking in a defective heart toward leadership that eventually manifests.

This spirit follows identifiable patterns. Once we can recognize these patterns in our life, in the church, in our relationships with one another, we can prepare ourselves so that we don't become victims or be used by it.



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God has given us the earth as our assignment. However there are areas of jurisdiction given to us by God on the earth where we will have more authority, more influence, and more strength than we will have in other areas. And when we are properly aligned to these places, we bloom and have great influence and authority in those areas. In this book, Dr. John Tetsola brings clarity to our understanding of placement, and in knowing how to commit to our placement when we find it.



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# Leading by EXAMPLE

So, being thus tenderly and affectionately desirous of you, we continued to share with you not only God's good news (the Gospel) but also our own lives as well, for you had become so very dear to us.

1 Thessalonians 2:8 (AMP)

By Dr. Vickie V. Tetsola

**O**ne common failure among ministers is to teach people the word and yet neglect to model the principle so the people will know how to live it in their personal life. But true discipleship is not complete until there is an example to follow. When people receive the word only as an intellectual exercise, their heads may become filled with knowledge, but that knowledge won't become workable in their lives until they have access to someone who models the message before them.

Jesus modeled His message before His disciples. He lived with them, walked with them, worked with them, travelled with them and spent nearly every minute of three whole years with them. As a

result of walking with Jesus so closely, the discipline not only received Jesus' message, but they also saw the way He lived it as He modeled an example before them.

## Imparting Your Souls To People

Modeling the word was also part of Paul's teaching style. In first Thessalonians 2:8, the apostle Paul wrote, "...we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls..." In this statement, Paul gave us the dynamic, life changing principle that we must teach the word and use our life to model the message. Paul taught publicly and there was probably no better teacher than he

in New Testament times. Paul could have lectured for hours from his vast wealth of information and revelation and I am sure from time to time he did.

For you yourselves know how it is necessary to imitate our example, for we were not disorderly or shirking of duty when we were with you [we were not idle].

II Thessalonians 3:7 (AMP)

But Paul did not just lecture and preach. He gave the people not only the Gospel, but also his own soul. His 'soul' was his life, his emotions, his view of things and his lifestyle. He lived so openly before the church that he was able to model his message





before them. Paul even told the Thessalonians, 'For yourself know how ye ought to follow us.' The words 'ye ought' are taken from the Greek word 'dei.'

This is a strong word that indicates that the Thessalonians understood that Paul was giving them compelling advice that they should obey. In other words, Paul's readers understood that even though the apostle did not directly command them to obey, they were to strictly follow the advice he was giving them.

### The Intentional Study Of Your Life

Paul continue to tell the Thessalonians, '...ye ought to follow us...' The word follow is the Greek word 'mimeomai.' It is a Greek word for 'an actor or a mimic.' Paul's command to follow implies an intentional study of the life, deeds, actions, thoughts of another person in an attempt to fully understand that person and then to replicate his attributes in one's own life. This type of following enables one to think like his subject, walk like his subject, mimic his subject's movement and to act like his subject in a masterful way. However, this can only be achieved by those seriously committed to the act of replication. Mimicking, replicating and acting

***“Although Paul publicly taught the word, he also showed the people he taught how to live the word.”***

like another person is the results of true leadership.

How I did not shrink from telling you anything that was for your benefit and teaching you in public meetings and from house to house,

Acts 20:20 (AMP)

Paul was committed to sharing not only the word, but his life with those to whom he ministered. He told the elders from Ephesus, 'And how I kept nothing back from you that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have thought you publicly and from house to house.' Although Paul publicly taught the word, he also showed the people he taught how to live the word. He gave them the entire package, which was the word and his life combined together.

### A Personal Living Example

When the word is packaged with a personal, living example, it is powerful. Nothing is more powerful that a message backed up by a person

who applies that message to his daily life. Paul was not fearful that the Thessalonians would lose respect by knowing him too well. Quite the contrary, he urged them to follow him and his lifestyle so closely that they would be able to duplicate his life themselves. The personal example of his own life showed them that they could walk in the power of the word just as he was doing. Watching the word work in Paul's life only made the message that much more powerful to the Thessalonians.

As you work with people who are under your spiritual influence, be sure to let them get close enough to see that the word you preach really works. If you are concerned that allowing people to get close to you will affect their respect for you, then you need to be honest about those areas of your life that you fear many discredit you in their eyes. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you walk in the reality of what you preach and teach. Ask Him to give you the boldness, confidence and grace to let the key leaders under your authority get close enough to see how the word works in your life. **R**







Continued from p. 8

father from his assignment.

▪ **Second, commit to make your function and assignment better than you met it.** Don't approach your assignment with mediocrity. Develop and excellent spirit in the performance of your duties. Look for ways to improve it and make it better. Invest your time, resources, and strength into taking it to the next level of success, exceeding the level it was when given to you. In doing this, God will begin to bring you into the next phase of your destiny.

▪ **Third, determine to**

**become one with your assignment and responsibility.**

One of the reasons many Christians never find destiny in the small things of their lives is because they never become with their assignments. Often they concentrate on the future without taking the opportunity to unite and embrace their present responsibility with joy. One of the reasons why Elisha was successful in receiving the double portion anointing was because Elisha was willing to become 'one of Elijah's servants.' Not his first servant, but just one of the guys. He was not looking for notoriety

or popularity. All he was interested in was just being a part of this man and his ministry. He was willing to be 'one of' and not 'the one.' This is a very important lesson that we need to learn. God will elevate you and bring destiny into your life if you are willing to become one with your assignment. Elijah was Elisha's assignment and he was willing to become one with him. In doing this, Elisha came into his own.

▪ **Fourth, if you are truly going to find destiny in the small things of your life, you are going to have to be willing to let go of what you have,**

what you expect, and who you are for something unknown, but new and fresh. With Elisha, he was willing to forsake all to serve the present in his life, so that the present could release him into his future destiny. Elisha came from a wealthy family that had twelve yoke of oxen. During his time, most farmers just had one or two yoke of oxen, but his father owned a large number of oxen. But in spite of his wealthy background, he was willing to let go of what he had in order to serve the man of God in his responsibility. **R**

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and body). All believers have received the fullness of grace in their spirit (legal position), and yet they can still live far below it in their daily experience (living condition).

Much misunderstanding about grace can be traced to misunderstanding the distinctions of these truths. Many confuse what Jesus did for us in our legal position with what He requires of us in our response to Him in our living condition.

Jesus' finished work on the cross makes His grace fully available to us as a gift. However, our regular interaction with the Spirit causes us to experience the transforming power of this grace in our daily life. James wrote about this when he urged believers to walk in a greater measure of grace because God "gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

James wrote this to born-again believers, calling them to receive more grace. A believer already has the gift of righteousness and therefore can't receive "more grace" in his or her legal position. However, each of us can receive "more grace" in our living condition—and this is what James was referring to. We can always experience more of God's grace to transform and renew our mind and emotions (see Rom. 12:2).

## Grace in the Eight Beatitudes

If we hope to experience more of this transforming grace on a daily basis, then we must follow the words of the greatest teacher on grace who ever walked the earth: Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) is His most comprehensive statement about a believer's role in cooperating with God's grace. In this teaching, Jesus defined loving God in context to the eight beatitudes (5:3-10), offering us a rich understanding of how to walk out biblical grace in our daily lives.

One aspect of this is Jesus' exhortation to us to hunger for more of God's righteousness (v.6). Here, Jesus affirmed the need to press into God for a greater release of righteousness in our daily lives—our living condition. Keep in mind that He wasn't calling us to receive more of the gift of righteousness, since we already fully possess this in our legal position. Our hunger for righteousness doesn't cause us to deserve grace—nothing can do that—but hunger positions us to receive more of the outworking of righteousness in our character.

Some believers don't hunger to grow in righteousness in their daily life. Rather, they seek to know how far they can go in sin and how little they need to talk with Jesus to keep their salvation intact.

Imagine a couple in their wedding ceremony who have just completed their

vows. While walking down the aisle for the first time as "one," the man whispers to his new bride, "how far can I go with other women before we get divorced? And how much do I have to talk to you each week?" Adding insult to injury, he then says, "By the way, we just signed a marriage license that legalized our marriage—so now I have legal rights to all that you possess."

Of course, the new bride would be heartbroken to hear that her husband didn't love her with all of his heart but was instead establishing their marriage on a faulty foundation—and focusing almost entirely on the bare-minimum "requirements" and legal ramifications involved.

Some teach about grace in a way that parallels the lack of wholeheartedness portrayed in this analogy. It's a version of grace more concerned with what it takes to "meet the requirements" on paper than to engage in the authentic, loving relationship for which it was originally intended. Sadly, this error is bound to occur whenever people separate the grace message from the first commandment.

## How to Receive God's Grace

Grace was never intended to be abused, but as our current church crisis proves, it can be. God gives us the freedom to choose relationship and obedience to His Word—and thus benefit

from the true liberty found in grace. Yet this is why Paul urged the believers in Corinth "not to receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1).

The gospel of grace is distorted in two main ways: first, by presenting God's love as something we can earn; second, by refusing to call people to respond in wholeheartedness to God. The fruit of the biblical grace message is confidence in the gift of God's love combined with a spirit of obedience. If either of these two elements is missing, then it isn't the true message. Thus, receiving God's grace in vain is to receive it in such a way that it doesn't produce confidence in God's love nor the resolve to respond wholeheartedly to Jesus' leadership. Either distortion is disastrous for our spiritual life.

Like Jude in the first century, we must earnestly contend for the truth about grace. The very soul of the youth in our nation hangs in the balance.

The good news, however, is this: The Holy Spirit is highlighting this spiritual crisis and is committed to the recovery of the biblical grace message. We can be confident that He will release His power to establish the first commandment in first place in the church before Jesus returns for His fully prepared Bride (see Rev. 19:7). Let's come alongside Him, rather than opposing Him, when it comes to receiving, understanding and walking in grace. **R**





# The Six Costly Mistakes of Church Planters

By Bishop Joseph Mattera

**M**y wife Joyce and I planted our local church twenty-five years ago (on January 29, 1984) in the Sunset Park section of Brooklyn, New York. We were not sent out with any money and with only a handful of people who volunteered to serve with us. The following is based on all the mistakes I have made as a church planter and the lessons I wish someone had coached me through.

## 1 Be sent from your local church

Unfortunately, many send themselves and just "went" instead of being "sent." The Bible teaches us that we should not preach unless we are "sent" (Romans 10:15).

I was sent out as an evangelist in 1980 by my pastor and was paid a small sti-

pend for three full years before I was sent to start our church. I had to prove myself by being faithful to our mother church and serve our mother church as a licensed minister.

Many ministers act more like Robert Duvall's character in the movie "The Apostle" than like the apostolic structure found in the book of Acts and the epistles of the New Testament because they "anooint," "appoint," and "send" themselves out without any biblical or ecclesial authority behind them!

I realize there are sometimes extenuating circumstances that may mitigate against a person receiving the blessing of a local church in order to start a work (e.g. Martin Luther and the Reformation, John Calvin, those saved and called by God in nations where the gospel is not yet

established with strong local churches, or those who sit under pastors who are control freaks who will not send anyone out).

I know of many people who just "went" and were never sent from their mother church—many even causing church splits—but I have yet to see any of these works have long-term success since the foundation of these works started in such a way that they could not set precedent for loyalty and submission to spiritual authority in their new churches. Those that have started the wrong way have to go back to their pastor and/or local church and repent, asking them for forgiveness and to release them and pray for them so that the curse of disobedience can be broken.

## 2 Have a strong church planting team

Jesus sent people out two-by-two, never alone. There was a reason for this. We need the prayers and support of fellow laborers when planting a church, which some believe is perhaps the single most difficult and stressful job in the world! The best thing is to strategically plan to have a team sent to plant a church which would at the very least include:

- An administrator
- A bookkeeper working with a CPA
- A worship leader
- Adequate legal counsel to help set up your corporate papers, board, and minutes
- The senior leader who will lead the work

Many are the church planters who go out





by themselves with only enthusiasm and passion as their resource for success, often resulting in unnecessary strains on their marriages and families because they have to be all things to all people while doing all the administrative work necessary to sustain organizational flow.

### ③ Have a financial base of support

Many church planters go out without raising support and without a financial plan. Although God has called out many into the mission field without any money up-front, that is the exception not the general rule. I believe a church planter should take at least one year raising financial support from their friends, family, local church, and even perhaps extracting and saving offerings for one year prior to the church launch from those called to be part of the church planting team. (This financial commitment will also help the team have more ownership and commitment to the process). New senior pastors depending week-to-week on tithes and offerings with less than 30 committed tithing families will have a very difficult time focusing on the new church because of the concerns they will have providing for their families. Marriages and families can split apart because of pressures such as these.

### ④ Search out and know the community

A church planter should do a demographic search of the community, know

its history, key locations, and personally meet senior leaders who run organizations that provide neighborhood support systems like hospitals, police stations, youth empowerment programs, job training centers, community boards, the chamber of commerce, etc. They should also have a target audience (specific age group, culture, religious and ethnic background) that will thus frame their methodological approach to ministry.

For example, when Jesus sent His leaders out to preach, He expressly told them not to preach to any but those of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He had His demographic target and did not operate by happenstance (Matthew 10:5-6). My theological mentor Ray Bakke always tells his students that they need to exegete their communities, not just Scripture.

### ⑤ Get to know the pastors and key leaders in the community

In the same way we need ministry teams to effectively shepherd a congregation, we also need to have meaningful collegial relationships with other pastors in the community. Church planters should attend monthly ministerial fellowships and get to know the "lay of the land," ask the right questions, and learn from the mistakes of those leaders who have gone before them.

Church planters especially need the support of other like-minded pastors called to the region so they can

be part of a support group. This is especially true if their mother church is in another state. But even if it is nearby, connecting with other pastors ensures that you do not have a sectarian spirit but a spirit of unity that enhances the Kingdom of God instead of only your own empire.

### ⑥ Strike a balance between discipleship and outreach

The philosophy I employed when I started our local church was based on II Timothy 2:2 which teaches that senior leaders are to pour into faithful people who are able to teach others.

I have seen many church planters get so caught up with numbers that their church became more of a center for events and big-name personalities that could draw people into a building than in focusing on building people. A church must be more than a "gathering of loose bricks." We are called to build a spiritual temple that alone can truly offer praises unto God. Church planters have to remember that the method they employ to establish a new church will be needed to sustain the long-term interest of the church attendees. Those that attempt to build a church by bringing in Christian celebrities will have to keep putting out an enormous amount of money in advertising and offerings to these guests, which will become a monster that has to be constantly fed. They will soon realize that building a church like this does

not produce much fruit.

I believe successful church planters also have to know the balance between pushing their attendees to help in evangelistic outreaches and in nurturing those that are already in the church. Some have made the mistake of only utilizing a strong mind set of outreach without also employing in-reach to people who are established in the faith and have new families they have to raise. When you have a young church full of a lot of single adults who have a lot of time on their hands, you can push them hard to do a lot of ministry-related neighborhood outreaches. But there comes a time when those same people are going to get married and have children and need to have more family time and biblical counseling to aid them in their journeys to maturity as fathers, mothers, husbands and wives. Unfortunately, I have observed numerous young churches experience continual church splits because their pastors never distinguished between single young people with more time on their hands, and those with growing families. (Consequently, these leaders demanded that those with new and growing families serve in the church 4-6 nights per week without any let up, which causes burnout, divorce, adultery and bitterness towards ministry). **R**



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