

Spirit-filled Discipleship

How God Reveals Christlike Disciples

David Fleming



Disciples Ignited

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SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP: HOW GOD REVEALS CHRISTLIKE DISCIPLES is the third book of the SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP SERIES.

SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP: HOW GOD REVEALS CHRISTLIKE DISCIPLES is a revised and updated version of section three of DISCIPLESHIP FOR A NEW GENERATION, published by the same author in 2000.

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This book is dedicated to my spiritual father,

Apostle Joseph Joel Laurore

who took me under his wing in 1985 and began to teach me the ways of Jesus. His revelation of Jesus is unsurpassed and has been the hallmark of his anointed ministry.

Special Thanks

I am forever grateful to the Lord Jesus for His love and the help He has given me through so many people who have all played a part in helping me author this book.

To my wife, Carol, who has lovingly stood by my side since 1975. I am deeply indebted and thankful for her wholehearted love for Jesus, her powerful prayers, and her faithful service in the Kingdom of God. I am blessed that we are joined together in life and ministry.

To my parents, Mr. & Mrs. B.R. Fleming, who brought me up in the ways of the Lord. I am forever thankful to the Lord that He blessed me with such godly and wise parents.

To Apostle Joel Laurore who is responsible for the birthing and impartation of the truths I have sought to write about in this book.

To Dr. Roxanne Mitchell for her helpful comments and editorial assistance.

Preface

You may have just begun the glorious journey of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ, or you may have been following the Lord for quite some time. Whichever is the case, I believe that you will gain much as you study the principles of discipleship presented in this series titled SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP. The series was written to help you gain insight into how God calls, prepares, and reveals Christlike disciples.

Unfortunately, as far as ministry is concerned, many in the Church make a big distinction between the ministers of the Church and the congregation. Such a mindset delegates all ministry to those who hold leadership positions in the Church. However, that wasn't the belief nor practice of the New Testament Church. When the Church first began all the disciples of Jesus ministered, in the Church and throughout the world they lived in!

The fact that God has called all disciples of Jesus to represent the life and ministry of Jesus is foundational to understanding true Biblical discipleship and is the approach taken in these books.

I originally published this book in 2000 under the title DISCIPLESHIP FOR A NEW GENERATION but I am now offering it as a series made up of three books.

- SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP: HOW GOD CALLS CHRISTLIKE DISCIPLES
- SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP: HOW GOD PREPARES CHRISTLIKE DISCIPLES
- SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP: HOW GOD REVEALS CHRISTLIKE DISCIPLES

The entire subject matter of the previously published book, *DISCIPLESHIP FOR A NEW GENERATION*, is contained in these three books but the content has been thoroughly revised and updated. I have also included questions throughout each chapter where I encourage you to *Pause & Reflect* on that which you just read.

Each book of this series will stand on its own. However, the series is meant to be read in sequence. I encourage you to read these books devotionally. Embrace the truths that are presented in each segment and ponder them until they permeate your heart and mind. Use the *Pause & Reflect* portion of each section to help you. I believe that if you answer the questions after each segment in a thorough, honest manner that you will be encouraged, challenged, and ignited to serve Jesus as did the early followers of Jesus who changed the world!

God bless you as you proceed.

Dr. David B. Fleming

Foreword

Discipleship is one of the greatest commands that Jesus has given to His disciples and ultimately the Church. I am absolutely elated that our good friend of 25 years, Dr. David Fleming, has decided to write a book on Spirit-filled discipleship. This is a subject that my wife and I are very passionate about, not only because it was a direct command from Jesus' own mouth, but also for what it stands to accomplish in the Church in terms of numerical and spiritual growth. Can anyone think of anyone who is better equipped to demonstrate and reveal Jesus to the world than a Spirit-filled disciple? I think not!

As I read **SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP: HOW GOD REVEALS CHRISTLIKE DISCIPLES** I particularly appreciate the way Dr. Fleming wedded the prophetic with Spirit-filled disciples, revealing their interdependence for truly effective ministry. The Bible says that no prophetic word has ever originated from men, but instead originates from the Holy Spirit. Conversely, there can be no genuine disciple who is independent of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, prophetic ministry and discipleship are designed to honor and make Jesus known.

I have read many books on discipleship, but **SPIRIT-FILLED DISCIPLESHIP: HOW GOD REVEALS CHRISTLIKE DISCIPLES** is one of the most Spirit comprehensive books on the subject. My word to you is

to allow the pages of this book to increase your passion regarding discipleship as you answer the call to follow Jesus!

Pastor Richard Sejour

An adoptive son of the living God!

Gateway Family Foursquare Church, Miami, FL

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Chapter One

Prophetic Ministry Revealed

The Lord Jesus is going to reveal Himself through a new generation of disciples. A generation that will be the fulfillment of the prophecy recorded in Romans 8:19.

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (Romans 8:19, ESV)

This scripture is talking about the day when the disciples of Jesus will fully represent Jesus! But in order for that to happen the Church is going to have to get serious about growing mature in Christ. Or as the Apostle Paul put it:

... attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13, NIV)

That is what God is calling the Church to do, reveal Jesus Christ in His fullness! And that is exactly what is going to happen during the great revival outpouring that was prophesied by Joel the prophet.

Joel's prophecy was initially experienced by the early Church on the Day of Pentecost, but it's going to be experienced in an even greater way in these last days.

... I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. (Joel 2:28-29, NIV)

This revival outpouring will give birth to disciples who will begin to reveal Jesus in such an awesome way that it will far exceed anything the world has ever witnessed in Christian ministry! One of the reasons these disciples will be so dynamic is because they are going to be anointed by Jesus to represent His prophetic, priestly, and kingly ministry. David is a good example of one who received an anointing from the Lord that was revealed in prophetic, priestly, and kingly ways. Thus, the next three chapters will deal with these three facets of ministry, how they were revealed in David's life, and how they are going to be revealed in the Church in order to reveal the fullness of Jesus.

The Prophetic Ministry Of David

Although David was not called a prophet in the Old Testament, the New Testament refers to him as such. He was one who heard and saw with a prophetic anointing, and like the prophets, he spoke prophetically.

But he (David) was a prophet ... (Acts 2:30, NIV, insertion added for clarification)

David's prophetic ministry was always Christ-centered. That should be the case for all prophetic ministry. In fact, we're told to beware of any prophetic ministry that isn't Christ-centered!

If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. It is the Lord your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. That prophet or dreamer must be put to death for inciting rebellion against the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. That prophet or dreamer tried to turn you from the way the Lord your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5, NIV)

Some of the most beautiful and detailed Messianic prophecies were given by David. The following are a selection to show the depth of David's prophetic insight concerning the Messiah.

- **The Messiah's Obedience:** *(Psalm 40:6-8, NIV) Sacrifice and offering you did not desire— but my ears you have opened— burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, "Here I am, I have come— it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart."* (Compare with Hebrews 10:5-10)

- **The Messiah's Zeal:** (*Psalm 69:9, NIV*) *zeal for your house consumes me* (Compare with John 2:17)
- **The Messiah's Rejection:** (*Psalm 118:22, NIV*) *The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;* (Compare with Matthew 21:42)
- **The Messiah's Betrayal:** (*Psalm 41:9, NIV*) *Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.* (Compare with John 13:18, 26)
- **The Messiah's Sufferings:** (*Psalm 22:16-18, NIV*) *Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet. All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.* (Compare with John 19:23-24)
- **The Messiah's Resurrection:** (*Psalm 16:10, NIV*) *you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.* (Compare with Acts 2:25-31)
- **The Messiah's Ascension:** (*Psalm 68:18, NIV*) *When you ascended on high, you took many captives;* (Compare with Ephesians 4:7-8)
- **The Messiah's Priestly Ministry:** (*Psalm 110:4, NIV*) *The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."* (Compare with Hebrews 6:20, 7:24)
- **The Messiah's Ultimate Victory:** (*Psalm 110:1, NIV*) *The Lord says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."* (Compare with Matthew 22:43-44)

It was also through the lineage of David that the PROPHET, spoken of by Moses, was born. This of course was a prophecy about Jesus Christ who was born as the son of David!¹

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. (Deuteronomy 18:15, NIV)

David not only prophesied, but he also submitted himself to the prophetic ministry of others. He realized that the Lord would give him direction as well as discipline through the prophets. He understood that if he was to accomplish the task that the Lord had given him, he was going to need their ministry. There were three prophets of the Lord who were especially influential in David's life.

- **Samuel, The Prophet-Seer**

Samuel was the prophet whom the Lord used to reveal and anoint David as the next King of Israel and when David had to flee from King Saul, he found the help he needed from Samuel.² Samuel proved to be the loving and wise counselor David needed so much during that period of his life.

- **Nathan, The Prophet**

It was Nathan the prophet who prophesied to David that he was not to be the one to build the Temple and he was the prophet the Lord used to confront David about his adulterous affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband.³ He was also used by the Lord to name Solomon, "Jedidiah", which means "Beloved of the Lord".⁴

- **Gad, The Prophet-Seer**

Some prophets in the Old Testament were also called seers, emphasizing their God-given ability to see things in the spiritual

realm that others could not see. While the Lord spoke to both the prophet and the seer through dreams and visions, it seems that a seer was more gifted in seeing things in the spiritual realm, while the prophet heard from the Lord in other ways. Although the scriptures don't make a definite distinction between the two, it could be said that the prophet "heard" the Lord and the seer "saw" that which the Lord revealed. However, the most important thing is that they both received! This distinction will not always hold true, but it does show that the Lord has different ways of revealing his will to those who are used in a prophetic way.

Gad was spoken of as David's personal seer.⁵ He apparently joined David and his men when they were hiding from King Saul.⁶ The Lord used Gad to prophesy judgment to David for numbering the fighting men of Israel. He was also the one that brought David the word of the Lord to buy the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, which became the site of the Temple.⁷

Although Samuel, Nathan, and Gad each had very important personal ministry to David, their ministry went far beyond that. For one thing, they were the ones in charge of keeping all the historical records of David's life and reign.

As for the events of King David's reign, from beginning to end, they are written in the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer, (1 Chronicles 29:29, NIV)

This was an important responsibility given to them by David. By having the prophets keep the historical records of his reign, David was ensuring that the truth would be told. There would not be any rewriting of history (which was commonly done by rulers of that day). David knew that the truth must be told, his victories as well as his personal failures. David knew that by assigning this task to these prophets that not only would the truth be recorded, but

their prophetic insight would help them make sure that the real story was told and not just what appeared to be true. David's heart for God was once more revealed in his humble approach towards the history he allowed to be written. He understood that history had to be truthfully told and that no one was better qualified to do that than the prophets who had personally ministered to him.

The prophets were also involved in helping David with the services held in the sanctuary. They not only helped arrange the gatekeepers, but they also helped organize the musical ministry of the sanctuary!

The gatekeepers had been assigned to their positions of trust by David and Samuel the seer. (1 Chronicles 9:22, NIV)

He stationed the Levites in the temple of the Lord with cymbals, harps and lyres in the way prescribed by David and Gad the king's seer and Nathan the prophet; this was commanded by the Lord through his prophets. (2 Chronicles 29:25, NIV)

We should take special notice concerning the influence that prophetic ministry had on the music ministry in the sanctuary. David recognized that true worshippers need prophetic guidance to help keep them "on track" and to help them attain to higher levels in worship. The Church needs that same influence today. Prophetic ministry will take our praise and worship to greater levels! As music ministers, worship leaders, and instrumentalists flow with prophetic anointing the Church will experience worship as it was intended to be!

The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by

trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: “He is good; his love endures forever.” Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God. (2 Chronicles 5:13-14, NIV)

Pause & Reflect

1. What are some of the prophetic revelations that David had concerning Jesus the Messiah?
2. Who were the three most influential prophets in David’s life?
3. What seems to be the main difference between a prophet and a seer?
4. Why do you think that King David gave the Lord’s prophets the responsibility of keeping the historical records of his life and reign?
5. In what way did the prophets influence praise and worship during David’s reign as King? (2 Chronicles 29:25)

The Office Of A Prophet

Prophets (along with apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) are one of the five major offices of ministry that Jesus has given His Church to bring it to maturity.

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ

may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11–13, NIV)

Becoming a prophet of the Lord requires that you are called by the Lord to that office of ministerial leadership. Jeremiah is a good example of such a person.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5, NIV)

However, even when the Lord reveals His will concerning your purpose in life, that doesn't necessarily mean that you're ready to fully function in that calling. God's "calling" on your life reveals His will and your potential, but in order to fulfill your calling you've got to be prepared by the Lord. Let me explain, when the Lord called you He planted a spiritual seed in your heart concerning that special calling. But like any natural seed, a spiritual seed needs to be nurtured so that it will grow and produce fruit. It will take time, preparation, and anointing, but thankfully the anointing you'll need to fulfill your destiny will start working in your life the moment you are called by the Lord. A good example of this is found in the life of David.

So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. ... (1 Samuel 16:13, NIV)

What this means for you is this: even if God has called and anointed you to minister you still need to be prepared. That's

why the Lord unites those He calls and anoints with those who are qualified to prepare them. That is exactly what the Lord did in David's life. Samuel, who functioned as a Prophet, Priest, and Judge in Israel, was an excellent mentor to David who was anointed by God to function in similar ways.

The prophetic office is one of the most important ministries a person can be called to. Why? Because prophets are usually the first to know what God plans to do. In fact, the Word tells us that the Lord doesn't do anything without first revealing it to a prophet.

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7, NIV)

It's not that the Lord is consulting a prophet for approval. The Lord reveals His plan to His prophet's so that they can begin to pray for the fulfillment of God's plan and then proclaim it to others when the Lord releases them to do so. That's why the prophet is often called a watchman, for with knowledge of the Lord and His plans the prophet is better able to watch over and direct God's people.

The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim, yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God. (Hosea 9:8, NIV)

Prophets are also messengers whom the Lord uses to deliver His messages: messages God's people don't always want to hear or obey! Reread and ponder Hosea 9:8 for insight into the difficulties prophets often experience: "... snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God." That's why it's so important for those who are called to the office of a prophet to be thoroughly

prepared and proven. No ministry is easy, but especially the ministry of a prophet!

- **A Prophet Must Be Fully Dedicated To Jesus**

Prophets are called to represent Jesus and reveal His will, not their own will nor the will of their listeners. Prophets who aren't dedicated to Jesus will often speak what their listeners want to hear, thus using their gift and office for their own benefit. The fact that people are drawn to those who are used prophetically makes this matter all the more serious. That's why the Lord takes great care in preparing those whom He calls to the office of a prophet. Prophets need to be solid disciples whom the Lord can trust to prophesy with purity and accuracy.

- **A Prophet Must Have A Deep Understanding Of Jesus And His Ways**

A prophet must also have a deep understanding of the Lord and His ways before being considered a full-fledged prophet in the Church. It takes time to learn the ways of the Lord and how He speaks, especially since the Lord often speaks to prophets through visions and dreams, which like riddles contain hidden meaning requiring spiritual insight, maturity, and discernment to understand.

“When there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” (Numbers 12:6–8, NIV)

Obedience to the Lord is an important key to understanding the Lord and His ways. This Biblical principle was written about in

Psalm 119:100 (NIV), “I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.” However, the opposite is also true; those who disobey the Lord lack both perception and understanding. Jesus spoke of this when He referenced the following prophecy of Isaiah:

In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.” (Matthew 13:14–15, NIV)

Spiritual understanding of the Lord and His ways is also needed to recognize the difference between faith and presumption. Faith is trusting and believing in the Lord and what He says. Presumption is assuming that what you want is what the Lord is saying. Learning the difference between the two is a major lesson that everyone who follows Jesus must learn. However, it is a lesson that is especially important for every prophet. Prophets must never presume anything concerning the word of the Lord! In order for their ministry to be effective and taken seriously they must know what the Lord is saying and proclaim it accurately.

If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed. (Deuteronomy 18:22, NIV)

- **A Prophet Must Be Mature In Jesus**

The prophet, as a leader in the Church, is called by God to help the Church grow mature in Christ. For this reason, a prophet must be an example of spiritual maturity in life and ministry. But what do you do with those who have been called by God to be prophets, yet lack the spiritual maturity to be leaders in the Church? The best way to approach this is to take these “prophets in the making” and put them under the watchful care of mature prophets who will nurture them until they become solid, mature disciples of Jesus. At the same time, they need to be given freedom to minister prophetically during the public services of the Church. However, before they’re considered leaders in the Church they need to be tested and proven. Their actions must show that they are growing in their understanding of the Lord and His ways. And their lives must verify that they are standing victoriously throughout their tests and trials. In other words, their maturity in Christ must be proven before they become leaders!

In the Old Testament schools were established to properly train those who had been called by God to be prophets. One such school is mentioned in 2 Kings 6, with Elisha as the headmaster.

The company of the prophets said to Elisha, “Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to meet.” And he said, “Go.” Then one of them said, “Won’t you please come with your servants?” “I will,” Elisha replied. (2 Kings 6:1–3, NIV)

These prophetic schools helped disciples grow in their understanding of the Lord and His ways, as well as providing them a place to exercise their prophetic gifts. Such a school provided these “prophets in preparation” the leadership and teaching they

needed to grow in their gifts and callings. But that was in the Old Testament. Where is a “prophet in preparation” supposed to find the same type of schooling today? In the New Testament the local church was the place where prophets in preparation found the leadership and teaching they needed, as well as being the place where they exercised and grew in their gifts and callings.

When praying about the church or ministry you’re supposed to join you need to be mindful of the anointing that the ministry flows with. Simply put, the anointing of the leadership of the ministry is going to be the anointing that governs the ministry. That means, if the leader is an apostle or prophet, the overall anointing that permeates the ministry is going to be apostolic/prophetic; if the leader is an evangelist, the anointing which governs the ministry will be geared towards evangelism; the anointing of a pastor/teacher causes the entire ministry to emphasize the development of solid disciples.

- **Apostolic/Prophetic Churches**

Apostolic/Prophetic churches are used by the Lord to establish the Church in the will of God. They are the ones that “see” what the Lord desires, prophesy it, and give birth to it until it becomes established in the Church. Apostolic/Prophetic churches are much like John the Baptist who was, “A voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”

- **Evangelistic Churches**

Evangelistic churches are given a special anointing by the Lord to win the lost. While the whole Church is involved in winning others to Jesus, it is the evangelistic church that sees the most success. Healing and deliverance are often experienced in this type ministry, much like that which Philip the evangelist experienced in Samaria.

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. (Acts 8:5-7, NIV)

- **Pastoral/Teaching Churches**

Pastoral/Teaching churches are geared and anointed to make disciples of those who have already become believers.

Obviously, a church should flow in more than one type of anointing because every church needs to be involved in apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, and teaching ministry. However, each church will have a dominant anointing that matches the anointing on its leader, thus enabling the ministry to fulfill its purpose. But that doesn't mean each church is independent. Far from it! Since the universal Church is actually one Body made up of many parts each local church is dependent on the ministries of the whole Body to fulfill its individual destiny. Evangelistic churches may see a greater number of people being led to Jesus, but their success is partly due to the work accomplished in the spiritual realm through Apostolic/Prophetic ministries. The same principle is seen in each type of ministry. No church stands alone. Each one, though different in calling and anointing, will complement the other.

Practically speaking, those who have a specific call to prophetic ministry will most likely be planted by God in an Apostolic/Prophetic type ministry. There they will find the prophetic leadership, specialized teaching, and needed opportunities to exercise their gift, thus adequately preparing them to fulfill their calling.

That leads to this question ... when is a “prophet in preparation” ready to be recognized as a full prophet with leadership responsibilities? First of all, realize that the Lord will lift you up as a leader when you are ready and not before. Second, the Lord will speak to your leadership and use your leadership to elevate you to leadership responsibilities when you’re ready. Lastly, if the local church is flowing together in the Spirit, they will also hear from the Lord and acknowledge the work of the Lord in your life. Therefore, if you know the Lord has called you to an office of ministry submit yourself to the leadership of your local church. Allow them to help prepare you for the ministry the Lord has called to. And don’t get anxious! When you’re prepared and ready the Lord will make a way and elevate you to fulfill your calling. The only thing you need to do is humble yourself as you grow in your calling and let the Lord do the elevating!

In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. (1 Peter 5:5–6, NIV)

Pause & Reflect

1. Why did Jesus put prophets in the Church according to Ephesians 4:11-13?
2. In Scripture why does the Lord often refer to prophets as “watchmen”? (Hosea 9:8, NIV)
3. Since a prophet is a leader among God’s people, what are some necessary characteristics that a prophet needs to have?

4. Numbers 12:6-8 tells us how the Lord speaks to prophets. What are they and what is needed in order to interpret them correctly?
5. According to Psalm 119:100 what is an important key to understanding the Lord and His ways?
6. What is the difference between faith and presumption?
7. What was the purpose of the School of the Prophets in the Old Testament and where is that to be duplicated today?
8. Comment on the statement, “the anointing of the leadership of the ministry is going to be the anointing that governs the ministry.”

The Proper Attitude Towards A Prophet

Prophets are going to play a major role in the advancement of God’s Kingdom on the earth in the last days. So, what kind of attitude should you cultivate towards prophets and prophetic ministry?

- **Be Open**

You must be open to the ministry of the prophet for the Lord uses them to reveal His will. They are in many ways the “eyes, ears, and mouth” of the Lord as He ministers to His Church. Unfortunately, some appear to be open but are really just looking for someone to tell them what they want to hear. They have what the Bible calls, “itching ears”.

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:3–4, NIV)

People with “itching ears” very rarely want to hear a true word from the Lord and thus they become easy prey for the enemy to deceive. The enemy is more than happy to lead such people to their own destruction. Yet, even when a true prophet delivers a pure word to those with “itching ears” their unwillingness to listen makes them deaf to the truth being spoken. People who are only willing to listen to what they want very rarely hear the real truth. They twist and turn the truth until it says what they want it to say. That is why it is not only important to be open to the ministry of true prophets, but to be very careful in the way that you listen. “Itching ears” are as dangerous as “false prophets”.

The Lord has given His Church prophets to help us attain to, “the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”⁸ It will be most profitable for us to listen to them!

- **Be Cautious**

Don’t be naive or gullible. The enemy will deceive many in the last days through the ministry of false prophets.

For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. (Matthew 24:24, NIV)

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. (2 Peter 2:1, NIV)

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, (1 John 4:1–2, NIV)

Therefore, you must be cautious! Don't look for signs, wonders, and miracles as proof that a prophet is sent by God. Instead look at the life and ministry of the prophet to see whether Jesus is being revealed and glorified. If not, beware! Remember, a true prophet is a representative of Jesus Christ and is sent by the Lord to represent and glorify Him alone.

- **Have Respect For A True Prophet**

A prophet should always be treated with respect for a prophet is the Lord's messenger sent with a message and ministry from God.

Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?" (1 Samuel 16:4, NIV)

Prophets are sent by the Lord Jesus with words of blessing as well as words of warning. To receive one aspect of a prophet's ministry and not the other would certainly be unwise. You must be open to both.

The Lord Jesus has given His Church the office of the prophet to help develop solid disciples. In these last days they are going to be especially important as the Lord uses them to raise up disciples who will carry the glory of Jesus Christ throughout the nations. Therefore, receive the Lord's prophet with joy and listen with godly fear!

Pause & Reflect

1. What is the difference between those who are truly open to prophetic ministry and those who merely listen with “itching ears” as the Apostle Paul referred to in 2 Timothy 4:3-4?
2. While disciples of the Lord Jesus must be open to prophetic ministry they must also be cautious. Explain why caution towards prophetic ministry is necessary.
3. What do many people look for as proof that a prophet is sent by God?
4. What is the sure proof that a prophet is sent by God?
5. Read 1 Samuel 16:4 and explain what it reveals about the ministry of a prophet and the proper attitude we should have towards true prophets of the Lord.

Prophetic Ministry

The office of a prophet and prophetic ministry in general are similar in that they are both prophetic in nature. The Lord uses both the prophet and those involved in prophetic ministry to prophesy. However, as has already been stated, being used prophetically doesn't necessarily mean that a person is a prophet. The ability to prophesy means a person has received a gift not a calling!

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ... To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to

another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. (1 Corinthians 12:4, 8-11, NIV)

The difference between a prophet and those who just prophesy lies in the leadership responsibilities of the prophet. A prophet is called to leadership, whereas those who prophesy in the Church may not be called to be leaders. Leadership requires spiritual maturity. On the other hand, being used to prophesy doesn't have anything to do with spiritual maturity at all. The ability to prophesy is received as a gift from God that must be exercised by faith under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Even baby Christians can prophesy! You don't have to be mature in Jesus to be used in the gifts! The gifts of the Holy Spirit aren't just given to those who are mature in Christ. In fact, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not a measurement for spiritual maturity at all!

Unfortunately, people tend to judge the spiritual maturity of others by how well they are used in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is most unfortunate and most unwise! In fact, instead of viewing all those who are used prophetically as spiritual leaders, you should view them as those who have received a gift of the Holy Spirit and are yielding themselves *at that moment* to be used. Such a view will give them the freedom to grow in their ministry, and it will prevent the rest of the body from exalting them to positions of leadership that they may not be called to, or may be called to but are not yet ready to function in.

However, in every way possible, prophetic ministry in the local church should be encouraged! In fact, we are commanded to do so.

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. (1 Corinthians 14:1, ESV)

This is a particularly interesting verse concerning the prophetic ministry because it teaches you to “eagerly desire” the gift of prophecy. To “eagerly desire” comes from a Greek word that when used in a positive sense (as it is here) means, “to burn with zeal, and to be zealous in the pursuit of something”. This clearly shows that the Lord wants His disciples to be eager to prophesy, for He wants them to be a blessing to others!

For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. (1 Corinthians 14:31, NIV)

In fact, this verse implies that prophecy will help keep the fire of the Spirit burning in the local church. Therefore, you must be careful that you never treat prophecies with contempt or discourage anyone in their prophetic ministry. Instead, you should encourage prophetic ministry for the benefit of the entire church!

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt ... (1 Thessalonians 5:19–20, NIV)

A good place to learn how to flow in the anointing of prophetic ministry is through praise and worship! It is through praise and worship that you are inviting the presence of the Lord, and exciting things always happen when the Lord starts to manifest His presence! The Holy Spirit starts moving and the gifts He has given to the church start blazing within the hearts of those to whom they have been given. Praise and worship are an excellent way to “fan into flame the gift of God”⁹ that the Holy Spirit has given you. You

will also find that prayer is conducive to prophetic ministry. In the Old Testament you will find that the prophets were often in prayer when they were inspired to prophesy.

He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.'" (Ezekiel 37:3-5, NIV)

As you begin to yield yourself to the Holy Spirit in prophetic ministry, you may find that you feel inspired to physically move in certain ways. This is not at all odd, in fact it is quite common for the Lord to use the physical body to address the spiritual realm.

Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her. (Ezekiel 4:7, NIV)

The Holy Spirit may also want to use your bodily movements to depict what is actually taking place in the spiritual realm. Or you may be a living prophetic object lesson representing what the Lord is about to do.

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" (Acts 21:10-11, NIV)

Thus, you'll find that although prophetic ministry is vocal, it is by no means limited to that which can be heard. Very often prophetic ministry involves that which can be seen as well! In fact, prophetic acts are a very important part of prophetic ministry. The following are just a few of the ways prophetic ministry is manifested through what is seen.

- **Bodily Position** ... (Ezekiel 6:2, NIV) *“Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them ...”*
- **Bodily Movement** ... (Ezekiel 21:14, NIV) *“So then, son of man, prophesy and strike your hands together. Let the sword strike twice, even three times. It is a sword for slaughter— a sword for great slaughter, closing in on them from every side.”*
- **Prophetic Actions** ... (Jeremiah 13:1–9, NIV) *“This is what the Lord said to me: “Go and buy a linen belt and put it around your waist, but do not let it touch water.” So I bought a belt, as the Lord directed, and put it around my waist. Then the word of the Lord came to me a second time: “Take the belt you bought and are wearing around your waist, and go now to Perath and hide it there in a crevice in the rocks.” So I went and hid it at Perath, as the Lord told me. Many days later the Lord said to me, “Go now to Perath and get the belt I told you to hide there.” So I went to Perath and dug up the belt and took it from the place where I had hidden it, but now it was ruined and completely useless. Then the word of the Lord came to me: “This is what the Lord says: ‘In the same way I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.’”*

Pause & Reflect

1. Explain the difference between the office of a prophet and those who minister prophetically.

2. Give your understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:1 and what you are doing to fulfill it: (1 Corinthians 14:1, NIV), “earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.”
3. Give your understanding of 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 (NIV), “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.”
4. What can you do to cultivate an atmosphere that is conducive to prophetic ministry?
5. What is a prophetic act? (See Ezekiel 4:7, Ezekiel 6:2, Ezekiel 21:14, Jeremiah 13:1-9, and Acts 21:10-11 for examples)

Recognizing True Prophetic Ministry

There are three criteria that you always want to look for in prophetic ministry to help you determine its validity.

- **Prophetic Ministry Always Points To Jesus**

The purpose of every prophet and all prophetic ministry in the Church is to help God’s people know Jesus, serve Jesus, and mature in Jesus.

For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.” (Revelation 19:10, NIV)

If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, “Let us follow other gods” (gods you have not known) “and let us worship them,” you must

not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deuteronomy 13:1-3, NIV)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13, NIV)

- **Prophetic Ministry Promotes Christian Growth**

But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. (1 Corinthians 14:3, NIV)

But when a person speaks what God has revealed, he speaks to people to help them grow, to encourage them, and to comfort them. (1 Corinthians 14:3, GW)

1 Corinthians 14:3 uses three very important Greek words to describe prophetic ministry. The first Greek word *oikodome* is translated by the New International Version as “strengthening”. It literally means to build up, as if constructing a building. Figuratively it describes that which is done to edify someone and promote spiritual growth. The second Greek word *paraklesis* is translated “encouraging” and speaks of someone who is called to the aid of another to help them. This is akin to the Greek word used to describe the work of the Holy Spirit as our advocate and comforter, the one called alongside to help. The third Greek word *paramuthia* is translated “comfort” and signifies admonition

(to encourage, persuade, convince) as well as consolation (to comfort).¹⁰ Thus, prophetic ministry is going to promote Christian growth in all those who will receive it. However, this verse is not to be misunderstood to think that no prophecy in New Testament times can be rebuking in nature. Any ministry that the Lord uses to encourage Christian growth will at times be used to address those issues that are hindering growth. Such was the case with every Old Testament prophet. They were used by the Lord to deal with the things that hindered Israel in their relationship with God so that spiritual growth and maturity could be realized. To say that prophecy today can't deal with negative issues in today's society doesn't follow scriptural precedent. Scripture is full of prophetic rebukes that have the goal of leading people to repentance. A ministry that strengthens, encourages, and comforts will at times have to deal with unpleasant issues in a person or nation. However, when the Lord does use prophetic ministry to deal with issues that must be rebuked, He will balance the rebuke with ministry that gives hope to the recipient if they are repentant. Notice how Jesus gave His disciples hope even when He prophesied to them that they would all forsake Him.

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will abandon me tonight. Scripture says, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep in the flock will be scattered.' "But after I am brought back to life, I will go to Galilee ahead of you."
(Matthew 26:31-32, GW)

Looking at the messages of the prophets as well as the prophetic ministry of Jesus Himself is proof enough that God often uses prophetic ministry to denounce the sins of mankind. Simply put, the Lord will use prophetic ministry to deal with the negative, but the goal is always positive ... growth in Jesus!

- **Prophetic Ministry Must Come True**

You may say to yourselves, “How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the Lord?” If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed. (Deuteronomy 18:21–22, NIV)

All true prophecies will come to pass. However, it must be remembered that many prophecies in the Bible haven’t yet been fulfilled! So, don’t be quick to judge a prophet or those involved in prophetic ministry when a particular prophecy doesn’t happen immediately.

We must also realize that not everyone involved in prophetic ministry is at the same spiritual maturity level. Therefore, the standard by which prophets and the spiritually mature are held should not be imposed on those who are just starting to be used by the Spirit in prophecy. Many involved in prophetic ministry are going to be new believers in Christ who are yielding themselves as best as they know how. Therefore, the local church must be loving and patient with those who are novices in the prophetic ministry. They need to be helped with Biblical teaching and prayerful guidance as they learn how to yield themselves to the Spirit when they minister prophetically.

I remember when I first went to Bible college. I had been serving the Lord for about two years and desired with all my heart to serve Him well. One day during our noon prayer meeting I sensed that I had a prophecy for the body of believers who were assembled together praying. With faith mixed together with fear, I began to prophesy, “All the promises of God are ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ in Christ Jesus.” As soon as I finished I had a sense that something wasn’t

quite right. I wasn't sure what it was, but I knew that I had spoken a verse of scripture. When I got back to my dorm room, I looked up the scripture in the King James Version and to my horror I read, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Corinthians 1:20 KJV) I immediately had a wave of guilt like a tidal wave beat against me. "I'm a false prophet" I kept thinking! I'm sure that the enemy wasn't helping me any, but I was doing a great job condemning myself without his help! The next day I went to noon prayers with deep remorse and repentance for having prophesied incorrectly. I went to the leader and told him what I had done, and his response gave me the healing in my spirit that I needed. He told me, "That's O.K. David, we all knew what you meant." I can't imagine what damage would have been done to me if he had condemned me the way many are condemned when they first begin to flow in prophetic ministry. Thankfully, he wisely counseled me, acknowledging my error, but encouraged me to continue my desire to be used by God to prophesy.

The ability to discern between true and counterfeit prophetic ministry is going to be increasingly difficult in the last days and will require spiritual maturity, Biblical understanding, and the spiritual gift of distinguishing between spirits. The Church will be experiencing global revival outpourings which will give birth to a whole generation of disciples flowing in powerful prophetic ministry. But at the same time the devil, who is a master deceiver, will be raising up his own counterfeit prophetic ministry with false prophets who perform great signs and wonders!

For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. (Matthew 24:24, NIV)

Therefore, the test for the genuine can't be based on the power and miraculous nature of the prophetic ministry. It's got to be

based on whether the prophetic ministry represents and points to the real Jesus. Why do I say, the “real Jesus?” Because the enemy will not only raise up false prophets, but he will also raise up false christs who will deceive many!

... many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. (Matthew 24:11, NIV)

For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. (Matthew 24:5, NIV)

Therefore, unless the prophetic ministry you are questioning is revealing Jesus as the Righteous Lord who came in the flesh and is the only way to the Father, don’t receive it!¹¹ This of course means that all prophetic ministry in the local church must be judged. This will not only help keep the prophetic ministry in your church pure, but it will also generate confidence within the local body towards prophetic ministry.

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. (1 Corinthians 14:29, MEV)

According to Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, “the others” are given the responsibility to judge what has been spoken prophetically. Who are these “others”? They are most likely the other prophets in the local church who are also ministering. If there are no other prophets in the local church, then those who are in leadership should be given the responsibility to judge since they would have the maturity and depth in God to know His Word, will, and ways. That’s why it’s wise to have established leadership around when prophetic ministry is being given. In fact, if you are new to the Kingdom of God it is best to get someone in leadership to stand with you before anyone is allowed to minister to you prophetically.

This will not only help you confirm what really is from God, but it will also save you from being deceived by fleshly, and sometimes demonic ministry. I have witnessed new converts being misled too many times and even deceived by “prophecies” given to them by others. In most cases these “prophecies” would be given in private with no leadership or spiritually mature person there to help judge the accuracy of the ministry.

There is and will continue to be a great need for the spiritually mature to be vigilant towards keeping the prophetic ministry in your local church on track. One of the safest ways to do this is to make sure that the prophetic ministry in the local church is submitted to local leadership. Prophetic ministry is a powerful ministry that must be given freedom in the local church, but no one in the prophetic ministry is beyond making mistakes. I have heard many being used prophetically say, “The Holy Spirit never makes mistakes.” While that is true we must be wise and mature enough to realize that people do make mistakes, even those who are used prophetically. That is why Scripture commands for every prophecy to be judged. So, when you are used prophetically by the Lord, be humble enough to submit your ministry to the loving and discerning spiritual insight of your elders. Remember, they are there to help you grow in your usefulness in the prophetic ministry!

If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. (1 Corinthians 14:37-40, NIV)

Pause & Reflect

1. List three characteristics of true prophetic ministry.
2. Explain your understanding of Revelation 19:10 (NIV), “For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus.”
3. How does prophetic ministry promote Christian growth? (1 Corinthians 14:3)
4. Why is it imperative that prophecies be judged? (Matthew 24:24, 1 Corinthians 14:29)
5. Who in the local church are the most spiritually qualified to judge prophecy?

A Prophetic Mantle On The Church

A powerful prophetic mantle will be on those who follow Jesus in the last days. This will be the result of three major things:

1. A Great Outpouring Of God’s Spirit
2. The Prayers Of God’s People
3. Prophetic Ministry

A good example of how the Lord uses prophetic ministry to impact a whole generation is seen in the ministry of Ezekiel. The Lord used Ezekiel to prophesy to a nation of dry bones and raise them up as a mighty army of disciples.

*Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.’”
... So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath*

entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. (Ezekiel 37:4–5, 10, NIV)

Many would have said that the generation of Ezekiel's day had no hope, that they were a "lost" generation, a bunch of "dry bones". Ezekiel was dealing with a generation that was the result of parents who had known the truth of the Lord but had rejected it. Instead of sowing the Word into their children, they choose to sow rebellion in their hearts. Ezekiel was left to deal with the outcome of this. The same is being seen today in this present generation, and for the very same reason!

They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. (Hosea 8:7a, NIV)

However, the valley of "dry bones" had powerful potential in God, but it took faith in God to see it! Thankfully, Ezekiel did have faith in God and rose up in obedience to prophesy to the "dry bones" as the Lord commanded him.

He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!'" (Ezekiel 37:3–4, NIV)

Ezekiel's prophetic ministry was used by God to bring life and unity to a disjointed, dead body, and raise them up as a mighty army! (Never underestimate the power of God that flows through prophetic ministry!) The Lord is doing the very same thing today. The Lord is using the prophetic ministry of the Church to help raise up true disciples for Jesus; disciples who, like a vast spiritual

army, will go throughout the nations in the power of the Spirit representing Jesus Christ in life and ministry.

Many of those who are raised up by prophetic ministry, will themselves be used by the Lord in prophetic ministry.

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. (Acts 2:17–18, NIV)

The prophetic anointing that will abide on the Church will be so prevalent that the disciples who live in the last days will flow in the prophetic ministry as no other generation before them. Even those who aren't accustomed to prophetic ministry will be caught up in the power of the prophetic anointing, just as Saul experienced when he entered the spiritual atmosphere surrounding the prophets.

The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. ... As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying. When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, "What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 10:6, 9–11, NIV)

The prophetic mantle that Jesus has for the Church is going to raise up a whole generation of disciples who operate with a powerful prophetic anointing. It's what Joel prophesied, and that which Jesus accomplished in His disciples on the Day of Pentecost. The prophetic anointing is already in our midst. Receive it and let the prophetic anointing start operating in your life!

Pause & Reflect

1. The prophetic mantle that will be on the disciples of Jesus in the last days will be the result of what three major things?
2. Comment on how God used Ezekiel prophetically in Ezekiel 37:1-10.
3. Comment on what the Church of the last days should anticipate according to Acts 2:17-18.

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1. Matthew 1:1
 2. 1 Samuel 16:13 and 19:18
 3. 1 Chronicles 17:1-15 and 2 Samuel 12:1-15
 4. 2 Samuel 12:25
 5. 1 Chronicles 21:9
 6. 1 Samuel 22:5
 7. 2 Samuel 24:18
 8. Ephesians 4:13
 9. 2 Timothy 1:6
 10. Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985.

11. John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 12:3, 2 Corinthians 11:4, 1 John 2:22,
1 John 4:2-3

Chapter Two

Priestly Ministry Revealed

The Church is called by God to be a kingdom of priests. This is exactly the same thing the Lord said to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. In fact, the Lord said He wanted the whole nation of Israel to be a kingdom of priests.

“Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites. (Exodus 19:5–6, NIV)

A Priestly Remnant

The Lord’s plan for the nation of Israel was to raise them up as a kingdom of priests who would represent Him before the nations of the earth.

... out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Exodus 19:5-6, NIV)

But the actions of the Israelites revealed that they weren't willing to be a kingdom of priests. Therefore, the Lord chose a remnant in Israel to fulfill the priestly calling He had given to the entire nation. That was when the Lord called Aaron and his sons who were from the tribe of Levi to be His priests. In principle, the entire tribe of Levi was part of the priestly remnant because all the Levites helped Aaron and his sons fulfill their priestly ministry.

I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine, ... (Numbers 3:12, NIV)

To better understand this, look back at the call God placed on Aaron, his sons, and the tribe of Levi. The Lord called the family line of Aaron, from the tribe of Levi, to be His priests. The priesthood was charged with the responsibility of offering sacrifices and leading the people in worship and confession. The rest of the tribe of Levi took care of the tabernacle and the Temple and performed other duties of assistance to the priests.

Bring the tribe of Levi and present them to Aaron the priest to assist him. They are to perform duties for him and for the whole community at the tent of meeting by doing the work of the tabernacle. They are to take care of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, fulfilling the obligations of the Israelites by doing the work of the tabernacle. Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to

him. Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests; anyone else who approaches the sanctuary is to be put to death. (Numbers 3:6–10, NIV)

But why did the Lord choose the tribe of Levi as the remnant that would represent the whole nation in priestly ministry? Simply put, the tribe of Levi had proven itself to be wholly dedicated to the Lord. Near the time of his death, Moses spoke of the faithfulness of the Levites and why they were chosen above all others.

About Levi he said: “Your Thummim and Urim belong to your faithful servant. You tested him at Massah; you contended with him at the waters of Meribah. He said of his father and mother, ‘I have no regard for them.’ He did not recognize his brothers or acknowledge his own children, but he watched over your word and guarded your covenant. He teaches your precepts to Jacob and your law to Israel. He offers incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar.” (Deuteronomy 33:8–10, NIV)

This same organizational structure of ministry has been repeated in the New Testament Church. Every New Testament believer has been called to be a priest of the Lord Jesus to minister to Him and to represent Him to the nations.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9, NIV)

Yet not all followers of Jesus are willing to fulfill their calling. Therefore, the Lord is raising up a remnant of disciples (led by

apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) to fulfill the ministry of the royal priesthood on behalf of the whole Church. But the remnant isn't just doing that which the whole Church is supposed to be doing, it is paving the way through example, teaching, and spiritual preparation till every believer takes part in the ministry of the royal priesthood!

Pause & Reflect

1. What does Exodus 19:5-6 reveal concerning God's will for the nation of Israel?
2. In what ways is the ministry of the New Testament Church similar to the calling God gave to the nation of Israel? (Compare 1 Peter 2:9 and Exodus 19:5-6)
3. Compare Exodus 32:19-29 with Deuteronomy 33:9 and Luke 14:26-27 and explain why God looked on the Levites with favor?
4. How was the tribe of Levi (while they were in the wilderness) an example of what a remnant people should be like? (Deuteronomy 33:8-10)

The Priestly Standard

You had to be born into the tribe of Levi, and specifically into the family of Aaron to be a priest. In other words, you had to be "born" into the priesthood. This same method of calling people into the priesthood is seen today in those who have been "born again" by putting their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, all those who have been "born again" have been born into the priesthood. Yet, being born into the family of priests didn't automatically mean that you were able to fulfill the ministry of a priest. You had to meet the qualifications the Lord made for the priesthood.

- **A Priest Had To Be Without Physical Deformity**

“Say to Aaron: ‘For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; no man with a crippled foot or hand, or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the food offerings to the Lord. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the Lord, who makes them holy.’”
(Leviticus 21:17–23, NIV)

The physical requirements that the Lord made for the priesthood were given to reveal the spiritual qualifications for priestly ministry. For instance, when the Lord said that a priest could not be blind, the spiritual implication was that a priest had to have spiritual insight. Or the fact that a man with damaged testicles couldn't serve in the priesthood reveals that the Lord expected those serving as priests to be spiritually fruitful. As a whole, the physical requirements of the priesthood reveal that one had to be spiritually fit in order to properly minister to the Lord and to others on His behalf.

- **A Priest Had To Represent The Lord In His Appearance**

Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron to give him dignity and honor. Tell all the skilled workers to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest. These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve me as priests. (Exodus 28:2-4, NIV)

These garments were a representation of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom Paul likened to the spiritual clothing that every disciple must wear.

Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. (Romans 13:14, NIV)

The priestly garments were also designed by the Lord to bring dignity to the priests, for they represented the Lord. By wearing these clothes, the priests were immediately recognized as those who had God's approval to minister. The connection between being qualified to minister to others and being clothed with Christ is clearly seen; those who aren't clothed with Jesus aren't qualified to minister!

Furthermore, a priest couldn't wear his priestly garments over his old clothes. He had to take off all that he had on, bathe and then put on the clothes that the Lord had provided for his priestly ministry. In the same way, you must, through repentance and faith, take off your old sinful nature and put on Jesus who alone can enable you to fulfill your calling to the priesthood.

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22–24, NIV)

- **A Priest Had To Represent The Lord In His Actions**

The priests are to perform my service in such a way that they do not become guilty and die for treating it with contempt. I am the Lord, who makes them holy. (Leviticus 22:9, NIV)

The lifestyle of the priesthood was closely governed by the Lord. In every way the priests were to represent the perfection of the Lord. They were to be examples that everyone else could look up to and follow. But considering that God's standard was perfection there weren't any priests who met such requirements. That's why the priests had to offer sin offerings for themselves as well as for those they ministered to.

Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. (Hebrews 5:1–3, NIV)

Even though the family of Aaron was called to the priesthood they found themselves lacking when it came to meeting God's standard of holiness. All the Levites and priests had failed! Therefore, God raised up a remnant (Jesus) out of the remnant (Israel) to fulfill the ministry of the priesthood. Jesus met the priestly standard of perfection set forth in the Law in every way. He was perfect in mind, body, and spirit. He was clothed in righteousness and acted righteously in all that He did. Jesus was the complete image of God, yet was also the perfect man! The priestly standard was fully met in Jesus. So, the issue wasn't whether Jesus was qualified to be a priest in the order of Aaron. The truth of the matter was that the Aaronic priesthood was unworthy of Jesus! The Aaronic priesthood was but a dim reflection of the revelation of Jesus Christ as the great High Priest. That's why when God raised up Jesus as the high priest, He was not called to function in the order of Aaron (who functioned in the weakness of sinful man) but in the order of Melchizedek.

If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? (Hebrews 7:11, NIV)

This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.” Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. (Hebrews 7:1–3, NIV)

Therefore, as a disciple of Jesus Christ you have a call to the priesthood, but not to function under the Law as did the Aaronic priesthood. You are called to fulfill your priestly ministry under the new covenant of which Jesus Christ is High Priest. By uniting you to Himself, Jesus has made you fit to minister as a priest!

However, that doesn't mean that there's nothing to be learned from the Aaronic priesthood. On the contrary! The Aaronic priesthood has much to teach us about priestly ministry. Yet, with all that can be learned from the Aaronic priesthood it is still only in Christ Jesus that anyone is qualified to be a priest unto God. It is Jesus who has called you, is leading you, and is perfecting you in your priestly ministry. It is in Christ Jesus that you have been made part of a "royal priesthood". All glory be to Jesus, who is the High Priest forevermore!

Pause & Reflect

1. In the Old Testament you had to be born into the tribe of Levi to be a priest. (Exodus 40:15) How can this principle be applied to a New Testament believer today? (John 3:3)
2. What were some of the physical requirements for an Old Testament priest and what do they reveal concerning the spiritual requirements needed in the life of a New Testament disciple? (Leviticus 21:17-23)
3. What spiritual significance do the sacred garments of the Old Testament priests have for New Testament disciples? (Exodus 28:2-4; Romans 13:14; Ephesians 4:22-24)
4. Give your understanding of Leviticus 22:9 (NIV), "The priests are to perform my service in such a way that they do not become guilty and die for treating it with contempt. I am the Lord, who makes them holy."
5. Why was Jesus called to be a priest in the order of Melchizedek instead of the order of Aaron? (Hebrews 7)

6. What qualifies you to minister as a New Testament priest?

Prepared And Equipped For Priestly Ministry

The priesthood of the Old Testament was given six main things with which to minister: blood, oil, incense, fire, God's Word, and His Name. These were not only needed to help prepare the priest for ministry, but they were necessary for priestly ministry to be acceptable to the Lord. Let's look at each item in more detail.

- **The Blood**

Blood was one of the major components of the priestly ministry. Everything a priest did was connected to the blood that was shed on the bronze altar. That was all to show the importance of the blood of the lamb of God.

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Hebrews 9:22, NIV)

The blood symbolized God's work in cleansing the priest from sin, thus, making the priest fit for service. In fact, the Lord was very specific on where the blood had to be applied so that the priest would be able to fulfill his ministry.

Moses slaughtered the ram and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. Moses also brought Aaron's sons forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. (Leviticus 8:23-24, NIV)

Each place the blood was applied symbolized a spiritual work that the blood of Jesus would accomplish. The blood was applied to the right ear lobe (man's natural senses), the right thumb (man's ability), and the right toe (man's walk). Thus, those who receive the ministry of the blood of Jesus are enabled to hear the Lord's voice, work with the Lord's ability, and walk in the Lord's ways.

The blood put on the priest was also a powerful symbol of death and life. When the priest had the blood applied to himself, he was personally identifying with the death of the sacrifice. But the priest was also identifying with the life of the sacrifice for the life of the sacrifice is in its blood. The Apostle Paul later shared the power of this truth when he wrote of being united with Christ in His death and sharing in His life.

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20, NIV)

The blood of Jesus is absolutely necessary for ministry. Not only did the priest have the blood applied to himself, but the blood of the sacrifice was a vital part of his ministry to the Lord. In fact, the priest wasn't permitted to approach the Lord in the Holy Place without the blood of the sacrifice. It was always the blood that prepared the way.

Before the altar ... "the priests shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar." (Leviticus 1:11, NIV)

Before the curtain ... "He is to dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times before the Lord, in front of the curtain of the sanctuary." (Leviticus 4:6, NIV)

Before the altar of incense ... *“The priest shall then put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense that is before the Lord in the tent of meeting.” (Leviticus 4:7, NIV)*

Before the ark of the covenant ... *“He is to take some of the bull’s blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover.” (Leviticus 16:14, NIV)*

It is the blood of Jesus, the sacrificed Lamb, that makes the ministry of the priesthood possible. All honor and glory to the Lamb who was slain!

- **The Oil**

The priest had to be anointed with oil before he was able to minister. The oil was and still is a symbol of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Lord was revealing that it is absolutely necessary for a priest to be anointed by the Holy Spirit to be effective in ministry. Even Jesus, as God incarnate, relied solely on the Holy Spirit to enable Him to minister. In fact, Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:1 to reveal how the Holy Spirit ministered in His own life.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. (Luke 4:18–19, NIV)

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is necessary for all who desire to reveal Jesus in life and ministry. That’s why the Lord commanded

the priests to be anointed with the oil. However, Christlike ministry can only flow through a Christlike life. That's why the oil was sprinkled on the priest after the blood was applied. The blood of Jesus must first cleanse you from sin and then the Holy Spirit can empower you to serve. That means, if you've been cleansed by the blood and are clothed with Jesus, you're ready for the anointing oil!

And take some blood from the altar and some of the anointing oil and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. Then he and his sons and their garments will be consecrated. (Exodus 29:21, NIV)

Concerning the anointing oil itself, the Lord had it made in such a way as to reveal many important truths about the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take the following fine spices: 500 shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much (that is, 250 shekels) of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels of fragrant calamus, 500 shekels of cassia—all according to the sanctuary shekel—and a hin of olive oil. Make these into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer. It will be the sacred anointing oil." (Exodus 30:22–25, NIV)

Below is a list of the ingredients and their meaning.

1. Olive Oil ... The main ingredient of the sacred anointing oil was olive oil. It was symbolic of the person of the Holy Spirit.

2. Myrrh ... Myrrh was a perfume most often used for embalming. The word “myrrh” comes from the Hebrew word meaning “bitter”. Therefore, it’s easy to see that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is closely associated with the crucified life. Once again the Lord is calling His people to die to themselves so that His anointing can flow through them.
3. Fragrant Cinnamon ... Fragrant cinnamon was added to the mixture as a perfume. In fact, the fragrance in the anointing oil was so strong it was as if the priests were anointed with perfume! Thus, whenever the priests ministered they carried with them the fragrance of the Lord.
4. Calamus ... Calamus was a form of sweet cane that became very fragrant when it was bruised. The Lord was once again emphasizing the need for brokenness in order for the “sweetness” of the Lord to be revealed. This truth is especially seen in the life of Jesus. When He was “bruised” through the mistreatment of others, nothing came out of Him but the goodness of God! Thus, brokenness is needed in the lives of those who desire for the goodness of God to flow out of their lives.
5. Cassia ... Cassia was another fragrant substance added to the mixture. “Cassia” comes from the Hebrew word meaning, “to bend the body or neck in submission”. Submitting to the Holy Spirit is a key to having the anointing of the Lord flow through you. That’s why Jesus, as a man, was able to be anointed with the Holy Spirit without limit. He died daily to His own will and was totally submitted to the Spirit, and thus the beautiful fragrance of the presence of God was revealed!

The purpose for the anointing oil in the life of a priest was to enable him to serve. It enabled the priest to minister to the Lord effectively.

Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them so they may serve me as priests. (Exodus 30:30, NIV)

But the anointing was also necessary for the priest to minister to others effectively.

The priest shall then take some of the log of oil, pour it in the palm of his own left hand, dip his right forefinger into the oil in his palm, and with his finger sprinkle some of it before the Lord seven times. The priest is to put some of the oil remaining in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, on top of the blood of the guilt offering. The rest of the oil in his palm the priest shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed and make atonement for them before the Lord. (Leviticus 14:15-18, NIV)

The anointing of the Holy Spirit that flowed through Jesus brought the good news to the poor, freedom to those in bondage, healing to the sick, and deliverance to the oppressed. That's why Jesus told His disciples that they had to be anointed (filled) with the Holy Spirit before they were ready to fulfill their Christlike ministry. Jesus never expected His Church to fulfill its priestly ministry with the blood alone; it requires the blood and the oil!

- **The Lord's Incense**

Burning incense was a regular part of the ministry of the priesthood.

Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps. He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the Lord for the generations to come. (Exodus 30:7–8, NIV)

The burning of incense was so important because it symbolized prayer. David, the psalmist, wrote ...

May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. (Psalm 141:2, NIV)

Jewish thought held that burning incense not only represented prayer but the life of the one praying. This certainly holds true concerning the life and ministry of Jesus. In fact, the ingredients of the incense give a unique glimpse into the prayer life of Jesus.

There were four equally divided ingredients used to make the sacred incense, and once made, it was only allowed to be used in ministry to the Lord.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take fragrant spices—gum resin, onycha and galbanum—and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is

to be salted and pure and sacred.” (Exodus 30:34–35, NIV)

1. Gum resin is derived from the Hebrew root word meaning, “to ooze” and is figuratively used to describe one who speaks by inspiration. Inspiration from the Holy Spirit is necessary for effective praying as is seen in the prayers of Jesus.
2. Onycha is derived from the Hebrew root word meaning, “to roar as a lion”. In Biblical days the lion symbolized power, royalty, and courage. Therefore, onycha is a symbol of the divine power that is necessary for effective praying, as exemplified in the prayer life of Jesus.
3. Galbanum is derived from the Hebrew root meaning, “fat”. In the Old Testament “fat” symbolized the best part, abundance, and the anointing. In fact, the scripture often quoted from the King James Version, “the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing” (Isaiah 10:27, KJV) literally means “the yoke will be broken because you have grown so fat” (NIV). Galbanum speaks of the Lord’s blessing that is seen in His anointing. Like no one else, Jesus prayed and is still praying with the fullness of God’s anointing and He is calling for His disciples to do the same!
4. Frankincense is derived from the Hebrew root meaning, “white, or to make white” which figuratively speaks of divine purity. In order for prayer to be powerful and effective it must be pure from all impure motives and sin. Jesus certainly prayed with a pure heart, desiring only that the Father’s will was accomplished for the glory of God!

As was previously stated there is no better example of one who prays like this than Jesus. But it is important that we also realize

that this is the type of praying that Jesus wants from all of His disciples: inspired, powerful, anointed, pure praying! How can this be? The answer is given in the making of the incense.

First, the ingredients had to be beaten into powder that would be measured, mixed, and burned. The beating of the ingredients represented the Lord's discipline that brings brokenness, obedience, and submission to God. It was the brokenness of Jesus that enabled Him to pray, "not my will, but yours be done." The same must be done in those who want to pray like Jesus, for brokenness is needed if you want God's inspiration, power, blessing, and purity to take over your prayer life! Next the beaten ingredients were measured equally, revealing that each part was equally important. After the ingredients were mixed together they were seasoned with salt. In Bible days salt was often used as a symbol of friendship. That is exactly the type of relationship Abraham had with the Lord, and that which the Lord wants with us today! And what better way to develop a friend relationship with Jesus than in prayer! Added to this the fact that Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth." Broadly speaking this is talking about the godly influence God's people are to have in the world. Concerning prayer, Jesus wants the prayers of His people to change the world! Lastly, the incense was taken and consecrated to the Lord, revealing how prayer itself is supposed to be an act of consecration to the Lord, not just a means of petitioning the Lord.

Another important aspect concerning the Lord's incense was that it had to be burned before the Lord continually, morning and evening. This certainly reveals God's heart for His people to, "pray continually." But how is that possible? The answer is found in how the priests used fire from the altar to activate and release the Lord's incense. In other words, the Holy Spirit enables God's people to pray unceasingly!

- **The Fire**

Fire was a major component to priestly ministry. This is important because the Lord often revealed Himself through fire. When the Lord did reveal Himself through fire it left no doubt that He was not to be trifled with!

For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. (Deuteronomy 4:24, NIV)

One of the most important things to understand about the priestly use of fire was that the Lord supplied the fire.

Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown. (Leviticus 9:24, NIV)

But once the Lord sent His fire, it was the responsibility of the priesthood to keep it going! It was to be a perpetual fire burning before the Lord.

The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out. (Leviticus 6:13, NIV)

The use of fire in priestly ministry as seen at the Tabernacle and later at the Temple in Jerusalem gives a wonderful revelation of what the Lord wants to accomplish in the life and ministry of His people. Not counting the pillar of fire that hovered over the Tabernacle at night, the first place the fire of the Lord was found at the Tabernacle was on the bronze altar of burnt offering, which itself was representative of the cross of Jesus. One very important

thing to note is that when the Lord sent His fire to the altar it completely consumed all that was on the altar. And that is exactly what the Lord wants to do with His disciples as they spiritually present themselves to Him as a living sacrifice!

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. (Romans 12:1, NIV)

The next place the Lord's fire was found was at the lampstand in the Holy Place. The priest would have carried the fire from the altar of burnt offering and used it to light the seven lamps that were part of the lampstand. The light from the lamps enabled the priest to see in the Holy Place. The key thought here is that fire reveals. That is exactly what the fire of the Spirit will accomplish in your life ... His fire will reveal Jesus to you and through you!

Next, the fire would be taken to the altar of incense that was also found in the Holy Place. The fire that the priest put on the altar of incense would also have been taken from the altar of burnt offering. As was already mentioned, it was the fire that made the incense effective by enabling its fragrance and smoke to be released. Obviously, the lesson to be learned here is a very important one. It is through the fire of the Holy Spirit that true ministry is released. This is exactly what took place when the fire of the Holy Spirit rested on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.

Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as

the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ... (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! (Acts 2:2-6, 11, NIV)

Lastly fire manifested above the ark of the covenant found in the Most Holy Place, the most important room in the Tabernacle. This fire was actually the glory of the Lord revealed in a cloud. This cloud (which was also known as the pillar of fire) was also that which the Lord used to lead the Israelites in the wilderness. The way the Lord used this cloud reveals the strong connection between the Lord's glory and His fire. In fact, it was from this cloud that the Lord originally sent His fire to ignite the altar of burnt offering. In other words, God's fire and glory go together! You can't have one and reject the other. That's why if you want to see God's glory you must be willing for the fire of God to minister to your life. Such divine fire will consume you, give you revelation, and release Christlike ministry to you and through you. Those who don't want the life changes that God's fire will bring to their lives don't really want to see His glory! Thankfully, there are those who are hungry to see the glory of Jesus. Their heart's cry is for Jesus to baptize them with His fire, for they truly want to be changed.

In the Old Testament the priests of the Lord were required to minister with the fire of the Lord. Today, in a similar way, priests of the Lord are called to minister with the fire of the Lord, but in a way that more closely resembles the ministry that took place on the Day of Pentecost. On that day Jesus made His disciples the actual vessels of the fire of the Spirit. In like manner a disciple of the Lord is called to become a vessel which carries the spiritual fire of the Lord. Thus, the vessels that held the fire in the Tabernacle

were not only a pattern of Jesus, but they were also a revelation of what Jesus is making His disciples into.

Therefore, let's look at the specific materials the Lord required the vessels that would hold the fire in the Tabernacle to be made of. There were actually only three different types of material used in all four pieces of furniture that held the fire: acacia wood, bronze, and gold. The bronze altar was acacia wood (known for its hardness and durability) overlaid with bronze. The lampstand was one piece of pure hammered gold. The altar of incense was acacia wood overlaid with gold, and the ark of the covenant was acacia wood overlaid with gold both inside and out. In each case the Lord had each piece of furniture made so that it would function properly with the fire that would be put on it. The materials the Lord chose to use for each piece were purposeful, practical, durable, and effective. First of all, everything used in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple was a symbol of Jesus. That means the purpose of the acacia wood, bronze, and gold was to symbolically reveal Jesus, each in a different way. Yet, they were also very practical substances to use because each one was able to take the heat that would have been generated by the fire. They were also durable and very effective. That is exactly what Jesus was as a man, and what He is making His priests' to be today ... purposeful, practical, durable, and effective vessels. It is upon such vessels that the Lord will put His fire. As long as you stay focused on your purpose (to reveal Jesus) and prove yourself to be both practical and durable, the Lord will make you more effective by increasing His fire in your life. Just make sure that you stay true to being a vessel that only carries the fire that God provides. In other words, beware of all spiritual "fire" that is not of God. Such was the case with Nadab and Abihu the two priests who thought they could offer fire before the Lord that had not come from the altar of burnt offering.

Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. (Leviticus 10:1-2, NIV)

If the spiritual fire you see manifesting in ministry doesn't focus on Jesus and release Christlike ministry, don't touch it because it's not of God. But be encouraged, Jesus is still baptizing His disciples with the Holy Spirit and fire today! Ask and you will receive! And once you receive, keep the fire burning in your heart, because you've been called to be a priest that ministers with the fire of God!

- **God's Word**

Every priest, no matter what his specific duty, was called to be a messenger of the Lord by instructing others in the Word of God.

"And you will know that I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue," says the Lord Almighty. "My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin. For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the Lord Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth." (Malachi 2:4-7, NIV)

After the children of Israel were established in the promised land it became more and more the responsibility of the priests to teach the Word of God to Israel. The same principle applies today. As

priests of the Lord all disciples must be able to share the truth of the Word with others.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15, NIV)

- **God's Name**

As a priest of the Lord, you have also been given the privilege of using His name. In fact, the Lord spoke to Moses and told him how the priests were to use the name of the Lord to bless the Israelites.

The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.'" (Numbers 6:22-27, NIV)

There was spiritual impartation that took place in the lives of the Israelites as the priests spoke this blessing. In fact, as the priests spoke this blessing over the Israelites they were actually putting the Lord's Name on them! In the same way, as a priest of the Lord, you are called to put the Name of Jesus on other disciples. But you can't impart His Name on anyone else until it is written on you, for you can only impart what you have first received. That is one more reason you need to submit to the priestly leadership the Lord will call you to. In so doing, you will not only have the Name of the Lord

written on you, with His blessing, but you will be prepared to fulfill your priestly duties towards others!

Thus, cleansed by the blood, anointed with the Spirit, given to a life of prayer, full of the fire of God, teachers of God's word, and ready to spread the blessing of His Name, the priests were able to fulfill their ministry.

Pause & Reflect

1. What were the six main things the priests of the Old Testament were given to minister with?
2. Explain the symbolism behind the placement of the blood on the priest's right ear lobe, right thumb, and right toe, and what it means for a disciple of Jesus today.
3. Why was the priest of the Old Testament required to apply the blood of the sacrifice on the altar, the curtain, the altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant when he ministered?
4. Why was the priest of the Old Testament anointed with the blood of the sacrifice before he was anointed with oil and why is that significant for a disciple of Jesus today?
5. List the five ingredients used to make the anointing oil, giving their symbolic meaning and how each one relates to a New Testament disciple today. (Exodus 30:22-25)
6. List the four ingredients used to make the priestly incense, giving their symbolic meaning and how each one relates to a New Testament disciple today. (Exodus 30:34-35)
7. Not counting the ark of the covenant, list the three places the fire of God was used, the symbolism involved and how it relates to a New Testament disciple today. (Leviticus 6:12-13; Numbers 8:1-4; Exodus 30:7-8)

8. What was the significance and symbolism of the three types of materials used for the four vessels that held the fire of God and how does this relate to you as a disciple?
9. Explain why Nadab and Abihu were judged by God and what lesson it teaches to New Testament disciples.
10. Give your comments on Malachi 2:7 and 2 Timothy 2:15 and how they relate to the ministry of a New Testament disciple.
11. The priestly blessing given in Numbers 6:22-27 provided the Israelites with a powerful impartation. What was it and what relevance does this have on a disciple of Jesus Christ today?

The Purpose Of Priestly Ministry

The ministry of the priests was dual in nature, fulfilling two main functions. First and foremost, priests were called to minister to the Lord. Secondly, they were to minister to others on behalf of the Lord.

*Then dress Aaron in the sacred garments, anoint him and consecrate him so he may serve me as priest.
(Exodus 40:13, NIV)*

Ministry to the Lord primarily involves worship. The Scripture gives several examples of true worshipers, one of which was David. David not only worshiped the Lord with all his heart, but he was zealous in how he worshiped. David also wrote at least half of the Psalms, many of which were songs of praise and worship.

Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. (Psalm 103:1, NIV)

Another good example of a true worshiper is Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who anointed the feet of Jesus with pure perfume.

Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (John 12:3, NIV)

So, although neither David nor Mary were priests according to the law of the Old Testament, they both fulfilled the ministry of priestly worship as seen in the New Testament. They allowed nothing to deter them from giving the Lord their best in worship!

Such worship will accomplish two very important things. First of all, and of greatest importance, worship glorifies the Lord. That is the single most important goal of any worshiper ... to glorify the Lord! But there is another aspect of worship that is vitally important. Dwelling in the Lord's presence as a worshiper will have a dramatic effect on you, making you more like Jesus in your life and ministry. That's why Mary had no problem humbling herself before Jesus, wiping his feet with her hair and anointing them with her costly perfume; she was a true worshiper.

It's also noteworthy that the first person Jesus revealed Himself to after His resurrection was another devoted worshiper, Mary Magdalene. True worshipers always get to enjoy His presence first!

Pause & Reflect

1. What are the two main functions of priestly ministry?
2. What is the primary means used to minister to the Lord?

3. What two things will true worship accomplish?

The Priestly Blessing

Those who enter into the fullness of their priestly calling will experience great blessings from the Lord. This is especially seen in how the Lord treated the Levites when He divided the Promised Land among the tribes of Israel. Each tribe received their allotted inheritance except for the tribe of Levi. To them the Lord said,

They shall have no inheritance among their fellow Israelites; the Lord is their inheritance, as he promised them. (Deuteronomy 18:2, NIV)

While all of Israel was said to be, “the people of His inheritance”, it was the tribe of Levi that was specifically given the promise that the Lord Himself was their inheritance. They were given something far more valuable than land and possessions. They were given the Lord. Do you really understand the significance of this? All the other tribes were given the blessings of the Lord while the tribe of Levi was given the Lord Himself! However, that didn’t mean the Lord didn’t provide for the physical needs of the tribe of Levi. On the contrary, they were amply taken care of through the tithes of the people of Israel. By doing this the Lord was using the remnant (the Levitical priesthood) to teach the whole of Israel a valuable lesson; those who seek the Lord first will always be taken care of.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33, NIV)

It's no different today for those who dedicate themselves to serve the Lord as, "a royal priesthood". By putting Jesus first you'll not only enjoy His presence, but you'll be a recipient of His blessings!

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19, NIV)

Yet, the blessings of the Lord must never become the motivating factor behind your priestly ministry. Those who seek after the blessings of the Lord instead of the Lord Himself are like the multitudes who followed Jesus after He miraculously fed them. In fact, Jesus insinuated that such people were following Him for the wrong reason.

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill." (John 6:26, NIV)

A "blessing seeker" is not the type of person who will fulfill a priestly ministry. A priest must be someone who will be satisfied with nothing less than Jesus Himself; someone who will be thankful for the Lord's material blessings but won't be motivated to follow Jesus for that reason. Jesus wants disciples who want to have a relationship with Him! That is exactly the kind of hungry people the Lord is raising up to serve Him as priests in His Kingdom; those who will serve Him no matter what the conditions, just as long as they get to have a relationship with Him. Such disciples will be willing to go through anything just as long as they can be with Jesus.

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights. (Habakkuk 3:17-19, NIV)

That's why Paul the apostle was able to minister to the Lord and others in such a wonderful way. He didn't follow Jesus with material gain in mind, but with a desire for a divine relationship! Material gain did not motivate Paul, and neither did it hinder him. It was the relationship that Paul had with Jesus that kept him serving in priestly ministry.

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:12-13, NIV)

Paul had the true blessing of a priest, the Lord Himself. Because you are a priest of the Lord, your inheritance is the same!

Pause & Reflect

1. How was the inheritance of the tribe of Levi different from the inheritance of the other tribes of Israel, and what spiritual lesson was the Lord teaching through this arrangement?

2. Some followers of Jesus only desire and seek after the Lord's blessings, while other disciples set their hearts on seeking after the Lord Jesus Himself. What kind of seeker are you?
3. Comment on how the Apostle Paul viewed the Lord's blessings. (Philippians 4:12-13, 19)

The Priestly Ministry Of David

Although David was not a priest in the order of Aaron, he was involved in priestly ministry.

- **David Ate The Bread Of The Presence That Only The Priesthood Was Supposed To Eat**

So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the Lord and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away. (1 Samuel 21:6, NIV)

- **David Wore A Priestly Garment While Bringing The Ark Of The Covenant Into Jerusalem**

Now David was clothed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and as were the musicians, and Kenaniah, who was in charge of the singing of the choirs. David also wore a linen ephod. (1 Chronicles 15:27, NIV)

- **David Also Sacrificed Offerings To The Lord Which Was A Priestly Responsibility**

David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped. (2 Samuel 24:25, NIV)

By what right did David do such things? It wasn't by the Law of Moses that he was given the privilege of carrying out priestly ministry. Instead, David was a living prophecy that pointed to the day when all believers in Christ would be priests unto God. He was a prophetic promise of a new order of priests that would one day be revealed in Christ Jesus; a nation of priests who would serve the Lord in the fullness of the Spirit instead of by the letter of the Law! As Paul said to the Corinthians ...

He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:6, NIV)

In many ways David represented the priestly ministry of all true disciples of Jesus Christ; disciples who feed on Christ as David did the priestly bread; disciples who are dressed with Christ and His anointing as David was clothed with the priestly ephod; disciples who minister to the Lord in worship and on the Lord's behalf minister to others, as David did when he built the altar and sacrificed. Yes, David was prophetically pointing to disciples who would be raised up by Christ Jesus.

It is now time for all true disciples of Jesus Christ to rise up with priestly ministry and fulfill their calling as priests of the Lord. To

minister as only priests can ... with His word, blood, oil, incense, fire, and Name. The nations are waiting for such priests to present them with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The nations are waiting for you!

Pause & Reflect

1. In what way did David prophetically point to the day when all believers in Christ would be priests unto God.
2. What was the spiritual symbolism revealed when David ate the consecrated bread? (1 Samuel 21:6)
3. What was the spiritual symbolism revealed when David put on a priestly ephod? (1 Chronicles 15:27)
4. What was the spiritual symbolism revealed when David offered sacrifices to the Lord? (2 Samuel 24:25)

Chapter Three

Kingly Ministry Revealed

When Jesus Christ came as the Son of man, He also came as the King of Kings; however, not a king as defined and understood by the world. The kingly ministry of Jesus was much different from that which most people expected from a king, yet it was exactly what Jesus needed to accomplish the work He came to do. The same type of ministry is needed today to continue building the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the Lord Jesus is raising up disciples who will do His work in like manner . . . through His kingly ministry.

Yet, the Lord's purpose for involving His disciples in kingly ministry goes far beyond this earthly sphere. He is preparing and training His disciples to rule and reign with Him in eternity. Thus, the lessons to be learned about kingly ministry as seen in the Lord Jesus Christ are vitally important for now as well as eternity.

Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. (2 Timothy 2:11–12a, NIV)

Ministering With The King's Authority

One of the first things that one usually thinks about in reference to the ministry of a king is his authority. Jesus was certainly known for the authority He exercised in ministry.

The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. (Mark 1:22, NIV)

All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What words these are! With authority and power he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!" (Luke 4:36, NIV)

A king in biblical times was one who had the authority to rule over his kingdom. But what exactly is authority? Is it the same thing as power? No, for you can have the power and ability to do something and yet not have the authority, or right, to do it. Jesus has both! He has all power, but He also has been given the authority to use that power.

That was one of the main issues between Jesus and Satan. When Adam sinned he forfeited over to Satan the authority God had given man. Therefore, if man was to ever fulfill his destiny as God originally intended, it was going to take a perfect man to regain the authority that had been lost. That's one reason why God was incarnated as a man. As the "Son of man" Jesus conquered Satan and regained the authority God had originally given to man.

Because of His victory over Satan, Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. His power is unlimited, and so is His authority to use that power in every realm. Thus, Satan lost the

right to use his authority over those who are under the authority of the Lord Jesus!

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18, NIV)

It was not for His own benefit that Jesus came to earth as a man and took back the authority that had been lost by man. He did it so that mankind could once again become what God created mankind to be. The authority that man lost was that which gave him the right to represent God. The Lord originally made man to rule over the earth as His representative. Now, that Jesus has regained the authority that man forfeited, those who submit to Jesus are given the power and authority they need to represent Him.

Yet, such kingly authority is only given to those who are totally submitted to Christ. There is no better example of submission to authority than the example Jesus gave by submitting to His Father. It was because of His submission that Jesus had authority! It's a paradox, but an irrefutable spiritual law ... authority comes through submission.

Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." (John 5:19, NIV)

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has

*not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.”
(John 8:28–29, NIV)*

In the same way that the Father gave Jesus authority to represent Himself, Jesus has delegated that same authority to His disciples. That is why the disciples were able to effectively preach the gospel, heal the sick, and drive out demons! They were acting under the authority of Jesus!

He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. (Mark 3:14–15, NIV)

As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. (Matthew 10:7–8, NIV)

The responsibility of every disciple of Jesus is much like that of an ambassador. Today an ambassador is the highest-ranking official in diplomatic service and is given the responsibility to represent his or her sovereign. Paul recognized that he was representing the Lord Jesus in much the same way that an ambassador represents the country from which he is sent.

We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. (2 Corinthians 5:20, NIV)

The authority given to an ambassador was effective because it was backed by the power of the sovereign to enforce it. In the same way, the kingly authority that Jesus gives those who act as

His ambassadors is not empty or vain. The God-given authority of His ambassadors is backed up by His divine power! That's why it is especially noteworthy that Jesus gave Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19, NIV)

As this verse reveals Jesus gave Peter the power and authority to do God's work, just as Peter had witnessed Jesus do it. That same power and authority is available to all ambassadors of Christ.

Yet remember, an ambassador is one who is in complete submission to his sovereign and only that which is done in the will of the King is supported by the power of the King. Those who try to represent God's authority without submitting to His Kingship won't be backed up by His power, as the seven sons of Sceva found out.

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. (Acts 19:13-16, NIV)

It is time for all disciples of Jesus Christ to rise up with the authority and power of the Lord Jesus to represent Him in His fullness!

Pause & Reflect

1. What is the difference between power and authority?
2. What did Adam do that caused him to forfeit the authority God originally gave him and who acquired it? (Compare Genesis 1:28 with Genesis 3:6, 13-19)
3. What did Jesus have to do to regain the authority God originally gave mankind? (Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:45-47; Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:6-9)
4. What was it that Jesus did as a man that enabled His Heavenly Father to give Him such awesome authority? (John 5:19; John 8:28-29)
5. What is it in the life of a disciple that unites divine authority with divine power?

Ministering With The King's Wisdom

The Lord wants those who represent Him in power and authority to also represent Him in other ways. Three Christlike attributes that are especially needed by all those who are ambassadors of the King are wisdom, humility, and love.

Wisdom is knowing how to properly use knowledge; it is the ability to judge correctly; it is following the best course of action based on true knowledge and understanding. Every king must have wisdom to rule effectively.

However, God's wisdom is very different from that which man considers to be wise.

- **God's Wisdom Is Far Superior To Man's Wisdom**

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. (1 Corinthians 1:25, NIV)

- **God's Wisdom Often Appears Foolish To Man Because It Is Inseparable From The Cross Of Christ**

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. (1 Corinthians 1:18–21, NIV)

- **The Wisdom Of God Always Reveals His Character**

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. (James 3:17, NIV)

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. (James 3:13, NIV)

Therefore, the wisdom that a disciple must have to represent Jesus as King must be received from the Lord Himself! That being the case, how does a disciple receive the Lord's wisdom? It all starts when you begin to have proper fear towards the Lord.

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, ...
(Proverbs 9:10, NIV)*

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom because a person who fears the Lord will think before they act lest they sin against the Lord. That is the beginning of wisdom, but there is more to wisdom than that. There will be times when you'll need specific wisdom for a particular situation. That's why the Lord invites you to ask Him for His wisdom to deal with the matter.

For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:6, NIV)

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (James 1:5-6, NIV)

David is an excellent example of a wise king. His understanding of the Lord and His ways was the basis of his wisdom. The fear of God also helped David make wise choices as seen in his refusal to kill King Saul who was God's anointed. David's wisdom as a ruler was probably what helped influence his son Solomon to ask the Lord for wisdom when he became king of Israel.

When Solomon became king he recognized that he had the authority and power to rule Israel, but that he lacked the wisdom to do so. Therefore, he asked the Lord to give him wisdom so that he could effectively lead and govern God's people. The Lord so graciously answered Solomon's prayer that he became one of the wisest men to ever live and his reputation for being wise spread throughout the world.

God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. ... From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom. (1 Kings 4:29-30, 34, NIV)

Although Solomon gained knowledge through studying many different things, he became wise because he sought for wisdom from the Lord. That wisdom is still available to those who seek it, for it is found in Christ Jesus!

Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2b-3, NIV)

If you're going to represent King Jesus, you'll need His wisdom to do so. Therefore, spend time in the presence of Jesus and seek His wisdom. Study God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to apply it to your life. Allow the love of God and the fear of God to grow in your heart. That is the true path to becoming a wise and competent ambassador of the King!

See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." (Deuteronomy 4:5-6, NIV)

Pause & Reflect

1. Define wisdom.
2. How does God's wisdom differ from man's wisdom? (1 Corinthians 1:18-21; 1 Corinthians 1:25; James 3:17)
3. Why is the "fear of the Lord" the beginning of wisdom? (Proverbs 9:10, NIV)
4. What must a disciple of Christ do to receive the Lord's wisdom? (Deuteronomy 4:5-6; Proverbs 2:6; Colossians 2:2b-3; James 1:5-6)

Ministering With The King's Humility

One does not often think of humility as a necessary attribute to represent a king properly. Yet, in God's Kingdom this is a highly regarded trait and essential in the life of every disciple of Jesus Christ. For without humility the Lord cannot and will not use you to your full potential. It is only the humble who are exalted by God.

Wisdom's instruction is to fear the Lord, and humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 15:33, NIV)

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:10, NIV)

David was a humble king. He didn't seek the throne, the throne sought him! He was humble about his accomplishments and abilities. Even as a young man, when he was used by the Lord to defeat Goliath and later became a leader in King Saul's army, he didn't become prideful. That is one of the reasons the Lord was able to use David in such a powerful way ... he continued to be humble as the Lord blessed him. In fact, when King Saul requested David to become his son-in-law David's response was one of astonishment because of his humble attitude towards himself.

But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?" ... "Do you think it is a small matter to become the king's son-in-law? I'm only a poor man and little known." (1 Samuel 18:18, 23b, NIV)

Even after David became King of Israel and the Lord promised him an everlasting dynasty (which is fulfilled in Jesus Christ) his humble attitude remained the same.

"This is what the Lord Almighty says: ... 'Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.'" ... Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said: "Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?" (2 Samuel 7:8, 16, 18, NIV)

David was also humble in the way that he worshipped the Lord. He wasn't worried about what others thought of him, he was only concerned about giving the Lord his best. Therefore, he was free to worship the Lord with abandonment!

Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, ... When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" ... David said to Michal, ... "I will celebrate before the Lord. ... I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes." (2 Samuel 6:14, 20, 21, 22, NIV)

But most important, David was open to correction and humbled himself in regard to his own shortcomings and sin.

Then Nathan said to David, ... "Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites." ... Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." (2 Samuel 12:7, 9, 13, NIV)

On the other hand, King Saul had been the exact opposite. He started out serving the Lord with humility, but quickly gave in to pride when the Lord raised him up as the leader of His people.

Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal." ... Samuel said, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel." (1 Samuel 15:12, 17, NIV)

There is so much that the Lord Jesus desires to do through His disciples, but pride too often gets in the way. It certainly got in the way of the angel, Lucifer, who allowed himself to become so prideful that he sought to overthrow God and take over His throne!

You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:13-14, NIV)

That is why every disciple that desires to represent Jesus with His Kingly authority must be humble. The more that the Lord uses you the more you will be tempted to think highly of yourself, and once pride takes hold of your life it will slowly destroy you.

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18, NIV)

However, true humility makes you a prime candidate to be used by God. Look at how the Lord was able to use Moses who was more humble than anyone else during his lifetime. Then there is Jesus! There is no greater humility than that which is found in Him.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, (Matthew 11:29, NIV)

That is why every disciple must learn humility at the feet of Jesus. In Jesus you learn how to be used by God without becoming prideful. Therefore, come to Jesus and learn from Him. He wants to impart into you the same attitude towards life and ministry that He had as the “Son of man”.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:5–8, NIV)

Jesus was able to minister as He did without getting prideful partly because of His attitude towards Himself and those around Him. He knew that He was God, but He was willing to fulfill the role of a servant. Therefore, if you are going to be able to minister like Christ, without getting prideful, you must be willing to do the same ... view yourself in light of how Christ viewed Himself, and view others in light of how Christ views them.

Concerning the view Jesus had of Himself: even though Jesus knew that He was the Son of God, He also knew that His mission on earth was to serve and to save. Jesus wasn't motivated by pride that would have driven Him to prove to others His importance. He knew who He was and that was enough! Thus, Jesus was able to be a servant. As His representative, you must have the same

attitude. You must know that you are a child of God who has been specifically called by God to represent Him. Yet, your ministry must be carried out with the heart of a humble servant!

As far as Jesus' view towards others: He was able to serve others, no matter who they were, because He viewed them as worthy of His ministry! His humility caused Him to be approachable, even by those whom society deemed unworthy of His attention.

*While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.
(Mark 2:15, NIV)*

The needy sensed the humility of Jesus and thus were drawn to Him and receptive of His ministry.

In a very real way Jesus viewed Himself as a willing sacrifice ready to give Himself to the Father on behalf of others. That same type of humble attitude is what Jesus expects out of those He calls to be His Kingly representatives.

Pause & Reflect

1. Why is humility a necessary quality that must be found in every disciple of Jesus Christ?
2. Give a few examples of how humility was found in the life of David.
3. Although King Saul started out as a humble man, he ended up becoming a slave to his pride. Give some examples of how pride was exemplified in King Saul's life and how it eventually led to his destruction. (1 Samuel 15:12, 17; 18:6-8)

4. Many Bible scholars believe that Isaiah 14:13-14 is not only a revelation concerning the king of Babylon but also of Satan since Jesus referred to this passage in reference to Satan's downfall in Luke 10:18. Read these passages and comment on what caused Satan's downfall.
5. Read Philippians 2:5-8 and comment on how Jesus exemplified humility.
6. Give several examples from the Gospels of how humility was seen in the life of Jesus.
7. The more that God uses you for His glory the more that Satan will tempt you to become prideful. What must you do to stay humble and at the same time be mightily used by God? (Matthew 11:29)

Ministering With The King's Love

While authority, wisdom and humility are necessary for a king to establish his kingdom, it will be because of his love that his position of leadership is secure.

Love and faithfulness keep a king safe; through love his throne is made secure. (Proverbs 20:28, NIV)

To put it another way, many people are drawn to ministers who are highly anointed. Or they might be drawn to them because their teaching is full of wisdom. They might even be drawn by the humility of their leadership that makes them accessible. Yet, those who stay with a minister and become trusted disciples will usually do so because they feel loved.

If there is one attribute that stands out in the life and ministry of Jesus, it can be summed up in His love! Jesus showed mankind

how to love God and how to love others. What is so remarkable is that Jesus loved everybody. His love wasn't reserved for those who were thought to be the best and the greatest. He even loved those who hated Him!

While the authority, wisdom, and humility of Jesus may have motivated His disciples to follow Him initially, that would not have been enough to keep them on the path that eventually took Jesus to the cross. It took the love of Jesus to make them true disciples! It took His love to motivate them to submit to His authority, listen to His wisdom, and follow His example of humility. When the disciples forsook Jesus at His time of crucifixion, it wasn't His authority, wisdom, and humility alone that brought them back, it was His love! The love of God expressed through the forgiveness of Jesus made the way for the disciples once more! That's why leadership must lead with the love of Jesus, for no matter how anointed, wise, or humble leadership may be, it will be their love that will cause disciples who are being prepared for ministry to continue to follow them.

It is that kind of love that you are called to represent. Authority, wisdom, and humility alone aren't enough for you to fulfill your destiny. It takes love to build the Kingdom of God. Those who move spiritual mountains with divine authority, speak words of wisdom, and humbly serve others will achieve nothing of eternal worth in the Kingdom of God if they do it without love. Even your prophetic and priestly ministry will be worthless without love.

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is

kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (1 Corinthians 13:1-7, NIV)

Understanding this makes the gospel very simple. The Lord wants you to love God and your fellow man with the love that is revealed in Jesus Christ.

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (Matthew 22:37-39, NIV)

Love is what the world is looking for and what the Lord wants to reveal through His disciples. That's one reason why the Lord emphasized the need for His followers to love one another. Like nothing else, love reveals a genuine disciple of Jesus.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35, NIV)

Therefore, your prophetic, priestly, and kingly ministry will only be effective to the degree that you minister in love. For only then will the Lord be truly represented.

Pause & Reflect

1. What does Proverbs 20:28 (NIV) mean when it says, “Love and faithfulness keep a king safe; through love his throne is made secure.”
2. Give an example of how Jesus showed the love of God to His twelve disciples.
3. In 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 the Apostle Paul made it clear that miraculous ministry, even sacrificial ministry, is not acceptable if it is done without love. Why is love so important in the life and ministry of a disciple who represents King Jesus?

Ministering With The King As A Warrior

One of the primary responsibilities of a king was to defend his kingdom. Therefore, it was necessary for every king to have an army that was equipped and prepared to fight in battle. As a disciple of Jesus, you have been called to be a part of His army and to fight beside Him in battle. In other words, you are called to be one of the King’s warriors!

It is interesting to note that David, a man after God’s own heart, was a man of war.

• David Was Called To Be A Warrior

David was called by God to be a warrior. He was called to be a true representative of the Lord, who is Himself a mighty warrior!

The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name. (Exodus 15:3, NIV)

- **David Was Prepared To Be A Warrior**

David was also prepared by God to be a warrior. From his early years as a shepherd to his first years as a leader in Saul's army, the Lord was preparing David for the time that he would lead Israel in battle.

And David said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!" (1 Samuel 17:37, ESV)

- **David Was Revealed As A Warrior**

The Lord revealed David to be a great warrior and leader of warriors!

Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. (1 Samuel 18:5, NIV)

Unfortunately, later on in his life David ceased to function as a warrior and it opened up the door to his downfall. Look what happened when David stopped going out to war!

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw

*a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ...
(2 Samuel 11:1-2, NIV)*

There is a powerful lesson to be learned from this. The moment a disciple ceases to fight the enemy for himself, the enemy is given an unnecessary advantage and will attack the disciple when he least expects it and isn't prepared! That's exactly what happened to David when he ceased leading his men in battle. When David stopped fighting he fell into the enemy's trap and rebelled against the Lord. It didn't matter that David had been called, prepared, and revealed as a powerful warrior in the past, or that the authority of the Lord had been given to him to successfully attack and defeat the Lord's enemies. David had ceased to fight the enemy and was thus made vulnerable.

Nevertheless, David is still regarded as one of the most important warrior kings in Israel's history. Yet, as great a warrior king as David was in his prime, his example was frail in comparison to the Lord Jesus Christ who was called, prepared, and revealed as the warrior King who came to destroy the devil's work!

*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy
the devil's work. (1 John 3:8, NIV)*

As a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, you must join Him in His battle against the devil's work. Therefore, you must be prepared. You have already been given the authority of the Lord to defeat the enemy in battle, but you must learn how to properly use it. Such preparation for spiritual warfare is hinted at in Psalm 144:1.

*Praise be to the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands
for war, my fingers for battle. (Psalm 144:1, NIV)*

The warfare the Lord is calling you to is not a battle against people, nor is it a battle against the kingdoms of this world. It is a battle against the spiritual forces of evil that nurture and support the evil desires of men. That is why the power and authority the Lord gives you to battle with are for use against Satan and his army, not against mankind and his flesh.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12, NIV)

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (2 Corinthians 10:3-4, NIV)

The place of battle is in the spiritual realm, therefore the means of carrying out the battle is through prayer. Although prayer is primarily a means of communicating with the Lord, there are times that the Lord will use you in prayer to battle and defeat the works of the enemy. One example of this is Daniel who interceded for twenty-one days to break through a demonic stronghold in the spiritual realm.

Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me,

*because I was detained there with the king of Persia.
(Daniel 10:12–13, NIV)*

Jesus is raising up disciples to join Him in battle against the enemy. He has called you and He is now preparing you to be an effective vessel of His power and authority. Get ready, for the day is soon coming when those who have answered the Lord's call to join Him in battle will be revealed with Him in His last battle against Satan!

They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers. (Revelation 17:14, NIV)

Pause & Reflect

1. David was called, prepared, and revealed by God to be a mighty warrior. What happened when King David ceased to function as a warrior? (2 Samuel 11)
2. Read 1 John 3:8 and comment on how Jesus Christ is the supreme example of what it means to be a warrior in God's Kingdom.
3. Read and give your thoughts on what Psalm 144:1 teaches concerning spiritual warfare.
4. What kind of warfare is every disciple of Jesus Christ called to engage in? (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:12-18)
5. What does Revelation 17:14 reveal about the disciples who fight alongside Jesus Christ?

Ministering With The King As A Builder

As a follower of Jesus Christ, you have also been called to work with Him in building His Kingdom. The enemy knows that he no longer has any legal right to rule on the earth, yet he continues to occupy the land and build his kingdom of darkness. Therefore, the Lord will use you to tear down the enemies spiritual kingdom in much the same way as He used the prophet Jeremiah.

See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant. (Jeremiah 1:10, NIV)

However, it is never enough to just tear down the kingdom of the enemy. You must also build the Lord's Kingdom! That is one of the main reasons why the Lord has granted His disciples the use of His power and authority. Through prayer you are able to legally enforce the will of God over the kingdom of Satan and start building the Kingdom of God! In fact, that is one of the first things Jesus instructed His disciples to pray about.

This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9-10, NIV)

Through prayer you will be able to learn the will and strategy of the Lord concerning His Kingdom, and how He wants you to work with Him in building it. He then empowers you and grants you the use of His authority! With such delegated authority you are able to enforce the will of God, overcome the kingdom of darkness, and effectively build God's Kingdom. In fact, representing the

King's authority to build His Kingdom is implied in the command Jesus gave His disciples when He told them to, "go and make disciples of all nations." Notice that this command was preceded by the proclamation that Jesus has, "all authority in heaven and on earth". That means, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, you are being backed by His power and authority to build His Kingdom by making disciples of all nations!

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ..." (Matthew 28:18-19, NIV)

The Lord is igniting a new generation of disciples! Christlike disciples whom God has called, prepared, and will use to reveal the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in awesome ways! I pray that you will heed the call of Jesus and embrace your time of preparation, for the Lord desires to use you in ways that you can't even imagine.

"What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"— the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10, NIV)

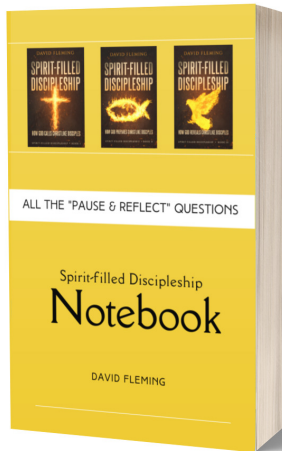
Pause & Reflect

1. Compare the calling that God gave Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:10) with the Lord's command for us to pray, "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10, NIV)

2. Comment on the importance of prayer in building God's Kingdom and making disciples of all nations for Jesus.
3. Explain the importance of Jesus' proclamation in Matthew 28:18 and how it became the basis of His command in Matthew 28:19.
4. As a disciple of Jesus Christ how does Matthew 28:18-19 affect your life today?

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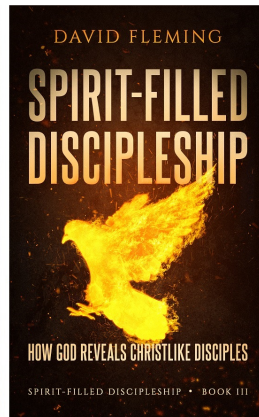
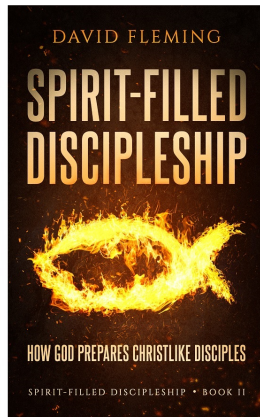
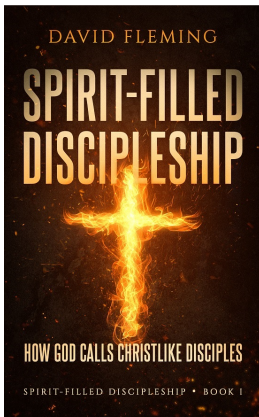
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