

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Part 1
Bill Click

OBSTACLES TO RECEIVING & APPLYING REVELATION

When we think of receiving and applying strategy from God, we are talking about illumination or revelation. And when defining these, we usually begin with accepted doctrines of the Church. Meaning, God reveals Himself through Scripture, His voice (the Holy Spirit), visions, dreams, and various types of prophetic utterances. But within those categories, however, there are probably as many ways of understanding how God personally leads us as there are human personalities.

We have a tendency to make everything cut and dried; we want all that we accomplish to be a seamless process that goes uninterrupted, without hindrance and unopposed. These next few messages will address that fallacy of expectation, which often becomes a great weakness for Christians in general and leaders in particular. What I will endeavoring to emphasize is that the more truly apostolic or prophetic one is, the quest for Divine guidance should eventually come to be seen as an event or process which results in being encountered by God in ways which could neither be predicted nor desired.

In the same way that *"we know not how to pray as we ought,"* we likewise do not know what the Head of the Church is calling for without it being revealed to us (Ro.8:26, 14). So while coming into the presence of the Lord for guidance we can quickly become aware of the extent to which we are not in control of the conversation. In fact, I believe that we should come to see that by bringing our concern about our circumstance to God first and foremost (instead of our "self's"), we are going to be prevented from arriving at the destination we sought.

In the midst of seeming interrupted by God changing the subject, or hindered because we have not received what we are after, or seemingly opposed by all else that stands in the way, it is what the Lord is not addressing that we should begin to pay attention to. Meaning, that by seeing our "need to lead," control outcomes of our efforts or produce results as more important than our need to follow Him, we show ourselves to be undisciplined in heart matters that are more important to God than they are to us. Of course, this should not be the case.

Such times or seasons reveal that there are issues the Lord wants to work with us on; there are ways we need to be more concerned with knowing and pleasing Him than knowing what to do or how to produce it. Therefore, key issues that will determine the destiny of Christ's people are intimacy and wholeness versus activity and productivity, desiring for more or different than His desire for us, and/or seeking to be in control of His power rather than be controlled by His Spirit.

As we begin to truly walk with Christ, we should become more aware of the extent to which we have been enlisting Him to walk with us than attempt to walk with Him. To recognize this is to begin to authentically mature. As we develop and become more unified in spirit, soul and body with the Father, Son & Spirit, we will accomplish much more than just take on His Presence. We will have received ongoing engagement with mind as well (1Cor.2:16). Moreover, we will have acquired His Heart.

“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you” (Jn.16:7-15)

It is by this oneness with Christ that we begin to see as He sees. Arriving at this stage of our development, the process of receiving guidance from the Lord shortens in its elapsed time, because the obstacle of our own understanding and expectation has been eliminated. Not only that, but we experience increased joy and fulfillment as well as greater fruitfulness in our relationship with Him. By beginning to dialog with the Lord on His terms, we leave behind the techniques and aids that were originally thought to help us grow into a relationship with Him. Instead, confidence coming through intimacy fulfills us in Him. The Lord’s own confidence of us is felt within us, and we become assured of His constant activity within us.

THE OBSTACLES MUST BE REMOVED

Inside many of us, however, there are spiritual “giants” resisting our advance into the “land” of this personal spiritual maturity and full restoration God has promised (Nu.13). It is not sufficient to assume that we are mature (or even maturing) just because we have been entrusted with leading those who seem less mature than we (2Cor.10:12). Feeding others, yet feeling “stuck” ourselves, these “ites” of personal, internal hindrance and opposition will not only impair our walk with God, they can and often will keep us blocked from even receiving revelation of a new apostolic purpose. At the very least these “ites” will keep us double minded and unable to retain, develop or function in what is revealed to us. When blocked, by either a lack of revelation, or due to the obstructions of wrong priority or lack of ability to self-correct by the Spirit, we are not able to proceed. These symptoms of lacking true intimacy prevent us from being led and leading.

So in these instances, we instead just “keep at it.” But if those committed to us do make progress and see some increase, they rapidly approach our “level.” We must then begin to realize we have increasingly little to offer them. This is seen by how many believers leave churches; how many Gifts of Christ leave denominations, fellowships and networks which cover them because they feel they have received all that was available and yet there is still “more.”

The obstructions of wrong priority and/or lack of ability to self-correct by the Spirit will keep from being able to address what’s most important or be capable of imparting or activating it. In these instances a new apostolic purpose will always remain un-established, even if it has been received.

STRESSED-OUT LIVING REVEALS AN EVEN GREATER NEED

During the last several years I have seen one issue keep more people bound than any ever before. It is not a new enemy strategy, but instead one that I have become increasingly aware of. It thrives when and where it should never even exist. All apostolic/prophetic people must address it. The stronghold I’m speaking of manifests itself in stress, but the matrix which facilitates is comprised by wrong priorities, false responsibility and a performance orientation. It is a paradox. It results in a mask which projects the appearance of much being accomplished. But actually, precious little is being done which God couldn’t do much more effectively without our involvement. Operating as a vicious cycle, the spiritual root is a deep unbelief in the basics of the Word of God concerning His love, oversight, and providential care for usB both personally and in ministry. Let me explain more fully.

This malady manifests in several different (& sometimes simultaneous) ways. It can be evidenced with those who constantly operate in a ‘crisis-mode.’ It is also seen in those who constantly hurry. It also thrives within those who are ‘last minute’ and/or under-prepared for everything. Some who manifest this stronghold struggle to keep their concentration on the task at hand and/or do not have control of their daily lives and schedules by the Spirit of God. Yet others are seemingly oblivious of the ways their behaviors are outside the boundaries of God’s for them. Some make it a practice to not have the time of day for anything or anyone that doesn’t directly or obviously benefit them. Many are so hyperactive it is extremely difficult to do anything other than be silent before them. You couldn’t possibly keep pace with their verbal delivery, but if you could they would not be listening to you, because they would be thinking of what they were going to say nextB even as you began to speak. Some are wound so tightly that they are given to sudden eruptions of negative emotions which are unwarranted by what triggers them. These are some examples of what I’m attempting to illustrate.

We’ve called these traits rudeness, immaturity, character defect, and the like, but it goes much deeper. This is most serious, because who we are is revealed by what we manifest and it’s so apparent to many. As leaders, whatever is out of

order within us gets not only imparted to others, it becomes the standard by which what is acceptable and worthy of promotion become defined. But it's not only our witness that is at stake. Many are revealing the extent to which they do not walk with God, and while the needs are obvious and evident to so many, it's as though they themselves are totally oblivious to them (1Tim.5:24-25).

Stress is killing people . . . literally. And sadly, the stress levels of those with the gifts of Christ "*sent*" and "*set*" into ministry often seem to be not less, but much more than the world which surrounds them (Ro.10:16; 1Cor.12:27). But the reasons for the stresses are not God's call. Instead, these are effects or impacts stemming from wrong priorities which are the result of false responsibility, flowing from a performance orientation that has been allowed to take over the inner man. TragicallyB both for us and those to whom we are calledB the wrong priority is often exercised when it comes to ministry. We tend to succumb to the cries of people and fail to hear and heed the cries of God within us. Why? Because we have wrong beliefs about what it means to serve God.

SHIFTING FROM RELIGIOUS WORK TO RIGHTEOUS FAITH

A few years ago I heard myself say during a message "we do not get into relationship with Christ through the church, but rather we get into relationship with the church through Christ." Although the church is very often the agent of God's work, the difference between coming in via the gate of man and entering through the gate of Jesus Christ is the difference between receiving the spirit of religion versus receiving the Spirit of God (Gal.1:6-10; 2Cor.11:3-6). Religiously, we work at everything to produce an outcome. In relationship, we respond to God's release of faith through His Word by trust and respond to His direction.

This has every implication for the person of ministry. It means that if we are to be of any benefit to others, it can only be the result of our first having been with God. It also means that if others are to receive the benefit of what we have been given by God to add to them, they also must have first been with God.

Years ago, speaking with the first apostle that I served under, I said: "I can't help the people if they haven't connected with God. If they haven't, all I can do is help them connect with God." Granted, there are times when even connecting others with God is a true spiritual feat, but Gifts of Christ have been given to equip, which goes far beyond simply reconciling. Truth told, however, may confess that much of what they do is help people "get the wheels back on." To settle for this type of life with God is to settle for being "serviced" by facilitative ministry. To minister in this way is to relinquish all opportunity to equip and advance others by "servicing" them. But this is the way it will go for those who are blocked by either a lack of revelation, or due to the obstructions of wrong priority or lack of ability to self-correct by the Spirit. Either way, they are not able to proceed. These symptoms prevent us from being led and leading.

We are warned that the *“form”* of Godliness (it=s appearance, intellectual content & deceptive ability to bond people to it) will become increasingly evident as time goes on (2Ti.3:1-9). It’s time that everyone insure they are not propagating apostasy by believing and modeling themselves as indispensable to people and thus equating it with being faithful to (& more Spiritual with) God. The placebos of appearance, being revered, popular and sought for only deepen the tendency within those ministering this way to be deceived about what’s most important. Without change at the heart level, the reinforcements of approval, appreciation and idolatry which those enthralled by works provide will only deepen the denial concerning the lack of true a new apostolic purpose within those of us who are “working for God.” Unless religious denial is broken and true intimacy of the Spirit is developed, there will be no change.