



## Fulfilling God's Purpose for your Life (part 7) Sunday May 14, 2006

### UNDERSTANDING GOD'S PREPARATION PROCESS

God progressively prepares those whom He uses.

#### 3.1. What Does God Want to Accomplish Through the Preparation Process?

2 Timothy 2:19-21

<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."<sup>20</sup> But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.<sup>21</sup> Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

- God wants to make you a vessel (Gr. = implement, equipment) of honor (Gr. = value, esteem, dignity).
- God wants you to be sanctified, (Gr. = purified, made holy) set apart for Him.
- God wants you to become fit (Gr. = useful, profitable, suitable) for the Master's use.
- God wants you to become prepared (Gr. = made ready) for every good work.

God's preparation process is continual. In each phase of life, He is preparing you for the next.

We must learn to cooperate and work with God through the preparation process.

#### Examples from Scripture:

##### **Moses (Acts 7:20-34)**

- God supernaturally arranged for Moses to be taught and trained in Pharaoh's palace. This was God's 'seed of spiritual destiny' in Moses' life (Acts 7:22). These were Moses' initial preparation and positioning for his heavenly purpose.
- At the age of 40, Moses began to understand his divine purpose. However, he made the mistake of trying to accomplish it through his own methods.
- Every time we attempt to do something in our own ability—we further delay the unfolding of God's plan. Moses attempted to go at it all by himself and it only delayed things by 40 years!
- Moses had to spend 40 long years in the wilderness (Acts 7:29,30; Exodus 2:15,23), simply because he had to wait for the king whom he had angered, to die.
- At the age of 80, Moses resumed his divine mission.
- For the next 40 years, he went about carrying out his life's purpose.

##### **David**

- David was anointed to be king while a teenage boy. Let us say he was 17 years of age at this time.
- He had his initial training taking care of his father's sheep. It must have been during this time that he developed his skill in music, killed the lion and bear, and gained a good reputation among the people of Israel.
- He had initial success when he killed Goliath and became a national hero.
- The tide turned and David had to run for his life when King Saul decided to kill him.
- The next 5-6 years David lived like a vagabond (1 Samuel 22:1,2). The man who was anointed to be king spent some time in caves!
- However, it was during this time that God sent men who joined David and later became important captains in his mighty army!
- When David was about 23 years old, he became king of Judah (2 Samuel 2:1-4).
- David was 30 years old when he was finally made king over all Israel and Judah (2 Samuel 5:4,5). He then reigned for 33 years as king.
- About 13 years of preparation—from the time of his 'calling' by the prophet Samuel to when he was 'commissioned' to step in to his call.

##### **Paul**

- Paul must have been about 33 years of age when he had his encounter on the Damascus road with the Lord Jesus. It took that many years to be trained.
- At the time of his encounter, the Lord Jesus revealed his calling to be a light to the Gentiles, an apostle of the faith.



- Paul initially spent 3 years in Damascus and Arabia (Galatians 1:16,17; Acts 9:19–25). People tried to kill him in Damascus and so he fled into Arabia and then returned later. It must have been during this time that he received much of the revelation of the Gospel which he preached.
- After this, he visited Jerusalem for 15 days (Galatians 1:18; Acts 9:26–30) during which time he preached boldly. But once again people tried to kill him and he left for Tarsus.
- He then spent about 13 years in the regions of Tarsus, Syria and Cilicia (Galatians 1:21–24; 2:1).
- Toward the end of these 13 years, Barnabas comes to Tarsus and brought Saul to Antioch (Acts 11:25,26).
- Paul then spent a whole year teaching in the church at Antioch.
- At the end of this year, Paul makes his second trip to Jerusalem along with Barnabas to carry relief to those in the middle of a famine (Acts 11:29,30). So he goes to Jerusalem after a gap of 14 years (Galatians 2:1).
- At this point, about 17 years had elapsed since his meeting with the Lord on the road to Damascus. Paul must have been about 50 years old at this time.
- Nothing much is recorded about the first 17 years of Paul's Christian life and walk with God. Of course we know that Paul preached and taught during this time. We know that he received revelation and understanding of the mysteries of God. However, nothing much is recorded of what he did and preached. These are referred to as the 'silent years' of Paul's life. These, in addition to His prior training under Judaism formed part of his training.
- Finally in Acts 13, after 17 years, Paul is called into his first missionary journey with Barnabas (Acts 13:1–4).
- In Acts 14:14, Paul along with Barnabas is referred to as an apostle for the first time.

It was about 17 years after his encounter with the Lord that Paul actually stepped into his apostolic ministry. Seventeen years of preparation and training even for Apostle Paul! God is not in a hurry!!

As you go through God's preparation process, you will discover the hidden talents, gifts and callings in your life.

Matthew 10:26,27

<sup>26</sup> Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. <sup>27</sup> "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.

Luke 6:40

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.

The preparation that God takes you through will bring about:

- Godly character.
- Maturity in all areas.

### 3.1.1. Godly character

2 Timothy 2:19–21

<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."<sup>20</sup> But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.<sup>21</sup> Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

Matthew 9:17

Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

- God is more interested in our character, than in our gifts.
- Your gift can take you where your character cannot keep you.
- Your character is the foundation upon which your life is built.
- Gifts and anointing are given from heaven, but character is built on earth.

Psalm 51:6

Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

- There is more to Christian life than saying the right things and going through the right motions. God is looking for godly character.



### 3.1.2. Maturity in all areas

Ephesians 4:11-16

<sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

<sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; <sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, <sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

- Maturity in our personal walk with God. Obedience in all areas.
- Maturity in our relationships with people.
- Maturity in our gifts and callings.

Matthew 10:16,17

<sup>16</sup> Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

<sup>17</sup> But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

- Your growth in godly character and maturity is progressive.
- Each time you step into a new level of obedience—a new level of godliness, a new level of maturity—you will find a new level of God's anointing on your life.
- The things you learn today will prepare you for tomorrow. God will prepare you to fulfil His purposes.

### 3.2. How Does God Prepare Us?

#### 3.2.1. The Word

2 Timothy 3:16,17

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

#### 3.2.2. The Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

#### 3.2.3. Other people

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

- Associate with people who are doing the kind of things you want to be doing.

#### 3.2.4. Life's experiences

- There are lessons to learn both in the good times and in the bad times of life.

Romans 5:3,4

<sup>3</sup> And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

James 1:2-4

<sup>2</sup> My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Hebrews 5:8,9



<sup>8</sup> Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. <sup>9</sup> And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

- Life's experiences will teach you lessons you cannot learn elsewhere.
- You cannot deny a man with experience.

### 3.3. Things to Keep in Mind as You Go Through God's Preparation Process

#### 3.3.1. We must learn to cooperate and work with God through the preparation process

1 Corinthians 3:9

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.

#### 3.3.2. Your attitude matters

#### 3.3.3. Consistency is where the power is

1 Timothy 4:15

Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

#### 3.3.4. As you are faithful in the little things, God will promote you to the next

Matthew 25:23

His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

#### 3.3.5. Beware of complacency. Allow God to stretch you

Philippians 3:12

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

#### 3.3.6. Preparation time is never wasted time. The greater the calling, the greater the preparation

#### 3.3.7. Do not be hasty. Let each preparation season run its full course

Proverbs 21: 5

The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, but those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty.

Examples: Moses, David and Paul.

#### 3.3.8. Stay within your area of calling and gifting. Do not try to become something God did not design you to become.



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