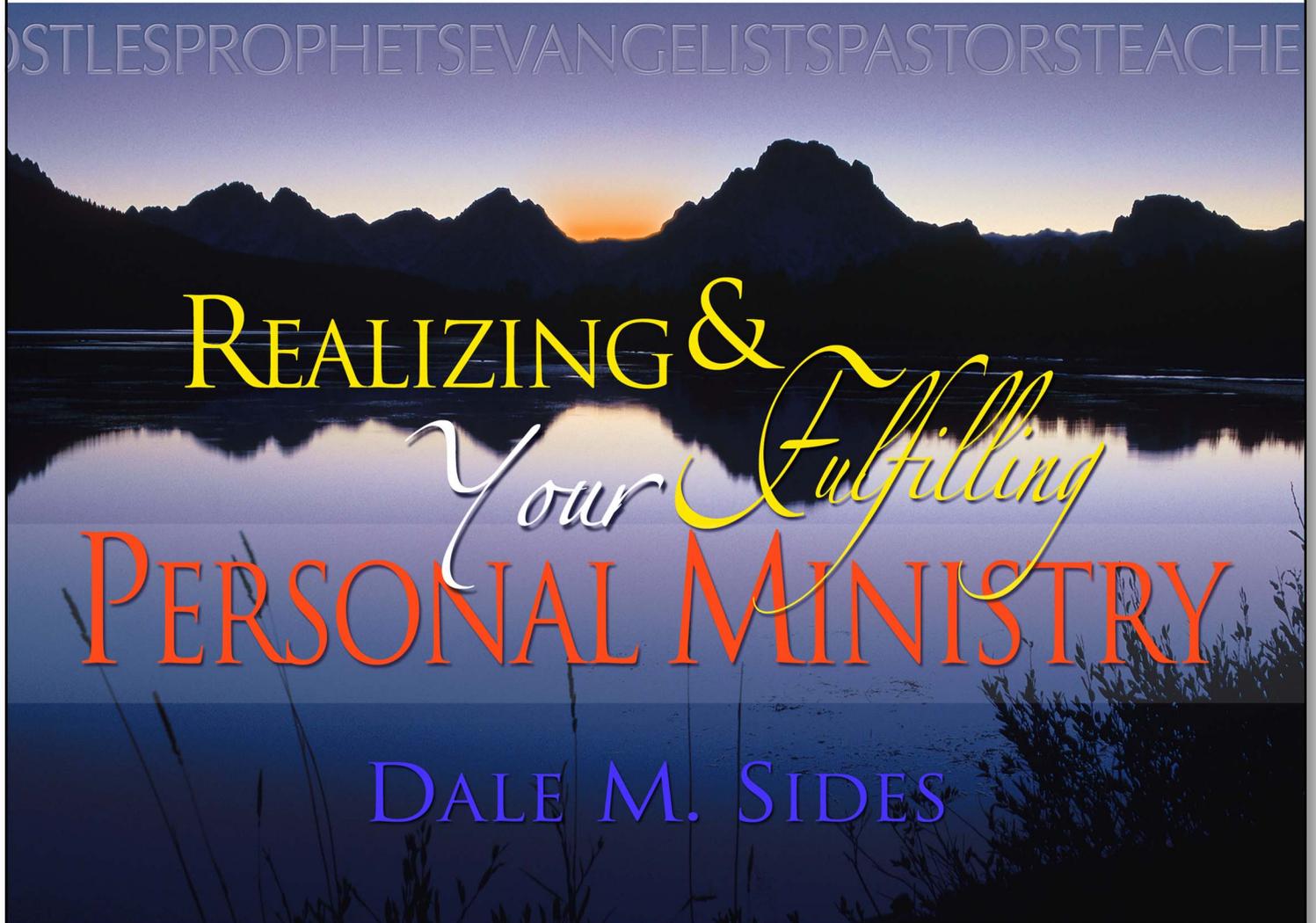


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REALIZING &
Your Fulfilling
PERSONAL MINISTRY

DALE M. SIDES

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E-book

Realizing
and
Fulfilling
Your Personal Ministry

Dale M. Sides

The scriptures used throughout this study are quoted from the New King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted. Any explanatory insertions by the author within a verse are enclosed in brackets []. Any boldfaced words indicate the author's emphasis.

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INTRODUCTION

All of us, at least once in our lives, have stopped to wonder, ponder, and pray about the enigma of, “Who am I, and why am I here?”

This two-part question has been spiritually programmed within us by our Creator and cries out, demanding an answer. The answer to both parts of this question is found only within Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life, and He alone holds the answer to our identity and purpose.

*Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life.** No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* John 14:6

For a Christian, the answer to the first question, “Who am I?” is very simple and straightforward: *You are a child of God through Jesus Christ.* God the Father sent Jesus into the world to find you, and only when your spirit is reconciled to your Father and Creator will the unscratchable itch in your spirit be soothed.

The answer to the second part of the question, “Why am I here?” is just as simple and straightforward: *You have a God-given destiny to fulfill.* That destiny lays only within the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

*For whom He foreknew, **He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,** that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.* Romans 8:29

You were called by God before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4–5) and pre-placed in God’s timetable to come to the earth and fulfill your calling and destiny. Everyone’s heart burns within them to realize and fulfill their own individual calling and destiny. That personal calling and destiny will be your ministry of service in the body of Christ.

The goal of this book is to help you realize and then fulfill that destiny or ministry. *Until you realize your ministry and calling, **stop** and do not go any further in your quest for spiritual knowledge and advancement.* You may be involved in a wonderful program and a scintillating study, but as exciting as it is, you could be just spinning your wheels. Since there is one fixed point of accomplishment for you to strive toward to fulfill your destiny, you may actually, in your zeal to learn and be productive, be heading away from your main purpose.

There is an unforgettable incident that stands out in my mind that occurred when I was teaching these truths in Colombia, South America. Seated in front of me were over 200 home group leaders who were on fire for God with an unquenchable zeal to serve. Ninety percent of these home group leaders had only been saved (had the first question

answered) for less than two years. Their hunger for the things of God was drawing the Word of God out of me.

On the front row was a big, handsome, smiling man who appeared to be totally wrapped up in the material I was teaching. I asked him, “How would you like to show up at the judgment seat of Christ and have Jesus say to you, ‘You worked hard, and I know it. I know your works (Revelation 2 and 3). You have plenty of them and you have worked very hard’?”

His response was an even broader smile as he anticipated standing fulfilled and successful before the Lord. I continued, “How will you feel if He finishes His statement with, ‘The only problem is that you did the wrong thing’?” This man’s mouth dropped open, and rather than just a gasp of realization, his eyes began to fill with tears. Being in the middle of a teaching session, I honestly did not anticipate such a response. In broken English he cried out, “I hurt because I do not want to disappoint my Lord.”

Not only is fulfilling your destiny the reason God created you, it is the only thing that will scratch your unsatisfied itch. It also is what will please the Lord.

Realizing your God-ordained ministry is a relatively easy thing to do. Fulfilling is not as easy, because it will take a lifetime of focused learning, directed effort, and redirected headings. One thing is definite: *you cannot fulfill your destiny and ministry before knowing what it is.*

I originally started this quest to help teens realize their purpose and function so that they could skip the futile and unnecessary trips to “Stupidville” that so many young people seem to take. However, after working with this age group for a number of years, I made the observation that Stupidville was also filled with many of their elders as well. Some of these “mature” adults actually had taken up residence there and seemed quite content with the place. (If you’re wondering where Stupidville is, it is anyplace outside of the will of God.) **Join me in moving out of Stupidville by realizing and fulfilling your personal ministry.**

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.** For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. **Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.***

Romans 12:1–6

Romans 12:1–6, loosely paraphrased, may be summarized by saying:

Leave Stupidville and instead use your body in your specific proper way by renewing your mind to fulfill the perfect will of God. You have a measure of faith given to you, and only to you, to fulfill a particular function in the body of Christ. Only you can do it, so get busy.

You can only *realize* your ministry by using the “real eyes” of the Spirit. Once you begin to see your true purpose, you can then map out the way to fulfill it. If you cannot write your calling and purpose within 25 words or less, *stop* what you are doing and get on board. In addition, even if you already know your purpose but have strayed away from it, it’s time to get busy and redirect your efforts toward why God created you.

Whether or not you will embark upon this study could be the second most important decision you have made since receiving the new birth and gaining the answer to the first part of the question. *Realizing and Fulfilling Your Personal Ministry* is a two-fold instructional manual: the first section will help you to realize your ministry, and the second and third sections will help you to fulfill it. My prayer is that it will catapult you into your God-given destiny.

Remember, you are a child of God with a destiny in Christ Jesus. *It is of utmost importance that you realize and fulfill your personal ministry!*

SECTION I

REALIZING YOUR MINISTRY

This first section of *Realizing and Fulfilling Your Personal Ministry* lays the necessary foundation for the second and third sections. If you have already conceptualized your God-given purpose, you may be tempted to jump ahead to section 2, but I highly advise you not to do this. Your life's calling is not a small thing, and it is vital to have it reaffirmed and established before you jump into it with all you have. A good foundation will make for a much stronger building.

Chapter 1 in this first section will help you to understand your purpose; chapter 2 will show you how to see your ministry through the eyes of the Spirit rather than the eyes of your soul; chapter 3 will teach you how to perform the particular aspect of Jesus' ministry you have been called to; chapter 4 will explore your passion and purpose; and chapter 5 will provide an evaluation to confirm what the Spirit has revealed to you.

CHAPTER ONE

YOUR PURPOSE

To begin to recognize your purpose in life, you must first understand the word “purpose.” American Heritage Dictionary defines it as, “The object toward which one strives or for which something exists; an aim or a goal.” It comes from the Greek word *prothesis*, consisting of the prefix *pro*—“before,” “ahead of,” or “prior to,” and the root, *tithemi*—“to position or place an object in a certain place.”¹ When these two meanings are joined together, a literal translation of *prothesis* could be “to place an item in a particular place, prior to the time it is needed.”

If we use the illustration of someone building a house, we can see how this would work: the builder typically places a light switch box next to the front door long before the electricity has even been connected, knowing that it will be needed in the future. Likewise, a housewife may buy vanilla extract a week ahead of the time she needs to bake a cake. Neither the light switch nor the vanilla extract is used immediately, but forethought is given to when it will be.

What a revelation this is when we realize that God had a purpose for us even before we were born.

(For the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose [prothesis] of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls.)
Romans 9:11

All of God’s children were foreknown by God and prepositioned for a purpose in life. The contractor who built the house knew that some dark night, the doorbell would ring, and the light switch would be needed. Before the foundation of the world, God, in the same manner, looked down the corridor of time and saw the need that you would provide in a specific time and place.

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.
Ephesians 1:4–5

God knew that you would not only have a purpose but a *time* to fulfill it. This means that there are no mistakes in the timing of our births because they were predestined before the foundation of the world. It’s also exciting to read in this verse in Ephesians that we were called according to the good pleasure of His will. **He wanted you to be here at this time and place!**

Did you know that you and I were actually created as spirit beings the same day as Adam and Eve and that God has been waiting for the right time and place for you to enter into human history? Look at the concluding statement after the end of the sixth day of creation, the day of Adam and Eve's creation:

*Thus the heavens and the earth, **and all the host of them**, were finished.
Genesis 2:1*

The word “host” means *masses of persons*. All the masses of persons were created as spirit beings on that sixth day of creation. God has been waiting for the right time for your body to be made so that He could release you into the world. This is *not* reincarnation, because you are distinctly you. There has never been, nor will there ever be, anyone again like you. You have the composite gene code, DNA makeup, and potential abilities—even physically—to fulfill what God has predestined you to do “for such a time as this.”

Many times I hear people say, “I was an accident.” If you are a child of God, that is not true. Even if you were an unplanned pregnancy, or if you were conceived or born out of wedlock, God still foreknew you and has a purpose for you. He loves you and has a plan for your life. God is omniscient and He saw your day coming.

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
Jeremiah 29:11 NIV*

We already had a purpose even before the world began. This is seen very clearly from 2 Timothy 1:9 KJV.

*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, **which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.**
2 Timothy 1:9 KJV*

This truth is particularly impacting to individuals who think that they have little or no worth. Some look at themselves through the eyes of rejection, abuse, or neglect. To see the reality of who God called them to be, they need to look through the eyes of the Spirit. Since they are new creations in Christ, they need to look at themselves through their new-creation eyes. (We will discuss this in the next chapter.)

Realize Your Purpose

This work is entitled ***Realizing and Fulfilling Your Personal Ministry*** for a reason. The root word of realizing is “real” (not imagined), and it defines what your purpose is—it is real and just waiting to be birthed and received. The words, “acquiring” or “understanding” or “finding” would not have been accurate in regards to your personal ministry because you already have it, and the potential to fulfill it already lies within you.

I believe that one of the reasons people wrestle with being committed Christians is because they do not know the true purpose of life and their contribution to it. We are to cleave to the Lord with *purpose* of heart as Barnabas exhorted the first-century believers in Acts 11:23.

One night I was ministering in Wilmington, North Carolina, with First Fruit Ministries, a homeless and discipling ministry that holds a dear place in my heart. While praise and worship was going on, one of the men (his name is Jarvis, and he will be proud to read this account) walked up to me and said, “You know, I am supposed to be doing that (leading worship) because that is what God made me to be.” I knew this man. He was one of the worst alcoholics I had ever seen. He lived on the streets, under railroad overpasses, and anywhere he could find that was dry. He was tormented, not just by demons, but also by the inward knowing that he was wasting his life.

I reached into my pocket for one of my harmonicas, and as I handed it over to him, I said, “Well brother, get busy. You’re not as young as you used to be.” He took the harmonica and began playing it everywhere he went. Then he got a guitar and started writing songs. Not long afterwards, he was leading worship at the church, sober as a judge. Then he got a job, a wife, and a house! He is still playing the harmonica and guitar and leading worship. All of this happened because he decided to fulfill his destiny rather than trying to numb the pain of not fulfilling it.

Although Jarvis’ story had a happy ending, this next one about my uncle does not. He was a hard-living, hard-drinking, hard-swearing man who used alcohol to sedate the pain of his service in World War II and his unfulfilled destiny. One day, he and I were sitting on the dock of his lake home. It was the early years of my ministry, and I was working a secular job. He commented, “Nephew, I am proud of you. You are working a job and still preaching. I will listen to a man who does that.” I said to him, “Uncle, when are you going to start doing the same? You have a job, but when are you going to start your ministry of singing the gospel?” He looked stupefied that I would challenge him. No one would dare to talk to him that way because he was such a hard man.

He said, “To totally turn to the Lord, which I know is the only way I will ever be happy, I know I will have to start singing for Him,” (he was an accomplished vocalist) “and even though I know that this is my purpose, I am not willing to.” I looked him in his bloodshot eyes and said, “Then why continue living if you are not striving to fulfill your destiny?”

A number of years later, sitting on the edge of his bed ready to take his life, he called my mother and asked how to get in touch with me. My mom said, “He is on his honeymoon, but we will find him. Don’t do anything. Wait, and we will find him.” He said, “It doesn’t matter—he already told me what I needed to hear. I didn’t want to listen then, and I won’t do what he says now either.” He ended his life that night—war torn, scared, and unfulfilled in purpose. God have mercy on him.

We all have a purpose and a destiny that God has given us. True sanity is only accomplished by striving for this mark of purpose and destiny. The Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:14 that this is the high calling for which we press.

God foreknew you and preplanned all you would need to fulfill His calling in your life. This includes all the gray matter and physical abilities to do it. He gave you a calling and purpose according to *His* will and purpose. You have no greater task at hand than to realize and then fulfill His preplanned will.

Remember that, as the word “purpose” indicates, you were placed into position long ago to be born at the time God knew you would be needed. God has a purpose for you, and He needs you *now* because this is when He called you.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REALIZATION OF *YOUR* CALLING

My quest to help people realize their calling and ministry began when I was working with teens. I wanted to help them get focused and stop wasting their time. I can still hear my sixth grade teacher, Mrs. Campbell, saying, “Idleness is the devil’s workshop.” I could see that the teens who had a focus and a fixed point of accomplishment were not only happier and better behaved, but they were also more fulfilled and a blessing to others. So I asked the Lord to teach me how to help the teens I was working with find their purpose and calling in life.

Well, God heard my prayer and answered it, and the proof is evident in the lives of the teens I was able to teach. While they are still kids and make mistakes like the rest of us, the ones who really received a revelation of their destiny and calling are focused and disciplined in their pursuits. This is true of anyone who discovers his or her destiny and calling. At that point of discovery, they are motivated to cross over the threshold of commitment to focus their energy, time, talents, and resources to fulfill it.

The Lord showed me the key to unlocking this truth in 2 Timothy 1:9 and 10. I must admit that although He initially gave it to me in a revelation word, because of the simplicity of it, I refused to accept it until I could read it in the Scriptures. Of course, He is faithful, and He then showed it to me in His Word. Once I saw it and began teaching it, I realized it was a truth desperately needed in the body of Christ.

While traveling and ministering in India, I had the opportunity to teach and show this to a group of about 200 young adults—across cultural lines, I might add. My spiritual son, David Ramesh, translated the message for me. For some reason that morning, he was having trouble getting into the flow. At the end of the teaching, I knew why. David was so flabbergasted with this truth, he was having a hard time translating rather than listening. He asked me for permission to talk to the group personally without translating. Because he had proven himself to be a faithful and trustworthy son, I gave my permission. He told them that what they had heard is something that people quest for their whole lives and that it had been delivered to them in 30 minutes. The importance of this truth really slammed me. Not only had the Lord revealed a masterpiece to me, but the Holy Spirit had packaged it for me into a 30-minute teaching!

The context of 2 Timothy 1 sets the stage for this magnificent truth that will help all Christians realize their purpose and calling. Timothy was being reminded of who he was and what God had called him to be. The exhortation, coming from his spiritual father, Paul, began with the reminder of his believing lineage and the call of God upon him. Verse 9 starts with the first and highest priority of life—who am I? It then continues with the second—why am I here?

Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. 2 Timothy 1:9

Grammatically, this whole verse is a simple sentence with a single subject and a compound verb. The subject is God (“Who”), and the verbs (or action words) are “saved” and “called.” The first part of the sentence, concerning salvation, deals with our identity (the answer to the first question: who am I?). Because God has *saved* us, we are now His children and that is our identity or who we are.

Once we pass by the first comma of 2 Timothy 1:9, the focus is upon the *calling* of a person (the answer to the second question: why am I here?). The calling, as we covered in chapter 1, is the purpose or ministry that a person is predestined to fulfill. The rest of this verse (and the next) deals with this calling. It is a diamond mine, laced with gems of beauty and truth, waiting to be mined, cut, polished, and displayed.

The phrase “called us with a holy calling” should arrest our attention because of its repetitive wording. Notice that our calling is not according to our works, but according to God’s purpose and it was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began (the King James Version says, “before the world began”).

The truth that we were given this calling before time began shows us that God foreknew our arrival on the earth and had already made plans for us even before we were born. Not only did He know of our arrival, but He also programmed our genetic makeup and talents long before we were even conceived, much less born. This is an amazing truth. He patterned and knit us together in such a way that we would have the abilities we would need in order to fulfill our callings. So, none of us can ever accurately say, “I don’t have the ability to do what God has called me to do.”

This calls to mind the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:15–30) where one person had five, another had two, and another had one. The talents were given to each according to his or her own ability (verse 15).

And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.
Matthew 25:15

This is a parable that communicates a literal truth—God has distributed to each of us talents according to His own will and purpose and according to our ability to use them. God also said in Luke 12:48 that to whom much is given, much will be required. Our ministries are like this too. Whatever you are predestined to do, God has given you the ability to fulfill. Nothing is quite so exasperating as to be given a job that you are not able to do. God has *never* done this to anyone. **Whatever He has called you to do, He has also made you sufficient and capable of doing.**

The last phrase in 2 Timothy 1:9, “before time began” (or “before the world began” in the KJV) is important because the next verse keys off of it.

*But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ.
2 Timothy 1:10a*

Before time began, before the world began, we were given a purpose. But *now* we can actually know what that purpose is because of the “appearing” of our Savior Jesus Christ. We can see that what “has now been revealed” in verse 10 is referring back to “our calling” in verse 9. In other words, our calling was given us in Christ Jesus before time began, but it has *now* been revealed in the appearing of Jesus Christ.

This is a promise in the Word of God. When we discover what the “appearing of Jesus Christ” is, our calling and destiny will open to us as reliably as the petals of a flowers open when it is time for it to bloom.

The Appearing of Jesus Christ

The word “appearing” in 2 Timothy 1:10 is a commonly used word in religious circles. It is the Greek word *epiphaneia*, from which we get the word “epiphany.” The meaning of this word holds the key to our ministry being revealed to us now.

Epiphaneia is a simple word, with a basic root and a prefix. The root word is *phaino*, which means “to show light on a subject.” The root of it, *phos*, is where we get our English words “photon” and “photography.” The prefix *epi* means “to come down upon,” or “to rest upon.” Combining these two words gives *epiphaneia* the basic meaning of “a special light or enlightenment that comes down upon.”

The most common usage of epiphany is referring to Christ’s return (1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1 and 8; Titus 2:13) where He, as the true light from heaven, will come down to enlighten the lives of men. However, this verse is speaking of “now”—not a future time. This indicates that the “appearing” must refer to a special revelation (light or enlightenment) about Jesus that concerns your calling *now*.

There is a special light about Jesus Christ that comes to each of us through the Holy Spirit, which will help to reveal our individual callings in Jesus Christ *now*—meaning at the present time of our lives here on earth.

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and **revelation** in the knowledge of Him, the **eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling.***
Ephesians 1:17–18a

This verse complements the truth in 2 Timothy 1:9 and 10 by saying the same thing in a different way. There is a special revelation given to us that will enlighten the eyes of our understanding concerning our calling from God. The unique and personal way we each see Jesus (because of how the Holy Spirit has revealed Him to us) will be reflective of our individual calling.

How Do You See Jesus?

When I teach this to the teens, I make a simple statement: *How you see Jesus is what God made you to be.* This is short and to the point, but the reality of it is life changing. The way you see Jesus will hold the key to your ministry; **that epiphany will contain the picture of your destiny so that you may stay focused to fulfill it.**

According to John 3:34, Jesus had the full measure of the Holy Spirit. This means that He had everything that the Holy Spirit had to offer, as well as every talent and ability to fulfill every possible ministry. He was the Word Incarnate. As Rufus Mosely said, "He was the perfect everything!"

*For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: **for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*** John 3:34 KJV

On the other hand, all Christians have dealt to them only a portion of that Spirit, not the full measure.

*For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, **as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.***
Romans 12:3

*But we will not boast of things without our measure, but **according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.*** 2 Corinthians 10:13 KJV

*But to each one of us grace was given **according to the measure of Christ's gift.*** Ephesians 4:7

Each of us is a *part* or *portion* of what Jesus was in His earthly ministry, or is now in His heavenly ministry, or will be when He comes again. Which part we have is the predestined order and form that God has called us to fulfill. Now, how we realize this is as simple as falling off a greased log backward. All we have to do is answer the following question and it will tell us what our ministry and purpose is: **When I think of Jesus, what do I see Him doing?**

Stop for a moment: sit back, close your eyes to block out any distractions, and think about Jesus. What do you see Him doing? Do this now. Stop what you are doing. Put the book down. Close your eyes and think about Jesus. Just imagine seeing Him. What is He doing?

Do you see Him teaching? Do you see Him healing someone? Do you see Him comforting the woman taken in adultery? Maybe you see Him feeding the multitudes, or turning over the tables in the temple, or bringing the little children and setting them on His own knee. Or perhaps you see Him leading the army of the Lord out of heaven or leading worship in the millennial temple.

Let's do it again. Relax. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to you. It is not hard, but you must do this if you want to realize your calling. Sit back and meditate on the Lord. *What* do you see Him doing?

Do you see Him leading the 12 apostles? Do you see Him praying in the garden? Do you see Him raising Lazarus from the dead? Do you see Him talking to the woman at well? Do you see Him confronting the rich young ruler?

The point is what you see Him *doing*, because whatever it is will be what God wants you to do. However you see Jesus is what God is trying to show you to do and be.

This is so simple. The Holy Spirit is teaching you in a way you will not be able to miss it. He wants you to know what your calling is. What you think about Jesus, or the dominant picture you hold of Him, is what God is trying to show you that He wants *you* to do. You behold Jesus in the way you do because this is what the Holy Spirit is revealing to you as you read the Bible.

Seeing Your Ministry through the “Real Eyes”

How this works is an amazing truth. You have been (or will be) *seeing* your ministry, calling, and purpose through the real eyes of the spirit—not the eyes of your own soul or body. You will “realize” your ministry when you look through your “real eyes” at Jesus.

The real eyes I am referring to are the eyes of your spirit man. Ephesians 3:16 and 2 Corinthians 4:16 tell us that we are spirits—this means that infused within our flesh is a spirit person. This spirit person (or man) can spiritually see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. In addition, the spirit person even has spiritual emotions. These spiritual faculties are referred to as “new creation realities.”² The spirit man (or new creation) within us is what communes with God, and it's who we really are. The Holy Spirit (God) communicates with *our* spirits (which are holy) to reveal our callings, our divine destinies, to us. He uniquely designed each of us as new creations to replicate Jesus here on earth at this point in time in our own individual ways, with our own individual purposes!

When we read the Bible, we are reading words from the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21 says that it came from the Holy Spirit and holy men spoke it. The new creation within us (our holy spirit) bears witness to the same Holy Spirit Who first gave those words to the holy men of old to record. This is spirit-to-spirit communication.

The Holy Spirit will reveal truths to you as you read the Scriptures. Sometimes a word may sort of jump off the page at you, or a truth in a verse will seem especially important. Specific stories may seem especially vivid and vital to you. These are distinct words or truths that the Holy Spirit is endeavoring to emphasize to you. 1 Corinthians 2:13 speaks of this.

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

1 Corinthians 2:13

The Holy Spirit compares the spiritual things of your spirit with the spiritual things in the Bible as you read. You may be reading along in a normal fashion, but when the Holy Spirit wants to really show you something He changes the way you see it. It's as if you are looking at a filmstrip in black and white, when suddenly you begin seeing it in color.

In my life, for example, I have always seen Jesus sitting down teaching 10 or 12 people around him in a circle. Duh, what does this say? I am, and always will be, a teacher. This is obvious to me because it is the aspect of Jesus' ministry that the Holy Spirit has written on my subconscious mind, or in this case, the mind of my spirit.

Let's say you are reading along in the Bible, and you come to the section where Jesus prayed all night in the garden of Gethsemane. Suddenly, the truth of this becomes very pronounced and you picture yourself praying intensely as He did. God has probably called you to be a prayer warrior and intercessor.

Or maybe you are reading along and enjoying the Scriptures, when out of nowhere the words on the page turn to color when you read about Jesus preaching to the multitudes. This is sort of like a movie camera beginning to run instead of seeing still frames—and you are in the movie! You can actually picture yourself doing what He did. If so, you have been called to be a preacher and/or an evangelist.

Or the color frames may start running when you read about Jesus healing someone. This could indicate a ministry of healing. When you read about Jesus railing on the Pharisees and you are suddenly in that “movie” in His stead, this could mean that you have a prophet's call on your life. Perhaps you see Him feeding the multitude with the few fish and loaves—then God may be calling you to be a loving and compassionate miracle worker.

The Holy Spirit, as your Helper (John 14:16), has been showing you these things through the eyes of your spirit. The spirit realm is starting to open up to you and you are beginning to see what God has called you to do. God not only calls His people to do these things, but He also calls them to be conformed into the *image* of His Son. This means that not only are we to *do* the same works as Jesus, but we are to do it *like* Him—in all manner of quality and quantity and with the same love and heart.

For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Romans 8:29

CHAPTER THREE

CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON

The truth stated in chapter 2 may seem too basic, but it remains: *How you see Jesus is what God wants you to be.* I have seen mouths drop open when I have taught this, because they can see that God has been revealing this to them throughout their Christian lives. Some say, “This is so simple. It seems right, and I have a witness in my spirit that it is true, but I need to be sure.”

When we examine Romans 8:26–32, the issue will be settled once and for all. This record confirms that the Lord wants you directed and focused in your ministry and calling. When He wants a significant point emphasized, He puts it in an important place. The book of Romans has been called the “Magna Carta” of the church by many biblical scholars,³ and chapter 8 sits at its apex. The positioning of these truths—being conformed to the image of His Son and fulfilling your calling—at the close of Romans 8 shows us that this is a very big deal.

*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, **these He also called**; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*
Romans 8:26–32

There are more usages of “spirit” in Romans 8 than in any other chapter in the entire Bible. I believe this even further confirms the Holy Spirit’s role in revealing our ministry to us. Chapter 8 is the crescendo of the doctrinal part of Romans, followed by the practical section of chapters 12–16. I believe this shows that the doctrinal pinnacle we must understand before we begin practicing our faith (Romans 12–16) is that *nothing can separate us from His love as we fulfill our calling and ministry.*

We saw in Ephesians 1:5 that God predestined us to become His children, but Romans 8:29 reveals that *He also predestined us to be conformed into the image of His Son.* This is a different predestination. Ephesians deals with the new birth; **Romans deals with our spiritual growth after that birth.** The truths found in Romans will help us to see that

the key to identifying and walking in our ministries (indicative of spiritual growth) is to recognize the aspect of Jesus' ministry that the Holy Spirit emphasizes to us.

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be **conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*
Romans 8:29

God not only foreknew us, but He also predestined us to fit into and fulfill the portion of the image of His Son that we hold in our spiritual DNA. The verse before this is often used to erroneously explain why mayhem and misfortune occur in the world.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.
Romans 8:28

However, the context of this verse shows that it has a much different meaning than many Christians believe. We can now see that it is set in the middle of the truth that God foreknew us and created us to accomplish specific purposes. Notice the phrase "called according to His purpose." This sets verses 26–32 within the context of a believer's calling and destiny. Verse 28 was not written to explain why someone's dog got hit by a car or why their child got sick. Yes, it does say that all things work together for good in the end, but it is to the end that the individual members of the body of Christ fulfill their callings, making the person of Jesus Christ a living, breathing reality on the earth. In the phrase, "all things work together," the "all things" are specific to the preceding verse.

Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.
Romans 8:27

"He" refers to Jesus Christ who ever lives to make intercession for the saints (Hebrews 7:25). He knows the mind of the spirit within you. Back up even further to verse 26 and you will see that we do not even know what to pray for. That is why we need the Holy Spirit to give us the utterance. (Many people believe this refers to speaking in a tongue.) It is obvious that our infirmity (weakness) is that we do not know what to pray for, so the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. Among the things we do not know is: *our purpose in life*. The Holy Spirit will make the intercession that's necessary to help us discover what our purpose is.

Now that we have looked at this by working backwards, you can read it in order and have a deeper understanding of it within the context of fulfilling your calling. Jesus knows the mind of your spirit, and He makes intercession to God the Father for your calling in agreement with the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

The good things that work together are the things that Jesus prays for, because He prays according to the will of God the Father who predestined you for a purpose. That destiny is revealed to you by the mind of the spirit within you. Ephesians 1:17 and 18 verify this:

*That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; **that you may know what is the hope of His calling**, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.*
Ephesians 1:17–18

The Holy Spirit reveals to you the purpose of your life, according to God's calling. Romans 8:31 and 32 are set in the context of God revealing, and you fulfilling, your purpose.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
Romans 8:31–32

If God (who predestined us) is for us, then who can be against us? In addition to the Father being for you, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are working in you to realize your calling. *The Holy Spirit is revealing it to you in your spirit as you read the Scriptures and meditate on the life of Jesus, and Jesus, your Intercessor and High Priest, is praying for your calling to be fulfilled.* Jesus, who is the “perfect everything,” is not only your Master, but He is your friend and intercessor! How can you possibly lose?

All the while, God the Father is sitting in heaven waiting for you to grab hold of it and then do it! Verse 32 reminds us that if God gave His own Son's life for us, He certainly is not going to spare anything for our callings and destinies to be fulfilled and accomplished.

The Image of Jesus

When we realize that we are predestined to be conformed into the image of God's Son, it becomes of paramount importance for us to have that picture of Him firmly and deeply engrained in our minds. This will be the vision that we will strive to become. In Romans 6:17, Paul commends the believers for obeying from their hearts the form of doctrine to which they were delivered. I believe that the image you hold in your heart is like that “form” of doctrine—you will conform to it, or “obey” it, as the Roman believers did. You may have heard the old saying, “What you look at, you will become.” What you can perceive, you can conceive. What you can conceive, you can believe, and what you can believe, you can receive. The picture you hold in your mind starts the whole process.

A number of years ago, my good friend, Larry Coker, and I were in India ministering to the lowest of the low caste (the “untouchables”) in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. I was teaching on exercising spiritual authority, but I may as well have been lecturing on nuclear physics. The truths were simply not sticking to them because the image they had held throughout their lives about themselves was that they were worthless. I finally put the Bible down, and Larry and I began demonstrating the truths instead by bringing

individuals up front and ministering healing to them. It worked, because it gave them a new image—a new picture—of their worth and what they could do in Christ.

They saw before their very eyes a conquering, yet compassionate Jesus who loved them enough to stand down the devil and set them free. They began to conceptualize what the Lord truly desired for them, as well as to see that they could exercise spiritual authority over their own lives. Once this picture was presented before them, it was much easier to grasp what the Holy Spirit was showing them concerning their own individual potential.

This reminds me of another story dealing with the image of what people hold in their minds versus the image of Jesus that the Holy Spirit is endeavoring to show them. In 1973, I was involved with an evangelistic program in New Orleans. One night a member of the Hell's Angels walked into our meeting. He reached into the pocket of his leather jacket and pulled out an automatic Colt pistol (ACP) 45, laid it on the table, and spouted in finite expletives that there would be no "BS" that night. Instead of responding by hiding under the table, we loved and encouraged him. This helped him to see a proper image of Jesus, and as far as I know he is still pastoring a church to this day. He had a great heart for helping people, but all he had known in his life up to that point in time was rejection and pain. When the Holy Spirit got a hold on him and began teaching him who he really was, it enabled him to be transformed into the image of a loving, caring, nurturing man—not a hoodlum seeking after physical thrills. He no longer held a false picture of himself as a motorcycle gangster but saw himself in the true image of Jesus as the loving shepherd. Not only do people receive deliverance when they see Jesus, but they also receive their destiny!

We absolutely *will* conform to the image we hold. Even successful secular people—in every arena of life—know this.⁴ Jesus said, "For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8b KJV).

It's not hard to determine what that picture is. Whether we hold the image of Jesus or stay locked into the false picture of ourselves depends upon allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal Him to us. When we ask Him to reveal Jesus to us, we will receive the pattern or example as well as the passion to conform to it. Whether it is a pastor, evangelist, intercessor, minister of mercy, or a healer, Jesus is the master example of all of these, because He had the full measure of the Spirit. He was (and is) the perfect everything—the Word incarnate *and* the Spirit demonstrator.

Develop Your Relationship with Jesus

As I was writing this book, my daughter Sarah called me to have a morning visit on the way to school. She asked me what I was doing, and when I told her, she said, "May I give you my opinion on the subject?" As her mentor, I have always encouraged her to speak up, so I said, "Sure, I'd love to hear it."

She said, "I taught the material on realizing and fulfilling your personal ministry to my teen Sunday school class, and it was awesome. They got it Dad; they really did. I pretty

much taught them from the tapes that you did, but in the middle of it I realized something.” What she said next became a very valuable lesson to me. “Most of the people you teach are seasoned Christians who have a good idea of who Jesus is because they have read the Bible for a while, but the teens I have been teaching need to know Jesus first before they know what He did.” Then she said, **“I believe that when you write your book, you need to tell people that they need to develop their relationship with Jesus if they really want to learn about their ministry. Not only do they need to know what He did while on earth, but they need to know *Him*—who He is and His heart—if they are going to fulfill their aspect of Him.”**

Thank you, Sarah. I applaud my daughter for her insight, and normally I would include this in the section on “Fulfilling Your Ministry,” but it is so fundamental that I have decided to include it in this first section of the book.

I do not want to be presumptuous and take for granted that you know Jesus personally and/or that you know what He did (or is doing now). Perhaps you are a newly born-again Christian, like some of the teens in my daughter’s class, with little or no knowledge of what Jesus did in His earthly life. Maybe you are a believer who has been less than faithful, and you have not read the gospels or been in touch with the Holy Spirit very much. If you fit this description, then I suggest you take some time and read the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Enjoy these divinely inspired accounts of the greatest man who has ever lived—the Word Incarnate, your personal friend and counselor—Jesus Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes as you read these accounts. These are the words of life and something very exciting will stir in you as the Holy Spirit begins revealing Jesus to you through them.

He will speak to you as you read these accounts, and you will quickly begin identifying with the aspect of the Lord’s ministry that most closely parallels your purpose and destiny. He will begin to show you things, and you will get to know your prime mentor and coach—the Master.

The Lord taught me a great lesson once that I will never forget. He asked me, “Have you ever noticed that my disciples always called me Master?” He continued, “The reason they called me Master is because I taught them their purpose and destiny.” He told me that if I would call Him “Master,” He would teach me too.

Getting to know *about* Him could be thought of as an assignment, but getting to *know Him* will be an exciting life-changing experience. This is another new-creation reality—the privilege of communing, or dining, with Him (Revelation 3:20). When you know Him, you will *want* to be like Him, not just in what He did, but also in how and why He did those things. This is not a ritual or an exercise but an intimate relationship with the Master. You were predestined to conform into the image of Jesus, and the more you look at Him, the more quickly you will be transformed from glory to glory.

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.
2 Corinthians 3:18

The Holy Spirit has been (or will be) showing you your place in the body of Christ and which measure of the Spirit you have. You will begin to recognize this in the aspect of Jesus' ministry that seems more vivid and personal to you as it is revealed to you. The spiritual revelation of this and the divine wisdom of how to accomplish it are both guaranteed from Ephesians 1:17 and 18. God wants to enlighten the eyes of your understanding so that you can know the hope of His calling in your life. This revelation will give us a lasting image of Jesus that we will hold in our minds with the intent of walking in His steps and fulfilling that portion of His ministry and life.

CHAPTER FOUR

YOUR PASSION/YOUR PURPOSE

My dear friend and prophet to the nation of India, Ezekiah Francis, and I were discussing the importance of each Christian knowing their calling and destiny. We were talking about the revelation of “the special light” of Jesus that we each individually hold and the image to which we conform. He said, “Brother Dale, this is one of the most important aspects of Christianity that there is, and the revelation that the Lord has shown you is astounding. It is the most basic approach to the subject I have ever heard.” He continued by saying, “I have seen the question and answer approach (which we will cover in the next chapter), and it is effective, but this is using the Holy Spirit’s revelation.” Then he added that he had also taught people to find their calling in a very easy way: *“I simply tell people whatever is their passion is their purpose.”*

I marveled at the simplicity of Ezekiah’s statement—so much so that I want to dedicate this portion of the work to him. His insight makes so much sense: **our passion is our purpose**. The reason it is our passion is because the Holy Spirit not only reveals our calling to us, but He also fuels a passion within us to fulfill it.

This aspect of discovering our calling or purpose comes from an experiential point of view, and the logic of this serves as testimony. As the previous chapters revealed, if God called us with a purpose before the beginning of the world, then He must have coded us genetically for it, because He knew the abilities we would need to fulfill it. Within that genetic coding is the desire or passion to carry out that calling. **It will be the one thing that excites us more than any other activity.**

I have talked to many, many people about their ministries and their callings, and without fail, their calling is the thing that makes them feel most fulfilled and satisfied. Why not? If it is their destiny, then it will be the thing they *like* doing the most.

Another good friend and fellow minister, Mike Blatnik, when referring to his own personal ministry in a teaching one day, made a vitally significant point. He said, “It was a great day in my life when I realized that it was okay to not be like Dale.” He then explained, “I am not an apostle/teacher like him—I am a prophet/preacher.” (And I would add, one of the best I know.) He said, “I don’t see things the way he does, because the Lord shows them to him differently.” He said, “I wanna be like Mike.”

It’s true. According to me, Mike is weird, but according to Mike, I am weird. He sees things allegorically, but I see things literally. He keeps dates and remembers patterns of

the past, but all I see is the horizon of the future. We are great friends—we hunt together, go to ball games together, and hang out together—but we are different. Mike’s passion is to preach and prophesy. My passion is to teach and liberate, but man, oh man, you should see us minister together!

I learned another good lesson concerning your passion/your purpose from Eddie Smith of the US Prayer Center. Through a personal lesson involving a member of his family, the Lord told Eddie, “I let Moses be raised by Pharaoh so that he could learn how to defeat Pharaoh.” This can be a major contributing impetus to people’s passion. Many times the thing(s) they endure or suffer through feeds their passion, increasing their zeal in that area.

While writing this I read Oral Robert’s autobiography, *Expect a Miracle*. He is one of my true heroes of the faith, and I marvel at the zeal of his commitment and his focus to fulfill what he was called to do. First of all, he was called to the ministry when he was healed of tuberculosis, so his passion for healing has always been a major aspect of his ministry. He lay in a bed for 16 months, dying of tuberculosis, and now to this day, he abhors sickness and disease. The memory of his pain and suffering was a great impetus to do what God called him to do. Satan hurt him in the area of his calling; now he hurts Satan in that same area. It is his passion to heal people. *His passion is his purpose.*

In my own life, I always saw Jesus as a teacher and a leader, but the aspect of liberating people came to me as a result of an experience I lived through. I was once caught in a very controlling ministry. I was not allowed to fulfill my giftings and destiny; instead I was accused of being selfish and prideful because I did not fit the mold that others were trying to cast me into. I saw men and women spiritually perish by the hundreds because of the control exercised over them. The Lord allowed me to be raised by Pharaoh so that I could learn how to defeat him. I now hate dominating ministries and controlling hierarchies. I do not advocate people to leave the position that they are in unless they are not allowed to. In other words, if they cannot break free of their position, they need to. I do not believe this is anarchy at all—it is freedom!

My wife is a daughter of mercy. She loves to find someone that no one else loves and then to smear him or her with “sloppy *agape*” from head to toe. Her passion is passion for others. She loves to love, and to be honest, I think that sometimes the less people love her back, the more committed she is to love them till they do. She is probably the best believer I know.

As I said before, your purpose/your passion is very much an experiential approach to understanding your calling and ministry. So ask yourself, what is your passion? Is it music? Is it feeding the poor? Is it witnessing to the lost? Is it helping drug addicts or alcoholics? Is it helping a little child? Is it giving money to help the poor? Is it sharing joy and laughter? You can certainly see your purpose in your passion.

So, as we wrap up this section on “Realizing Your Personal Ministry,” we have studied the special light of Jesus that the Holy Spirit shows us from 2 Timothy 1:9 and 10 and have looked at the image of Jesus to which we are to conform. Then “Your Passion/Your Purpose” has shown us that God made us to be good at, and fulfilled by, the things we love. We are now ready to finalize the inquiry of realizing our destiny and calling by partaking of the spiritual gifts evaluation found in the next chapter.

There are a number of statements to evaluate that will allow you to specify your calling, and these will help you confirm what the Holy Spirit has already been showing you. The goal of this and the whole first part of our study is for you to have your ministry defined so that you may then focus on fulfilling your calling and destiny. Mine has slightly changed over the years, so this may serve as a good directional check, even if you feel you are already walking in your calling.

Please proceed to the next chapter and complete this evaluation before advancing to section 2, “Fulfilling Your Personal Ministry.” This should enable you to clearly identify your ministry and write your vision and purpose.

CHAPTER FIVE

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EVALUATION

This evaluation is designed to document for you in your mind and soul what the Holy Spirit has already shown you in your spirit. The purpose of this is not to replace a revelation that is necessary for you to receive from the Lord, but it is to give you a confirmation and an assurance of the revelation you have *already* received from the Lord. It was initially designed and used by the Church Growth Institute and is used with their permission. There have been modifications made to it that make it uniquely and specifically adapted for our purposes.

Before you take the evaluation, there are a couple of prerequisites you need to fulfill. By responding to these, you will fulfill the mandate of Habakkuk 2:2:

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

Habakkuk 2:2

Once the vision has been written and made plain, then it will be possible to “run in the spirit” instead of just walking. The goal is to write down your ministry and calling in less than 25 words and then post it where you will see it daily. The evaluation and tally sheet serves as a confirmation of your ability, desire, and gifting.

There are two distinct aspects to this evaluation. First, it will show the calling and purpose of your ministry. Second, it will reveal the different gifts that are functioning in your life to help bring your ministry to pass. There are no right or wrong answers or combinations of ministries and gifts. How God chooses to resource you, or gift you, is His business. There may be occasions when the gifts that are fundamentally operating in your life are augmented by other gifts, especially as you focus on fulfilling your ministry later on in life.

Make sure that you keep that written vision in a place where you will read it often, and, above all means, pray for its fulfillment by the will and help of God Almighty.

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. *Colossians 1:9–10*

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EVALUATION STATEMENTS

Note: This Spiritual Gifts Evaluation may also be taken online at www.LMCI.org

Instructions:

Step 1. For each of the statements, select the value from 0–4 to the degree that the statement is true in your life:
0 = Not at all, 1 = Little, 2 = Moderately, 3 = Considerably, 4 = Strongly

Step 2. Record each response (value) on the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Answer Sheet.

1. I enjoy working behind the scenes taking care of details, and I don't need a lot of public recognition.
2. I usually step forward and assume leadership in a group where none exists.
3. I enjoy cheerfully providing food and a place to stay for those in need.
4. Sometimes when I pray in the spirit, God gives me the interpretation.
5. I am able to organize ideas, people, and projects to reach a specific goal.
6. Others in the church have noted that I am especially able to see through phoniness.
7. I have believed God for the impossible and have seen it happen in a tangible way.
8. I am asked to sing or play a musical instrument at church functions.
9. I have a heightened sensitivity to see, hear, taste, feel, or smell in the spirit realm.
10. In the name of the Lord, I have often been used by God in healing diseases instantaneously.
11. I have an ability to use my hands in a creative way to design and build things.
12. I have healed people's illnesses in the power of Jesus' name.
13. I enjoy freely giving money or resources to those in serious need.
14. I enjoy ministering to people in hospitals, prisons or rest homes to comfort them.
15. I often have insights that offer practical solutions to difficult problems.
16. I have discerned strategies or techniques God seems to use in furthering His kingdom.

17. I strongly desire to encourage and give counsel to those who are discouraged.
18. I have an ability to thoroughly study a passage of Scripture and then share it with others in a way they can understand.
19. I like the role of nurturing God's people.
20. Other people respect me as an authority in spiritual matters.
21. I have the ability to easily learn a foreign language and adapt readily to other cultures and lifestyles.
22. I often am compelled to speak specific words of encouragement or correction from God to others.
23. I enjoy spending time with non-Christians, especially with hopes of telling them about Jesus.
24. When I pray, God frequently speaks to me and I recognize His voice.
25. I have spoken to evil spirits and they have obeyed me.
26. I am passionate about building the kingdom of God by ministering to and networking with people within the business sector.
27. I have a desire to assist pastors or other leaders so they can focus more on their ministry responsibilities.
28. I am often chosen as the leader in a group of people.
29. I enjoy opening my home to those visiting the area to make them feel welcome.
30. I have interpreted tongues with the result that the body of Christ was edified, exhorted, or comforted.
31. I am a very organized person who sets goals and makes plans to reach them.
32. I have a spiritual sensitivity to distinguish whether a person is or is not born again of the Spirit of God.
33. I have seen things in the spirit realm that I have subsequently brought into the physical world.
34. I have an excellent ear for music and can harmonize well.
35. I frequently see or am aware of the presence of angels.

36. I have witnessed God do the impossible when I prayed.
37. I enjoy doing things such as woodworking, crocheting, sewing, metal work, or stained glass, etc.
38. I have ministered to the sick and seen them recover.
39. I firmly believe God wants to prosper my business to finance His kingdom.
40. I have compassion for people who are hurting and lonely, and I like to spend considerable time with them to cheer them up.
41. People often seek my advice when they don't know what to do or how to do it.
42. I enjoy being led by the Holy Spirit to recognize difficult biblical truths and principles.
43. People often tell me their problems, and I am able and willing to encourage them.
44. When a question arises from a difficult biblical passage, I am motivated to research the answer.
45. I take an active role in protecting Christians from worldly influences that would hinder their spiritual growth and weaken their faith.
46. Starting a new church or ministry would be exciting.
47. People of a different race or culture have been attracted to me and we have related well.
48. My passion is to train people how to hear the voice of God for themselves and to encourage them with words of confirmation.
49. I find it easy to frequently lead others to accept Jesus as their Savior.
50. Praying in tongues is a big part of my life.
51. I have a passion to see people get set free from demonic forces.
52. I often receive revelation from the Holy Spirit about business strategies.
53. I have the ability to recognize a need and get the job done, no matter the size of the task.
54. I don't mind asking others to accomplish an important ministry in or for the church.

55. Our home is often used for small group meetings, social activities, or as a haven of rejuvenation.
56. Diverse kinds of tongues are a big part of my prayer life, and God frequently gives me their interpretations.
57. I easily delegate significant responsibilities to other people.
58. The spirit realm is real to me, and I have seen angels and/or demons.
59. I am usually successful at starting and finishing projects that initially seem daunting.
60. I am motivated to develop my gift in music.
61. I frequently get visions or dreams that I know are from the Lord.
62. God has used me to personally work supernatural signs and wonders.
63. I like to share my artistic talents with the body of Christ.
64. I know I have the faith to see God's healing come to people.
65. God has blessed me with the ability to make more money than I need, so I cheerfully give much to the church.
66. I have a desire to work with those who have physical or mental problems to alleviate their suffering.
67. I sometimes feel that I know exactly what God wants to do in ministry at a specific time.
68. I often receive helpful information from God, which I would not have known otherwise, that builds the faith of others.
69. Challenging others to better themselves (especially in their spiritual growth) without condemning them is very important to me.
70. People have told me that I have helped them learn a biblical truth in a meaningful way.
71. It concerns me when people do not have spiritual guidance and direction.
72. The Lord has granted signs and wonders to be done by my hands when I have preached the gospel of Christ.

73. I would like to present the gospel in a foreign land.
74. Sometimes I feel a need to speak a message that calls God's people back to His heart.
75. Every chance I get I try to win my friends to Jesus.
76. I have a passion to pray consistently and diligently and to watch God answer.
77. Others call on me when they suspect that someone is demonized.
78. Others have noted that I have a deep burden for taking "church" outside of four walls and into the ongoing, daily relationships with people.
79. I would like to do things like typing or filing, gardening, painting, cleaning, special projects, etc., for the church or to help in any way that I can.
80. I have the ability to manage a group of people toward achieving a specific goal.
81. I consider it extremely important that guests and newcomers feel welcome at church.
82. Many times I am inspired to bring a word of encouragement from God to others.
83. I am able to recognize gifts and abilities in others and help them find an area of ministry where they are effective.
84. I can tell with a fairly high degree of assurance when a person is afflicted by an evil spirit.
85. When I pray, it is not unusual for me to see miraculous answers.
86. I have an inner burning to worship the Lord frequently and help bring people into His presence.
87. The Lord has revealed to others that I have a seer anointing, and they have told me so.
88. God frequently gives me revelation to do impossible things for His glory.
89. I find satisfaction in meeting people's needs by making something for them.
90. I actively seek out opportunities to pray for God to heal those who are physically and emotionally ill.
91. I am pressed in the spirit to provide for the kingdom of God.

92. When I hear of people who are without jobs and can't pay their bills, I do what I can to help them.
93. I often am able to give an interpretation and the application of spiritual revelations to help others.
94. Sometimes the Lord gives me understanding of and solutions to problems in the church.
95. I can effectively motivate people to utilize their giftings for a more worthy endeavor.
96. I am organized in my thinking and systematic in my approach to presenting Bible lessons to other people.
97. I have enjoyed relating to a certain group of people over a long period of time, sharing personally in their successes and failures.
98. Leadership and vision are a big part of who I am.
99. I have a compelling burden to pray for a certain country or people group different than my own.
100. Through God, I have revealed specific things which have happened or will happen in the future.
101. I have shared joyfully how Christ has brought me to Himself in a way that is meaningful to non-believers.
102. I have a deep burden to pray for people as soon as I hear of their need, and I continue praying until I get a release.
103. I have ministered to people who were demonically oppressed and consistently witnessed their miraculous deliverance.
104. I feel it is my responsibility to promote the gospel in the business community.
105. I feel spiritually energized and fulfilled by helping others.
106. When I am in charge, people respect my opinion and follow my direction.
107. Others have frequently remarked on the heartwarming love evident in church suppers or other social events that I have coordinated.
108. I have the faith to step out and interpret what someone else has spoken in a tongue.

109. I am comfortable making important decisions, even under pressure.
110. I can sense when the anointing of the Holy Spirit intensifies in a meeting place.
111. Others have told me that I am a person of unusual vision, and I agree.
112. The Lord uses me to compose songs, deliver a message through song, or to prophesy on a musical instrument.
113. People say that the words I speak from God move their heart and stir up their hunger for intimacy with the Lord.
114. Others can point to specific instances where my prayers have resulted in visible miracles.
115. People say I am gifted with my hands.
116. People often seek me out to pray for their physical healing.
117. I listen for and obey God's direction to know how to distribute my wealth for His kingdom purposes.
118. I enjoy working with the "unfortunate" and the "have-nots" who are often overlooked by others.
119. I have felt an unusual presence of God and personal confidence when important decisions needed to be made.
120. I have witnessed people coming under conviction when I shared insights given to me from the Holy Spirit.
121. I have a deep desire to see people excel, and I tell them that.
122. I feel God's blessing, power, and anointing when publicly speaking His message.
123. I help wandering Christians find their way back to a growing relationship with Jesus.
124. Starting new groups of Christians in areas where there aren't many excites me.
125. I find great joy in working with minorities, people of other countries, or those with other distinct cultural differences.
126. People have told me that I have communicated timely and urgent messages that must have come directly from the Lord.

127. I have a strong desire to help non-Christians find salvation through Jesus Christ, and it frustrates me to hear a good gospel message with no invitation to receive Him.
128. The Lord calls on me to pray often.
129. I am confident in my authority to cast out demons in Jesus' name.
130. I feel like I'm fulfilling my ministry when I am at work, and God has granted me spiritual authority in that environment.

-Adapted from the work of Church Growth Institute and others

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EVALUATION ANSWER SHEET

*Note: This answer sheet is to be used in conjunction with the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Statements.
The Spiritual Gifts Evaluation can also be taken online at www.LMCI.org.*

Step 1. Select the value from 0–4 to the degree that the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation statement is true in your life: 0 = Not at all 1 = Little 2 = Moderately 3 = Considerable 4 = Strongly

| ANSWERS | | | | | TOTAL | ROW | GIFT |
|---------|----|----|-----|-----|-------|-----|------|
| 1 | 27 | 53 | 79 | 105 | | A | |
| 2 | 28 | 54 | 80 | 106 | | B | |
| 3 | 29 | 55 | 81 | 107 | | C | |
| 4 | 30 | 56 | 82 | 108 | | D | |
| 5 | 31 | 57 | 83 | 109 | | E | |
| 6 | 32 | 58 | 84 | 110 | | F | |
| 7 | 33 | 59 | 85 | 111 | | G | |
| 8 | 34 | 60 | 86 | 112 | | H | |
| 9 | 35 | 61 | 87 | 113 | | I | |
| 10 | 36 | 62 | 88 | 114 | | J | |
| 11 | 37 | 63 | 89 | 115 | | K | |
| 12 | 38 | 64 | 90 | 116 | | L | |
| 13 | 39 | 65 | 91 | 117 | | M | |
| 14 | 40 | 66 | 92 | 118 | | N | |
| 15 | 41 | 67 | 93 | 119 | | O | |
| 16 | 42 | 68 | 94 | 120 | | P | |
| 17 | 43 | 69 | 95 | 121 | | Q | |
| 18 | 44 | 70 | 96 | 122 | | R | |
| 19 | 45 | 71 | 97 | 123 | | S | |
| 20 | 46 | 72 | 98 | 124 | | T | |
| 21 | 47 | 73 | 99 | 125 | | U | |
| 22 | 48 | 74 | 100 | 126 | | V | |
| 23 | 49 | 75 | 101 | 127 | | W | |
| 24 | 50 | 76 | 102 | 128 | | X | |
| 25 | 51 | 77 | 103 | 129 | | Y | |
| 26 | 52 | 78 | 104 | 130 | | Z | |

Step 2. Add up the scores, horizontally, for each row of answers on the answer sheet.

Step 3. Use the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Answer Key to discover the categories of your three strongest (highest scoring) gifts/ministries and enter those categories on this answer sheet.

Step 4. Refer to the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Ministry Definitions for further explanation of your results.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EVALUATION KEY

Note: This key is to be used in conjunction with the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Statements and the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Answer Sheet. The Spiritual Gifts Evaluation may also be taken online at www.LMCI.org.

Instructions:

Step 1. Use this Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Key to discover the categories of your three strongest (highest scoring) gifts/ministries and enter those category names on your Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Answer Sheet.

Step 2. Refer to the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Ministry Definitions for further explanation of your results.

- A. Helps/Service
- B. Leadership
- C. Hospitality
- D. Interpretation of Tongues
- E. Administration
- F. Discerning of Spirits
- G. Faith
- H. Music/Praise & Worship
- I. Seer
- J. Miracles
- K. Craftsmanship
- L. Healing
- M. Ministry of Liberality
- N. Mercy
- O. Wisdom
- P. Knowledge
- Q. Exhortation
- R. Teaching
- S. Pastor/Shepherd
- T. Apostleship
- U. Missionary
- V. Prophet
- W. Evangelism
- X. Prayer/Intercession
- Y. Deliverance
- Z. Marketplace Ministry

-Adapted from the work of Church Growth Institute and others

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EVALUATION MINISTRY DEFINITIONS

Note: These definitions are to be used in conjunction with the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Statements, Answer Sheet, and Evaluation Key. The Spiritual Gifts Evaluation may also be taken online at www.LMCI.org.

The Greek word for ministry is *diakonos*, which means “a way of service.” The ministries listed here are particular ways of service that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the administrator of the church (1 Corinthians 12:5), has chosen to show a part of Himself. Each person has a measure of the gift of Christ (Ephesians 4:7; Romans 12:3) and particular adeptness and abilities (Romans 12:6).

These definitions, listed alphabetically, show how each of these ministries contribute to the whole body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7). They are not written to limit a person’s function and practice but to give guidelines of direction and practice. Scripture references or recommendations, though by no means exhaustive, are given for further study.

Administration

People with this ministry are particularly adept at organization, planning, and the oversight of plans and projects. It is often accompanied by a ministry of wisdom, such as Joseph administering the affairs of Pharaoh and Egypt. This is often a behind-the-scenes function and is extremely effective in fellowship with a “leadership” ministry.

Apostleship

Considered to be a chief officer in the church (1 Corinthians 12:28), this is one sent by God (Greek *apo* –from, *stellos* –sent) with a particular mission in life. An apostle can be doctrinally contributive or specific to an area for the whole church, such as excelling in imparting an understanding of faith or gifts of the Spirit. Apostles are usually associated with founding and establishing churches. (For more information refer to *Utilizing Gift Ministries*).

Craftsmanship

Certain people are gifted with ability to make or fashion things. For example, Bezaleel and Aholiab were craftsmen of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:1–11). These ministries have “conceptual” abilities and are a gift to the church in that they can craft items needed whether in physical service or for worship. Another example of this ability was Tubal-Cain (Genesis 4:22).

Deliverance

Deliverance ministers are confident of their God-given authority and adept at casting out demons, boldly demonstrating the power we have in the name of Jesus Christ to set the captives free. This ministry requires a high level of spiritual maturity and a long suit in the revelation gifts of word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and discerning of spirits.

Discerning of Spirits

This ministry utilizes a high degree of spiritual sensitivity to detect with assurance the origin of the presence (or non-presence) of spirits—whether they are of God, the spirit of man, or the evil spirit kingdom. It also has adeptness at distinguishing whether certain behavior purported to be of God is in reality divine, human, or satanic. This ministry often works in conjunction with a deliverance ministry and is also connected with intercession and spiritual warfare.

Evangelist

This is a ministry sent to win new people for the Lord. (See *Utilizing Gift Ministries*). It carries a propensity for miracles and healings (1 Corinthians 12:28 and the evangelist Phillip in Acts 8). This is a “preacher” who announces the message of salvation and usually carries an anointing of excitement, confrontation, and often healing.

Exhortation

This ministry carries similar attributes as a prophet in that the person is a spokesperson for the Lord. His or her words offer encouragement, consolation, comfort, and counsel for the practical application of truth. It sees people’s potential and therefore exhorts and encourages them to fulfill their calling.

Faith

This ministry is the special ability that God gives certain members of the body of Christ to discern with extraordinary confidence the will and purposes of God for His work. Gifts of healing and working of miracles often accompany this ministry. These people are empowered by God to “see things already done” and are an inspiration to others around them to keep the motivation to finish the task.

Healing

This ministry is more than just having a desire to see people healed; it is the actual doing of it. All believers should lay hands on the sick (Mark 16:18), but this ministry imparts

gifts of healing by the will of God through revelation (not just praying for the sick through one's own faith). It is closely related to miracles, but the result is manifested differently.

Helps/Service (Deacons)

This ministry deals with having the hands-on responsibility for projects. It mandates the ability to handle details and serve with little recognition. However, the adage “faithful in least, faithful in much” can apply to this ministry because from it, elders in the church can be prepared and trained. Also, Acts 6:1–7 shows that the help/service rendered allows other church leaders to focus without distraction on their own ministries.

Hospitality

This is the special ability that God gives to certain people to provide an open house and a warm welcome to those in need of food, lodging, or rejuvenation. Because these ministers have an acute awareness of visitors and a desire to make all feel welcome, they are a key to helping newcomers become a part of the group or congregation. They provide a deep well of refreshing for the body of Christ.

Interpretation of Tongues

This is not just the gift of interpretation available to every believer. Instead, it is a greater calling and ministry of utilizing interpretation of tongues adeptly and consistently. (See 1 Corinthians 12:26 and 27). It is mainly used in public worship and sometimes flows with diversities of tongues. The Holy Spirit also utilizes those with this ministry to give the interpretation when someone else has spoken in a tongue for the profit (edification, exhortation, or comfort) of the church.

Knowledge

This is a ministry gifted with a propensity of word of knowledge. It operates as the Holy Spirit gives specific information in any area (including knowledge of the future). The gift can be received by all Christians, but the Holy Spirit pours it out in abundance upon certain individuals. Those with this ministry are also at home in a book or studying, and they will often spend countless hours in research.

Leadership

This ministry closely relates to the attributes, but not necessarily the calling, of an apostle. It includes visionary qualities and a “natural” tendency to be the first one at the helm of projects.

Marketplace Ministry

Marketplace ministers have a strong spiritual calling to the workplace, meaning their work *is* their ministry. They frequently receive revelation about business strategies, and they are often divinely positioned in key places to impact their communities. Their kingdom work is very evident in the workplace, and they are spiritually fulfilled by using their God-given authority and abilities there.

Mercy

This ministry carries the same heart as a pastor in that it loves the “unlovable.” When no one else cares about someone, this ministry will find that one lost sheep and nurture it back to health. (It is the one you want to see when you are hurt.) Romans 12:8 says this ministry is to be done with cheer, not a long face of pity.

Ministry of Liberality

Certain individuals are gifted with ability and favor to give remarkably great amounts of their income or material resources to the work of the Lord. These ministries are a gift to the church (not to the individual) and as such, they are not to squander their wealth on selfish pursuits. (See *The Ministry of Liberality*.)

Miracles

This ministry often accompanies a ministry of faith. It has a propensity to bring things out of heaven into a concrete form on earth. Moses was empowered with this gift. This ministry will win multitudes whereas healing may win one or two at a time.

Missionary

Although the word “missionary” is the Latin equivalent to the Greek word “apostle,” this ministry’s function is more similar to an evangelist than an apostle. It is a “harvester” in a far away vineyard. Its job is not to establish churches but to win lost people for the kingdom of God. Even so, this ministry needs to work closely with an apostle.

Music/Praise and Worship

This ministry is obvious and is a God-given talent. Both Lucifer and David are prime examples—the utilization of this ministry brought one to be the most cursed of all creatures and the other to be a “man after God’s own heart.” (The potential for good can be perverted by pride.) Music is properly used to glorify God, and those with this ministry help bring people into the presence of the Lord.

Pastor

This is a shepherd who has a God-given heart for the sheep. They have loving and compassionate attributes that enable them to help feed, care for, and bind the wounds of injured people. (See *Utilizing Gift Ministries*.) This is a ministry of great importance in connecting a local “flock” to the whole body of Christ and mobile ministries.

Prayer/Intercession

People with this ministry are servants to the whole body of Christ through prayer. They often seek the solitude of God and His fellowship more than the fellowship of people. There is a “heart for prayer” that is the driving urge behind this ministry, but it also includes the operation of diverse kinds of tongues, which is the tool of powerful intercession. Intercessors usually offer great insight for leaders as well as prayer coverage. (See “The Vital Relationship Between Pastors and Intercessors.”)

Prophet

This is a senior ministry in the body of Christ, not just the gift of prophecy. A prophet may function as a seer or a speaker. He or she will usually carry a long suit in exhortation and will speak for God irrespective of consequence. (See *Utilizing Gift Ministries*.) A primary goal of New Testament-era prophets should be to teach others how to hear the voice of God themselves.

Seer

A seer is one who sees the things of the Spirit but not always in a conventional way. With their spiritual senses, seers often “see” angels and demons. They may “smell” the soon coming rain or “hear” the trumpet of the Lord, etc. In these New Testament days, the seer’s goal should be to see and reveal Christ Jesus (e.g., like John and the book of Revelation), heightening a hunger in the church for intimacy with the Lord.

Teacher

This can be one sent to the whole body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:28) or to any aggregate of people (Romans 12:7). (See *Utilizing Gift Ministries*.) The purpose of this ministry is instruction. It includes the ability to grasp truth and concepts, arrange them in a pattern, and present them with simplicity and clarity. Teachers carry a low profile as they work to establish an already existing situation.

Wisdom

This is a gift of “knowing how to get things done.” It is not necessarily one in leadership, but assists those who are. These ministers could also be an advisor, a counselor, or a confidant. Oftentimes, the ministry of wisdom accompanies the ministry of helps/service.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS EVALUATION RESPONSE FORM

Note: This response form refers to the results obtained by utilizing the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Statements, Answer Sheet, Answer Key, and Ministry Definitions. The Spiritual Gifts Evaluation may also be taken online at www.LMCI.org.

Instructions:

Step 1. After taking the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation, use the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Key to discover the categories of your three strongest (highest scoring) gifts/ministries. Enter those ministry category names on this Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Response Form.

Step 2. Complete the rest of this form and mail to Liberating Ministries Christ International, PO Box 38, Bedford, VA 24523.

According to the Spiritual Gifts Evaluation Answer Sheet, my three highest-scored ministry categories are:

(1)

(2)

(3)

Name:

Spouse's Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Home/Work/Cell Phone:

Email:

*Please mail your completed response form to LMCI, PO Box 38, Bedford, VA 24523.
Thank you!*

SECTION II

FULFILLING YOUR PERSONAL MINISTRY

This book could have easily been split into two volumes—one for realizing your personal ministry and the other for fulfilling it—since each warrants its own independent study. However, because they are so closely aligned and intertwined, I decided to put them both into the same volume. Logically, you *cannot* fulfill your personal ministry until you first know what it is, which is why it is necessary to read section 1 first.

I also highly recommend spending time in prayer and fasting before moving into this next section. Even if we feel sure of what the Lord has called us to do, He will deepen our understanding and commitment when we take the time to seek His face before launching out. I believe this is mandatory if we are to be the good and faithful servants the Lord desires us to be for the establishing of His kingdom on earth.

Once you are ready to move into this section on fulfilling your personal ministry, remember that this will be your driving commitment all the rest of the days of your life. This is not a one-time study that you can read and check off your “to do list.” You will need to stay focused and refer to these truths often in order to stay on course. There is an old saying that is applicable here: “It’s difficult to remember the purpose of draining the swamp when you are knee deep in alligators.” In other words, it will be hard to stay on track in the midst of enemy’s attacks. He will do his best to distract us from what the Lord has called us to do; therefore, we must continually refresh ourselves with the vision He has given us.

I have placed three chapters within this second section: “Get Busy,” “Get Help,” and “Get It Together with Others.” This, by no means, is exhaustive, but it will give you a good platform upon which other related subjects may be built. Each of these subjects is practical in nature and have little doctrinal teaching aside from straightforward obedience.

Section 3, “Write the Vision and Carry Out the Plan,” will help to transition you into a practical application of the truths in this book and also provide a measurable standard for you to survey periodically.

CHAPTER SIX

GET BUSY

Now that the vision has been made plain and you have written it down and posted it in a place where you can see it and read it daily, you can begin running in the right direction. This may seem obvious, but sometimes “common sense ain’t too common.”

A study of the words “slothful” and “diligence” will help us to understand this necessary next step. In the King James Version, “diligence” and its related words are used 61 times; “slothful” and its related words are used 17 times. I believe the fact that there are more words concerning diligence shows that what we do (through diligence) is more important than what we do not do (through slothfulness).

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.
Proverbs 4:23 KJV

He that diligently seeketh good procureth favour: but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him.
Proverbs 11:27 KJV

As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.
Proverbs 26:14 KJV

Diligence and slothfulness are both traced back to the same source—the decision and action (or inaction) of the individual. Whether we will or will not do something depends upon our decision—not our desire. Desire comes out of the soul, but decision comes out of the spirit. Most of us have heard the old adage: “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” We may have good intentions, but if we never carry them out, they are nothing more than good ideas that will never produce fruit.

As I write this at 4:50 AM, I am reminded of a conversation I had once with a friend of mine who has a great writing ability. He asked me once, “I know the Lord has called me to write, and I have subjects in mind and the ability to do it, but where do you find the time?” When I responded, “Usually at four in the morning,” I saw his jaw drop and his gaze break away from mine. I don’t think he was expecting an answer like this, but I had to be honest with him if I was going to help him. I explained to him that the key to discipline is not the ability to regiment the flesh, but vision. If your vision is clearly in front of you, you will continue to desire it and pursue it. *If you want something bad enough, you will pay the price to get it.*

Stir Up the Gift of God

When it comes to the aspect of fulfilling a ministry, perhaps one verse stands alone at the top of the list:

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.
2 Timothy 1:6

This verse sits in the context of the foundational truths we have already gleaned out of 2 Timothy 1: 9 and 10. We learned that the *epiphaneia* of Jesus is the true revelation of what God has called us to be. Even with that powerful truth in our hearts, however, if we do not stir up that gift, it will lay dormant in our lives and not bring forth the fruit that the Lord intended.

You may think that the words “stir up” mean to use a swizzle stick and stir to the end that nothing is allowed to settle at the bottom of a cup or glass—and that does have something to do with it. However, when we examine the Greek word for “stir up,” *anazōpureo*, we will see that it has an amazing definition that goes deeper than this. (It is also significant that this is its only use in the Bible.)

The prefix, *ana*, means “to do something again.” This prefix is attached to two root words: *zoe*, which means “life,” and *pur*, which means “fire.” It is Strong’s usage #329, and the preferred definition is “to rekindle.” As we meditate on this in its context, we begin to see the greater meaning of it.

That gift of God, which you are to stir up, is a gift of fire He placed deep within your heart. It is a living fire—a pulsating reality—the throbbing drive that “floats your boat.” For a fire to burn, it needs three elements: fuel, heat, and air. In this case, the fuel is your body—it is to be consumed on the altar (Romans 12:1); the heat is the baptism of fire (Luke 12:49 and 50) or commitment; the air is the breath of God coming from the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2—note the usage of fire in verse 3). To “stir it up” means to bring it to the surface again and let the breath of the Holy Spirit breathe on it to rekindle it to life. *We* must stir up the gift of God that is within us.

We have all seen what happens when someone blows on a smoldering fire—it bursts into flames. When God breathes on anything, it will burn. For that gift of fire to be rekindled within you, the breath of life (oxygen for the fire) needs to be blown on it.

By the freedom of our will, we make the decision to rekindle our commitment by giving our bodies as a living sacrifice. I heard once that the only problem with a living sacrifice is that it keeps crawling off of the altar. As funny as that seems, it is true. Staying on the altar demands commitment and discipline. Yes, it is challenging, but why are we here on the planet anyway? We must bring our bodies into subjection (1 Corinthians 9:27), and that demands commitment.

Get Discipline

I mentioned before that the key to getting discipline was not to regiment the flesh but to have vision. I initially learned this concept from one of my heroes, Derek Prince, and even though I have taken this and refined it a little, the credit goes to him.

“Disciple” is the Greek word *mathetēs* and simply means “a learner or a close follower of a teacher.” It also means that the student *practices* what he has learned from his teacher. In other words, teaching is activated through the teacher, but learning is activated through the student. This is why we esteem Jesus as *the* Master, because He not only instructed, He demonstrated—He practiced what He preached.

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

Luke 6:40

We must always hold the example of Jesus before our eyes and conform to the image of the Master. We must see Him do what He wants us to do and then follow His example. We can see Him through the Scriptures, and we can see Him with our spiritual eyes as the Holy Spirit reveals Him to us.

He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

John 16:14–15

Although Jesus promised the Spirit of truth (the Holy Spirit) would reveal Jesus to us, in order to become a learner and not just a student, we must *practice* what we see Him do. For example, I read about Jesus healing people, and I had even “seen” it by the Holy Spirit revealing it to me as I read the Bible. But it was not until I actually laid my hands on someone and began *doing* the lesson that I became a learner.

To get the necessary vision that will then inspire our discipline, *we need a revelation of Jesus as **Master** and not just Savior.* The Lord spoke this to me one day. He said, “If you will start calling me Master, I will teach you how to do what I want you to.” It works.

In Luke 6:40 we learn that the disciple must be perfect as his master. “Perfect” is the same basic word as is used in 2 Timothy 3:17.

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, **thoroughly furnished** unto all good works.*

2 Timothy 3:16–17 KJV

In this verse in 2 Timothy, the New King James Version renders it “thoroughly [fully] equipped.” This is a great lesson. Luke 6:40 tells us that we will be perfect when we are like the Master, and 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17 tells us that we get this full equipping from the Scriptures. When we put these two truths together, we realize that we cannot get our

lessons of discipline only from reading the written Word of God. We must also get disciplined by the Incarnate Word—the *living* Word of God, who is Jesus. *You will never have true discipline unless you know Jesus as your personal Master and Trainer.*

We must get busy following Jesus—doing what He did, in the way He did it. We must hold Him as our standard in motive and action. We must walk as He walked in power and love. We must be perfect as the Master and do as He did.

But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1 John 2:5–6

To fulfill our personal ministry, we must have a revelation of Jesus and that part of His calling we are individually assigned to replicate and accomplish. Then we must learn how to do what He did in that area as we learn from Him.

This is why it is important to write out our own personal vision of the part of Jesus we are called to be and do. As we daily read our written vision, it will help us to stay focused and committed to fulfill that “part of Jesus” that God has willed each of us to perform.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GET HELP

This chapter on getting help is absolutely mandatory because no matter how gifted we may be, there are still things we need to learn from each other in the body of Christ. This is especially true for anyone who is just starting out in ministry.

Humility is a prerequisite to asking someone else for help, because pride will make us think that we can do it on our own. Humility is a true test of godliness. With it, we can acquire the help we need from our brothers and sisters as well as from God. Without it, we will be resigned to a life of independence—existing and subsisting with the single motive of caring only for ourselves.

Humility was a great virtue lacking in Adam and Eve’s character, as seen from their original sin of independence. I know of no scripture that shows that God gives humility; however, there are records that show He can bring someone to a point of humiliation if necessary.

There is a reason for this: God wants us to demonstrate our love for Him by admitting our constant, desperate need for Him. Humility stems from that admission—that He is God and we are not. It is the opposite of pride, and pride is the greatest character killer there is. I believe this is a universal truth, since I have ministered around the world and witnessed that regardless of the culture, pride will kill an otherwise solid character. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

*Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”? But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “**God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**”*

James 4:5–6

We need to humble ourselves and receive help—first from God, and second from our brothers and sisters too. Most Christians agree that they cannot fulfill their callings without God’s help, but they may be unwilling to submit themselves to the aid, advice, and oversight of others. Unbelievers in the secular world will usually accept the help of others but not their need for God’s help. They reject His grace and even His existence to the end of promoting self only.

Those of us who walk humbly before the Lord acknowledge our need for Him *and* others, and we actively seek both. We are keenly aware that God is the one who not only provides us with the resources and revelation we need to fulfill our purposes, but He will also supply the right relationships so that we can receive the help we need from others.

The Lord never intended for our ministries to be self-sufficient or self-serving. Actually, if they were, they would not truly be ministries (or services), because they would not benefit others to build up the body of Christ. Just as our ministries provide services to others, their ministries also provide services to us. Our ministries must flow harmoniously together where the Lord has placed us in His body if we expect to fulfill our destinies and callings.

From whom [Christ] 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.
Ephesians 4:16

The only way that the body of Christ will grow is for every part to do its share. In order for that to happen, we must all recognize that those surrounding us contribute to the overall success of the body of Christ. For example, pastors need apostles; prophets need intercessors; elders need ministers of hospitality; deacons need exhortation; teachers need evangelists; and everyone needs ministers of cheer. These are just a few examples of the gifts and callings that need to work together. There are many more, but the main point to remember is that none of us can function apart from others.

The interrelationships between ministries is a massive subject that could easily fill another book, but the reason it is pertinent to realizing and fulfilling our personal ministries is because it will help us to recognize our need for a mentor.

Mentoring

Most successful men and women in the business or secular world acknowledge the importance of mentors; however, many of us in the “church world” have failed to recognize the significance of having those who are more experienced or mature help us. In the secular realm, there are master plumbers, electricians, carpenters, and salespersons, etc., and they provide on-the-job instruction, training, and oversight. We desperately need this provision in the church as well. Too many ministries launch out on their own without proper training and supervision.

There are examples of mentoring throughout the Scriptures. Obvious examples include David and Solomon, Elijah and Elisha, Moses and Joshua, Jesus and the twelve, and Paul and Timothy. I believe the Lord has made it clear throughout the Bible that mentoring holds a vital link to the overall health and continuance of the church of Jesus Christ. I also believe that one of the reasons we have witnessed so much ministerial failure in our day is that we have been deficient in this area.

Although the church has experienced some growth in the area of mentoring recently, it has occurred more through conferences and training seminars. I am very thankful for these gatherings and their benefits for the church, but there is still a need for proper accountability that cannot be provided through non-personal meetings. I know of no greater way to ensure that accountability than to have personal mentoring.

Finding a mentor is often a challenge for people aspiring to fulfill a ministry. I suggest you go to the leadership of your church and let them know what you believe your ministry is. Ask them if they know of someone within the church who would be qualified to offer counseling and training in a similar ministry as yours. The local church is generally the most fitting place for mentoring to take place. The relationships will be closer geographically, thereby allowing the oversight and training to be face-to-face. This personal interaction and instruction will help to strengthen the bonds of trust and friendship, making the subsequent growth much richer than it would be from phone calls or emails.

Another way to find a mentor is to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading when you attend seminars and/or training conferences that pertain to your ministry. Ask the Lord to give you a divine appointment with someone there who would be willing *and able* to help you. I emphasized the words "and able" because oftentimes we meet someone we would like to have work with us, and they simply are not able to help. This is especially true of those in leadership positions who have full schedules; they may be honored that you asked them, but they usually do not have the time.

If you approach someone like this who is unable to help you, you can ask him or her to recommend someone else. If they do, then it is your responsibility to follow up on the referral. It is usually the responsibility of the mentored (you) to initiate action and to cultivate the relationship with the mentor.

Remember also to "give honor to whom honor is due" (Romans 13:7), since there will be times when tribute is a reasonable response to a mentor.

Another aspect to consider is that *you* may be that provision to another brother or sister. Perhaps you have expertise in a certain field. Why not offer your talents to an aspiring servant with the same persuasions as your own? There are many things for us all to learn from each other, whether we are the mentored or the mentor. The movie *Finding Forrester* is a good example of what a mentor can do for a young person and the reciprocal benefit that can come to the mentor.

Relationships between mentors and the mentored often last a lifetime. The mentor will have great Godly pride in seeing the student advance, hopefully beyond the mentor's accomplishments. Mentors should also understand when the people they are working with are ready to be released into their ministries. There is a growing process and (much the same as with adolescence) responsibility is to be doled out over a period of time as the person demonstrates the ability to handle the portion given to him or her.

Called and Separated

When it comes to getting help from a mentor, the understanding of calling and separation is vital. We are first *called* to a ministry and then *separated* to fulfill it. The bridge of time between the calling and the separation is *preparation*. The best example of this in the Scriptures is the Apostle Paul.

Romans 1:1 and Acts 13:1–2 give the details of being called and separated. Paul was called to be an apostle from the day of his conversion on the road to Damascus. The Lord told him that he was a chosen vessel to take the message of the gospel to the Gentiles. Paul immediately, like a newly born-again zealot, charged headlong into the ministry and almost lost his life in Damascus. He needed a mentor. After spending some time in Arabia, he went back to his hometown of Tarsus. Barnabas found him there and became his mentor. After serving with Barnabas for a period of time in Antioch of Syria, the Lord separated him away from his mentoring time and released him into the fulfilling of his ministry.

From time to time, we hear of situations where young believers receive prophecies that mention a great ministry for them. These novices, like Paul, zealously charge onto the scene and grab the bull by the horns. All too often, the horns belong to someone already in a ministerial responsibility and the bull pushes back. We all need to understand that zeal is good (Galatians 4:18), but the zealot needs mentoring and stabilizing. We all have need of wisdom, and for those of us who have witnessed these situations, or lived through them ourselves, we need to impart that wisdom to those less mature than us. In misunderstandings we need to be children, but in understanding we need to be mature men and women.

Getting help from others includes more than just mentoring. The Bible tells us that older women should guide and advise the younger (Titus 2:3 and 4). Likewise, young men are exhorted to be in submission to elders. All of us need to be submissive to those in authority and realize that God gives authority to those who are willing to be under authority.

We need the help of others—in training and in relationships. There are many members to the body of Christ, and our ministries work best when they work in harmony with each other. What will the interpreter do if the tongue speaker is not present? Who will the teacher teach if the evangelist does not evangelize? Where will the people sit when the pastor preaches if the deacon does not set up the chairs? We are all members of one body with different functions but with one common goal—building a kingdom fit for our King.

The Holy Spirit as Our Helper

The greatest empowering and equipping ability to fulfill our ministries comes from the Holy Spirit. Yes, natural ability, such as gray matter and natural charisma, allow people to perform amazing tasks, but it is the power of the Holy Spirit that truly enables us to rise up to the heights of the spiritual part of Jesus that God has foreordained us to fulfill.

*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves;
but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the
new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but
the spirit giveth life.*
2 Corinthians 3:5–6

There has been much debate about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and its availability today, but there is little objection when people really hunger to fulfill the destiny that God has sown in them. In reality, there are several doctrines of baptisms (Hebrew 6:2):

- the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is for salvation (Romans 6:6);
- water baptism is for repentance (Matthew 3:11);
- baptism of fire is for commitment (Luke 12:50);
- the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5) is for service.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit has been talked about extensively within charismatic circles, but sometimes we forget the need we truly have for its empowerment in order to fulfill what God has called us to do. The nine gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7–10 are a Christian’s power supply to perform the same, or similar, works that Jesus did.

Jesus promised us that we should, could, and would do the same works that He did (John 14:12) because He would go to the Father and send the Holy Spirit.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.
John 14:12

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit that comes upon us so that we can do the same works as Jesus did in order to serve, help others, and fulfill our ministries.

In actuality, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as promised in 1 Corinthians 12:7, is given to each person for the common profit of all (the church).

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.
1 Corinthians 12:7

The gifts of empowerment are then listed in verses 8–10. They are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, workings of miracles, gifts of healings, prophecy, discerning of spirits, diverse kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

When these gifts are individually operated, a single profit and evidence of the Spirit is produced. However, there will be times when they will emerge as a consistent pattern in someone’s life. Many times they will work in combination with other gifts as energized by the Holy Spirit. When this happens, we are witnessing the dawning of that individual’s ministry or divine calling and destiny. This is why 1 Corinthians 12:31 says to earnestly desire the best gifts. *The best gifts are the ones that make your ministry functional and truly profitable for all others in the body of Christ.*

Examples of the “best” gifts for empowering our ministries are as common as there are ministries. For example, to be an effective intercessor, the best gifts to desire earnestly would probably be the gifts of diverse kinds of tongues, discerning of spirits, and the gift of faith. To be an effective teacher the best gifts would logically be prophecy, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and the gift of faith. To be a healer, discerning of spirits, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and gifts of healing would be among the best gifts. To be a minister of liberality (one who sows money into the kingdom of God) one would need word of knowledge, word of wisdom, gifts of faith, and working of miracles. The list goes on and on.

The only way we will be truly effective in our ministries is by seeking help from the Holy Spirit. I was teaching this once and a lady walked up to me and said, “I have been an intercessor for 40 years and do not speak in tongues.” She continued to say, “I did not need it then, and I do not need it now.” I responded, “I really admire your tenacity and commitment to fulfill a ministry for so long, having such poor tools. You are like a ditch digger using a spoon. If you really care about those individuals that God has assigned you to pray for, then humble yourself and seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit so that you can be the greatest intercessor you possibly could be.”

I was a little shocked when she retorted, “My denomination does not believe in that.” She must have been even more shocked when I said, “I personally know the head of your denomination and not only is He baptized in the Holy Spirit, but He has also authorized me to tell every one in that group that He is instituting sweeping reform on that subject.” She said, “I didn’t know that you knew the Bishop.” I said, “I don’t. The head of your denomination is Jesus Christ. He most certainly is baptized in the Holy Spirit, and if He is not the head of your denomination, you need to get out.”

There can be no room in a true disciple’s heart for anything but total commitment to Jesus Christ and a resolve to fulfill the part of His life and commission given to them. We must remember that not only are there higher-profiled ministries such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, but that there are also those that may not be seen up front, such as elders, deacons, intercessors, ministries of hospitality, mercy, cheer, and liberality. All are necessary for the whole church to be complete, and all of them will be accomplished with the empowering gift of our Helper—the Holy Spirit.

We need to have the humility to get help from God through the Holy Spirit and from our brothers and sisters if we are going to fulfill our divine destinies and callings. Then we need to build relationships with others so that the fullness of our ministries can be released through us working side by side to make increase of the body of Christ.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GET IT TOGETHER WITH OTHERS

We all need to work together to fulfill our ministries and destinies. This truth is made clear by the analogy set forth in 1 Corinthians 12:27.

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.
1 Corinthians 12:27

Although we are individual members, we must function *together* to accomplish the work of the kingdom. The verses before this say that the eye cannot say to the ear, or the hand to the foot, that they have no need of each other. What would there be for the teacher to do if the evangelist had not won the lost? Where would the prophet go if there were no pastors overseeing local flocks or congregations? We are all tied together and, therefore, have need of each other.

There is a wonderful truth concerning this found in Ephesians 4:16. The placement of this gem in the pivotal chapter of Ephesians makes it shine like a beautiful diamond on a velvet pillow.

From whom [Christ] 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.
Ephesians 4:16

The whole body is knit together by what each joint supplies. The joints represent relationships. Without joints, a physical body is not a body but a conglomeration of arms, legs, organs, etc., formless and powerless. The same holds true in the spiritual body of Christ; therefore, *relationships are not an option.*

When lions or hyenas hunt in Africa, they look for gazelles that have isolated themselves from their herd. When they find them, they stalk them. The devil does the same with Christians who have withdrawn themselves from their spiritual family. It's no wonder many believers come under such attacks from the devil when they are divided from the body of Christ. They become easy targets for the fiery darts of the wicked. It reminds me of what Benjamin Franklin said at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."

A major key for each of us doing our part well is the quality of the relationships we have with others. In Colossians 3:12–14, we see the attributes necessary to cultivate and perfect these relationships.

*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. **But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.***

Colossians 3:12–14

The love we have for each other in the body of Christ is the bond (the cohesive element that holds us together) of perfection. That love includes the ability to forgive one another the same way Christ has forgiven us.

There is a particular Greek word that defines how we as members in particular should “get along.” It is the word *alleon* and is translated “one another.” If you take the time to look up the following verses where this word is used, and pay close attention to the action connected with it, I believe your understanding about getting along with others will be greatly enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Here are the references: John 13:34; Romans 12:10; 14:13; 15:14; Galatians 5:15 and 26; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13 and 16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24; and 1 John 3:23.

The abundance of these verses where “one another” (*alleon*) is used confirms the Father’s desire to see His children work together and love each other. If there is a damaged relationship in the body of Christ, the He commands us to reconcile, so that the body be one as Jesus prayed for in John 17:21.

That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

John 17:21

We need a revelation of God’s heart concerning the body becoming one. Broken relationships must be repaired and restored just as a broken bone needs to be set, stabilized, and given time to heal. Loving relationships are vital if the body is to function at its optimum.

We may “get busy” pursuing our ministries and even “get help” from others and the Holy Spirit, but if we do not “get it together” with our brothers and sisters—if we do not have love for one another—we will not be able to operate in the capacity that God has called us to. We will be the clanging cymbal that 1 Corinthians 13:1 speaks of.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

1 Corinthians 13:1

In the context of realizing and fulfilling our personal ministries, this verse shows us that even if we operate the gift we have been given, if we do not form those loving relationships with our brothers and sisters, we will just be making noise (or as the verses following this one show, there will be no profit and we will be as nothing).

I exhort you to look over the verses above with *allelon* in them and endeavor to do what is instructed in them.

SECTION III

WRITE THE VISION AND CARRY OUT THE PLAN

This concluding portion of *Realizing and Fulfilling Your Personal Ministry* contains lessons that will take you from a doctrinal understanding of your ministry to the practical application of fulfilling it. It is basically a short process that leads you through a process of realizing what your ministry is and then fulfill it. To reach that desired goal requires not just having a vision of who God has called you to be but a plan of how to fulfill it.

The Spiritual Gifts Evaluation given at the end of section 1 should have confirmed the revelation given to you by the Holy Spirit concerning what your ministry is. Writing the vision and setting goals will lay a basic foundation of what you need to do to fulfill your destiny in Jesus. If you have not taken the evaluation, then I suggest you do so before proceeding to this section.

When we stand before the Lord Jesus Christ at His judgment seat, we should all desire to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” My prayer is that these lessons will help that desire become a reality.

CHAPTER NINE

SET GODLY GOALS

*Wise planning will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe.
Proverbs 2:11 NLT*

Administrative procedures in the secular world mandate the practice of setting goals, but what the secular world does not realize is that setting goals is actually God's invention. The fact that the secular world has tapped into this practice, while the church has not, is not God's fault but that of the teachers and mentors in the body of Christ. Corporate executives insist that each department head have written forecasts of where their department is going, how long it will take to get there, and how much it will cost. Why? Because the results have proven time and time again—*if you fail to plan, you plan to fail*. Even with this knowledge, however, the Christian world usually drifts listlessly on a sea of varying currents and winds, hoping to arrive at a beneficial port. This is like the old adage that says: "If any port will do, then any wind will do also."

Perhaps it is only my observation, but I have also noticed that a lack of planning or goal setting is often justified with an "I-don't-want-to-get-in-God's-way" attitude. This kind of attitude predetermines that setting a goal is contrary to God's will and could actually be a deterrent to it coming to pass. This logic is symptomatic of "charismania" and is a good example of the children of the world being wiser than the children of God.

*And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely:
for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the
children of light.
Luke 16:8 KJV*

Again, God is the one who initiated the concept of setting goals, and He did it in order to compensate for our lack of divine omniscience. No man knows the future, aside from those things God chooses to reveal, but setting goals allows us to crystallize a strategy of reaching a set point in the future. Goal setting is how progress can be planned and advancement scheduled. Godly goals are rooted in the revelation of the Holy Spirit and provide the church, as well as the individual Christian, with signposts that will take them to the haven and port of their destiny. Secular goals are extensions of the mind or imagination and the product of aggressive thinking. **The major difference between secular goals and spiritual goals is that secular goals are set by imagination while spiritual goals are set by revelation of the Holy Spirit.**

Perhaps the Christian world needs a crash course in Godly goal setting. Both Christian institutions, as well as individual believers, need to understand that the Father redeemed the world through Christ by planning and setting objectives (smaller goals to reach the bigger goal). Jesus did not just "happen" to arrive in Jerusalem at the Passover, on the exact day He was to be sacrificed, and it was not a coincidence that He died at the same

time as the Passover lamb was slain. The Father, who is the greatest organizer of all time, initiated the management skill of planning backwards, and Jesus, as the Incarnate Word, demonstrated it by carrying it out.

Planning Backwards

Planning backwards is the basic management tool of progressive, organizational administration, whether secular or Christian. Both start with a master plan (goal) and then incrementally trace the necessary steps of each action backwards to set the necessary objectives to accomplish it. Every objective is given an accompanying amount of time to reach its completion.

For example, how does a contractor give a promise date of occupancy to the new homeowner? Initially, he looks at the finished product and then begins planning backwards through the stages of operation, determining how long it will take to accomplish each step. He considers the landscapers, brick masons, roofers, cabinetmakers, painters, drywall contractors, electricians, carpenters—all the way back to the cement pourers and diggers for the foundation. He estimates how long it will take for each job to be done and what has to be done before the new phase can begin. *He plans backwards from the finished project.* He sees the end before he begins.

Similarly, God destined Jesus to come to the earth to redeem man by planning backwards, insuring every step would fall into the right place so that His Son would be crucified at the exact predetermined moment in time. The same is true of end-time fulfillment. Before the kingdom comes to the earth, the resurrection of the just must take place, and before that occurs, the Great Tribulation must take place; before the Great Tribulation, the departure of the church and Israel's priesthood need to be re-established; before that, Israel must be re-gathered to their homeland; before that, knowledge must increase, and men must travel to and fro, etc, etc. No man knows the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own hand, so the best we can do is to offer educated guesses of His intended timetable. But rest assured, God definitely knows the plan, and it is well under way. Yahweh, our heavenly Father, is *the* master planner and the inventor of goal setting. He knows the end from before the beginning and plans backwards.

The Master's Plan

This phrase, "The Master's Plan" is a play on words of "the master plan." There is a master plan for your life, and it is the Master's Plan for your life. It is that specific part of Jesus, *the* Master, that you have been called to fulfill.

The destiny and ministry function that the Lord assigned to you specifically is the whole scope and focus of this book. It is that portion of the construction project the Lord has assigned individually to you, and it is your place in the body of Christ. Now you must write it down and crystallize the plan in order to stay focused on the goal.

The first section of this book focused upon that plan, because if you do not know what your master plan is, then you won't know where you have been assigned to work. If you are not yet clear on the Master's Plan for your life, then you should go back and review the first section, spend time in prayer with the Father, and wait for His answer. *You must know your function and which part of Jesus' life you are to fulfill.*

It Is Not Real until It Is Written

Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it."

Habakkuk 2:2

One of the partners in our ministry, Brother Steve Munro, a very successful businessman, told me recently that even if you have a plan or a goal and it is not written, it is not real. *If you write it, you can read it and then run to fulfill it.* If it is not written, it gets out of sight and out of mind. Therefore, if you have not yet written down the aspect of the Lord Jesus' ministry that God the Father has called for you to fulfill, stop now and do it.

Capsulate within 25 words or less what God has called you to do. Remember, it is the picture you predominately hold before yourself of Jesus doing His earthly (or heavenly) service for people. Be as specific as possible. If you are called to be a teacher of youth, then specify "youth" in the vision statement too. This is your master plan, which should have been confirmed by the results of your Spiritual Gifts Evaluation.

My portion of Jesus' ministry is:

Now, visualize what Jesus looked like doing this. This is your goal or final destiny. Next, ask yourself what you need to do to walk as He walked in this realm. Assess where you are now and how long it will take you to get to the goal and then plan the increments you need to achieve to accomplish this. Remember, planning backwards is one of the major keys in writing objectives. The steps you need to take in order to systematically accomplish this goal will be your objectives.

I learned a neat trick for writing objectives from a retired Colonel in the New Zealand Army. He taught me an acronym that simplifies writing objectives. He further added that this is the how military leaders are taught to write their objectives. The acronym is SMART: S-specific; M-measurable; A-achievable; R-relative; and T-timely. Write your objectives specific to the goal and make them measurable rather than idealistic. Achievable objectives are obtainable and engender courage rather than discouragement. All your objectives need to be relative to the master goal, whether for an individual or a congregation. Finally, set a time limit on the operation. This will help all the other aspects of the SMART objectives come into focus.

For example, many churches have as a vision the Great Commission, but when they do not set specific, measurable, achievable, relative, and timely objectives, the people involved in the movement get discouraged because they never reach a specific point of accomplishment. Similarly for an individual who is striving to be like Jesus in an aspect of their life, if they do not break that goal down into bite-size pieces, they will more than likely give up, resigning themselves to defeat.

*My child, don't lose sight of good planning and insight. Hang on to them.
They keep you safe on your way and keep your feet from stumbling.
Proverbs 3:21, 23 NLT*

Goals can be set for all aspects of your life, not just the spiritual aspirations. Goals for your physical health, or financial advancement, or family growth are all profitable and can be done by writing SMART objectives. Remember if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.

Through my years of helping people to liberate their ministries I have found that many people need help in setting good, Godly goals. To help in this I would like to suggest that you do the following to get started and stay focused on the destiny that God has called you to.

1. Read at least two books a year relative to your calling and ministry. This will keep you focused on your calling and furbish you with new ideas and inspirations.
2. Attend at least one conference or seminar each year dealing with your ministry calling. This will keep you current on what is going on in your area of concern and will help you meet people of similar interest. This is also a great place to find a mentor that can help you if you bog down or get side-tracked.
3. Fellowship with others who have a similar ministry. This will get you practically oriented instead of just being doctrinal and thinking about things. This may necessitate a change of venue and relationships, but if you do nothing different, nothing changes.
4. Plan activities that will get you moving in the right direction. For example, if you want to teach like Jesus, then plan activities where you can teach, or if you want to evangelize like Him, then get involved in an activity where you can witness the gospel.
5. Find a mentor. These individuals can give you practical advice on systematically fulfilling your calling that you cannot get out of a book or a generic conference. Galatians 6:6 is a great verse to study and apply relative to mentors.
6. The power of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 1:8, is what makes you the effective minister and witness that you are and will be. Focus on the power and baptism of the Holy Spirit for the power you need to walk as Jesus walked.

In order to fulfill your ministry, you need to stay faithful, day after day, week after week, and year after year. Ask your mentor, ministry relations, or church leadership to covenant with you in speaking into your life, so that they can help you maintain your focus.

Next, I also suggest that you put your written vision and calling in a place where you will see it continually. When you see it, *read it aloud!* If you continue to read it, it will help you to stay focused. Remember the key to discipline is not just the ability to regiment the flesh, but to stay focused on the vision.

Make time each week to set goals, pray, and ask God for direction and reassess your progress. This is a major benefit of keeping a weekly Sabbath. Place your goals in front of you and work toward the Master's plan for your life.

Finally, don't forget that a later part of your responsibility is to pass along what the Lord has given you. You may need a mentor now, but sometime you will need to mentor someone else. If we do not pass along what we have learned, the next generation will have to start all over. The importance of this aspect of fulfilling your ministry will be more fully explained in our final chapter, "Finish It."

CHAPTER TEN

FINISH IT

Of all the words that Jesus spoke while upon the earth, His last ones are among the most significant. Before He gave up the spirit of man, He lifted His heart to heaven and decreed before His Father, all the angels, and all of mankind: “It is finished!”

So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. John 19:30

There has been much discussion of what exactly He was referring to in this final cry. Perhaps He was speaking of the accomplishment of mankind’s redemption, or the final victory over Satan’s plans, or the final sacrifice of His body. Although all these are awesome truths, the main point in our quest to realize and fulfill our personal ministries is that *He was faithful all the way to the end*. He obeyed the Father without fail to the final moment to insure that His main mission on earth was completed.

This is how we must live our lives—determined to complete what God has sent us to do. Although we may want to live long enough to see our children and grandchildren reach a certain age, or to see our business passed on to the next generation, or to reach a certain milestone of time, the main point is that we have a purpose to fulfill and we must strive toward that mark until it is finished. Revelation 2:10b says, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” Whatever our calling or ministry, the Lord will help us to stand faithful until the end.

What keeps a man or woman striving for the finish line? What is it that makes people throw caution to the wind and give everything they have to finish what they started? On the other hand, why do some people stop short of fulfilling a goal or *not* keeping what they set out to do? The answer lies in the person’s resolve or will. We may call it discipline or “stick-to-it-ness” or determination, but in the end it is commitment, and commitment is a choice.

Whatever we decide to call it, the Apostle Paul certainly had it. He said at the end of his life, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). Notice that he said he had fought a good *fight*, meaning that it was not easy. We can read the records of what he endured in order to finish his course in 2 Corinthians 11 and 12. He was shipwrecked, beaten, stoned, and betrayed. He was hungry, swam in the ocean for a day and a night, shivered in the cold, and was robbed. It was his commitment that carried him through these tough times. We too must learn how to fight spiritually so that we do not quit when times are tough.

Examples of this resolve are strewn throughout Christian history. If you have ever read *Foxe’s Book of Christian Martyrs*, then you know that this kind of resolve comes from

knowing that the cause of Christ is greater than life itself. Years ago I read the following statement (unfortunately, I can't recall the source): "When a man recognizes that his cause is greater than himself, it is at that point he becomes committed." People who have been committed to a cause more important than themselves are the ones who have made history.

"Commitment" is not a dirty word—on the contrary, it needs to be elevated to a high position in our lives. We need to do this because, search as I can, I have not found Scriptural evidence that God gives this quality to people. Like humility, it comes out of our human spirit and is a barometer of our character and not of our ability. *Commitment is what will keep us from quitting before we reach the finish line.*

Pass it on

Another aspect of finishing your ministry is its transfer to successors or the next generation. We see this principle when Moses passed his mantle to Joshua, when Elijah passed his to Elisha, in all the kingly and priestly successions, in Paul's passing of his mantle to Timothy, and, of course when Jesus commissioned His apostles.

Before He left the earth, even while upon the cross, Jesus blessed His people and conferred the mantle and responsibility of the ministry to them (Matthew 28:16–20; Luke 24:50). He mentored them, empowered them, and then He released them.

We have touched upon mentoring in the chapter on "Get Help." Now in this chapter on "Finish It," we see that there is a changing of roles as you become a master in your field and can now mentor others. You will be the one giving the help instead of the one getting it.

The laying on of hands and imparting a blessing and an anointing is a scriptural act of "passing the baton" on to the next runner so that they can fulfill their calling. The example of Moses passing his mantle on to Joshua is among the most notable.

*And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; **for Moses had laid his hands upon him:** and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses. Deuteronomy 34:9*

This may not seem significant in your life at this time, since you are probably not yet at the "master's level" in your ministry. But when the Lord wants you to begin imparting what He has given you, He will bring this back to your remembrance. The timing may be when the Lord begins to prepare you for going home, like He did for Paul (2 Timothy 4:8) and Peter (2 Peter 1:14). However, He could also prompt you to begin releasing those you have mentored long before the end of your course. Regardless of when you pass on what you have been given, doing so will insure the fruitfulness of your ministry and calling after you have finished your course.

Remember “the job is not finished until the tools are put away,” and that includes setting in order the things the Lord has in store for you. So finish what He has given you to do by passing it on to others. “Freely you have received, freely give.”

Surely you realize now that fulfilling your particular portion of Jesus’ life and ministry will take a lifetime of planning, implementation, and patience.

We at Liberating Ministries for Christ International are devoted to helping individuals realize and fulfill their personal ministries. We stand ready to help you in your endeavors and exploits. Please let us know if we can help you. What a joy it will be to finish your course, stand before the Lord, and hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

His lord said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.”
Matthew 25:21

NOTES

1. Moulton, Harold K., *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 1978) 404.
2. Dale M. Sides, *New Creation Realities*, CDA13 (4-compact disc set), Liberating Ministries Christ International.
3. Examples of writings in which Christian authors have called Romans the “Magna Carta” of the church can be found online at <http://www.khouse.org/articles/2000/285/print/> or at <http://hermeneutics.kulikovskyonline.net/hermeneutics/galromhc.pdf> (see footnote #2 at end of introduction) or at http://www.xulonpress.com/book_detail.php?id=4845 (read description of Dr. Al Huba’s book, *The Apostle’s Heart*).
4. The following website will expound on this in detail for those who are interested in finding out more about secular people who hold a mental picture to bring success to themselves: <http://www.intouchmag.com/visualization.html>.