

ASCENSION SERIES

MATURING
SPIRITUALLY

3 Series Combination

'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.' Luke 2:52

“Mature”: To fully develop, to reach the most advanced stage in a process

People are generally aspirational by nature – we want to be better tomorrow than we were yesterday in the areas that matter to us. As much as we may aspire, if we don't put a structure in place to achieve that improvement it will just be a nice dream. This is why we go to school, develop ourselves in our field of expertise, eat healthy, exercise and so on.

When it comes to the things of the spirit it's important that we also aspire to ascend to greater heights because our spiritual capacity is closely linked to our natural ability to achieve and sustain whatever we aspire to. Life is spiritual as such ascension in the things that draw us closer to God should be the goal for every believer. We must also seek His wisdom to understand how to navigate the issues of life so we can truly represent Him in every area of our assignment.

This month we are running the spiritual maturity series which explores **3 critical areas**: growing in our prayer life, identifying and maximizing strategic associations, growing in influence and expanding our boundaries as part of our dominion mandate.

Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit will give us the insight required so we end the year strong and start the coming year full of His wisdom.

Ascension Series

MATURING
SPIRITUALLY



Day 1

Powering Up Our Prayer Life

'Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in Christ.' 1 Corinthians 3:1

We all grow through a process of spiritual maturity and a key way to grow is our prayer life, with the focus being on the content of our prayers. When we go to God what do we show up with? Do we come with an expectation that He has a say in what we're bringing before Him or are we more interested in engaging in a monologue on our part?

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.' Matthew 6:31-33

When we start our walk with God, our prayer life is typically focused on our personal needs alone. God fully understands that we have needs which must be addressed, but the fact that we start there doesn't mean we should stay there. Jesus encourages and challenges us not to stay at the level of our needs alone because that would lead to a very transactional relationship and we will remain babies spiritually.

'For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right.' Hebrews 5:13

God's intention isn't that we don't bring our needs before Him, rather it's that we do so, we also come with an understanding that He also has an agenda and is looking for people to partner with to execute this agenda on earth. Because babies are only interested in what they want and haven't yet developed the capacity to take on any responsibility, they still need to be carried, fed and taken care of by the adults responsible for them. However, we aren't expected to stay at the baby stage and as we develop we start taking responsibility and equipping ourselves to know God more beyond getting our needs met.

Prayer: Lord thank You for showing me that You have needs as well. Help me develop a hunger for knowing You intimately and become an active contributor to the expansion of Your kingdom.

Day 2

Knowing & Meeting God's Needs

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord . "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.' Isaiah 55:8-9

As we mature spiritually, we start getting interested in knowing more about God – who is He, what are His ways, what is His agenda, what does He expect from me? As we start on this path, we see that our prayer and personal study habits begin to change.

'He revealed his character to Moses and his deeds to the people of Israel.' Psalms 103:7

'If it is true that you look favorably on me, let me know your ways so I may understand you more fully and continue to enjoy your favor...'" Exodus 33:13

God didn't favour Moses over the other Israelites when it came to revealing Himself, rather they chose to have Moses find out what was on God's mind and then come back and tell them (Exo 20:19-20). God loves to reveal Himself to us and the extent to which we know Him is the extent to which we are willing to search for Him. It may seem convenient to have someone else tell us God's mind, but we are cheating ourselves of intimacy with Him if we do.

'Come close to God, and God will come close to you... ' James 4:8

We have God's Spirit in us (1 Cor 2:10) and He will reveal the Father to us, but we must intentionally and consistently engage Him. No one opens up to someone that doesn't value them and God isn't different in that area. When He sees that we prioritize a relationship with Him, then He begins to reveal Himself to us.

'I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called...' Ephesians 1:18

God doesn't ask us to seek Him in vain. As we draw nearer to Him, we start taking on more of His attributes and as we are transformed we start taking on not just the nature, but also the dominion power of Christ.

Prayer: Lord flood my heart with light so I understand the hope I have in You and the eternal riches available to those who know and walk closely with You.

Day 3

Carrying God's Presence

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." Luke 22:42

At this stage of maturity, we move to the point where we focus on what the will of God is. This means a move away from personal interests, sentiments and emotions and ensure the will of God comes first. Before we get to this stage we must encounter God personally and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work of transformation in our lives.

'Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me... and make me willing to obey you.' Psalms 51:10,12

There is a process we must allow the Holy Spirit to take us through for us to get to the stage that we are willing to lay ourselves down. This requires a dying to self and going through a purification process. In practical terms, this means being ready to let go of what God says to let go of, allow Him to change what needs to be changed and open to accepting that only He can bring the best out of us.

'...If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.' Luke 9:23

Jesus made no pretenses about what is required to be His follower – there's a need to daily submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit and following His instructions. This isn't in a master-servant type of way, but in a Father-child way as every process the Lord takes us through is so that He is able to entrust us with more of Him and all that He has available to Him.

'I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!' Isaiah 65:24

It's at this stage we experience God answering even before we call, where we tangibly experience the goodness of His word and the power of the age to come. God is eager to make all these and more available to us, the question is how far are we willing to go with Him?

Prayer: Lord thank You for showing me not just the cost, but the rewards of following You. Help me Lord to yield to the processing of the Holy Spirit so I can be counted as one of those that can be trusted to carry Your presence and power.



SPIRITUAL MATURITY SERIES

Strategic Relationships



'Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh...' 2 Corinthians 5:16

This is the second part of the Spiritual Maturity series and in this section we are taking a deep dive into strategic relationships. Associations are powerful in the realm of the spirit because God functions through people to achieve His purposes here on earth. For us to reach to the full stature of our maturity, we can't afford to treat every relationship superficially.

There is an inter-connectedness to life which means we must be able to accurately dimension the strategic people assigned to us so we can recognize the role they are to play in our lives and we in theirs. Stay with us as we explore 9 types of people we need to pay attention to.

Prayer: Lord help me to identify the people you have sent to me. Open my eyes to see the role the people in my life are to play. Show me what roles are missing and direct their paths to connect with mine. Where I may have misused or despised the relationships Lord in Your mercy redirect me and open their hearts to give me a second chance.

Day 1

The Troublers

“And he had two wives...Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. And her rival (Peninnah) also provoked her (Hannah) severely, to make her miserable, because the Lord had closed her womb.” I Samuel 1:2, 6

We may like to believe that the people the Lord will use to mature us will always be favourable to us, but that's not always the case. God knows us better than we know ourselves and He knows the triggers that will get us to grow spiritually. Looking at Hannah as an example, even though Hannah was loved by her husband, she had a troubler in Peninnah her husband's second wife who consistently provoked her.

“And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said, “O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life...” I Samuel 1:10-11

As painful as it was, it was due to Peninnah's provocation that Hannah made a vow to God which led to the birthing and dedication of Samuel the prophet. Had she not been provoked, Hannah may not have taken the steps she did and gotten the outcome God was looking for. When we encounter people who are a source of consistent provocation, it is wise to engage in prayers of enquiry and ask the Holy Spirit: What is this provocation meant to draw out or birth in me?

“Blessed be the Lord my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle”
Psalms 144:1

Some training in maturity doesn't happen in the place of comfort but in the place of conflict and contention. They are all part of God's training program as certain situations are needed to provoke growth in aspects that such as patience, wisdom, exercising dominion, warfare and much more. When we understand the role of such people, we are able to move beyond the emotions so we don't get overwhelmed, take the learning God desires and respond accurately.

Prayer: Lord grant me the grace and wisdom to rise above my emotions so I can recognize and understand the purpose for every troubler I encounter so I respond accurately

Day 2

The Constructive Critics

'The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day.' Proverbs 4:18

The process for shining ever brighter isn't always a pleasant one and includes constructive criticism. There is a fine line between criticism and condemnation as such our prayer should be that the Holy Spirit will connect us to those who will consistently speak the truth to us in love otherwise we will be deceived and stagnant.

'Faithful are the wounds of a friend [who corrects out of love and concern], But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful...' Proverbs 27:6 AMP

Constructive critics aren't those who enjoy putting others down just because they can. Rather the type of criticism referred to here is from those who will tell us honestly where we have gone wrong or can do better. The fact that it's in love doesn't mean what is shared will necessarily be pleasant to our ears or egos, but it means the words spoken are from a heart filled with love for us and a goal to improve rather than destroy us.

'...He said, "My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you. For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.'" Hebrews 12:5-6

The same way parents don't raise children only on sweet things, the Lord won't mature us through niceties alone. There are times when He needs us to come up higher by showing us where we may have fallen short in some areas. This means that it is out of love for us that the Lord brings people into our lives who will tell us the truth whether we want to hear it or not. While we may not like what was said or the method of delivery, we must be open to correction so we can grow.

When we get constructive criticism we must ask ourselves is: What is the key take way from what was shared and what adjustments need to be made? This self-reflection helps us reassess ourselves and consistently improve upon who we are, what we do and how we do it as we partner with the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Lord help me identify and connect to those who will always speak the truth and correct me in love so I am constantly maturing.

Day 3

The Igniters

'As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.' Proverbs 27:17

People elicit different responses in us as we engage with them. Some leave us feeling drained and discouraged, while others leave us feeling energized and ignited. This means there's a certain type of person we need to ensure we consistently have access to because their presence in our lives makes us better.

The first thing we need to be mindful of in identifying the igniters is that the person is already in the process of doing what we want to do, and is willing to walk with us on the journey. No matter how excited we may be about something there will come a time when the energy levels wane and we need someone to help get the fire re-ignited. By engaging our igniters often, we become one another's accountability partners and are able to help one another keep going.

'At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her...' Luke 1:41

There was something about Mary that caused a reaction in Elizabeth and likewise being with Elizabeth would have caused Mary's faith to grow as she watched the pregnancy of her elderly relation progress. Likewise there are people that we need to pray into our lives because their very presence will challenge our preconceptions and perceived limitations. Otherwise we will engage life at a level below which we are capable.

'... the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting.' Exodus 33:11

As Moses' assistant, Joshua saw closely how God engaged Moses and this ignited a passion for the things of God. Whenever Moses went on the mountain to meet God, Joshua would follow close by and when Moses left the Tent, Joshua would remain. We can only wonder what may have been of Joshua if he hadn't connected to Moses. Likewise there are people we must connect to for us to push beyond our comfort levels and fulfil destiny.

Prayer: Lord connect me to my igniters, the ones who will work with me and enable me to move beyond what I am capable of by myself.

Day 4

The Right Supporters

'Moses' arms soon became so tired he could no longer hold them up. So Aaron and Hur found a stone for him to sit on. Then they stood on each side of Moses, holding up his hands. So his hands held steady until sunset' Exodus 17:12

Not everyone should be part of our inner circle. There are specific people with whom we can be vulnerable and will be there for us come what may. Imagine if Moses was all alone on the battle, Israel would have lost because as powerful as Moses was, his hands became tired. This is where Aaron and Hur came in to help him until the battle was won. No matter how anointed, talented, intelligent, or gifted we are, we need to have the right people in our corners so we can keep going.

'Then Daniel went home and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah what had happened. He urged them to ask the God of heaven to show them his mercy by telling them the secret...' Daniel 2:17-18

When Daniel asked not to eat the king's food he didn't make that decision alone, his 3 friends were with him throughout the journey (Dan 1:12). When the time came to ask God to reveal the king's dream, again Daniel's friends prayed with him though he was the one that received the answer. There are people we need to have around us that we can always call on for support as we go through the challenges of life.

'Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone.' Matthew 17:1

'He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.'" Matthew 26:37-38

With companionship it's not the quantity but the quality of the relationship that really matters. Jesus had many disciples but whenever He was going to have any significant experience, He only gathered three people. Which means Jesus had by the Holy Spirit identified that of all those that surrounded Him, these were the ones to hold close and be more open with than with others.

Prayer: Lord help me identify my companions, those You've assigned to be a support system to me through my journey.

Day 5

The Transformation Agents

'Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" Matthew 4:19

When the Lord wants to transform us, in addition to the enablement of the Holy Spirit, He also works through people. Which is why there are some people whose entry into our personal space dramatically alters the trajectory of our lives. This is what walking with Jesus did for His disciples. When He called them, their response led to a permanent transformation of their lives, and they in turn transformed others as they went from fishermen to global change agents.

'When you arrive at Gibeah of God... you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the place of worship... and they will be prophesying. At that time the Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a different person.' 1 Samuel 10:5-6

'When those who knew Saul heard about it, they exclaimed, "What? Is even Saul a prophet? How did the son of Kish become a prophet?"' 1 Samuel 10:11

Considering that Samuel was a prophet, how come he pointed Saul to another set of prophets? This tells us that there are specific people the Lord will use to bring transformation to our lives. It may be through a group as with Saul, or it could be through specific individuals.

'Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please, for the Lord has sent me on to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel.' II Kings 2:2

Elisha wasn't the only prophet that knew Elijah. In fact, there was a group of 50 men who watched Elijah from afar, yet they were not transformed by him. Because Elisha perceived that there was something Elijah carried for him, he refused to let him go. Had Elisha not perceived correctly, he would have been just another prophet. Have you identified the person/people the Lord is using to bring a transformation in your life? Are you being casual or strategic about your relationship with them?

Prayer: Lord let my spiritual perception and discernment be sharpened so I can identify those You have assigned to my life as transformation agents.

Day 6

The Strange Children

'Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood' Psalm 144:11 KJV

“Strange children” are the people David described as deceitful liars. These are the type of people known in today’s parlance as “frenemies”: people pretending to be friends but are really enemies in disguise. David certainly encountered such people and sadly they didn’t only exist in Biblical times and are very much with us today as well.

When we’re dealing with people who are openly confrontational to us we know to be mindful of what they’re saying or doing. But how do we know when someone close to us is speaking lying words? How can we spot deceit from someone we trust? These clearly cannot be done by natural means and is why David very wisely asked God to rid and deliver him of such people.

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes...' Proverbs 3:5-7

'...For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'" I Samuel 16:7

Information available to the natural man is extremely limited and we don’t know what we don’t know. This is why the Bible instructs us not to lean on our own understanding or be wise in our own eyes. As we pray one of the areas we need to ask the Lord to help us with is weeding such people out of our lives. This isn’t a one-off prayer as people will constantly flow in and out of our lives and as such we will always need the Lord’s help. Another prayer is when we may have fallen into the hands of such people (even if we don’t know it yet) and we need the Lord to deliver us. It could well be that such people are the ones behind some negativity we’re going through, but we would not think to connect them to this experience and unknowingly continue to empower them to harm us.

Prayer: Lord grant me heightened perception so I don’t bring strange children into my life and where they may already be present, rid me and deliver me from them so I don’t fall into their hands.

Day 7

Those We Pour Into

'Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing...' Philippians 4:9

Our lives are meant to be channels through which the Lord empowers and equips others in all aspects of life. The same way others are designed to pour into our lives is the way the Lord expects us to pour into the lives of others through mentoring. Mentoring others keeps us unselfish because it moves our thought processes from our needs alone to the needs of others and how we can help them. Mentoring others also helps sharpen our understanding of what we're teaching as it's impossible to accurately teach what you don't understand. So one of the ways to keep growing is to have people we pour into consistently.

'Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.' I Corinthians 11:1

Jesus was very intentional about teaching all His disciples and having what we could call "Masterclasses" with a smaller number of them so they could engage Him directly and ask questions. Paul followed the example of Jesus and was also very intentional about pouring into the lives of others. Whenever he set up a church in a location he spent time not just preaching but also teaching and living out what he preached and taught so others may learn from him. It's the process of pouring out that led him to write the many books in the Bible we are still learning from today.

"And the Lord has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach their skills to others." Exodus 35:34

It doesn't end at spiritual mentorship alone. As we journey through life, we acquire skills and experiences that others can and should benefit from. The platforms may differ, but we must each have at least one person we are intentionally improving skill wise. As excellent as Bezaleel and Oholiab were, the Lord still gave them the ability to teach their skills to others. This gives us an insight into the mind of Christ about improving others working with us as channels to reach and teach them.

Prayer: Lord I ask for grace to pour into others. Show me how to go about this and help me identify those You would have me connect to.

Day 8

The Custodians of Capital

'Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, along with some women... who were contributing from their own resources to support Jesus and his disciples.' Luke 8:1-3

When Jesus ran His earthly ministry He recognized the need to have a structure in place for the continuity of His ministry, whether the requirement was funding, logistics, accommodation, right up to His burial site. Every step of the way He had people working with Him to ensure the smooth running of His assignment. Knowing that Jesus was able to do things miraculously, the fact that He had a structure gives us an insight into God's pattern for provision. When God wants to provide, He often does so through people.

'Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. I have instructed a widow there to feed you.'" 1 Kings 17:8-9

The Lord successfully fed Elijah for a while using ravens, but at a point He chose the widow as the channel to provide for Elijah's feeding. The interesting thing is that at the point God instructed her, she wasn't yet in a position to even feed herself long term. This teaches us two things. One being that when we are committed to His assignment, He will take care of the details accordingly. Second is that the ones with the necessary capital to support us may be those we least expect so discernment is required.

'Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.' Matthew 6:33

Jesus didn't have to worry about what or how to eat or fund His ministry because He understood how God works. Even when He died on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea was on hand to provide a burial site (Mk 15:43). When we are aligned with God's agenda, He connects us to the custodians of the capital required (financial, social, political) that will ensure we successfully complete our assignment.

Prayer: Lord connect me to the custodians of the capital I need to fulfil my assignment. Open my eyes to discern both who they are and their role in my life.

Day 9

Pillars vs Scaffolding

'Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew all about people.' John 2:23-24

Scaffoldings are temporary and movable structures typically used in construction to help the workers complete their work after which they are taken down. Pillars on the other hand are permanent structures typically used to provide load bearing or support functions in buildings. As we encounter people in life, it's key to we discern not only the role they play in our lives, but also their permanence.

'During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time... And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.' Acts 1:3

Jesus always discerned accurately so He didn't draw everyone close to him. He knew those interested in a transactional relationship with Him and those who He would entrust His ministry to. This is why He was intentional about who He spent time with and what He committed to them.

'In fact, James, Peter, and John, who were known as pillars of the church, recognized the gift God had given me, and they accepted Barnabas and me as their co-workers...' Galatians 2:9

'One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them." ' Acts 13:2

When they met Paul, the apostles discerned that he was going to be a permanent fixture in the work that Jesus had committed to them and as such they accepted him as a co-worker. This suggests it's not everyone they necessarily accepted. Similarly the Lord has specific people assigned to us for varying periods. It's by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to distinguish who is meant to be with us, for how long and in what capacity. If we try and make this distinction in our natural senses we will miss it as He knows what the future holds for us and the people meant to be with us through the journey.

Prayer: Lord help me to discern those You have assigned to be pillars in my life so I don't lean on the wrong people.



EXPANDING YOUR TERRITORY

H70
A Heart of Wisdom

Expanding Your Territory

“Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, And your descendants will inherit the nations, And make the desolate cities inhabited.’ Isaiah 54:2-3

God’s dominion mandate for the believer has not changed. He still expects us to walk in authority and power as His representatives and extenders of His kingdom here on earth. As we mature, we begin to get more clarity on the capacity God has made available to us, not for ourselves alone, but so we can fulfil our respective mandates. The Lord can make all the human resources and associations available to us, but if we aren’t open to expanding our thoughts and building our capacity, then we will likely remain where we are without maximizing our full potential.

In this section of the series, we will explore a few key elements critical to expanding our territories and maximizing our potential including the power of having the right vision, strategic direction, wisdom and capacity for the season.

Prayer: Lord open my mind to reason as You do. Help me appreciate how much You have invested in me. Let this mind be in me which is in Christ Jesus.

Day 1

Seeing The Big Picture

“After Lot had gone, the Lord said to Abram, “Look as far as you can see in every direction—north and south, east and west. I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a permanent possession.” Genesis 13:14-15

There had been contention between Abraham and Lot’s herdsmen over space: what they occupied was too small to contain their combined possessions. Abraham could have argued with Lot and used seniority to force the situation to his advantage. And he wouldn’t have been wrong to do so, after all it was Abraham God called and Lot tagged along. But that wasn’t Abraham’s perspective.

“Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your descendants.” And Abram built an altar there and dedicated it to the Lord, who had appeared to him.” Genesis 12:7

“Finally Abram said to Lot, “Let’s not allow this conflict to come between us or our herdsmen. After all, we are close relatives! The whole countryside is open to you. Take your choice of any section of the land you want, and we will separate. ...” Genesis 13:8-9

Abraham didn’t see the need to struggle with Lot, even when Lot picked the seemingly more attractive portion of the land. He trusted God to fulfil his commitment so there was no need to fight with Lot. This mindset was what enabled him to accept that God had indeed given him all the land. Contending with Lot would have meant that they were both ‘struggling’ for a small piece of the promise.

“[God] graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ.” Ephesians 3:8

Is it possible that the space you are contending for just a small portion of what God has made available to you? Can you see the bigger picture of how far God can take you if you surrender and partner with Him? The Lord gave Abraham a practical demonstration of what He was being given, so his mind could be expanded. Let’s ask the Lord to open our eyes so we don’t limit ourselves.

Prayer: Lord expand my vision, remove the limitations I’ve placed on myself or allowed others to place on me. Open my eyes to see myself the way you see me

Day 2

Strategic Direction

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you [who are willing to learn] with My eye upon you.” Psalms 32:8 AMP

God is always willing to give those who are willing to learn strategic direction. Our willingness to learn is reflected in how we respond to His instructions, be they seemingly big or small. We're often waiting for a dramatic intervention that will show us where to go and what to do (similar to Abraham, Moses, Paul) but those dramatic episodes are in the minority.

“Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.” Psalms 119:105

“Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, “This is the way you should go,” whether to the right or to the left.” Isaiah 30:21

God leads us daily through step-by-step instructions and it's as we follow those instructions that we get on the right path. It will be difficult for us to receive God's direction if we don't spend time in His word. The Holy Spirit will either speak to us directly or confirm something He's said to us through scripture. This is important because God will never contradict His word.

“[I always pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may grant you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation [that gives you a deep and personal and intimate insight] into the true knowledge of Him [for we know the Father through the Son].” Ephesians 1:17

“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the Lord. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine.” Isaiah 55:8

As we spend time in the Bible with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal God's mind to us, we receive insight into God's mind and strategic focus for the season. This insight is critical because God doesn't function with human calendars so the direction He's pointing us in may not necessarily appear logical to us or others as He prepares us far in advance for what is to come. Noah was preserved by building an ark at a time the earth hadn't experienced a flood (Gen 6-7). David was anointed king while Saul was still on the throne (1 Sam 16). Peter abandoned his business immediately after a massive breakthrough (Lk 5:4-11). When asking God to give us strategic direction, we must be ready to trust Him and follow His instructions.

Prayer: Lord give me strategic direction for these sons of my life. Help me to trust and obey even if I don't fully understand what You're saying to me at the time.

Day 2 Strategic Plan

“David then led his men to Jerusalem to fight against the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of the land who were living there. The Jebusites taunted David, saying, “You’ll never get in here! Even the blind and lame could keep you out!” For the Jebusites thought they were safe. But David captured the fortress of Zion, which is now called the City of David.” 2 Samuel 5:6-7

David knew he was anointed to be king over all of Israel, but he didn’t necessarily know how it was going to happen. After ruling in Judah for 7 years, it was time for him to expand and take over Jerusalem. But it wasn’t going to be straightforward as the city was so heavily fortified the inhabitants felt even their lame and blind alone would defeat David and his troops. This is where the insight and creativity of the Lord came in.

“On the day of the attack, David said to his troops... Whoever attacks them should strike by going into the city through the water tunnel.” 2 Samuel 5:8

When the Lord has given you a word about something and there seem to be forces ganged up against you, or it simply seems impossible to achieve, we should not give up. Rather we should ask God for the strategy for winning. Even though David’s men couldn’t take the city from the conventional way, the Lord gave David insight into the winning strategy. The Jebusites clearly didn’t expect anyone to use a water shaft strategy to penetrate their fortress so they were exposed in that area.

“But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.” John 14:26

The water shaft strategy delivered Jerusalem to David and he ruled there for over 30 years. The Holy Spirit is available to teach us everything and this isn’t included to spiritual activities alone. Because He knows the beginning and the end, the Holy Spirit can teach us the strategies for taking on new territory. This is why the Bible admonishes us not to lean only on our own understanding which is quite limited. Whether it’s starting a new business, job, family the Holy Spirit knows the best route for us to take so we get maximum results.

Prayer: Lord teach me the strategies for expansion. Show me the best pathway to succeed and keep growing sustainably.

Day 3

Capacity Building

“So David made the fortress his home, and he called it the City of David. He extended the city, starting at the supporting terraces and working inward.” 2 Samuel 5:9

Once David took the city of Jerusalem he didn't rest on his victory but was intentional about developing and expanding the territory he'd acquired. The first thing he did was to rename it, meaning he took ownership of the city then he took responsibility for the city by extending it both inwards and outwards. When it comes to expanding our territory, the Lord gives us the strategic direction and plan necessary to take the territory, but it's not meant to stop there. Like David we are to maximize what we've acquired and that requires building capacity.

“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” Matthew 7:19

“Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’ But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.’” Luke 13:7-9

We see from many of the parables of Jesus that God is interested in getting results from His investments, and as such there's an expectation that we partner with Him to multiply whatever He's made available to us. While He gives us the direction and strategic plan, we must be ready to put in the work required to get the results He's looking for. The first step to getting results is spending time with God to understand what sort of results He wants from us. Most organisations have key performance indices which are a set of measurements that determine success or otherwise in a role. Similarly God also has expectations and we need to know what they are so that the results we get from whatever territory we're taking align with His desires.

“Despite their desires, the lazy will come to ruin, for their hands refuse to work.” Proverbs 21:25

“But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace.” 1 Corinthians 15:10

We must also be ready to put in the work required because God isn't going to do everything for us. Paul talked about the results he was able to get because He allowed the grace of God to motivate and equip Him to put in his very best. Are there things the Lord has already given you direction and a plan for? It's time to put in the work so we can partner with God to produce the results He's looking for.

Prayer: Lord empower me by Your grace to get maximum results as I commit to doing my part and putting in the necessary work

Day 4

Unlimited Expansion

“Praise the Lord, who is my rock. He trains my hands for war and gives my fingers skill for battle.” Psalms 144:1

The Bible says the Lord trains our hands and gives us skill - this is present continuous meaning it's something He's doing continually, not on a one-off basis. This is indicative that expansion is meant to be continuous for a believer as we take on more and more territory for the Lord in the place of church ministry, careers, business, education, government, policy and so much more. In yielding to the Holy Spirit and partnering with Him to meet God's needs, we are constantly being sharpened so we have incredible capacity to take on more.

“Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left...” Isaiah 54:2-3

God is expansive in nature and as His children we are not to let our minds be limited to what we believe we can do by our natural strength alone. We have access to an unlimited treasury of supernatural resources: ideas, execution capacity, favour, wisdom, strategies and much more. However the devil knows this which is why he tries to keep our minds and hearts boxed in by focusing on the things around us. The constant barrage of issues we seem to be experiencing isn't random. It's a strategy of the enemy to keep us limited because he knows better than we do how powerful we are and how dangerous we can be to his kingdom if we fully align with God and fulfil our God given potential.

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” Colossians 3:2

“You are My battle-ax and weapons of war: For with you I will break the nation in pieces; With you I will destroy kingdoms;” Jeremiah 51:20

The real contention is for our focus, because what we focus on is what we enlarge. If we focus on the things of God, we are able to consistently and accurately express His priorities in our daily activities. As we express God's priorities His kingdom is enlarged here on earth and automatically the enemy's influence is reduced. This is why there is such a strong contention for our time, skills and deployment of material resources.

Prayer: Lord I recognise that the expansion of the child of God is the expansion of the kingdom of God. Help me to keep my eyes fixed on You and Your capacity to do immeasurable things through me. Let my life consistently be lived as an expression of Your priorities.

Day 5

When Pushing Boundaries, Don't Settle

“for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.” Genesis 13:15

“Now Joshua was old, advanced in years. And the Lord said to him: “You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed.” Joshua 13:1

God made Abraham a promise which He kept true to His nature. When Joshua led the Israelites to take on the promised territories, in spite of all the battles won the Lord Himself told Joshua there was still very much land to be taken. No matter how far we think we have come with God there's always room for more. Some things we initiate may end with us, while others will be fulfilled by our descendants - biological or otherwise. So we are charged to keep moving forward and pushing boundaries.

“...I brought you out of Egypt into this land that I swore to give your ancestors, and I said I would never break my covenant with you. For your part, you were not to make any covenants with the people living in this land; instead, you were to destroy their altars. But you disobeyed my command. Why did you do this?” Judges 2:1-2

Israel had a mandate completely take over the territory the Lord had committed to giving them, however they didn't fulfil their mandate and conquer all the necessary land. Rather several tribes compromised and lived side by side with the previous inhabitants. Over time Israel imbibed their pagan practices and served their gods which weakened them. When God gives a command, He speaks from a perspective we may not fully be able to comprehend at the time. So when we disobey Him, we're actually setting ourselves up for issues in the future.

“Not a single one of all the good promises the Lord had given to the family of Israel was left unfulfilled; everything he had spoken came true.” Joshua 21:45

“So the Lord burned with anger against Israel. He said, “Because these people have violated my covenant, which I made with their ancestors, and have ignored my commands, I will no longer drive out the nations that Joshua left unconquered when he died.” Judges 2:20-21

There are critical lessons we can learn from the Israelites. First is not to limit God, He has the character and capacity to do as promised regardless of any obstacles we may face. Second is that we must also be faithful to do our part without compromise. Whatever we leave undone becomes a snare to us in the future. Those bad habits and character traits we're choosing to ignore can lead to a major issue in future. Third is not to settle for less than what God has promised. God isn't limited in any way so we shouldn't use human

rationale to try and limit Him in our lives and situations around us. He is well able to do what He said He will do.

Prayer: Lord I judge You faithful, help me to also be faithful to what You've committed to me. Help me not to confine Your capacity to perform to my limited understanding. Help me to give You my all because You are faithful to keep me and my generations to come.

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