

Your Ministry

'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.'

(1 Corinthians 12:4)

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***I dedicate this book to every follower of
Jesus.***

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Introduction

There are people in the Bible that are famous, have impacted history, and yet they did nothing we know of, and we don't even know their names.

'Some went about in rags, destitute and mistreated... living in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith. The world was not worthy of them.'

(Hebrews 11:37-39)

What we know is that they had and held a deep and sincere faith in God. The world could see nothing in them or on them that set them apart, but they glowed like gold in the eyes of God, and it was said of them: ***'The world was not worthy of them.'***

As someone who believes in Jesus, you have eyes that see God.

'Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.' (Matthew 13:16)

You are a child of God: ***'To those who received Jesus, he gave the right to become children of God.'*** (John 1:12)

Your faith alone is ***'worth more than gold.'*** (1 Peter 1:7) You are your ministry – a light in a dark world. Let's consider this a little more...

1. Am I Important?

Every person is a unique creation of God, a miracle.

Now, it is important that you personalize this. To personalize it is really to access its meaning, and to honor God. You must say: *I am a unique creation of God, a miracle.*

Stay on this truth for a minute. Maybe close your eyes and whisper it a few times. Let it soak in. Let the world fade, let all other people fade, and let God's truth about you sink in: ***I am a unique creation of God, a miracle.***

There's really no point talking about the miracle of *all* people, if the individual person cannot accept it. Time and time again Jesus left the crowd to be with the individual. In fact, in his parable of the lost sheep, Jesus said the shepherd left the ninety-nine sheep to go find the *one* that was lost. (Luke 15:1-7)

One of the most impactful stories for me about Jesus and his love for the individual, was when Jesus had just risen from the dead. We are told that he appeared alongside two people walking on a lonely and long road. He spent hours walking and talking with them, and they did not even know who he was. Then that evening, when he agreed to stay and dine with them, their eyes were opened and they realized it was Jesus. (Luke 24:13-35)

What strikes me in this moment of world-changing history, is that Jesus did not appear to a crowd, or to his family or the twelve apostles. He appeared, and spent time with, someone who we still have no name for.¹ We don't know him, but God knows him. And he was sought out in his sorrow, on a lonely, dusty road, and God walked with him, because he loved him.

This takes me to another very important point for you and me to understand.

This man Jesus met on the road to Emmaus, and walked with, well this is a man that is now known around the world and throughout history. Famous paintings have been done of this sublime encounter, this tender companionship.²

This man had time with Jesus in such a way that this man is now 'important' to me, someone I would be honored to meet. I would love to ask him about his time with Jesus: *Did they see him coming? What did they talk about exactly?*

Now, here's the key point: This man has had such an impact on history, and yet this man did nothing. His importance, his fame, is fully because Jesus came to him, not him to Jesus. He was simply a man with a deep and sincere faith in Christ. The rest is about Christ knowing him, following him, setting him apart.

¹ One man's name was Cleopas, but we are not given the other.

² An amazing painting is by Diego Velázquez, 'La Mulata' (1599-1600)

In his sorrow, as a child of God, Jesus knew him, came to him. Now this man's ministry to all of us, to history itself, is what Jesus did for *him*, not what he did for Jesus. We want to meet him because he was loved.

'God's foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are his.' (2 Timothy 2:19)

You are like this man. You are loved, chosen, set apart. He was a child of God by faith, and you are a child of God by faith, and God shows no favoritism.¹ He walked with that man in his loneliness, and made that man special to us all, and he walks with you in your loneliness, and makes you special to us all.

Let's look at another case like this. Take royalty, for example. If you or I ever had the chance to meet a princess or a prince, there would come over us a sense of awe, like we are in the presence of someone very special.

Now, if you break this down, it would seem that the unique identity – the true, special identity – of this prince or princess, is simply who they are by their birthright. They are a child of a king, a queen. The honor they are given, the impact they even have on history and people around them, has nothing to do, essentially, with *what* they do. It has only to do with *who* they are. And

¹ Romans 2:11

they actually had nothing to do with who they are!

They are royalty. They are loved by a powerful leader. This is their deepest and truest significance. What comes later, such as actions and behavior, well, that only has real bearing because of who they are. Who they are is first and foremost.

You are a child of the King. You are royalty. Rest in this. You are light. Your presence is a blessing to others, regardless of what you do or say. Just you. You have seen God in Christ, and you are his. Here are a few verses to soak in. These are truth about you. God wants you, even *needs* you, to let his love and truth about you soak your spirit. Because the life you live out of this identity will be your truest life.

'To those who received Jesus, he gave the right to become children of God.' (John 1:12)

'Anyone in Christ is a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come.

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.'

(Galatians 2:20)

'Our citizenship is in heaven.'

(Philippians 3:20)

'You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession... Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.' (1 Peter 2:9-10)

'Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.' (Matthew 13:16)

'Jesus said, 'You are the light of the world.'''
(Matthew 5:14)

2. Am I Unique?

You may be royalty, a prince or princess, but that is only the start. In a sense, that is your general identity.

But even in the royal household, the family, you stand out. You are unique. You have original character, giftings and destiny.

Have you ever been struck by how different every human being is? And I don't mean slightly; I mean *completely*? I've often thought, as I'm looking into the eyes of another, how completely separate, unique, beautiful, original they are. Of the billions of people on the planet, and the billions past and future, no 2 people are even remotely the same.

'Who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them?' (1 Corinthians 2:11)

'The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters...' (Proverbs 20:5)

'God has set eternity in the human heart.'
(Ecclesiastes 3:11)

You are a spiritual being, made in the image of God. (Genesis 1:27) Your heart runs deep, with eternity set in it. You are vastly unique, completely set apart from every other human.

There's no comparison. It's futile to compare.

So you are royalty, a prince, a princess. But who exactly are *you*? What is *your* God-given character? How do your eyes see and how does your heart feel? What does your spirit discern?

When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet, Jeremiah felt he was ***'too young.'*** (Jeremiah 1:6) But God told him that he had known him and called him from before he was born. Then God asked him:

'What do you see, Jeremiah?' (vs.11)

Jeremiah said what he saw, and God said:

'You have seen well.'

Jeremiah was seeing the way God had made him to see. Jeremiah was in step with the Spirit of God within him.

So my question to you, the reader, is what do *you* see? What do you tend to see as you walk with Jesus? Do you tend to see and feel injustice on a large scale? Or do you tend to see and feel the sorrow of a neighbor or child, or the individual who is close to your home, your world? Do you feel a need inside your church, or outside the church? What moves your heart?

What do you see?

3. Approval (Part 1)

When you are seeing as God has you to see, and doing – or speaking – what God has you to do and speak, you may or may not receive approval from people.

When God called Ezekiel to be a prophet, to speak God's truth to people, look at what God says:

'You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen.' (Ezekiel 2:7)

Ezekiel was told straight up that people would be against him, oppose him, not listen, but he must go and speak. Look what Ezekiel says after receiving this commission:

'I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the Lord upon me. I came to the exiles... where they were living, I sat among them for seven days - deeply distressed.' (Ezekiel 3:14-15)

We get so much reassurance from people approving of what we do and say. This is true in life generally, but is also true when it comes to following Jesus. It is OK to value the counsel, the advice, of Christians that you respect when it comes to God's leading in your life; but the last word stops with God. We need to take people's input and bring it to God in prayer. Not the other way round. We need full approval from God

alone, whether people approve or not.

Has God been leading you to go a little deeper with him, maybe a little deeper than is the norm of your Christian friends? Do you feel pulled by the Spirit this way or that, but the paths look a little lonely, don't seem to interest some people around you?

Quietly, humbly, set out on the paths God is pointing you to. Maybe he has been calling you to spend a little more time quietly with him, reading the Bible, praying, listening? Maybe he has been calling you to spend a little more time serving with certain people, reaching out to certain people? Or maybe he has been calling you to spend a little *less* time serving in the church?

You don't need the approval of people, or for other people to go with you. God often called people personally, individually, to begin a journey alone. In fact, we see in the Bible and hear from many testimonies, that God will only start certain seasons in a person's life when he meets with them alone. You and God.

***'This is what the Lord says —
he who formed you:***

***"Do not fear, for I have saved you;
I have called you by name; you are mine.
When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,***

***they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
For I am the Lord your God.'***
(Isaiah 43:1-3)

4. Approval (Part 2)

We often speak about believing what Jesus says about himself – who he is. In fact, believing and receiving the true person of Christ was his highest call. He said he was the Son of God, one and the same as God, and he called us to lay aside our doubts and receive him.

‘Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.’ (John 5:24)

‘If you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.’ (John 8:24)

Now, having believed on Jesus, received his report about himself, he now calls you to believe his report about *you*.

Have you believed who God says *you* are?

I struggle with this, honestly. I don’t struggle with knowing who it is God says I am; I struggle with stepping *into* that identity. In my case I think there are two key reasons. Let me explain...

Now, actually, *before* I explain let me first say that the reason I am quite clear on who it is I am (my spiritual giftings, etc.) is because many years have passed in my life, many seasons following the Lord, with times of backsliding also. So I’ve had lots of time and experiences to learn

about myself as a Christian, and as an individual before God. You may not be quite at this place where you have this clarity, and that's OK. It's not a race. There's no pressure or time crunch. But in my case, where I find myself, knowing my identity in Jesus is not the challenge; it is stepping into it. So here are the reasons I believe this is hard for me:

1. Alienation from the World:

I had a clear conviction that Jesus was true from a very young age. I knew the call to believe and obey. But I wandered, strayed, disobeyed, and by the time I was sixteen years old, I was fully of the world.

No one knew me as a person of faith, because it had no bearing on my life or behavior. Now, when God gripped me, spoke to me, convicted me of my sin and my false living, I was broken. Honestly, I felt like my 'persona', the identity I had built up with friends and in school, was shot through the heart. I felt God had said, '*Enough!*', and my façade fell. This coming back to Jesus was a lonely, lonely road. It was the path of repentance, which meant walking away from almost everyone in my circles.

Now, the real challenge when we become Christians – or in my case at that time, when we begin to *follow* Jesus – is that we see something the world does not see, and it changes who we are and how we see life.

‘God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness’, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of... Christ.’ (2 Corinthians 4:6)

We have seen something that other people don't see.

‘Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.’ (Matthew 13:16)

The spiritual change is real. The ‘seeing’ of Christ, this revelation, is real. And many, even most¹, do not see what you see, namely, Jesus as Lord.

So the first reason I find it hard to step into my identity in Jesus is because it truly is ‘outside’ the identity of the world, and the systems of the world. I feel alienated from much. It can be lonely. It can be awkward, uncomfortable. There are things – conversations and events – I can't be part of, and may have to explain why. There are things I can't laugh at, and may have to explain why... This is tough stuff! We crave to fit in, to be accepted, to rest and not battle all the time, and yet as a Christian I find myself in a spiritual battle day in, day out, and this is hard!

‘Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take

¹ Matthew 7:13-14

up their cross and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.' (Mark 8:34-38)

2. Other People's Recognition:

The second reason I find it hard to step into my identity in Christ is to do with other people's recognition. What I mean specifically here is the struggle I experience internally when I don't get the recognition of who I am in Christ by other people.

Listen, it would be easy for a prophet of old to be a prophet, if everyone he or she went to speak to recognized their spiritual insight, their spiritual authority. The challenge to be true to my identity in Jesus – operating out of the insight, the gifting, the authority that Jesus has given me – is when other people do not recognize it. This makes me feel insecure.

Let me expound on this a little. I've had people who should have listened to me when I was sharing spiritual wisdom with them, *not* listen to me. Disrespect me. They challenged my views

and acted like they were on the same level, even higher, than I was. Now, even my language here might surprise you. It has taken me a long time to allow myself to even use this type of language. But I felt God press in on me and challenge me to just be real, be childlike in my understanding in this.

There are people that should be seeing and feeling the gifting in *you*, but they don't. They may even question yours. This can be disconcerting, and here's why: there's no way to prove otherwise. And yet you know.

So here we are in a very spiritual sphere. But it is real. It is humbling.

When a mother or a father tells a child that she knows better, a foolish child can discard this. They can actually believe otherwise, and do otherwise. There is no 'proof' in the moment, no accolades or rankings that prove the parent knows better. Time will tell, but not in the moment. And so a parent is often disrespected to their face. They have seen more, understand more, have wisdom for the moment and the path ahead, but the child calls them '*Fool!*' and believes otherwise.

When this happens spiritually – i.e. in the life, mission and family of Christians - when you know what you know and another does not recognize or defer to you, this can cause deep insecurity and cause you to step off your own

course. Let me personalize this, first by rephrasing this sentence and owning it: When someone – a Christian or non-Christian – disrespects *me* spiritually, it throws me.

One day I shared a verse card with a young man at a gym. I asked him about himself. He explained that after about a decade of drug addiction he was just now stepping back to Jesus. He said he had learned all about the Lord as a child, even served in church for a few years, but then went off the rails. He was now back, only weeks.

He then went on to talk about some things regarding ‘predestination’ and basically that God determines all things. This is error. I shared with him what I had learnt over the course of about thirty years, where we need to accept those Scriptures that seem to speak to this, alongside those Scriptures that show choice and consequence outside of ‘God’s will’, and let the truth sink in, in Spirit, with all truths calibrating the others.¹ To my surprise he began to argue this, and rather than really listening, noting, hearing my appeal to him to see more freedom for his soul, he started to argue. *‘But but but...’*

Now, here’s where I fell: I began to argue back. And not just this time, but a number of times, as we encountered each other at the gym over the

¹ I share more on this in an essay called, *‘This Side of Evil’*. See the ESSAYS page at 1peter1three.weebly.com

coming months.

I realized I had taken the bait. Not *his* bait, but the bait of the enemy, of the devil. My pride had kicked in. This young man did not recognize what I had to offer him, and this triggered my own pride, sense of insecurity, and I began to argue, to debate, trying to win his approval, his respect.

Why?

Why was I so in need of his recognition of who I was and what I had to offer spiritually? Why argue? Why debate?

‘Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.’ (2 Timothy 2:23)

It was me that actually made this ongoing conversation an argument. I knew better. I could have easily side-stepped this, blessed and encouraged this young man, and avoided the deeply divisive issues of ‘predestination’ and ‘determinism’.¹ I could have steered the conversation towards something more devotional, encouraging, and blessed him.

Jesus was not threatened by people who did not recognize his spiritual identity. One of the most

¹ *‘Warn a divisive person once, warn him a second time...’* (Titus 3:10) I was the one being divisive in this situation.

impactful examples of this for me is when people resisted – rejected – Jesus and his disciples passing through their village. His disciples got so mad they wanted to call down fire from heaven and kill these people. They obviously were suffering from a superiority complex like me – which is actually insecurity, effectively a sense of inferiority. But here is how Jesus dealt with the disrespect, and here is how mature, humble people deal with disrespect:

‘Jesus turned and rebuked the disciples and they went through another village.’

(Luke 9:55-56)

So the second reason I find it hard to step into the identity, the calling, the equipping of Jesus in my life, is my pride. I feel insecure and threatened when my role is not embraced, recognized, and approved by men.

So what am I going to do? Am I going to only operate in my calling when people around me recognize and approve of my calling? Or am I going to get alone with God, listen, and see what I see, and walk in that – whether people listen or fail to listen?

‘No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.’ (2 Timothy 2:4)

5. The Greatest Among You

‘Jesus said, ‘The greatest among you is the servant of all’ (Matthew 23:11)

Jesus did speak of ranking in his kingdom, and differing rewards.

He spoke of these things to warn the prideful, not to give a road map of scrambling to the top. He spoke of these things to people who had ‘visible’ ministries – *the Pharisees, his own disciples* - and might be tempted to think they were something that they were not.

‘If anyone thinks they are something when they are nothing, they deceive themselves.’ (Galatians 6:3)

Jesus told a short, powerful parable about a servant after he has done his work. Basically Jesus was saying that a servant – or employee – does what they are paid to do, and should not expect further reward. He concludes:

‘So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’ (Luke 17:10)

I find it interesting that Paul seems to have only one main goal on his mind after he completed his ministry – to be raised from the dead and find himself in the presence of God. Nothing more.

'I want to know Christ... and so, somehow, be raised from the dead.' (Philippians 3:10-11)

Mature Christians know that the spiritual gifts they are given are truly a gift for them. They have been given a 'trust', a purpose here in this life beyond just living, and this is amazing! My spiritual gifts – although they are expressed in serving others - are primarily a gift to me.

When I start thinking that I am owed some kind of special treatment because of my spiritual gifts and actions, well, I'm dangerously mistaken. It is an honor to receive gifts from God for serving others, and the pleasure is always mine. This is the only truthful disposition of someone operating in their gifts, their ministry.

'It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful... For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?' (1 Corinthians 4:2,7)

The truly great in God's kingdom, and to be rewarded greatly, are not those 'seen' here and now. They do not write books or post on social media. They are not known for their strong faith and prayers. They are not called on for spiritual input. No, those type of people, in many regards, have received their recognition and rewards already. If they are truly spiritual and mature, they will know this, and act accordingly.

The truly great among us serve others and are unseen. They are believers in Jesus with his light and Spirit deep within, and they are faithful in the quiet, lonely places. They are mothers caring for their children and suffering behind closed doors; they are poor people isolated in their humble dwellings who pray all day, and don't even know they are praying. They are those who forgive the arrogant, and have a God-honoring 'poor spirit' in the depths of their being.

You are gifted. Your ministry is primarily who you are – a child of God, with God's light in your soul. Where you sit, even alone and maybe unsure of your giftings, your roles, well, even in this place of humility your very self rises up as an aroma pleasing to God – the ultimate purpose of all ministry.

My heart's desire is for you, the reader, to see and take hold of something only faith can access: God's love for you. I feel my call in writing this is to help you know that you are complete. Your ministry is just you. Anything else that comes out of you, well, that's just a blessing through you to others. But you are enough.

'I pray that you will know how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, a love that surpasses knowledge.'

(Ephesians 3:14-19)

6. Your Spiritual Gifts

‘There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.’ (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

I wasn't sure which verses to choose from 1 Corinthians 12-14 to open this chapter, because there are so many important ones to note about gifts.

The key in these three chapters is that God gives gifts, we don't pick them. And it is the same Holy Spirit that distributes them to each person, they are for the common good, and not one is more significant than another.

The real point of these three chapters is that everyone is gifted by the Holy Spirit – absolutely everyone!

‘Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given...’ (vs.7)

The Spirit is in you, has gifted you, and manifests through you. He does. Whether you are clear on exactly how or when, well, that is different. But what you need to receive, to believe, is that you are filled by his Holy Spirit, and you minister. Yes, you do. Your heart speaks, even when your mouth does not. Your

spirit worships, even when your mind does not. Jesus partners with you, as does the Holy Spirit, in praying for you and with you and through you:

‘The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans... Christ is also at the right hand of God interceding for us.’

(Romans 8:26,34)

You are a spiritual light, a ‘lampstand’, wherever you are, wherever you go. Just your presence changes the spiritual landscape of a place. Christ in you, your living faith, pushes demons back. This is deeply spiritual, but true. Just you as a believer in Christ is the most impactful part of your ministry here on earth.

‘You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.’

(1 John 4:4)

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 a number of gifts are listed: wisdom, knowledge, faith, serving, mercy, preaching, teaching, speaking in tongues, interpreting these mysterious tongues...

‘All of these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.’ (vs.11)

Do any of these gifts, these inclinations,

resonate with you? Do you love to pray and believe for others? (Faith) Do words of Scripture, or words of truth/guidance, come to your mind for people in certain situations? (Wisdom/Knowledge)¹ Are you moved with compassion, as was Christ, for people to know Jesus and his blessing? (Mercy)

Maybe you are discerning in your life some type of ability or calling that is not listed here. God is big! His Holy Spirit does not stick to one list!

¹ *'The Holy Spirit will teach you all things and call to your mind things I have taught.'* (John 14:26)

7. Start With Prayer

God is relational. He created us, and made us in his image, for relationship, for love. He talks to us, and we talk to him. He asks things of us, and we ask things of him. He makes known his thoughts to us (Amos 4:13), and we pour out our hearts to him. (Psalm 62:8)

We pray to God for people. We ask him to work in people around us, to change their hearts. God calls us to pray for people.

'Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests... Always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.'

(Ephesians 6:18)

This is not meant to be 'pressure', but release. You see, with a childlike faith we would be praying – or talking to God – all the time anyway. We would be asking God to help him and her and us... We would be asking God to provide and protect. It would not be pressure. The relationship would simply overflow into dialogue and working together, like any deep companionship.

But as we grow older and 'wiser', we become less wise! What we tend to do, rather than pray, is think and talk about prayer. We sit around in groups at coffee shops and talk about how there is no reason, really, to pray because God knows all things and will do whatever... As we

addressed earlier, this is the fallen reason of mankind, not the revelation of the true and living God at work. Jesus calls us to be childlike in our faith, in our love and relationship with God. He goes so far as to say that unless we **'change'** and become like children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:3)

It is critical that we walk back to our origin, to that Garden of Eden, where our knowledge, our reason, was pure and holy and alive. We walked with God in the cool of the day. In this space, we talk to God, we work with God, we look to him and he looks to us. This is God's way.

'Be transformed by the renewing of your mind...' (Romans 12:2)

And so we pray. We whisper a prayer to our God for our neighbor, for our son, for our daughter. We pray. We whisper for our marriage, for a job, for protection. We sing quietly. We worship. We ask God to give us joy because our hearts grow heavy.

'Give your servant joy, O Lord, for I put my trust in you.' (Psalm 86:4)

We can't do it alone. We should not try. And whatever it is we do, we do in the strength Jesus gives. And we rest.

So as you put your hand to what is before you – *working, raising kids, helping the family, looking*

after your own health – rest and know that you are loved. You are enough. Jesus came for you.

And pray. You may feel you cannot ‘do’ much, but you can whisper a prayer of hope and help for someone.

Who has God put on your heart today? Ask Jesus to come to them. Ask Jesus to draw near to them, and open their hearts to his presence and love and guidance.

‘I know that through your prayers and God’s provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.’ (Philippians 1:19)

8. Your Ministry

‘To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability.’ (Matthew 25:15)

In this parable Jesus is talking about people investing the resources, the abilities he has given them. In life we do this, too. If a man is strong, we expect him to carry more bags than a man who is not strong, etc.

In this parable, the master comes back to his servants and asks them to give account. The man who had five bags invested and gained five more. The same with the man who had two bags. Now, the man who had only one bag said this:

“Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ (vs.24-25)

It is important to note here, before we see the Master’s response, that this man had equal measure of responsibility and calling as did the man with five bags. We know this because each was given a trust in keeping with their ability. It was not a matter of how much gold each was given, but the fact that each was given 100% of their ability to go and invest 100%. The amount

of gold – and the amount of return – was not the point. Here is what the Master said to this servant:

“You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.”

(vs.27-28)

The Master wasn't buying his philosophical reasons for not investing his talent. And he didn't even get in an argument about what the servant said. He simply said, if you thought that, you could've done this... And he exposed that the servant was simply not willing to do what he had been asked to do.

Whether you consider your trust to be five bags of gold, two or one, the question is – and the accounting will be – what you have done with what you have been given.

You may think that this or that person reaches hundreds of people for Jesus, and what they do is really important, whereas what you do, or feel you can do, is really not that important. You might think that your ability is so insignificant that maybe you just don't need to bother.

Two things on this: First, your ability is so significant! Your part, no matter how humble, if of

God, of the Spirit, is real and matters! Most of the compelling stories and events in the Bible are about one-to-one encounters, not big crowd events. Jesus tells us three times in Matthew chapter 6 that God, who is unseen, sees what we do in secret and will reward us!

'If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones... that person will certainly not lose their reward.'

(Matthew 10:42)

Your ministry is underway. You have been gifted, called, you have the light and presence of Jesus in your soul – everywhere you go!

What you do in faith, in Jesus' name, is standing, is building. Look at this incredible passage:

'Each one should build [on the foundation of Christ] with care... If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved — even though only as one escaping through the flames.' (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

My friends, Jesus is going to show each ministry for what it is – not the number of 'views', hits,

likes, sales, attendance numbers. Nope. Jesus is going to test all work with fire, and the structures that rise out of that furnace will look very different to our buildings and bar charts. There will be 'miracles' and 'prophecies' that will not stand the test of fire on that Day, and then there will be silent prayers and kind words that will emerge from the fire with eternal significance.

'Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matthew 7:21-23)

Your ministry may not have a brand or a logo, but in heaven it does. Continue to do what God has equipped you to do. Continue to believe God (faith), and pray for what is prompted in your Spirit. Continue to pray, sing, worship, give, serve – whatever God moves you to do each day. Your ministry is rock solid, and builds and grows!

'Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says... To the one who is victorious, I will give to that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.' (Revelation 2:17)

Thank you for taking time to read this book. I hope it encouraged you!

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www.1peter1three.weebly.com



For more resources on sharing Jesus with others, please visit:

www.sharingyourfaith.weebly.com



Notes:

Notes:

***‘Whatever you do, whether in word or deed,
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving
thanks...’***

(Colossians 1:17)