

THE ART_{OF} FOLLOWING

**BIBLICAL INSIGHTS FOR A NEW GENERATION OF
MINISTRY**

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The Art of Excellence

Excellence means to be preeminent, to be outstanding and to surpass. Let's be honest, today you don't find anything that surpasses your expectations anymore. For example, the quality of service that you get when you go out to dinner is horrendous. Very rarely do you ever find anything that surpasses your expectations. I used to think that it had a lot to do with how much money you spent. I figure if you're in better restaurants, and you spend a lot more money, you would end up getting better service. To be honest with you, that is simply not true. In today's society, excellence is a lost art form.

You ever heard the term, "Go the extra mile?" Jesus said for us to go the extra mile. Roman soldiers in those times could bring their bags and their gear to your house for help. If they came to your home, you were obligated to carry their bag for them one mile. This is how they moved infantry, rations and supplies. Jesus said, "If you carry it one mile, carry it another one," just to show the type of person that you are.

If "excellent" means "to be preeminent," then that means you take a certain level of care about who you are as a person and you recognize that whatever you do, you are autographing with your signature. However, you handle assigned tasks, your school work, your job, your family or your children and even how you treat your possessions is a reflection of your level of excellence. Think about the word "preeminent." Jesus said, "Go the extra mile." If you're a Christian, you are head and shoulders above the rest.

It's amazing how people want to be the head and not the tail, but they act more like the tail than they do the head.

It says to excel above the rest. That means you're different; you're not the same as everybody else. It's funny when you go into a job or workplace; you are called the boss' pet if you try to excel at your job. Where did the shift happen that we made the decision that we don't have to do the best that we can?

I cannot imagine having to go through what our Lord and Savior went through. You had to have an excellent spirit; you had to be able to see the vision and know that the future would be greater than your present. Your future has to be seen as greater than the discomfort of your present. People today don't want to be excellent and don't see the need to be either.

I was a good, solid C student. I'd get a B every once in awhile, maybe even an A on occasion, but I was a solid C. To be real honest with you I was absolutely bored in school. So for me, all I did was enough to get by. That wasn't good enough and I regret it. Often times I see that type of mentality reflected in areas of people's lives, but mediocrity is not the pinnacle of success. No one has been successful being mediocre, being average, being par, or on the middle of the line.

***"Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm."
- Daniel 6:3***

The people and the princes around him and those that served with him, they sought to find where Daniel was making mistakes and interestingly enough they couldn't find any. So they resorted to trickery, to get the king to decree it so that Daniel would be an infractor. Haters and people who are against you in life, if they cannot find occasion against you for real reasons, often times they will fabricate what they need in order to serve their goals and bring occasion against you.

Daniel was a man who lived his life in such a way that even those that were looking to find occasion against him couldn't. He operated with such excellence; I don't mean perfection, I mean excellence. There's a difference; perfection is where you hold yourself to a standard that you can't do. Excellence is when you do the best you can with what you have. If you're a two talent person, then you do what you can do with your two talents. If you're a five talent person, you do what you can do with your five talents. God does not expect you to do more than what you are capable of, He expects you to use what you have.

Excellence does not have excuses. We have a responsibility to people. To serve them and to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to their growth and success as a church. We have a job function that has been mandated by God and divinely orchestrated by him. How in the world can we come up with an excuse? If this is the bar, set the bar where it should be and hit the mark. Excellence is when you go above and beyond and say, "You know what? I'm preeminent; I'm outstanding. In God, I can do all things. I'm honorable towards what God has called me to do."

It's amazing and it's not just in the congregation, it's even in the ministry leaders and the Five Fold Ministry,

those that know better but yet they're lazy about their ministry. You can always spot people that have a high level of faith. When you put them in ministry, you can tell because the first thing they want to know is how can we make this the best it can possibly be. An average thinker wants to know what do we need to get by right now.

I'm not interested in fixing the problem that we have right now; I'm interested in fixing the problem we're going to have in five-ten years. If we are preeminent then, we are people of excellence who hold ourselves to a different standard so when people try to seek occasion against us, they can't. Some people, you don't even have to seek an occasion. They're so sloppy an occasion against them comes to you.

The Bible says Daniel handled himself so well that the king suffered no harm. The king never took a hit because Daniel was on the scene. That's where someone can leave you in charge and know that it'll get handled just as if they were sitting there, not as if it's an opportunity to shine and do things their own way. They'll think that since the leader is away that he will never know. Excellence is when you carry yourself to a whole different standard. The king knew that if he put Daniel in charge, he would suffer no damage. People wouldn't complain about him. He wouldn't leave projects undone. The king did not have to put his mind on it.

Could you imagine if our President had to worry about who's going to mow the lawn? I don't want that man worrying about who's going to mow the lawn or who's going to clean the guns. What I want him to do is focus on fixing this country, that's his job. Yet and still what we don't understand is that when you are in a corporation, a

business, a church, or wherever it is; if the lawn doesn't get mowed, somebody has to be responsible for it. If the floors don't get swept, somebody has to be responsible for it. If the church doesn't get setup, somebody has to be responsible for it. The moment that you have to go there in your head to deal with those items, you have just been derailed from the true focus of the job.

What if we were talking about a CEO? You have to recognize that the responsibility of the vision lies on the leader, but he cannot do that if people are not excellent at what they do. Mediocrity will always affect an organization. You can always determine what's mediocre; it's average. How do you know what is not average? People are wowed! "Wow" goes above average, "wow" invokes a spirit of excellence. It's preeminent and outstanding! The Bible says the reason why Daniel had these characteristics is because he had an excellent spirit within him. Not an excellent soul, not an excellent mind, not an excellent body. He was not the most handsome and the most dashing. He had an excellent spirit. See when you understand and recognize that, then you can ask yourself if you have an excellent spirit. Well, I want to ask you a question. If you have the Holy Spirit who lives on the inside of you then I would hope you would recognize and discern that you do have an excellent spirit. But why do we not understand that if the Holy Ghost teaches us all things, if the Holy Ghost is the one that brings all things to remembrance in the scripture, then why do we struggle with excellence? Our flesh and our soul try to take over everything we do. If I were to sit down and talk to somebody going into ministry, I would tell them to be excellent. Be the one that Pastor can trust. Be that one that will do it the way you are asked to and not the way you feel the bar should be lowered. It

amazes me how when I set the bar higher, people constantly want to come and say, "Yeah but can we do this?" No, in your house you do it the way you want to. In this house we are, in my opinion, preeminent. We are Christ-like; so everyone in this organization is going to hold the bar of excellence because that's what we do, that's who we are. People always tell me that I am radical. Beautiful, keep it moving and don't hurt the rest of us. As long as there is oxygen in my body, I expect excellence, and I would not expect it from you if I did not do it myself. I bring everything I have to what I do because that's who I am. Solving problems is what I do. I don't talk about problems, I don't report the problem, I solve it. What about you, are you a problem solver? Are you a paycheck taker or a difference maker.

The spirit of excellence is not in everybody. Let me tell you something, if you are working in a company and you're one of the leaders, you better watch people under you because you can always tell who has an excellence spirit and who doesn't. The ones who don't hang by the water cooler talking and need 50 million smoke breaks. The people of excellence are the ones that will be there. They arrive early and they leave late. They're not complaining about what time they need to be somewhere.

I have ran several companies over my career and it never ceases to amaze me how people will run out of the building at 5 o'clock. Now it stands to reason that it at least takes you a couple minutes to get your stuff together, so how you leave at 5:00 P.M. on the dot. I do not know. To me, you just robbed me of a few minutes of work. They run out the door like the school bell rang. The same thing happens in church. Service is released and people are out

the door like somebody shot off a gun. Where's the excellence? You might be done with your work but how can you help someone else with theirs? How can we make this a little bit better? Maybe the floor got swept, but it'd look nicer if we mopped it. How do we take it to the next level?

Don't get into ministry if you're not going to be excellent. You want to know why? Satan will eat your lunch if you're not paying attention to the details. I have a saying, "There are no trolls." You know how in fiction stories at night, everybody goes to sleep and then the trolls come out and they do all the stuff, fix and build everything, then when you wake up it's all done! I don't have trolls, plain and simple. So if I go to bed and it wasn't done, I'm going to wake up and it still won't be done. We have a responsibility to understand that if we are excellent, then there's no occasion that can be found against you.

People will take the victimized position and ask why are they being "picked" on. You're sloppy. Let's call it what it is. Love you, but you're sloppy. That's why you get "picked" on all the time. Because see, Daniel did not say, "Why is everybody picking on me..." Because they could not. He operated and carried himself so that they had to create a problem to hold against him because they could not find one. Everything you do, the Bible tells you to do it as unto God. Do we even realize that everything we do for God, every position in the church, every job you work at, God is looking at you going, "Do this as if you're doing it unto me?" How can you be a witness to other people if you are sloppy? If you act like they act, how are you going to tell them that there's a God that will empower you to be successful if you can't do it?

An excellent spirit will surpass expectations. Have you ever heard the saying that you don't get what you expect, you get what you inspect? When you inspect, then they know there's pressure that someone is looking over their shoulders. But it always amazes me how people do not come to the realization that God is the chief inspector. He can discern the intentions of your heart. Knowing that God is the ultimate fruit inspector, to some of you that's an indictment and to others it's encouragement. God can discern the very nature of your heart. Daniel was preferred above everyone else; above all the presidents and princes because there was an excellent spirit in him.

People will sometimes say that you have to be fair and everybody needs to be treated the same? You know that's a lie, don't you? God is not fair; God is just. There's a difference. In the Parable of the talents the Bible says that to one God gave five, to one He gave ten, to another He gave one. God is not fair; He's just. He divides unto whomever He desires based on their abilities. They had different capacities. It's not fair; it's equitable. An excellent spirit sets you apart from others. Daniel was preferred because he was excellent; he was preferred because he was different; he was a man of integrity and got the job done. The king wasn't running around behind him asking if he collected taxes today. Did you get this today? Hey, did you do that? The king never had to touch it, which made him excellent.

There's a process that everybody goes through when they come to the church and it's the same for every person. When they speak about the church, they will say, "Pastor, I really like coming to your church." Then, at some point they will begin to start saying, "Pastor, I really love our

church." Finally, they're saying, "Pastor, I love my church." What happens is people start taking true ownership of that which really does not belong to me, it belongs to the body of Christ. The church is not here for me; it's here to develop you, teach you, train you, and prepare you to become fully developed followers of Christ.

You may walk into someone else's house, you might say, "Well it's not as clean as I'd like it to be, but you know it's not my house." But when you go into your house, all of a sudden you begin to see things a little differently because it's your house. But vision can be a very, very dangerous thing. You want to know why? The easiest way to steal a person's vision is to give them another one.

“At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee...”

- Acts 26: 13-16

Paul, standing before King Agrippa, was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. In chains, he was not ashamed because of the bondage. He'd been bonded since the moment he received the vision. The vision that he received was that he was going to testify what he had seen

and what God was going to show him. Notice, when he had his Damascus experience, he said, "Is that you, Lord?" He was blinded on the road to Damascus. Now why was he blinded? God was giving him another vision, so He took his natural eyesight away from him. Your eyesight will always lead to your insight, but they are not one in the same. You can have eyesight and no insight and vice versa. God was giving him a new vision along with instruction of what to do. We then see in Paul's life a dedication to the vision. The Bible says in Proverbs 29 that literally the people perish without a vision. If you read it in the NIV, it says they cast off restraint when they have no redemptive revelation. You know what a redemptive revelation of God is?

Let me help you to get a picture of a redemptive revelation. You all, at one point in time prior to Christ, have put yourself in compromising positions that you were not supposed to be in. Some of you went to the club with a bottle full of whatever. Some of you were dancing it up, some of you "every day you was shuffling." Then there came a point where you recognized your redemption in Christ. You became clearer about what God expects from you and of who God is and what He is in your life. So, you lived your life a certain way and then you came to the realization, Hey wait a minute, God expects more. Then you begin to realize there's more to this than that. The decision is made that you're not going to stay in this low-level place of thinking. You began to get a redemptive revelation of who you are, which means that your understanding of who you are is now viewed through your redemption. Who you are is now viewed in the light of your redemption it is not who you used to be. I don't care if you think you are the most sanctified, holy-rolling person that

ever walked the planet. Who you are today is nothing compared to what you look like through the lens of God's redemptive plan and purpose for you.

God's vision always comes through a redemptive revelation. In other words, it comes from His perspective, not yours. He is seeing it through the lens of what you're supposed to be and not what you currently are. This is a unique challenge for a pastor, because when the pastor begins to deal with his flock, he is not speaking to who you are in the flesh. He is speaking to who you are in the spirit. The office of the pastor gives a unique God inspired perspective.

You can have knowledge, but not have a redemptive understanding. You have to ask yourself, is your church, reaching the full redemptive potential that God has for it? Is it really at the place where God wants it to be? Not, "Is it good enough for me? Does it take care of my needs and my family?" We have to realize that there is a redemptive plan and that plan is always seen in light of the redemption that's been offered to you. Christ did not die for you to live an average life. John 10:10 tells us that Jesus came that we might have an abundant supply, more than enough, to the full, until it overflows. There's one thing to do something great; it's another to put your life on the line. He did not do all of that for you to be average.

There's an old joke where the cow and the pig and the chicken got together and they said, "You know, farmer has been real nice to us. He's fed us and taken care of us. I think we should do something nice for him. Maybe we should make him breakfast." The pig looked at the cow and the chicken and said, "That's easy for you, but for me to supply the bacon I've got to give up my life."

It is literally a slap in the face for you not to recognize that Christ laid his life down for you to be redeemed, to be pulled out of the world. It's a shame to go back to low-level living and not realize that the redemption that draws nigh unto you was brought into your life for you to be preeminent and outstanding. People should look at you and go, Wow! I hate them. They always show up early; they're always staying late. Of course, the last thing they will be saying is that they can't believe you are their boss. Your redemption made you excellent. A cut above the rest!

The sign of the anointing is I can do more with less. If I need to work twice as hard to get half as much, I'm operating under a curse and it's time for me to check some things and get myself in order. Might be the way I think, the way I feel or the things I'm doing, but if I have to do more to get less, what do I need God for? The sign that God's favor is upon my life is that I'm able to do more with less. When you're able to do more with less, trust me when I tell you that you will invoke a green spirit in most people. They will get jealous. Now, your Christian brothers and sisters, they won't get jealous because they're holy and they recognize that the same spirit that dwells in you dwells in them. All they'll have to do is get up and go be excellent too, right? If only that were true. Some of your worst critics will come from inside the church. Some of your worst sabotage will come from your Christian brothers and sisters who will be smiling in your face, all the while they want to take your place. But a redemptive revelation does not allow you to see it any more than the way God wants it to be. Not with your resources, but with His. Not with your vision but with His. Not with your ability but with His! God said His ways are higher than your ways; His thoughts are higher than your thoughts. You could think ahead to your fastest

moment and God will be sitting there waiting for you when you get there. Paul was given a vision and the vision was to do what God had revealed to him. Now here's the thing, Paul said that by all measures of education that he was a Pharisee. He was as smart if not smarter than the rest of them. Do you realize that Paul was already excellent? All he needed was a direction, a vision. When people don't have a vision, they cast off restraint, they have no order anymore; they perish. They can't see it anymore and they have no guidelines by which to live. Listen, You should not be excellent because someone is watching or supervising. Be excellent because that's who you are. People that aren't excellent hate being supervised. They don't want to be "micromanaged." Do your job with excellence and you won't be.

The Apostle Paul left Timothy at Ephesus. Timothy was fairly young. We know this because Paul wrote him a letter telling him to not let anyone despise his youth. When Paul was writing about Timothy, he commented that there was a gift in him. That it was in his grandmother and mother. When I read that, I began to think to myself, "Why would he have stated where it came from?" Obviously, that is where it comes from. If we are lacking of excellence, sometimes we have to look at how we were reared.

My parents did not expect me to be a brain surgeon. My grandfather, told me one time, "I don't care what you do, you could be a ditch digger, you just be the best ditch digger there ever was." It wasn't a matter of having an expectation for me to be a lawyer or a doctor or whatever we may deem to be the most prestigious positions on the planet. Quite frankly I think being a pastor is about the most prestigious position every created by God. So I'm

comfortable with where I'm at and with what I'm doing. But my parents just wanted me to do the best I could. When I messed up, it wasn't a matter of being a bad person. It was a matter of, "You're better than that!"

See, sometimes people respond with, "Let's beat you down," While some people respond with, "You know what? You are literally better than that. We don't do stuff like that!" Remember in the days when everybody used to have lines cut into their hair with clippers? They'd have them going all the way around their head and stuff like that. My grandparents, would babysit me during the day and I remember talking to my grandma one day.

I said, "All the kids got these lines in their head and I want one."

She said, "What tribe do you belong to?" I said, "What do you mean 'what tribe do I belong to'?"

My grandmother was half Indian, so she wasn't playing. She said, "What tribe do you belong to?" I said, "I don't belong to a tribe." She said, "Then you don't need lines on your head either do you?" Now some of you may think, "That was a little harsh." She was telling me, "That's not what we do. Everybody else can do that."

I'm not conceited; I'm confident; there's a difference. I understand who I am in Christ and I think some of you need to recognize who you really are in Christ. Paul told Timothy to not let anyone despise his youth. Timothy pastored the Ephesian church. He was a young man and the people were attacking him because of his age. But they failed to recognize that it wasn't a matter of him being old enough, it was a matter of him being excellent and doing things the way God would have wanted them to be done. There are a few theories of Timothy's age ranging

everywhere from around twenty on up to his early thirties. It doesn't matter because Timothy pastored the largest known church in the world at that time. Can you imagine pastoring the church that Jesus' mother went to? The Apostle John went there, the one whom Jesus loved. Can you imagine preaching to them?

The criticism that could have come from all of that. Timothy was afraid, but he still had an excellent spirit. You can have fear and still be excellent. Timothy is pastoring the largest known church in the world, yet and still Paul had to put him there because Paul had a vision and he understood it. He knew that one man couldn't do it all. If you have a God size vision, you can't do all of it by yourself. If you can; it is not a God vision. When God gives a vision, it employs the masses. You can always tell the people who don't have a vision because they can't be excellent. They don't know where they're going or what they're doing, i.e. a lack of vision.

Restraint is a good thing. You ever heard, "The love of God constrains you?" Sometimes the love of God will keep you from doing some things. You know what I'm talking about; Sister Bucket-Mouth starts running her mouth and all of a sudden you like, "Really? You know, really?" There's that point where you become stressed. Then all of a sudden the love of God comes in and the mind overrides the body's desire to choke somebody. People who have no vision can't be excellent. They don't know what they're doing, they don't know why they're doing it and that's a sad thing. You ask somebody, "Hey where are you going to be in five years?" If they can't really answer that question right off the top of their head, they don't have a vision. That's

why Paul said, "I press toward the mark of the high calling of God."

That word, "mark" in the NIV is translated as a "goal." A goal is a piece of your vision. I understand there's a vision and in order for me to accomplish the vision; I have to step through a series of goals to get there. But if I don't have a vision then I can't have a goal. If I don't have a goal, then you are accomplishing what your goal really is, which is nothing. The worst thing in the world is somebody that doesn't have a vision. Second worst is somebody who had the correct one and then someone else gave them another one.

God is looking for your fruit. The Bible says you know a person by the fruit they produce. If I put you in an orchard and I neglected to tell you what type of trees were there, you wouldn't know until you saw the fruit. People produce fruit and an unripe piece of fruit can still come off the tree. Not all fruit is sweet and good. I had a house that had an ornamental orange tree. If that isn't one of the stupidest ideas I ever heard in my life. Still have to pick the oranges, they still rot on the ground but yet they're ornamental which means you don't eat them. What is the point of that? It produced and looked like real oranges; cut one open you'll see it isn't. You have to realize that excellent people, they don't produce bad fruit. They'll tell you flat out, If my name's going to be associated with this; this has to be done right. I don't partner with people that don't share my values. I don't care if you're making a million dollars a day, if we don't have the same core values then I'm not interested. I'm not ruled by money; I'm ruled by God. I am reminded by a Hip Hop song that came out many years ago called CREAM it was an acronym that I

have re-coined as “Christ Rules Everything Around Me.” Whatever my name is associated with can not be junk. Sometimes you see professional athletes will do an endorsement deal strictly based on the money. I don't take anything because of the money. If it's not excellent I don't want anything to do with it. If it's not the best, my name doesn't go on it because I hold myself to a different standard.

Do you hold yourself to a different standard?

Do you recognize that you have to have a vision?

Do you recognize that God is the ultimate fruit inspector?

Do you recognize that everything you do, God is watching how you do it?

It's funny when people say, "I'm just volunteering. If you'd pay me, boy I'd give you everything." No, you won't. Over the years, I've hired people that made six dollars an hour to over six figures a year. Let me tell you something, a bum is a bum. They're a bum at two hundred thousand and they're a bum at six bucks an hour. It doesn't matter what you get paid. If you're moved by the money, you have no vision. I've never worked for money, never. I've taken jobs where I was paid very little, way less than what I'm worth. Let's be honest, who is really paid what they feel they're worth anyway? I work for opportunity. It has to do something for me; it can educate me.

My dream is to one day work at a pizza shop. I just want to learn how to make pizzas. I'd do it for free, I just want to learn. I value education more than money. "Pastor, if you'd pay me I'd come work for the church." That's why I

won't pay you. I refuse because I worked for the church I pastor now for almost three years and never got paid. Served and worked for the church, that I came up in for eight years and never requested a paycheck. If you do it for the money, you're the wrong person because if you had a vision you would say this, "I know that if I bring my supply, I can make this organization better. If I make this organization better and increase it, God will take care of me financially. " That's faith!

But we'd rather go and sell ourselves to the highest bidder, when the real highest bidder is our Father. Listen, it's not for everybody, I know that. Could you imagine if I showed up to the church without my notes or my Bible? "Everybody, hold on I have to drive home and get my stuff." You would be irritated..

You expect me to be excellent because you know I have responsibilities. Yet you don't have a shepherd without sheep. Sheep have the same responsibility to show up as the shepherd does. We have what is known as a synergistic and a symbiotic relationship. I need you and you need me, that's how it works. People expect me to be excellent and some have no problem telling me when they think that I'm not excellent. We're still working on them. However, some are all too quick to have lunch and dinner and talk about how not excellent their leader really is. But do you hold yourself to the same standard?

Did you ever stop and think what we could do if five people said, "I'm going to go above and beyond." If you understand going the extra mile then that means for everyone there is two. I love addition; I really do. "One plus one equals two" is great, but when it comes to my finances I'd prefer multiplication. What if ten or twenty of

us would say, We're going to give this thing thirty days of everything that we have. Can you imagine the progress that could be made?

I read a story about a guy who started a church in England. I believe He had three friends; two of them were doctors and the other a lawyer. They went to him and said, "God told us to quit our jobs and to put all of our money into this church." Now listen to me, I'm telling you a story, I am not telling you to do such a thing, I'm just sharing a story. If you do any such thing without having heard from God and all your life falls apart, do not blame me because I did not tell you to do this. They wrote the article because these three men became millionaires. They asked them, "How did you get that way?" They said, "God told us to quit our jobs, take all that we had, and put it into this church. As we grew the church, God brought us businesses and companies because He knew we would put it into the organization."

They grew the church and God blessed them to such degree that all three became millionaires. These were not ignorant men or people that were easily deceived. They were highly educated people, those that have gone to graduate school. They heard the voice of God resounding in their hearts that said, "If we would just bring our supply..." How far would our organizations go if we had five people that said, "I'm going to bring my supply"? What if we have ten? How about twenty? Where would we be if thirty; how about if forty said, "We're going to bring our supply?"

The leaders that are over ministries in the church are all wanting to get people to serve in this capacity. Some of the leaders, they're working twice as hard. What if we brought everything we have? Not just on Sunday. What if we

brought it throughout the week? Think of the people's lives we could affect and touch. Think of the things that we could do as the body of Christ. What would happen if we became the resource to feed and house people? What would happen if the city, the county, the state you're in, was looking at your church and asking you to help fix community and socio-economic problems. Do you think we'd be doing ministry for real then? I think we need to stop playing in the church! I'm talking about real ministry, but how do we get there? How do we get into the real that God desires? Do you think that He's sitting on high watching the things that are going on as we're flipping through the stations going, "Wow, that's a tragedy; somebody should do something about that. How could God let this happen in this world?" God isn't letting it happen; you are!

I'm passionate about this because I've seen the redemptive revelation and vision that God has. We all have heard, I hope; the speech that Martin Luther King Jr. gave called "I Have A Dream." If you haven't heard it recently, I want you to listen to it. I don't want you to watch it; I really want you to listen to it. You'll hear a cadence in his voice, almost like music. It's composed with such eloquence. I believe it's one of the greatest speeches ever given. He's describing a redemptive revelation that God gave him of what it was supposed to be. At the time, everyone thought he was crazy and it would never be like that. Racism still exists it's just a little more underground, so maybe it won't happen in our lifetime because it did not happen in his. Yet God gave him a vision that was not in his lifetime. He was merely a person that God used to get it to the next goal. The vision he had was not for right then, it was something to be aspired, to desire after, to chase after and to pursue because

God gave him a vision. You need to have something to work towards. You need to see the end. For me, it's hard now because it's a double-edged thing. I want to know where I'm going, but yet once you know where you're going, sometimes you become agitated that you're not getting there fast enough.

You really become agitated when you begin to realize that it's not because you won't go; it's because someone else won't go. That's what caused Moses to strike the rock instead of speaking to it— the frustration of dealing with people. If God just wanted me to be there right now, he would have given me something I could do by myself, but He wants every one of you to see the vision and say, "I see that and we can get there. We might not get there in my lifetime, but I'm going to leave enough growth and advancement that my children can pick something up and continue on with it. There will be a value to my life that I will not just have been a blip on the radar, but that I'll have been a force to have been reckoned with. I will be known for having done something and I'll have a legacy that I can leave to my children and my children's children. I will know that my life counted for something because I have a vision and I'm excellent."