

Jim Martin  
P.O. Box 291962  
Dayton, Ohio 45429

## **JULY 2019 “ARE YOU READY FOR MINISTRY?” (Part 2)**

Dear Friends,

In my letter last month I shared the first part of a teaching titled, “Are You Ready for Ministry?” (If you did not receive that letter, send an email to [PastorJimGCC@gmail.com](mailto:PastorJimGCC@gmail.com) and a copy will be sent to you.) This month, I am continuing that teaching after briefly reviewing from last month.

All Christians have a ministry calling from God. Those callings are varied and are based on God’s will for the individual. However, many Christians battle frustration because they feel their ministry or leadership position is not taking off or that they are not being promoted further into their calling the way they desire. Last month I shared a prophecy wherein God explained why, out of all the people following Jesus, only 12 specific men were chosen as Apostles. What qualified them was the condition of their heart and attitude. The same is true today. God promotes people according to their heart and attitude toward following Him and His instructions.

There are Christians who think a theological degree is the qualification necessary for ministry. This is one of the greatest deceptions ever imposed on people. Some of the most arrogant and ignorant Christians I’ve encountered live in self exaltation concerning their education, their understanding of the Greek and Hebrew languages or their ordination from a seminary or denomination. Though education and the knowledge of biblical languages can be helpful, the accolades of man will never be the qualifier for ministry.

Many Christians want to be used of God, yet they do not have a home church. Scripture makes it very clear that we are to be planted in the house of the Lord. If there is no good church in the city where we live, technology makes it possible to be a part of a church by way of the internet. If our heart and attitude is right before God, we will seek Him for direction concerning the church He wants us to attend. Furthermore, we are to be faithful in our attendance. A passive approach to attendance is the fruit of a passive walk with God. If you want to move forward in your calling, you will be known for your faithfulness in church attendance.

Something I’ve noticed in many people who feel they have a calling to preach or teach, but are underused in their calling, is a habit of wanting to be sure others are aware of their vast knowledge of scripture. They want to do the talking. They want to teach people the ways of God and His Word. Since opportunities to minister aren’t opening up to them the way they desire, they create opportunities for themselves. This includes using social media as their pulpit.

**SOME OF THE** most uneducated, unscriptural and irrational statements and teachings I’ve ever encountered from Christians have been in social media, primarily on Facebook. Even if a post is filled with truth, it is inevitable that the fools (as described by Proverbs) will contradict, argue, misuse scripture and stir up contention, all because they have to deliver their theological pontification. Are you that desperate for recognition that you want to engage fools in their folly? Do you not realize that fools despise wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:7)? Such debate, wrangling and disputing can in no way benefit the Kingdom.

***<sup>27</sup>He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. <sup>28</sup>Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding. (Proverbs 17:27-28)***

***<sup>4</sup>Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. <sup>5</sup>Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit. (Proverbs 26:4-5)***

***Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him. (Proverbs 29:2)***

***In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. (Proverbs 10:19)***

Has God truly given you something to say? Do you have teachings that genuinely line up with a contextual use of scripture? If so, what are you doing with them? Are you writing them out in preparation for their use in the future? Might God want you to start writing a teaching letter similar to what you receive from me each month? Would He want you to start a YouTube channel and post videos of your teachings? Even more, have you ever once met with your pastor to share God's calling on your life?

Social media can be of great benefit to spreading God's Word. The more you walk in wisdom you will refrain your lips and hold your peace and be counted as wise, and God's wisdom is a path to promotion in ministry (Proverbs chapter 2)

**DO YOU** want to be exalted by God further into your calling? Jesus has made you a king and a priest unto God; therefore, you should look like one of God's kings and priests.

Years ago, church attendance seemed to dictate that men wear suits and women wear dresses. It is obvious that such standards are no longer the norm and casual dress is perfectly acceptable. But you are representing the eternal Savior of mankind, the One who shed His blood and gave His life for your salvation. As such, your appearance and bodily hygiene should matter to you. This is **NOT** about needing to wear expensive clothes to impress people with your fashion sense. It's **NOT** about spending great sums of money for expensive cologne. However, it **IS** about presenting yourself as an ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).

***And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. (Exodus 28:2)***

***And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. (Leviticus 16:24)***

***Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. (Ecclesiastes 9:8)***

I have preached in many churches in the United States and other countries. What I have witnessed at times is very sad. There are Christians who show up in dirty, tattered clothes, and some smell as though they haven't bathed in days. This does **NOT** include those who come

straight to church after a long day of hard work; it is speaking of those who have lost their perspective of who they are in Christ.

It doesn't take a lot of money to look nice and keep clean. Decent clothing, both casual and dressy, can be purchased at thrift stores for very little. Some discount stores in the U.S. sell all their products for just \$1.00; this includes soap, shampoo, toothpaste, laundry detergent, deodorant, shoe polish and more. In other words, you don't have to be wealthy to present yourself as someone called of God to represent Him in the world.

One of the most disturbing trends I've noticed over the past several years is how churches, including leadership, have allowed what's fashionable in the world to establish what's fashionable and acceptable in the church. I've viewed church services on YouTube where those on the praise team, male and female, look more like they're performing in a bar than standing on the platform of a church, facilitating worship unto our Savior. The goal seems to be an attempt to "fit in" and be accepted by those outside the church in order to draw them into the church. As one preacher used to say, that is ignorance gone to seed. You don't win the lost by being like the world, you win the lost by being like Jesus.

Romans 12:2 tells us that we are not to be conformed to this world. In John 17:16, Jesus explains that those who believe in Him are like Him: not of the world. I realize some might twist my words into some kind of doctrinal legalism not at all being represented in what I'm writing. But as Christians, we should demonstrate the character and integrity of Christ in every aspect of our lives. If you want to gain the respect of others as you represent Christ, look the part, even if the best you presently have is a clean, untattered pair of jeans, a fresh, clean T-shirt and clean sneakers.

**YOU WANT TO** be used by God in ministry, but who are your teachers? I have been walking with God for over 37 years. During that time I have become increasingly aware of the fact that, out of all those standing up and preaching, it is a very, very small percentage who truly teach the Bible accurately. When Paul spoke of the Corinthians having ten thousand instructors, he was using pure sarcasm to tell them they had itching ears and were running after every wind of doctrine. When he said they did not have many fathers, he was saying they had extremely few teachers who could present God's Word in a precise, line-upon-line manner.

***<sup>15</sup>For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. <sup>16</sup>Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. (1 Corinthians 4:15-16)***

***Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)***

***Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (Philippians 3:17)***

The person from whom you receive the most teaching should be your pastor. However, if you attend a church where the pastor does not strictly adhere to what Jesus and the Apostles taught (as recorded in scripture) then you need to do some serious prayer about how long God wants you remaining in that church. Just because you think there are ministry opportunities in that church is no justifiable reason to stay there. Why would God want you attending a church where truth is compromised?

You should also be receiving teaching from others who stay true to scripture, refusing to preach what is popular, politically correct or watered down. The list of teachers God directs you to will be short. Years ago, I would listen to anyone who taught about faith, anointing, the Gifts of the Spirit, healing, and so on. But as I progressed in God, He began leading me away from so many of them. It wasn't that everything they taught was wrong; in fact, most of what they taught was good. But as I grew spiritually, I began to understand where they were wrong and no longer felt a drawing to their teaching. However, too many Christians who want to be used in ministry are listening to teachers who sow error.

I cannot begin to tell you how many pastors have contacted me over the years and invited me to preach in their churches yet know little or nothing about me. I receive their emails wherein they say God told them that I am the man who is to come and preach in their church and village, or I should come and hold crusades, or I should come and train pastors, and on it goes. When I ask how many of my sermons they have heard, repeatedly I am told they have never heard me preach! That is incredible! I inform them that they have no idea about my doctrine and for all they know, I could be a wolf in sheep's clothing. The truth is, such people have no business pastoring, for any pastor who would do such a thing is in no way ready to shepherd the flock of God's pasture.

**ONE OF THE** biggest weaknesses in so many Christians who want to be used in ministry is that they simply do not keep their word as they have given it. Ask almost any pastor anywhere if people in his church who want to be used by God in ministry have agreed to do something, then failed to do it as promised, and you'll get a resounding "YES" for an answer. But if those same people are asked to preach or do something else that will publicly prove they are "called of God," they will jump at the opportunity and do whatever it takes to keep their word.

***If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth. (Numbers 30:2)***

***<sup>21</sup>When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. <sup>22</sup>But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. <sup>23</sup>That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth. (Deuteronomy 23:21-23)***

***<sup>4</sup>When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. <sup>5</sup>Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5)***

***He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. (Luke 16:10)***

The moment you agree to do a task, you have given your word. Most do not seem to realize God sees them as having made a promise to Him. It doesn't matter what assignment you have accepted at church – cleaning rest rooms, helping service audio/visual, grass cutting and yard work, helping in the nursery, teaching Sunday School classes, etc – your responsibility is to keep your word, do what you've agreed to do, and do it exactly as instructed. It is so odd the way

some people claim to have fulfilled a task when the proof they didn't is blatantly obvious. If you refuse to follow instructions in the "non-glamorous" tasks, why should a pastor utilize you behind the pulpit, in leading worship, or in some other highly visible assignment?

More than one pastor has been accused of holding someone back in ministry. But if those accusers would examine themselves, they might discover that they are holding themselves back by not taking seriously every commitment they have made. In Matthew 10:42, Jesus let us know that God takes it seriously when a Christian does something as simple as giving a person a cup of cold water.

Interestingly, this same principle applies to pastors. Many seem to think that pastoring a small church is just a training ground and steppingstone to a bigger church. Furthermore, they treat that smaller church as though it is less important than a large church that can pay a larger salary. This is a despicable attitude that is a stench in the nostrils of God. What an insult to Him and His children! It doesn't matter how many attend a church, the pastor is to see himself as God's minister to those people. He is to see them and their lives as having no less importance and value to God than those in the big churches. If you're a pastor, you absolutely do not start looking for greener pastures; you stay where God has assigned you and shepherd that flock to the fullest of your calling.

There is much more teaching on being prepared for ministry than I can cover in just a few letters. My sermon, *Basic Guidelines for Ministry* can be helpful, and you can order a CD of it using the form below. If you truly humble yourself in the sight of God, He will lead you into preparation, bring "fathers" into your life for teaching and mentoring, then exalt you in due time (1 Peter 5:6). Remember, you are to serve the Lord before you serve people; He will then show you how to properly serve people.

In His Grace,

*Jim*

☐ Check this box to receive a CD of the sermon, *Basic Guidelines for Ministry*.

My love gift for this month is \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Email\_\_\_\_\_

Jim Martin Ministries • PO Box 291962 • Dayton OH 45429 • [www.jmmgrace.com](http://www.jmmgrace.com)