

MAXIMIZING SEASONS OF YOUR LIFE PRT 3

- I want to continue with part 3 of **MAXIMIZING THE SEASONS OF YOUR LIFE**.
- Let me remind you that, it is God's will and desire for you to live your life that is full of His evidence and presence.
- Your life must not be empty of God's hand, otherwise how else will non-believers know that there is God.
- This is the whole point of this series. I am not teaching you new things but by the spirit of God I believe the Lord is releasing keys that will rewrite your story for years to come.
- Last week I said that discernment, which is a faculty for spiritual perception grows when you:

1. Master the art of waiting on the Lord in prayer.

- I mentioned to you that without prayer, your spirit remains immature and cannot respond to impulses of the spirit.
- Today, I want to deposit another key that will strengthen your spiritual perception.
- When Joshua was about to cross the dangerous river Jordan, the man of God gave a very important instruction to the Israelites. It is that instruction that you need to obey to grow your spirit man into its full maturity.
- Let's go to the scripture again:

Joshua 3:1 Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. 2 After three days the officers went throughout the camp, 3 giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. 4 Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits between you and the ark; do not go near it."

- Joshua and the Israelites had not been at this location before, in other words it was unfamiliar to them.
- Listen, what is unfamiliar to you is not unfamiliar to God. What is strange to you, is not strange to God.
- That is why you need discernment – the understanding of times and seasons.
- Because they had not been there before, they needed the one who knew all things the lead them.

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- In the midst of Israel, there was the ark of the covenant. The ark was a box built of acacia wood, heavy and sturdy wood, which was overlaid with pure gold. Both the inside and outside of the Ark was covered in gold and was decorated with cherubim.
- The ark represented the presence of God among His people and was carried on the shoulders of the priests.
- Joshua then gave an instruction for the ark to be carried ahead of the people and for the people to follow at a distance.

“When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. 4 Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before.

- The priests also did not know the way but somehow by divine guidance, as they carried the ark, they knew where to go.
- Your level of discernment is determined by your relationship and response to the Holy Spirit.

2. Develop a meaningful relationship with the Holy Spirit.

- It was the presence of the ark that provided the direction, and it will be the presence of the Holy Spirit that will sharpen your perception.
- Discernment in the life of a believer can be achieved and sustained by partnering with the Holy Spirit.
- Many times, we rush into making decisions without allowing the ark to be in the front.
- It was exciting to be overlooking the promised land, to be very close to their breakthrough. It was tempting for them to simply run into it.
- However, without the ark, Joshua and the Israelites were going to get lost.
- It does not matter how familiar you are with certain dealings, do not neglect the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- You can walk with the Holy Spirit, but you might not have a meaningful relationship with Him.
- Your relationship with the Holy Spirit ought to be the advantage you have over a non-believer.
- Stop living like a non-believer who does guess work and trial and error. You will save yourself time and heart ach by developing a meaningful relationship with the person of the Holy Spirit.

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- Paul makes this point quite clear in 1 Corinthians 1

1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard," nor has it entered into the heart of man, "the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God...14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

- The work of the Holy Spirit is key to your perception – He dwells inside the Father and one of His works is to search the heart of God in order to reveal to you what is rightly yours.
- The Israelites were expected to respond to the move of the ark. They were told to take up their position and follow the ark as soon as the Levites were on the move.
- Joshua told them to leave a gap of about two thousand cubits between them and the ark and not to go near it.
- The Israelites needed to know how to relate with the presence of God, the ark. You cannot behave anyhow around the Holy Spirit.
- Some people got themselves in trouble by mishandling the presence of God.
- In 2 Samuel 6:1-7, David instructed ordinary men to go and take the ark of the covenant using an ox drawn cart. One of the men was Uzzah, who tried to stabilize the ark when it was being transported.
- The Bible said when he touched the ark, God struck him dead. The ark was never meant to be transported on a cart, and it was to be carried on the shoulders of the Levites.
- Don't get too accustomed to the Holy Spirit to the extent that you treat Him like an ordinary man.
- Joshua said, let there be a distance between them and the ark.
- You need to rediscover reverence for the presence of God – you cannot talk anyhow, you cannot criticize the things of God anyhow, where is the reverence and the fear of God.

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- There is a behavior that grieves and pains the Holy Spirit. When a person is unhappy, they usually withdraw and keep quiet, the same is true with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building up the one in need and bringing grace to those who listen. 30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, outcry and slander, along with every form of malice.

- So, you need to develop a meaningful relationship with the Holy spirit.
- If you want to know the mind of God, you must embrace the Holy Spirit in your life. He needs to be central to all that you do. To many well-meaning believers, the person of the Holy spirit is an afterthought, if not a disturbance and distraction to their decision-making skills.
- In other words, a mature believer should never be in the dark regarding seasons and times of their lives.
- As long as Joshua and Israelites paid attention to the leading of God, they were ok. However, further down we see Joshau getting into trouble for proceeding without asking God.

Joshua 9:3 And when those who lived in Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, 4 they worked slyly. For they came and acted as if they were ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their asses, and old and torn and bound up wineskins, 5 and old and patched sandals on their feet, and old clothes on them. And all the bread they had taken was dry and moldy. 6 And they went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, We have come from a far country. Now therefore, make a treaty with us... 4 And they received the men because of their provisions, and did not ask at the mouth of Jehovah. 15 And Joshua made peace with them, and made a treaty with them, to let them live. And the rulers of the congregation swore to them. 16 And it happened at the end of three days after they had made a treaty with them, they heard that they were their neighbors and that they lived among them.

- This became a big problem for Joshua because he had to keep to his oath, he had made without asking the Lord.
- Speed without the leading of the Holy Spirit is the highway to destruction.
- It is therefore important for you to invest in building your relationship with the Holy Spirit.

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- A mature believer knows how to learn and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit.
- The assignment of the Holy Spirit is to restrain you according to your level of yieldedness.
- Because He is gentle, the moment you struggle with Him, the Holy Spirit will pull back and leave you to your devices.
- Joshua told them to leave a gap and to follow the ark – this is a life of yielding to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
- When you walk with the Holy Spirit, He will instruct you, He will guide you – look at this portion of scriptures in John.

John 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, so that He may be with you forever, 17 the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him nor know Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.

- In the same way you learn your wife's voice, your child's voice, you need to learn how the Holy Spirits speaks to you.

Hebrews 3:15 As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."

Revelation 2: 29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

- Walking with the Holy Spirit is a personal choice. God made provision for us to know the Holy Spirit and to relate to Him, but you have the choice to develop the relationship.
- The key to walking with the Holy Spirit is found in the word TRUST – don't trust your environment, don't trust your feelings, but in all circumstances trust the Holy Spirit.