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Maturity for Ministry

I remember being very excited about the small motorcycle that my parents had gotten for me. I was probably thirteen at the time, and I had lived most of my life riding dirt bikes, but this one was different. It was a little bigger and more powerful than my past bikes. I was riding it around our place having fun when my mother walked out with my little brother Jimmy who was five or six years old, and in my passion of brotherly love, I invited him to join me for a ride. My mother protested that I wasn't experienced enough to carry a passenger especially one as young as my little brother, but I believed in myself and my special skills at riding so much that I talked her into it.

So, he jumped on right behind me, with his hands tightly wrapped around my waist and both of us excited to ride together. I clicked it into gear and took off, instantly swerving and crashing in about twenty feet as both of us went flying off the bike. Thank God neither of us was hurt and we had a good laugh about it later, but it could have been worse. It's interesting that all these years later I can recall every detail of that moment.

That type of zeal is how I lived my youth. Always venturing out before I knew all the details, believing I was more prepared than I was. I think most of us had the same type of youthful enthusiasm that we had to grow through. Between racing motorcycles and cars, I look back to my younger years and wonder how on earth I survived without dying. Thank God for His mercy!

I jumped right into serving God with that same eagerness. In fact, my mother told me that I was "like a fish that finally found water" when I discovered God. I ran right into serving God in every way possible when I was eighteen years old. I wasn't raised in church, so I was clueless on many of the universal teachings and Bible stories, but I was involved. I'm grateful for the men and women of God from my church that helped me to slow down and focus on growing up in God.

It took many years of obeying God before He really began to trust me with people. To God, there is nothing more precious or valuable to Him than people, and He is most protective of His children. Look in Psalm 96:4 "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Here, He shows Himself as a protective mother hen with her wings spread out over the top of her little chicks. That mother hen will sacrifice her life for the safety of her babies.

This is why the Lord has high standards for any person who will minister for Him to His children. I believe that understanding this verse is especially crucial in today's world of instant gratification. I find many people who desire to minister for God are like I was with my motorcycle. Craving to be used of God in prophecy, teaching or in power is a wonderful thing to have on your heart. Yet, many people forge ahead of God's process of maturing in an attempt to see God work through them. Being impatient and frustrated, these people are not as prepared as

they think they are, and they do not realize that people's lives are at stake. Convincing people to jump on the back of your beliefs may seem easy, especially with today's social media. You can damage people with your opinion and actually find yourself at odds with a protective mother hen.

Recently on the news, there was a story of a large commercial jet plane which had to make an emergency landing. There were around one hundred and sixty people on board and about thirty minutes into their flight many of them started bleeding from their ears and noses. Can you imagine the fear you would feel trapped inside of a plane with blood coming out of your ears as well as other people around you? They were able to safely land the plane to find out that the pilots had forgotten to flip a switch as to pressurize the cabin of the aircraft. They put the lives of the people they were caring for in danger because they were not prepared and yet they still took control of the airplane.

Ministering for God is even more important than being a pilot in my view. What we teach others can not only affect their lives but also those around them. There's a scripture in 1 Timothy 5:22 "Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure." In this verse, the Apostle Paul is referring to a type of ceremony whereas a Pastor he would appoint a person to a position of leadership. By doing so, the pastor is declaring that this person has proven themselves in faithfulness, love, understanding of the Word and moral character. Another way we would say it is "Do not be quick to place your seal of approval on any person." This scripture also shows a warning of promoting people beyond their character by stating "nor share in other people's sins." The ability to be promoted by God is not through anointing or prophecy but through maturity! If you are finding yourself frustrated because it seems God is not promoting you fast enough, then I want to encourage you to stay patient. As we focus on our spiritual maturity through prayer and obedience, the Lord will see to it that promotion from Him will come. Placing my future in His hands was probably the most challenging step in my younger years, but my Father has proven faithful to me, and He will do the same for you.

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