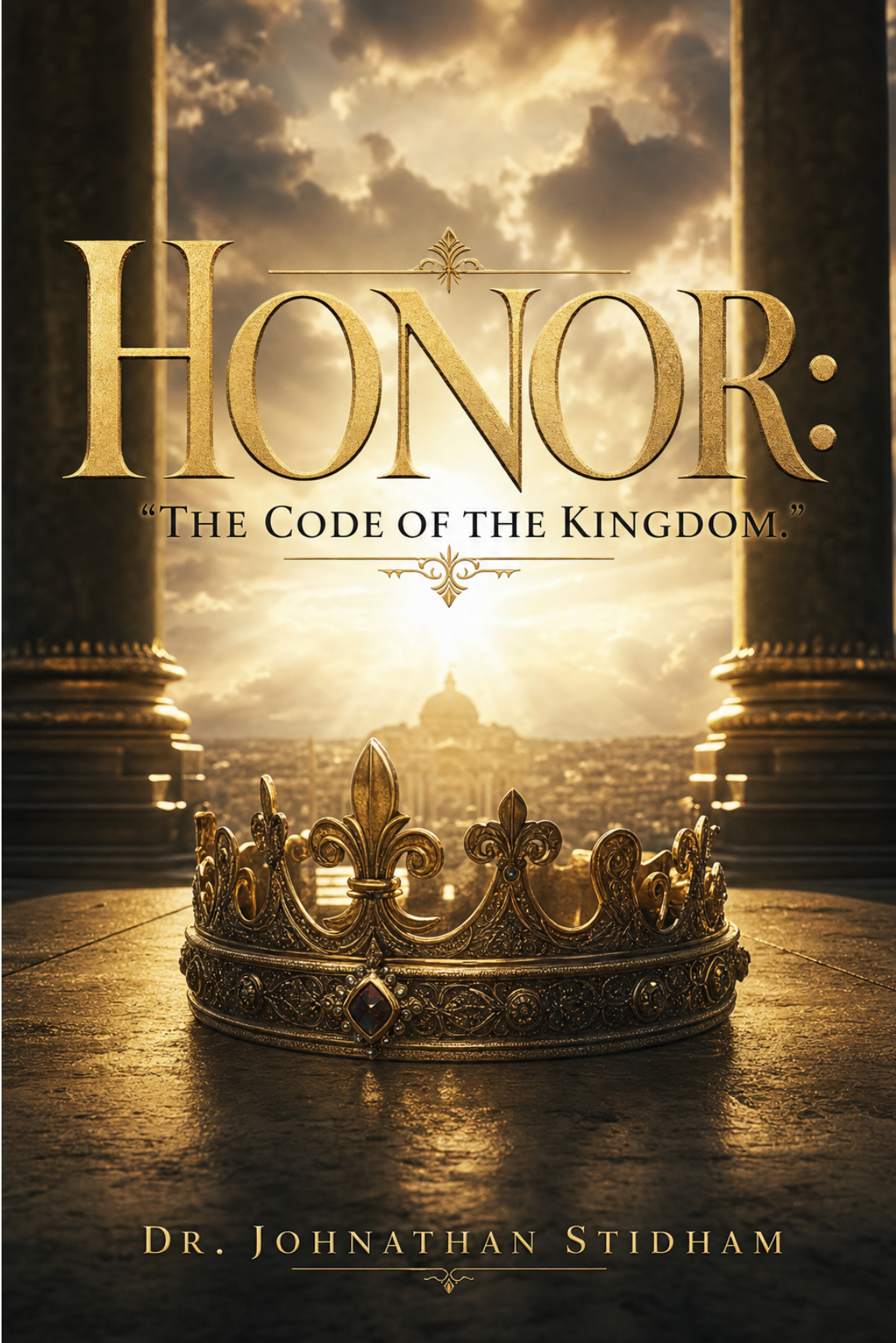




HONOR:

“THE CODE OF THE KINGDOM.”

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Honor
“The Code of the Kingdom”

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Table of Contents:

1. The Lost Code
2. Honoring Christ Above
3. Honor your Father and Mother
4. The Gift of a Spiritual Father
5. Honoring the house: The Local Church
6. When You serve the Man of God, You serve God
7. The Prophet's Reward
8. When Disloyalty Enters the House.

CHAPTER ONE

The Lost Code

At sixteen years old I was given an assignment. The assignment changed me forever. I can't begin to comprehend all of the ways that staff prepared me for the ones to come. As I think of pulpits I'll preach from, nations I'll see, assignments I'll receive, and opportunities I'll encounter, my mind goes back to that wooden staff in God's house.

I can still see myself staring into the eyes of my pastor. He looked into mine and said, "Son,"

"Hold this staff. Hold it until I ask for it back."

Confused, I replied, "Okay."

His sermon was about Moses' staff. It parted the Red Sea and became a rod that swallowed the serpents of Egypt. He had a staff to symbolize this during his message. After service was over, he gave that staff to me. He did not explain why. He gave it to me. And, he never specified how long I'd be holding that staff.

After the people filed out I stood there confused. People left one by one until it was just me. Chairs were being stacked. Musicians put away their instruments. Ushers checked for purses left behind. The parking lot emptied. Sections of the building shut off. And, still, I stood there holding that staff.

Finally, I heard the door locked. Thinking my spiritual dad had forgotten about me, I walked towards the door. As I lifted that staff from my sweaty, clammy hand I thought, There's no way

this means all night. Setting it upon the first pew I shuffled out of God's house and headed for the door.

As the door swung behind me, I heard footsteps behind me. Then, I heard that familiar voice again. Except this time it came over the phone. "Son, bring me the staff."

I drove back to that church, ran inside, and headed straight to the front pew to grab that staff. As soon as I reached the first pew, my jaw hit the ground. The staff was nowhere to be found! A figure stood in the shadows of the entryway. As soon as I approached, he lifted that staff and said, "Honor is doing what is right even when no one is around."

In that moment, I wanted to argue with him. To tell him, I thought it meant hold on to it during service. Not all night. As soon as you're not looking! But, I knew that wasn't so. That man saw something in me I couldn't see in myself. And, he was under God's direction to see it. So, I stood there humbled as he looked upon me with eyes of grief instead of eyes of anger and said: Honor creates humility. Honor brings discipline. Honor is doing what I'm supposed to do even when I don't understand what I'm supposed to do.

In that moment, I understood the Kingdom of God is built on honor.

Honor is a currency. Honor is not a character trait, a way of life reserved for Southerners, an outcome of proper upbringing, or a requirement of church culture. No, honor is a way of operating. Honor is the currency of the Kingdom of God. When honor is spent, things start to move. When honor is withheld, everything shuts down.

Jesus experienced this first hand. In Mark chapter six it says, He could there do no mighty work... And he marvelled because of their unbelief. Jesus returned to Nazareth as King. The people looked upon Him and took offense at him. They reduced the weightiness of his assignment to something as light as Who is this guy anyway? Who do you think you are? We know who your mama is! She's Mary! We know you're a carpenter. We've seen your brothers. You're just one of us. And then...nothing. Nothing moved in Nazareth. Nothing broke forth. Nothing got resurrected. Everything shut down.

Miracles don't break forth in the presence of disobedience. Jesus was a prophet in everything except where He was born and raised. Prophets must be honored, especially in secret. In secret is where honor is proven. When no one's watching. When there's no audience. When there's no applause.

The centurion understood honor. The general understood honor. Lazarus' sisters understood honor. Timothy understood honor. Moses understood honor. Elijah's mantle fell upon Elisha because Elisha understood honor. The apostle Paul saw potential in Timothy, and Timothy honored Paul's assignment. And, though Timothy was known as timid, God raised him up as an apostle!

Elisha sent a messenger to the general Naaman and gave him instructions. Go wash in the Jordan seven times. Instead of receiving the staff with both hands and thanking God for the prophet, Naaman left angry. Honor is receiving assignments with great significance. Honor is receiving assignments from God's people and honoring them. Honor is realizing, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. Honor is realizing there's authority on the other side of that phone call, text, email, or letter. Honor is realizing there's assignments given with great significance. Honor is obeying even when you don't understand the reason behind it. Honor is realizing your spiritual dad doesn't correct out of anger. Correction is not disqualification. Correction comes from a place of love. Spiritual fathers speak into areas of need. They know you before you're born and they see areas of potential you can't see in yourself. Honor is realizing your spiritual father is in God's direction to speak into areas of your life you can't even fathom right now. Honor is realizing there's potential for Joshua's where others see Moses'. Honor is receiving assignments and taking them as weighty assignments, not flippantly. Honor is receiving assignments and believing God has something greater on the other side of obedience. Honor is the currency of God's Kingdom. Honor brings forth double portions and raises the dead. Honor breaks forth Lazarus' out of four-day-old tombs. Honor raises Timothys' in the name of Jesus. Honor raises kings. Honor breaks forth potential. Honor brings forth destiny. Honor brings forth assignments from God's staffs of honor. Honor is the lost code of God's Kingdom. And, when honor is honored, power moves.

Kabod: The Weight

Kabod is a Hebrew word that is translated as honor or glory. Its primary meaning is heaviness or weight. Kabod also mean Honor when speaking to men, is the sense of something having weighty significance. The word is used to describe the glory of God. When Moses asked to see His glory he was asking God to show him His kabod, the heaviness of His presence. Honor is more than lip service or empty words, it's treating things as being significant, letting them have a weighty influence over your life. If something has kabod it will affect your decisions, you'll even pay a price for honoring that thing. Honor means recognizing something as having influence and power. Honor means submission. Honor is costly. Honor means endurance. Honor is doing what is right even when no one is around.

When I was sixteen years old, after one of the evening services, the pastor walked over to me and handed me his staff. "Son," he said. "Hold this staff. Hold it until I ask for it back." I took the staff, thanked him and walked out of the church. As the lights were being shut off and people filed out of the building, I walked into one of the front pews and set his staff on the pew. When my phone rang and the pastor asked for the staff, he had already picked it up himself. He smiled at me. "Son, bring me the staff."

I thought it was a test of endurance. I thought I passed. But his smile betrayed his disappointment.

That pastor loved me. He was a spiritual father to me. Fathers are supposed to discipline their sons. When we step out of line, fathers point us back into line. Discipline is not disqualification. And in that moment, he disciplined me, pointing me back into line. Honor is doing what is right even when no one is around. That staff represented something, and I failed to give that thing its kabod.

I've been thinking about that staff a lot. I failed to give that staff kabod, honor, and significance. I didn't rebel against him by refusing to carry the staff, but I made a significant assignment into a lightweight matter.

Kabod is a good word. Qalal is the opposite. To make light of something. To treat something significant as insignificant. To treat something heavy as light. That's what I did with his staff. It represented something and I made light of that significance.

Nazareth dishonored Jesus. They had the Son of God present in their midst. They had the King. But they dishonored Him. And because of that, Jesus could there do no mighty work... And he marvelled because of their unbelief (Mark 6:5–6). Think about that! They had the Son of God in their hometown. And because of their dishonor, their qalal, Jesus could not perform miracles among them! Power shuts down in the presence of dishonor. Miracles and breakthroughs will not occur where authority is dishonored. Nazareth had the presence of God, but missed out on His manifestations because they were void of His kabod, His honor. He'd just calmed a storm moments earlier with a word! He'd raised Lazarus from the dead out of a four-day-old grave! But in Nazareth He could do nothing!

A Generation That Lost the Code

Our generation has it all. We have resources and revelations. We have revelations from God and revelations from science. We have anointed leaders, music, worship, education. We have connectivity. We have so much going for us as believers. But there's one thing that's missing. We've been influenced by a culture of qalal, dishonor. We've lost kabod. We've lost the code.

Kabod was common among the nations. It was embedded in military service. We read of a Roman centurion in Matthew 8. This man was an officer in the occupying army. He was a Gentile with no religious pedigree. But he understood kabod. Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. He understood authority. He understood submission.

Kabod is necessary for success. Naaman, the Syrian general, was angry when Elisha sent a message to him through a messenger. Go wash in the Jordan seven times. Where are the fireworks? Where's the drama? Where's the manifestation of the Spirit? I want kabod! He was angry. He walked away offended. Where's the glory of God? But when he humbled himself and honored God's Word, God honored him right back.

Kabod was passed on. Moses gave his mantle to Joshua. Elisha received a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Paul mentored Timothy. Moses was bold and fearless but Timothy was timid. Still, God used Timothy, counting him as an apostle. Kabod was present. They bore one another's burdens. They carried one another's assignments. They picked up where others left off. We want the mantle of Elijah, but we're not interested in Elijah's bags!

We treat going to church like Netflix. We'll subscribe to church for a season, but eventually cancel. And when we subscribe, we're just as critical of preachers as we are of films. We sing songs of worship. We exercise gifts of leadership and authority, gifts of prophecy, intercession. But when it comes down to submission, honoring, kabod, we choke.

Kabod is missing from the body. And without it, power shuts down. The same power that raises the dead is unavailable to the body of Christ. Breakthrough is unavailable. Great revivals have been stunted. Assignments have been unfulfilled. Pulpits have gone unserved. Nations remain unreached. I'll never know what might have been. But one thing I know. Someone is going to fulfill what I can't. Someday, God's going to ask me why I set that staff down. And my excuse will fall flat because God saw what happened when you put your hand out to receive. They saw what happened when you took it, but He saw what happened when you set it down. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). Honor is doing what is right when no one is around. Honor has kabod, weighty significance. Honor is costly. Honor is necessary. Honor unlocks the heavens. Honor is required. Honor is power. Honor is breakthrough. Honor is glory. Honor is kabod.

Honor unlocks power! Honor breaks through! Honor opens heaven! Honor releases anointing! Honor is kingdom currency. Honor brings glory to God!

The Second Chance

We live in a generation that has been deprived of correction. We live in a generation that has been deprived of spiritual fathers. A generation without correction produces orphans and not sons. Applause does not correct. Applause does not develop character. Applause does not mature you for ministry. Correction produces sons. Correction produces honor. Correction develops character. Correction matures men of God. Moses saw the Promised Land before Joshua could even imagine it. Elijah saw the double portion before Elisha could wear it. Paul saw an apostle before everyone else saw a boy with a weak stomach! Your spiritual fathers see assignments, pulpits, and nations that you cannot even dream of right now. Honor them. Honor them with endurance. Honor them in the unseen. Honor them by heeding their advice. Honor them by obedience. Honor them because one day, they will point to you and others will hear: This is Joshua. This is Elisha. This is Timothy!

Naaman of Syria was desperate for healing. He rode to Elisha on horses and chariots bearing bags of silver, hoping to catch Elisha at the door. Instead, a messenger delivered these instructions from Elisha: "Go wash in the Jordan seven times." Naaman left angry, disappointed, and offended! Why? Because these instructions contradicted everything he thought God was going to do for him. But, his servants begged him to realize how foolish he was to be offended by such a simple assignment: "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou have not done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" Naaman honored Elisha and went and dipped himself seven times in Jordan: "and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." It wasn't the Jordan that healed him. It was his honoring of Elisha's instructions that healed him!

Beloved, when God speaks to you through a prophet or a pastor, take that instruction with significance. Honor the speaker. Take it with great weight and importance. If you have been given an instruction from God, don't minimize it. Take it with great weight and importance. Honor the speaker. Honor the source. Honor the assignment. Don't make something light that God intended to be heavy. Don't minimize His assignments. Honor them! Honor them with

endurance. Honor them in the unseen. Honor them by heeding their advice. Honor them by obedience. Honor them! Honor them because one day, when Lazarus stank of death after four days in that grave, you'll hear Jesus shout with authority and raise the dead: Come out! Come out! Come out! Honor opens graves. Honor breaks chains. Honor releases power. Honor releases healing. Honor releases revival. Honor breaks through! Honor opens heaven! Honor releases anointing! Honor is kingdom currency. Honor brings glory to God!

Questions for consideration and conversation

What assignment/instruction are you holding?

Have you held onto that staff since God handed it to you

Have you obeyed in the secret place?

Pray

Father, I'm sorry I treated Your staff as light. Thank You for disciplining me out of Your great love. Fill me with faith like the Roman centurion had, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. Let dishonor die within me, replace it with faith. Let there be no more famine, no more Nazareth, in my life. In the mighty name of Jesus' I pray! Amen.

CHAPTER TWO

Honoring Christ Above All

Given over to adoption as a child, I've always had a sense that I wasn't wanted and that promises were broken and not kept. As a result, God as a loving Father was inconceivable to me. I couldn't imagine that any father, much less God, could possibly love a child as crazy as me!

The first time I encountered Jesus' sovereignty was the night he walked into my life and commanded me to serve Him. I was at fifteen years old, depressed, angry, and contemplating suicide. As I sat in the dark, my bedroom started to glow. It wasn't that any objects in the room were shining, it was the atmosphere itself, the air, the room that began to emit rays of light. Suddenly, there was a Man in the room. He spoke to me of my purpose, my destiny, my plans for the future. As my thoughts of suicide faded away in the light of eternity, I wanted to know who this mysterious and glorious Man really was. "WHO ARE YOU?!" I shouted. His reply was this: "My name is Jesus Christ. And you will serve Me all the days of your life."

This is the foundation of my walk with Christ, not an invitation, not a proposal, not a sales pitch, but a command from one who has all authority! In that moment, I knew him as King. It was the encounter of an atheist with an orphan's scar on his heart meeting his real Father. That night, he adopted me. Since then, Jesus has been King over every area of my life.

The Night the King Walked In

When the angel told Mary that Jesus' throne would be eternal and that "he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32–33), it's reasonable to assume that Jesus expected everyone who encountered him to acknowledge his sovereignty. Yet so many treat him as though he were a cosmic fortune teller who can be tapped for guidance. We ask for advice and then act as though we're free to disregard his counsel. But this is not who he is, he is King!

His sovereignty was clear to the wise men who crossed the desert to worship him, bringing gifts fit for a King. It was clear to the centurion that Jesus had authority beyond his own. When Jesus called Peter out of his boat, Peter left everything, including his livelihood, and followed. Even the early church understood his sovereignty, they would sooner be thrown to the lions than acknowledge any higher power than Jesus. They refused to offer the prescribed oath to Caesar. But today? What kind of allegiance are we offering him? Do we really believe that Jesus' kingdom has no end? Have you surrendered to Jesus' sovereignty?

There's nothing casual or breezy about surrendering our will to Jesus' will. We must yield our thrones and call him Lord. The question is, Do we honor him as Lord?

Too often, we reduce him to a heavenly fortune teller or cosmic genie who grants three wishes. We approach him flippantly, ignoring the awesome truth that Jesus is King. If we want to see his power, we must honor him as such. Jesus knew this truth when he rebuked, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

My first experience with Jesus was one of encountering his sovereignty, his kingship. And this encounter gave rise to a relationship of intimacy, love, and adoration. When we see who he is, a King beyond compare, we can't help but adore him! As the Bible says, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). His kingship reveals his greatness and his heart. When he revealed his sovereignty to me, he also revealed his heart of love. He adopted me as His own that night, and he's been pursuing my heart ever since! The promise that God will adopt us is especially sweet for those of us who were wounded by earthly fathers. The Bible tells us that "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up" (Psalm 27:10) and that "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15).

Have you surrendered your throne to Jesus? Are you content to rule alongside Jesus in partnership, or will you acknowledge that he is King and lay down your crown at his feet? When you're in control of your own kingdom, you limit Jesus' ability to work in your life. We see his greatest works when he has full reign in our lives. That's when we encounter his power and watch him move mountains! His final act of humility took place in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus yielded his will and cried out, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). If the Son of God submitted his will, how much more should we?!

When an angel came to Mary, she was told that her baby would be King. “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke 1:32–33). The wise men knew it. They braved the desert and sought after a king and gave costly gifts when they found Him.

Why did they honor Him? He’s a baby! They honored Him because He was who He was. The key to honor is kabod (treating someone as weighty). How can we give Jesus weighty honor, especially in areas where it seems like He has nothing to offer? Honor to Jesus is the pillar from which flows honor in every area of our lives, our covenant, church, pastors, parents. Where did honor for parents come from? Honoring Christ. If you don’t give Jesus kabod in your life, it’s not surprising if your relationships and marriages are suffering.

When I was given over to adoption, I didn’t understand why I was given away, and it caused me great anguish. As a child I’d lie in bed, scream, “WHO ARE YOU?!” at the ceiling and demand answers. As a teen I was an atheist with a hole in my soul that only God can fill. I thought that hole was abandonment. In my fifteenth year I prepared to end it all, but God met me in my glowing bedroom with a message that has sustained me ever since: “My name is Jesus Christ. And you will serve Me all the days of your life.”

It’s easy to serve Jesus when He gives us what we want. The hard part is serving Jesus when He’s silent or when He takes away. When you look at the trajectory of Jesus’ life, what was He serving? His Father’s will. His own death! In Gethsemane He prayed, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). Jesus gave His Father kabod.

There are many people in church today that believe in convenience Christianity, wanting everything that Christianity has to offer, but none of what Jesus asks of them. They want salvation, but not King. They want the cross but not the crown. They want Him in their hearts but not the demands on their behavior. They want a Savior, not Lord. But, Jesus is a man of war, not compromise. He asks us to commit.

In the early church, believers were thrown to lions for swearing allegiance to Jesus instead of Caesar. Why? They recognized Jesus’ sovereignty and wanted no compromise with Rome. The early church understood kabod. They lived in the kingdom of Jesus because they gave Jesus’ kingdom all of kabod.

In the Gospels, Jesus asked a chilling question, “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). How often do we treat Jesus like Lord on Sunday but just an advisor by Tuesday, one of many voices alongside our own feelings, circumstances, bank accounts and plans? Do you give Jesus kabod in your life? Are you giving Him the honor that is due? We see the kingdom of Jesus in proportion to the honor we give Him. Where has God seemed distant? Give Jesus more kabod there. How can I see Jesus’ kabod in my life? Give Jesus kabod and watch how much more power you’ll see from Him.

He Came for Me Before I Came to Him

If you’re wondering whether Jesus has any interest in you, know that He called you by name before He died on the cross. Peter had a boat and some nets, but Jesus called him. A centurion

had many underlings and slaves, but when he encountered Jesus, he said, Lord, just speak the word. Because of his kabod for Jesus' authority, Jesus performed a miracle from afar for him. Jesus performs miracles today when we treat Him like a miracle-working King!

If you're an orphan, Jesus came to adopt you. We were lost sheep and He came looking. We were enemies, but He reconciled us. We were slaves, but He set us free. We were wounded atheists carrying an orphan's scar, but He called us by name. I can testify that adoption is God's answer to my wound, which has been His conduit for me to understand spiritual adoption from the inside out. Jesus' real Father's heart beats inside of my chest. We love Jesus because He first loved us, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). We may not always feel embraced by earthly fathers, but Jesus came looking for you and me and died so we could have real adoption: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15).

Nazareth didn't see much of Jesus' kabod because they didn't give Him kabod, He's just that carpenter's son. When we give Jesus kabod, we'll see His kabod in our lives. What's your story? Surrender to Jesus' kabod and watch Him write a better ending. I'm His lifelong servant and I'd stake my life on it, Jesus' kabod is the best you'll ever find.

As a child, I was given over for adoption. For some reason, someone thought it best for me to be someone else's responsibility. I don't know who did what, why, or the rest of the story. All I know is that I grew up believing that children aren't really kept. I had an orphan's scar. And when I met Jesus in my glowing bedroom during my fifteenth year, I finally came face-to-face with my real Father.

In that moment, as He began to walk out, I screamed, "WHO ARE YOU?!" I trembled in awe of Him as He spoke these piercing words: "My name is Jesus Christ. And you will serve Me all the days of your life." And so I surrendered.

Have you? Have you surrendered your life to Jesus as your Lord and Savior, your Father, your Provider, your Deliverer, your Healer, your Comforter, your Guide? Have you laid down the reins of control? Have you cried out to Him and experienced His power? Have you honored His name, His Word, His church, His messengers? Have you seen His glory? If not, I urge you to get to know who He really is. Jesus is more than your friendly, heavenly advisor. He's your King!

WHAT IS THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

He is the Christ, the Messiah, prophesied throughout the OT and revealed to Mary by an angel: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

WHAT HONORING CHRIST ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

- Treating the Word of God as final, not your feelings (see the centurion who believed Jesus could send a mere word and his servant would be healed, the servant of a man who honored authority). Jesus said, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

- Allowing God's will to trump your will ("Not my will, but thine, be done", Gethsemane (Luke 22:42)).
- Valuing His name above your reputation ("Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32)).
- Honoring your earthly father/mother and other godly spiritual fathers.
- Treating the body of Christ (your local church) with respect.

Reflection Questions

What level of honor have you given Jesus? Is He more than a carpenter's son to you? Are you honoring Him like the wise men did?

How much did it cost the wise men to honor Jesus in this way? How much does it cost you? Have you honored Jesus with costly gifts like gold, frankincense and myrrh? "You don't experience Jesus beyond the level at which you honor Him." Which level of Jesus have you experienced in your life?

How does Psalm 27:10 answer lies caused by wounds of abandonment, rejection, loss, etc.? How do our wounds lie to us about God before we really know Him?

Write a prayer of confession, coronation and declaration. For example, confess times when you have claimed Jesus as Lord with your lips, yet, when your plans didn't match up with His Word and will, you treated Jesus like an emergency contact, comforter, counselor, consultant, advisor, helper, etc. Declare that Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, King of Glory. Declare that His word and will is greater than our reputation, rights, feelings, dreams, plans, goals, desires, etc. Repent of trying to reign in your own life. Crown Jesus as King of your finances, relationships, dreams, plans, wounds, etc. Declare that Jesus pursued you before you ever pursued Him. Cry out for the Spirit of Adoption and cry out Abba Father because He really is our

Father and He does NOT leave us! Declare that your life is not pointless and you're not worthless!

Here's an example of a prayer of coronation: Lord, You are King of Glory! I repent of treating You as my advisor, helper, comforter, consultant, etc. Repent of reigning in my life! Thank You that You pursued me before I ever pursued You! I crown You as King over my plans, dreams, goals, finances, etc. I receive the Spirit of Adoption. I'm not left, I'm not worthless. You are my true Father. Thank You!

How could you expand on the sample prayer and apply it to your life? How can you declare Jesus' greatness, majesty and sovereignty over your life? What areas of your life (finances, wounds, past, future, dreams, goals, relationships, etc.) need to hear Jesus' voice declaring He is King?

CHAPTER THREE

Honor Your Father and Mother

The Vacation That Changed Everything

During a family vacation when I was in the fifth grade I learned I was adopted. That single revelation created confusion and turmoil in me that took many years to work through. Who were you if you learned you were adopted? Where did that fit into your identity? What about all of the things that had been done to you? Who gave you away? Why? What happened next? And so on and so forth. As a teenager this contributed to my atheism and feeling of being abandoned. Eventually all of this was addressed and healed and now, as a Christian, minister, and parent, I'm thankful to my parents for raising me.

I think about how easy it is for us to take our parents for granted. As we grow up it's easy to think they're going to be there, that they're part of the fabric of life. They feed us, raise us, discipline us, take care of us, love us. It's just what parents do. But what about in cases like mine? What if your parents chose to adopt you? It's not required to raise a child that isn't of their seed. My parents freely and fully embraced me. They decided to feed, discipline, raise, love, and commit themselves to me. They had the opportunity to walk away but they didn't. And when I came to understand that as a child, it created a sense of gratefulness to them. And if you're grateful to somebody it creates honor. So, because of their actions toward me and because of what I understood about adoption, it created a desire to honor them. And you could tell when I

interacted with them. There was a level of respect there that others noticed. That's what honoring your parents looks like. It's tangible. You can see it. It's not hidden. And for me, adoption played a huge part in my desire to honor my parents.

I'm sure there are plenty of people that wish it was that easy with their own parents. Maybe they have an estranged relationship with them. Maybe they wish things were different. Maybe there are things they're not over or have forgiven. Honoring your parents doesn't mean pretending like they didn't mess up. Honoring your parents means refusing to hold onto bitterness. It means refusing to laugh at their expense. It means refusing to talk about them in a way that mocks or ridicules them. Honoring your parents means lifting them up with your words and refusing to tear them down.

The First Commandment With a Promise

The fifth commandment given on Sinai is a pivotal one. It's the bridge that connects honoring God and honoring each other. The first four commandments have to do with our relationship with God and honoring Him, but the final five are about how we're to behave towards others. This means that the way we treat authority in our parents' footsteps lays the foundation for the way we're going to treat other authorities in life. So, how are we supposed to honor our parents? Let's take a look at the fifth commandment:

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." - Exodus 20:12

Paul referred to it as "the first commandment with promise" (Eph. 6:2–3), which reads:

"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." - Ephesians 6:2–3

Notice the promise of long life here, but it's more than that. It's a promise of well-being. So, not only will you live long days but God promises that those days will be good.

How should you honor your parents?

There are a couple of important points that need to be made. First, this isn't just for children. Honor is an everyday, current, tangible, vocal activity that lasts throughout adulthood. The word honor has a vocal element to it. We tend to save honoring for funerals but it's supposed to happen now. Secondly, thanksgiving leads to honoring. Look at all of the places that tie together thanksgiving with honoring:

disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy (2 Timothy 3:2)

glorified him not as God, neither were thankful (Romans 1:21)

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will (Ephesians 1:5)

Just as we are adopted into God's family, some of us are given the privilege of adopting others into ours. Adoption creates gratitude which produces honor. Noah's sons honored their drunken, naked, stinking father in an amazing way. Instead of spreading the word about what happened (like Ham did), Shem and Japheth took a garment, walked in backwards, and laid it over him.

And when they entered into the tent to cover him, they made sure they didn't look at him. They honored the office of father, they honored Noah's position. Instead of laughing about it and running around town telling everybody what happened, they kept it private, covered him up, and refused to rub his face in his failure. We can learn from them. Honor your parents. Honor your father. Honor your mother. It's the fifth commandment but it's the first one with a promise.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." - Exodus 20:12 "Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." - Ephesians 6:2-3

We must honor our parents. This truth stands boldly, beautifully, unshakeably upon the very foundation of God's covenant with His people. It's one of the first promises made to His people after they're rescued from slavery at Sinai.

What happens when we don't learn it at home? It creates a hole that follows us for the rest of our lives. We transfer the hole onto our teachers, pastors, employers, anyone else who dares call themselves "father." Despise your parents, and I dare say that you will despise every other father God tries to put in your life.

Gratitude: The Soil Honor Grows In

Honor out of duty is a bottomless pit that sucks all of a person's breath. Duty-based honor says, "I will obey but know that I will never forget what you did to me." Duty-based honor performs obedience and keeps track of all of mom and dad's faults. Duty-based honor exhausts itself quickly.

But what if a person could see their parents clearly enough to know what God did through them? What if a person could look at his or her parents and see provision and love where nothing was earned? It's an almost incomprehensible love. And when a person finally sees what God does through imperfect people like their parents, the balance tips. Parents become kabod again. Heavy. And suddenly what was owed becomes a gift. When people see what God does through their parents, gratitude rises. And out of gratitude comes honor.

Paul links ingratitude and dishonor: "disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (2 Timothy 3:2). These sins build upon one another in a list that becomes darker and darker. Romans tells a similar story. The slide into darkness begins with people who did not think it fitting to acknowledge or "glorified him not as God, neither were thankful" (Romans 1:21).

Gratitude changes honor. Gratitude reminds us of the countless times they laid awake during a bout of childhood fevers, fed us when we were hungry, worked jobs they didn't even like, all to provide benefits we had never once earned. When we see the benefits of their labor with clarity, honoring them out of duty morphs into honoring them with delight. Honor becomes a gift that bubbles up from our hearts and spills out of our throats. Gratitude breathes life into honoring parents, while they're still alive. Gratitude means we don't wait for a parent's funeral to give an eloquent eulogy. Gratitude gives life to honoring parents. Gratitude moves stiff Mother's Day phone calls into heartfelt, spontaneous displays of affection. Gratitude causes us to honor them in their lifetimes, and it's that kind of honor that pleases God.

Honoring Imperfect Parents

Some of us have more difficult assignments when it comes to honoring parents. For me, it starts with abandonment. For me, honoring my parents requires me to make peace with the decision that they made to give me away. Honoring my parents means making peace with who they were when they let me go.

Honor doesn't mean lying. Honoring parents does not require us to paint pictures of childhoods that never happened. It does not require us to call abuse, love. And neglect, provision. Honoring imperfect parents doesn't require us to lie.

One day Noah became intoxicated and lay down naked in his tent. This same Noah, the most righteous man of his generation. This same Noah, God's salvation vehicle. Naked. In his tent (see Genesis 9:20–23). One of his sons saw his nakedness and ran around town talking about it. But his other two walked backwards into his father's tent with a garment on their shoulders and laid it over his father without looking at his nakedness. Two responses to their father. But one honored him in a very different way than the other, and those actions determined two very different destinies.

Honoring imperfect parents doesn't mean lying. We can establish boundaries, tell the truth, grieve for the love and provision that was missing. Honor means not mocking them. Not rubbing their failures in God's face. It doesn't require lying, but it does mean treating them with dignity.

Forgiveness requires honesty. Forgiving an unpayable debt may be the toughest way to honor your parents. But our heavenly Father did it when He adopted us into His family: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Ephesians 1:5). As a Christian and a parent, my biggest challenge is honoring God's gift of adoption. As a teenager and a former atheist, it was easier to ignore adoption altogether. As a minister for several years, I've seen what happens when we don't learn how to forgive our own parents. Holding them in check doesn't happen. Bitterness lasts much longer than their punishments. Forgiving an unpayable debt may be the toughest way to honor our imperfect parents. But we know this works because our heavenly Father did it first.

For me, honoring parents means thanking them for adopting me. It means thanking them for committing to raise a child that was not their flesh and blood. It means thanking them for nurturing and encouraging me to make it through life as best as I could. It means thanking them for giving me away. Honoring them means thanking them for letting me go. And that kind of honor begins with gratitude.

I was adopted. For most of my life, I thought my story started with abandonment. It wasn't until I became a Christian that I started to see adoption as a beautiful illustration of the way God builds His family. Every person in the Kingdom of God is an adopted child.

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will (Ephesians 1:5).

When I think about the commitment of my parents and their nurturing of me, it causes me to honor them. They made a commitment to raise a child that was not of their bloodline and fulfilled that commitment faithfully. As a teenager, I was an atheist and had little desire to attend

church, let alone glorify God in any way. Nevertheless, my parents provided an environment that caused me to see God's character and fall in love with His ways. They fed me, clothed me, took me on vacations, and celebrated holidays and traditions. They nurtured a broken, abandoned, atheist into a minister of Jesus and parent.

For this reason, it's important to honor your parents whether they gave birth to you or adopted you. It's important to forgive abandonment or failure and show appreciation for everything else. Find areas of gratitude and honor them with your words and actions. Tell them how thankful you are. Tell them how blessed you've been as you've watched them raise their family. Tell them before it's too late. Don't save your appreciation for their funeral. Honor them now. Honor them with your words. Honor them in front of your children. Honor them because it's the first commandment with a promise.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." - Exodus 20:12

Paul calls it the first commandment with promise in Ephesians 6:2-3:

"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

Honoring parents isn't a one-way street. Whatever seed you plant in regards to honoring or dishonoring your parents will likely be harvested by your children. If your children watch you slander your mother and father behind their backs, what are they learning about you as they approach their parents' gray hairs? You will be honoring your children when you call your parents, encourage them, speak life over them, and honor them with your words and actions.

On the other hand, Paul writes that people in the last days would be,

"disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy" (2 Timothy 3:2).

And in Romans 1:21, he writes about unbelievers that,

"glorified him not as God, neither were thankful."

Gratitude and honor seem to be missing pieces in a lot of areas of life. Maybe one area that needs a piece of gratitude and honor stitched onto its patchwork quilt is honoring parents. That piece of honor is the thread that holds together how we view authority in general. That's why the fifth commandment connects honoring God with honoring people.

Holding the Staff

Noah was a righteous man in his generation but stumbled into drunkenness. In his drunkenness, he became naked inside of his tent. When Ham saw this, he went out and told his brothers. Instead of holding up his father's staff by honoring and defending his father's name, he laid his father under a cloud of dishonor by sharing this event with others. On the other hand, Japheth and Shem entered the tent backwards and covered Noah without looking at his nakedness. Instead of casting his father under a cloud of dishonor, Japheth and Shem honored their father's staff. They honored him by covering him and refusing to look at his nakedness.

Honoring parents doesn't mean pretending like they've done nothing wrong or refusing to admit when they're wrong, but it does mean covering their nakedness and holding up their staff instead of laying them under a cloud of dishonor like Ham. Honor them like Shem and Japheth.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What's one thing your parents gave you freely that you still have yet to repay them for?
- Has your honoring of your parents been out of gratitude or duty? Why?
- Can you think of an area where your parents stumbled like Noah? How have you responded, like Ham or Shem and Japheth?
- Is there an area that requires forgiveness?
- How have you honored your parents in front of your children? What has this communicated to your children about how they should honor you as you approach your gray hairs?
- Paul writes that whoever honors his parents will live long and it will be well with them. Can you think of areas of unwellness in your life? Do you think some of them could be connected to dishonoring parents?

PRAYER

Lord, I thank You for the people You used to carry me into this life and through it. Thank You for choosing them for me. I choose to release any debt they owe You and cover them like Shem and Japheth instead of Ham. Lord, I desire to break any curse of generational dishonor by honoring and thanking my parents for their sacrifice. Teach me to see adoption as Your story instead of abandonment. Fill me with gratitude and teach me how to weave that piece of gratitude onto the patchwork quilt of worship. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER FOUR

Honor Your Spiritual Father/Mother

I will never forget the name of my spiritual father. He is Pastor R.D. Mounts. It is because of this man's ministry to me and my family, that I am able to stand here and share this book with you. Pastor Mounts won my whole family (seven members) to Jesus. I am eternally grateful for Pastor R.D. Mounts!

In addition to winning us to Christ, this man disciplined me. He disciplined me in the arts of prayer and Bible study. He disciplined me in the ways of carrying an anointing and walking under a mantle. He disciplined me in the arts of shepherding God's people and handling responsibility. He disciplined me in the arts of standing in front of God's people and ministering the Word of God under a great fear of God! It was not long after Pastor Mounts led my family to Christ, that he put a level of ministry responsibility in my hands that has continued to increase to this day. He stood in an emptying church, put the Word of God in my hands, and told me to preach. He sat in his office, interceding and mentoring me through ministry! He trained me to be a preacher at sixteen years of age!

Pastor Mounts disciplined me personally. It is my opinion that discipleship cannot be done over the internet or through information. It requires fathers! As Paul said to Timothy, my beloved son... my ways which be in Christ. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 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. — 1 Corinthians 4:15

I became a part of the inner circle of this man. I saw prayers that weren't prayed in public. I saw the burdens this man carried that weren't written down for the world to see. I saw his tiredness. I saw his quirks. I saw his humanity. I watched this man deal with frustration in the morning and night. I saw his humanity because I was near him.

And because of my nearness to him, I could have grown casual. I could have grown so casual with this man of God, that I would have stopped honoring him. But from my youth, I resolved to honor this man, nearness be damned!

The Danger Zone of Closeness

We want you to honor your spiritual father. It's easy to honor your father when you are standing outside. It's easy to honor your father when you are sitting under artificial lighting in the sanctuary for just an hour a week. But what happens when you are given access? What happens when you are given an up-close perspective of your pastor's life? What happens when you get to know your pastor? Can you honor him still? Will you honor him still? Will you maintain that spirit of reverence, or will familiarity breed contempt?

Familiarity is a sneaky beast. Familiarity sees the truth, then uses that truth against God's plan and purpose for a man. Familiarity can take something that is real, true, factual, and solid, then use that same fact against God's desire for a man. Familiarity uses a leader's humanity against their heavenly assignment! Familiarity says, well, I've seen that side of you. You're nothing but human. Familiarity cuts off impartation and limits destiny!

Think back to Mark's account of Jesus' ministry to Israel. Jesus returned to Nazareth where he was from (Mark 6:1-2). The people of Nazareth knew Jesus. They had known Jesus for thirty years. They had seen him grow into manhood. They had seen him work in the family's carpentry business. They knew him well enough to ask, Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? (Mark 6:3) Then they stumbled over who he actually was. They stumbled over who they knew! A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house (Mark 6:4). Familiarity stopped Jesus' ministry, He could there do no mighty work. Jesus' familiarity with Nazareth cost them a miracle! The widow of Zarephath got a miracle out of Elijah that the widows of Israel never touched (Luke 4:25-26).

How different than the attitude of Shem and Japheth as they entered Noah's tent! They honored Noah! They took a garment and threw it over their shoulders. Then, walking backward, they entered the tent and covered their father's nakedness. They honored their father. They maintained a reverent spirit toward their father, despite closeness and familiarity. They didn't think, Oh, I've seen you naked before. You're not the man that I thought you were. They honored Noah!

Closeness doesn't give you the right to be disrespectful. Closeness doesn't give you ownership. Closeness doesn't give you permission to be disrespectful. Closeness doesn't give you permission to be rude. Closeness doesn't give you permission to be casual. Closeness demands honor! Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom because Moses laid his hand upon Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9). The laying on of Moses' hand imparted the spirit of wisdom to Joshua. When the Lord told Saul to go into Damascus, He gave him directions, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do (Acts 9:6). God used Ananias to lay hands on Saul. God used a man! Ananias was just an instrument. Ananias was just a means to an end. But, without Ananias, God's plan for Saul wouldn't have happened! Honor your spiritual fathers. Honor them when it's easy. Honor them when it's difficult. Honor them when they're on stage. Honor them when they're in the stands. Honor them when they're at work. Honor them when they're at home! Honor them always, no matter what you've seen! Honor them nearness be damned!

What I Watched Happen to the Familiar Ones

There is a level of honor required of those in the inner circle. If you're around the pastor all the time, you're not an exception to honor; you're a steward of honor.

During the first half of my time in the house of Pastor Mounts, I watched the following happen time and time again (and I'm not exaggerating one bit when I say it was without exception): People would begin to make jokes about Pastor Mounts (jokes with edges), stop referring to him with titles of honor, look at him in certain ways when he would miss a detail or stumble on a thought, correct him during conversations, begin to speak of him instead of to him... Their language would begin to move from my pastor to the pastor to R.D. Then, like dominoes falling, they'd lose the flow of the Spirit, lose favor, find themselves on the wrong side of unanswered

prayers and closed doors... Pastor Mounts would still love them, pray for them, want to go to bat for them, help them straighten things out, pursue them, reach out to their families, etc., but he couldn't. The pipe was cut off, not on his end, but on theirs.

Jesus couldn't do any mighty works in Nazareth. It was nothing to do with the well; it was access. That well was infinite.

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house... He could there do no mighty work (Mark 6:3-4, 5).

Jesus was dishonored in Nazareth and couldn't function, not because He didn't have strength, but because there was no access to it.

Elijah ministered a miracle to one widow outside his country while dozens of widows sat hungry inside his own country:

(And yet) (Luke 4:25–26).

Not Many Fathers

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. — 1 Corinthians 4:15

In an age when believers have ten thousand instructors in their back pockets (via the Internet), it's more important than ever to distinguish between an instructor and a father. You can download any number of podcasts, conference speakers, YouTube teachers, etc., but fatherhood is another matter. An instructor will impart information to you; a father imparts himself. An instructor speaks to a multitude; a father speaks to your future. An instructor won't care what happens

when the microphone turns off; a father is keeping track. An instructor gives you access to what he knows; a father gives you access to what he is.

When Elijah left his mantle with Elisha, Elisha didn't just leave with Elijah's library. When Paul wrote to Timothy about my beloved son... my ways which be in Christ (1 Corinthians 4:17), Timothy wasn't just walking around with Paul's systematic theology. When God put a spirit of wisdom in Joshua as Moses laid his hand on him (Deuteronomy 34:9), Joshua didn't just have Moses' favorite songs on shuffle. From Genesis to Revelation, God usually releases destinies through human beings. When Israel needed a deliverer, God sent Moses. When the Lord needed to meet Saul in Damascus, He had to get Ananias into gear: Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do (Acts 9:6).

My own testimony bears witness to the power of impartation that comes through honoring your shepherd. When I met Pastor R.D. Mounts at sixteen, I'd never met another believer. My family of seven was not saved. I'd been an atheist my whole life. My dad and mom had adopted me. Pastor Mounts became my first real spiritual father figure. From the moment I met him to the day I graduated from high school; I was under his wing. He disciplined me to be a preacher. In those years, I soaked up everything I could from him. It's safe to say I still function by what I learned sitting at the feet of R.D. Mounts. I watched him pursue families; I saw him standing over the church, praying. Behind the scenes, my pastor carried burdens I'd never understood until I became a pastor myself. There's no way to quantify what I received by sitting under Pastor Mounts for so long, honoring him as I did.

Two people sat under the same shepherd, under the same anointing, one flourished and the other flatlined, in the house of Pastor R.D. Mounts. Honor isn't etiquette, it's infrastructure. Honor determines reachability. If you want Noah's blessing, learn from Shem and Japheth. If you want a miracle, learn from the widow of Zarephath. If you want to carry a mantle, walk humbly behind your father, the way Elisha walked behind Elijah. Honor determines reachability. Say it three times. Write it on your bathroom mirror. Tattoo it on your forehead, if necessary, honor determines reachability.

Questions for Meditation & Discussion

Why is it important to differentiate between an instructor and a father?

How have you seen God use human beings to impact your destiny?

Where have you seen honor determine reachability?

What kinds of things have you experienced because of honoring your pastor? What kinds of things have you witnessed others experience?

I had a close and intimate relationship with my pastor. He was my spiritual father. He gave me his staff to hold. I didn't hold the staff to use it. He gave it to me to hold to be formed by it. That's what he did with me, and he's doing it with others.

Holding that staff formed me. It gave me a vision of who I am and what I am supposed to be. Pastor R.D. Mounts looked at an atheist and an adopted child and saw a preacher. God revealed to my spiritual father what he saw in me. He knew what was going to happen to me and what I'm going to do. A spiritual father reads your story like it's a scroll from heaven and spends years or even decades preparing you to hold your staff.

How do you treat your spiritual father? Does your treatment of your spiritual father affect what God wants to do through him over your life? The short answer is yes. The answer is an unqualified yes. Your relationship with your spiritual father has everything to do with your walk with Jesus.

Noah had a lot to impart to his sons, particularly Shem and Japheth. How did his sons treat him? They honored him! They respected him! They covered his nakedness! They didn't walk around Noah's room with casualness and familiarity. God used Noah's sons' attitude towards Noah to impart to them.

Likewise, Nazareth wasn't impressed with Jesus. They treated Jesus with familiarity. They knew who he was. They knew who his mama was. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" (Mark 6:3). They treated him with familiarity, and that hindered what he wanted to do in Nazareth. "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mark 6:4). His own town treated him casually. "He could there do no mighty work". Casualness hindered impartation! Casualness hinders impartation today as well.

Elijah had an anointing on him. Elisha honored Elijah's anointing and received a double portion. Joshua honored Moses' anointing and received the spirit of wisdom. The widow of Zarephath honored Elijah's anointing and saw a miracle. These people understood that spiritual leaders are conduits from heaven. These people understood that it wasn't Elijah, Elisha, Moses, Joshua, Paul, Timothy, etc. It was the anointing of God on their lives! These people honored the anointing of God on their spiritual father's lives.

A spiritual father isn't honored because he's perfect. No, a spiritual father is honored because he's sent. How you treat your father determines what you receive from your father. It's as simple as that. My family was saved through Pastor Mounts, but did my family see Pastor Mounts praying fervently for my family? Did my family see Pastor Mounts weeping before God for my family? Did my family see Pastor Mounts carry a burden for my family behind the scenes? Did my family see Pastor Mounts persistently pursue my family until we were saved? No. But, when impartation happens behind the scenes and a spiritual father pours his life into your life, you owe him eternal honor.

Spiritual fathers aren't common. It's rare to find them. You might come across one or two in your lifetime. We live in a day where anybody with a smart phone has access to ten thousand teachers. It's rare to come across a father. "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." — 1 Corinthians 4:15. Jesus blinded Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, but Jesus told Saul, "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). God used Ananias as an instrument to lay his hands on Saul's life. Jesus could've done away with human instrumentality, but he didn't. It's important to recognize your spiritual father. It's important to honor your spiritual father. It's important to be intimate with your spiritual father. It's important to be on the inner circle of your spiritual father. However, don't let familiarity breed casualness. Don't let familiarity breed contempt. Don't allow yourself to treat your spiritual father casually. Don't flatline spiritually. Honor your father!

He wanted for Nothing

As I grew in my understanding of honor, I realized that when my Pastor was hurting, we were all hurting. I determined in my heart that every time I could bless him, I would! If he ever needed anything, like his car breaking down, a mortgage payment. I would take care of that for him. My life began to increase the more my revelation of honor increased.

1 Timothy 5:17 – "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Questions to sit with

In what ways has God used pastors/speakers/leaders to father you?

Have you allowed familiarity to breed casualness in your attitude towards your pastor/speaker/leader?

How does your attitude towards your pastor/speaker/leader effect impartation from heaven over your life?

Who's your spiritual father? Have you acknowledged him? Have you honored him? How can you honor him more?

Are you allowing leaders to father you? Are you allowing leaders to impart their staffs to you? How can you grow in that area of your life?

Are there any ways that you've hindered impartation in your walk with Jesus because of the attitudes of your heart towards leaders?

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the pastors/speakers/leaders that have fathered me. Thank you for imparting their staffs into my life. Lord, I repent for the times that I've been casual towards them. Lord, I repent for the times that familiarity bred contempt. Lord, I repent for the times that intimacy produced casualness. Lord, I repent for the times that I've hindered impartation over

my life through my attitude towards men of God. Lord, thank you for your forgiveness. Lord, thank you for restoring brokenness into beauty. Lord, thank you for impartation that has come to me because of restoration. Lord, thank you for impartation that I'm going to receive because of repentance and humility. Lord, help me recognize my spiritual fathers. Lord, bless the man that begot me in the Gospel. In the mighty and powerful name of Jesus, I pray. Amen!

CHAPTER FIVE

Honoring the House: The Local Church

The Family That Never Looked Back

When we came to Christ, we also made another commitment, to commit ourselves to supporting his church with our time, energy, and money. We would support the house of God just as fervently as we supported the works of wickedness and foolishness before Christ. Even more fervently. We had so much energy and time and money wasted on the world, the flesh, and the devil. Now, God's house was going to see some of that energy and enthusiasm.

For the rest of our lives, that's been our posture toward the local church. My family has served in whatever capacity was needed. When a leader is willing to serve in another leader's house, God opens doors of advancement. If you're not serving under somebody else, I'd be concerned about what's happening in your life. My family has mowed the lawn, taken out the trash, painted walls, and cleaned toilets. We've served in leadership capacities, but never asked for plaques or special recognition. We've been leaders, but never demanded respect. My family has planted churches and started new ministries. We've done it in joyful unity. We've gone through lean times and expensive ministries and generous seasons. Through it all, my family has never ceased to give of its finances, tithes and offerings. There's been decades of consistent, uninterrupted, cheerful giving.

The House Is Not Optional

From the beginning of Scripture, those who honored the house of God enjoyed a unique intimacy with the LORD. David declared, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life" (Psalm 27:4). Later, David wrote, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1). In his next breath, David writes, "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand" (Psalm 84:10).

When Jesus turned twelve, He revealed the burning zeal He had for His Father's house. Imagine how incredible this day must have been in Jesus' life. It's the first recorded words from the lips of Jesus. Where is He? Where are His first spoken words centered around? His Father's house. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). Later, as an adult, it became Jesus' custom to worship at the local church, specifically the Jewish synagogue. "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for read" (Luke 4:16). When the disciples witnessed Jesus cleanse the temple, they remembered what was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17). Jesus honored the house of God. We must also.

Some of my favorite scriptures deal with the importance of the local church. Hebrews 10:25 warns believers to give no heed to those who ignore the local church: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is". In my opinion, most of the immature and carnal Christians today could be described as those in Hebrews 10. They come and go as they please. They are here today and gone tomorrow. They don't understand that the key to flourishing in the will of God is staying put: "Those that be PLANTED in the house of the LORD shall FLOURISH in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." Psalm 92:13-14. Church-hoppers don't flourish in God's will. Those who stay put flourish in God's will.

God's house is holy ground. Those who honor His house are honored by Him. David understood this when he cried, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10).

Honoring the house of God also meant bringing your treasures into its treasury. This was no onerous tax. This was an honor: "Bring ye all the tithes into the STOREHOUSE, that there may be meat in mine house, and try me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven" (Malachi 3:10).

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

How much time and money did you give to sin before coming to Christ? Would you be willing to devote that much, if not more, to supporting the work of the local church? How else could you

better support your local church? How has serving under somebody else prepared you for advancement with God? Why do you think so many believers take a casual attitude toward church? What's your family's track record in tithing and giving to the local church? What changes do you need to make?

I am glad to be in church! Let me repeat the title of this chapter because it is extremely important: "Honoring the House: The Local Church." Consider David's words. "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life" (Psalm 27:4). And again, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1).

What a tremendous attitude of honor toward God! And the same attitude was shared by Jesus. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" And again, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17). This attitude toward the physical manifestation of the church should be ours. It is no accident that Hebrews issues this warning: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10:25).

Planted, Not Potted

Our family was converted under Pastor R.D. Mounts and has been PLANTED there ever since. Our whole family of seven converted. Over the years, we have mowed that church's lawn, cleaned those toilets, fixed the leaking faucets, hauled out the trash, and so on. We have served with everything we had!

Jesus said He was going to BUILD His church (Matthew 16:18). Then why is it so casual with believers today? He said He is going to return for a church, and He's not going to accept less than a GLORIOUS church (see Ephesians 5:27). Where's our zeal for the house?

Potted plants are easy to carry around. You don't sink deep roots. The result is small and shallow-rooted fruit. If you took a tree out of the ground every two years and transplanted it, the majority of its energy would be consumed with developing a root system. It would never get very big or bear much fruit. How many people go to six churches in ten years? They get offended or hit a

dry spell, so they move on to another church, blaming the last one for their problems. Then they do the same thing. They are portable. Their problems are portable!

The promise is this: "Those that be PLANTED in the house of the LORD shall FLOURISH in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." Psalm 92:13–14. There's a promise there for those who stay and endure! Stay planted! Endure the dry spell! Endure the offenses! Endure the years of unproductivity as far as you're concerned. Our family is evidence of this. We're still planted and we're flourishing.

Service opens doors

There is a spirit of honor for the house of God in heaven that is lacking today. Instead of honoring the house, many want to promote themselves and their ministries and build up their own platforms.

Service to the house, both physical and unseen, opens doors. David tended his father's sheep before he tended Israel's sheep. Elisha poured water on Elijah's hands before he could get his portion (2 Kings 3:11). If we will be honored to serve in God's house, He will honor us with authority to rule! David said it well, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10).

Our Lord taught us, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10). He will test you in someone else's house before He releases you in your house. He will test you in externals before He entrusts you with your own body. We must prove ourselves faithful stewards before He gives us more (Luke 16:12).

Give to the house

Honor that never touches your wallet is a sentiment

We must learn to give to God's house. We must learn to honor Him with our finances. Many believers live it backwards. They give the best of their energy, finances, and time to anything but God's house and give the leftovers to the house of God. The word of the Lord says, "Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase... Bring ye all the tithes into the STOREHOUSE, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, wherefore there shall be no strength against" (Malachi 3:8–10). The storehouse is the church.

Questions for Personal Meditation or Group Discussion

Why should believers be glad to be in church? How does one demonstrate this?

What does it mean to be planted? Why is it important? What are some of the rewards of being planted? How can we stay planted? What promises can we cling to during the dry spells?

Why does God ask us to serve? How can service open doors? Can you identify a principle here? Why do you think so many believers are reluctant to serve? What can we learn from David's attitude toward serving in God's house?

How should believers treat God's house financially? Why is it important for believers to give to the house? What are some of the rewards for giving to God's house? How can believers honor God with their finances?

HOLDING THE STAFF

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4).

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1).

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

"The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17).

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Hebrews 10:25).

Have you noticed the attitude of worship toward God's House in those verses? Those verses show us that God's house should be important to us!

In light of the importance of God's house, let's dig into five areas where our actions speak volumes as it pertains to our treatment of His house.

Giving: How do we give?

"They that be PLANTED in the house of the LORD shall FLOURISH in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing." Psalm 92:13–14.

It seems like there is some mystery attached to church members who flourish. It seems that those that flourish and those that don't, are doing similar things. What's the difference? I've noticed that those who flourish remain planted! Those that switch churches every couple years don't seem to flourish in ministry. But those that stay planted in one church seem to flourish!

Money tells you where someone's heart is. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). Honor the Lord with thy substance and the firstfruits of all thine increase. And thy barns shall be filled with plenty (Proverbs 3:9–10).

The Lord commanded His people in Malachi to give. He said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the STOREHOUSE, that there may be meat in mine house" (Malachi 3:10). That is the only place in all of scripture where God tells them to TEST God!

My wife, children, parents, and I have served in churches for many years now. All seven of us were converted under the ministry of Pastor R.D. Mounts. From day one, we made it our goal not to miss a tithe nor withhold our offering. Over the years we've TESTED the Lord to see if He's faithful and He's been faithful time after time!

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness (Psalm 84:10).

Whom will ye render unto if you haven't proved faithful with another man's goods (See Luke 16:10–12)?

I've seen those who want to rise in ministry, serve faithfully under another. They clean houses of worship. They fix things. They mow the lawn. They take out the trash. They humbly serve!

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. I'm asking you to make a commitment with me to devote as much, or more money, energy, and time into the body of Christ as you've been using. Why? Because you've given those same three things to SIN! Can you imagine what will happen when we devote those three things into the work of Christ!

PRAYER

Father, I thank You for the physical building that is used as a church. Thank You that it represents Your Kingdom here on earth. Teach me to have zeal for Your house. Teach me to love Your house. Teach me to serve Your house. Teach me to get caught up in Your house! I refuse to miss an opportunity to serve. I will serve under other men's ministries. I will gladly and happily clean Your house! Lord, teach me to serve in ways that will not get credited. Teach me to hold the staff for other leaders so they can go higher and deeper into Your will for their lives. Teach me to honor Your house by never missing a tithe nor withholding my offering! Teach me to remain planted in one church! Teach me to flourish in ministry because I've been faithful to remain planted! Teach me that Your house is important to You, so I treat it with importance. Thank You, Lord, for teaching me the importance of Your house. Amen.

Chapter Questions

List the verses from Chapter Five. What do they have in common? How should we feel about the physical house of worship?

What are the five areas where our actions speak volumes as they pertain to the house of worship?

In the area of Attitude, how should we feel about entering into the presence of God? How can you tell if you feel this way? What verses show the joy of being in God's presence?

In the area of Serving, how can you tell if you're holding the staff for other ministers? Have you ever held the staff for another minister? Describe it. What promises apply to those who serve?

In the area of Zeal, how can you tell if you're on fire for the house of God? List some of Jesus' fiery statements about the temple. What actions speak volumes in relation to our treatment of God's house?

Chapter Five ended with a list of things. What happened if they answered yes to them? Can you think of other questions like these?

Have you ever switched churches within a period of 10 years? Describe the reasons for switching. Have you ever cleaned a house of worship or helped in any way to beautify one? Describe it. Have you ever withheld your offering? Describe it. Have you ever missed a tithe? Describe it. How has your attitude about the house of worship changed since reading Chapter Five?

Chapter Six

Serving a Man of God

God revealed to me that my calling could only be tapped through yielding to His process of discipling under pastoral leadership. I learned that God gave me abilities and skills that were necessary for my calling through years of serving under and building another man's ministry and supporting another man's vision. My dreams, plans, ideas, ambitions, desires, and agenda died daily as I gave my all to advance Pastor Mounts' ministry. I learned that dreams laid down die daily to raise up multiplied upon resurrection.

Jesus asked, If ye have not been faithful in that which is ANOTHER MAN'S, who shall give you that which is your own? (Luke 16:12). Jesus said he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it (Matthew 10:39). Your latent abilities lie dormant until you tap into another person's abilities to serve in their assignment. God hid your destiny in another person's vision.

The Secret God Told the Prophets

The prophet Amos wrote, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. God reveals His plan and agenda through His servants, and your agenda and assignment is revealed through another person. Adam was the first link in God's chain of partnership. When God created Adam He limited His ability to act in a divine manner on earth unless it was in cooperation with humans. Genesis 1:26–28 details how God granted Adam dominion. During the flood, God needed Noah to build something. When God chose Abram He needed a nation built. God sent a man to bring deliverance and held back judgment (plagues) until a man with a rod/staff came through Egypt. Your abilities are revealed when you are partnering with somebody else.

Be Honest: The Church Made You

I could write an entire chapter detailing ways in which the local church has been the incubator that has seen talents flourish. You are a product of your church. Famous singers will tell you, I started singing in church. A choir director saw something in me and said, you've got something. Many people in the sound booth have seen their latent abilities flourish as sound engineers through the church's praise and worship team. The church is the mother of filmmakers through its media team. Designers flourish in the media team and the hospitality department. Administrators are produced as people serve as managers of the ministry. Church youth rooms have produced teachers, counselors, and communicators. The nursery produced caregivers. Accountants flourish in the finance team. Great construction managers flourish as people serve on the building team. You will be amazed to know how many latent abilities the church develops!

Elisha Burned the Plows

When Elisha saw Elijah cast his mantle over him he knew that he had been called by God. Elisha's assignment was not his own, he had to tap into Elijah's assignment before God revealed his own calling. His own calling was hidden inside Elijah's ministry. The secret of Elijah's mantle had to be revealed to Elisha before he could continue the ministry. The sons of the prophets watched from afar (2 Kings 2:7). The sons of the prophets witnessed Elijah's mantle

falling on Elisha from afar. But, Elisha was standing in the middle of everything. For years he was known as Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. His proximity to Elijah's ministry was essential for the mantle to settle upon him. Elisha's perseverance in ministry was necessary for him to inherit a double portion. Elisha didn't want to leave his twelve yoke of oxen, but he had to burn them to build a foundation for Elijah's ministry. He took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen (1 Kings 19:21). Joshua laid down his desires to advance Moses' vision. Moses laid his hands upon Joshua filling him with the spirit of wisdom. Joshua served Moses' ministry for approximately forty years. When they sent away spies to scout out Canaan Joshua came home faithful. When Moses lifted the rod in battle with Amalek Joshua saw victory. When David slew the lion and the bear in the den, his latent abilities flourished to fight Goliath, as he said to Saul, thy servant slew both the lion and the bear. Joshua, David, Peter, and Elisha laid down desires to see latent abilities flourish. Peter left his boat and nets to receive the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Joshua left his desires and received Canaan. Elisha left twelve yoke of oxen and received a double portion of Elijah's spirit. You must lay down desires to see latent abilities flourish

Joshua: Forty Years of Another Man's Vision

As I think about Elisha and Joshua, it's amazing to me that they poured out their lives unto Elijah and Moses. Every dream they ever had that God intended to resurrect in and through their lives was buried as they served in honor to Elijah and Moses. Every dream that they surrendered to serve these men's assignments came back resurrected with interest. Elisha and Joshua discovered the secret of growing in practical and spiritual capacity by serving another man's vision. I've experienced this phenomenon as God has raised me up and discipled me under Pastor R.D. Mounts' leadership since I was a teenager (at the age of sixteen). There are dreams that I've buried as I've served under Pastor Mounts that God has resurrected in me with interest. There are assignments God has given me that are greater than anything I could have received apart from serving and pouring out my life unto Pastor Mounts' ministry. In fact, apart from burying my dreams to serve under the burden of Pastor Mounts' calling, I would not have had enough capacity to receive or operate in some of the dreams and visions God has given me.

The story of Elisha reveals some amazing principles:

Peter threw away his nets, boat, business, dreams, ambitions, etc., and he received the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Noah built during the flood, Abram fathered a nation, Adam received dominion over the earth, Amos prophesied that "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets," Amos 3:7, and David slew Goliath.

Jesus said, "he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:39). Jesus also stated in Mark 10:29–30 that everyone who leaves their house, wife, children, brethren, parents, friends, lands, dreams, ambitions, visions, etc., for His name and gospel's sake, shall receive a hundredfold.

The double portion stayed upon Elijah until Elisha buried all of his dreams in faithfulness to Elijah's vision. The mantle didn't float around in the atmosphere until someone claimed it; it stayed on Elijah's head until he saw his departure and cast it on Elisha. It wasn't like Elijah cast his mantle on Elisha and said, Here's what's going to happen when you receive my mantle. There was no pitch! There were no promises! Elijah didn't sell Elisha on receiving a double portion. All he did was cast his mantle on Elisha. And, what did Elisha do? "He took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen," fed his friends, and "arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him" (1 Kings 19:21). Elisha had a very profitable business—he plowed with twelve yoke of oxen (1 Kings 19:19)! But, Elisha understood that every dream he surrendered unto Elijah's assignment would resurrect with interest. For years, the guy that performed miracles double what Elijah did was known as "Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah" (2 Kings 3:11). It's amazing to me that for years, Elisha, a wealthy farmer's son, was known as Elijah's water boy. But, the capacity to receive the mantle and perform miracles double what Elijah performed came as Elisha ministered unto Elijah.

The principle of capacity is a natural law. You gain capacity by serving another person's vision and dreams. Jesus said in Luke 16:12, "If ye have been faithful therefore in that which is another man's, yours own will you have much more: If ye have not been faithful in that which is

ANOTHER MAN'S, who shall give you that which is your own?" When you serve another leader's vision faithfully, God multiplies the dreams that you bury in honor.

Joshua discovered the law of capacity in the same way that Elisha learned this law. Joshua buried his dreams for roughly forty years to serve in honor of Moses' assignment. The first reference to Joshua in the book of Joshua identifies him as Joshua the minister of Moses (Joshua 1:1). When Israel fought Amalek and Moses held the rod (Exodus 17), Joshua fought. When Moses climbed Mount Sinai, Joshua waited for him partway up the mountain for forty days (Exodus 24:13). When Moses went into the presence of God in the tabernacle, Joshua was there when Moses came out (Exodus 33:11). For years, Joshua poured out his life unto Moses' assignment until Moses laid his hands on Joshua and Joshua was "filled with the spirit of wisdom: for Moses had laid upon him his hands" (Deuteronomy 34:9). As a result, Joshua had enough capacity to lead Israel into Canaan where Moses led Israel out of Egypt. God used Joshua's capacity to fulfill His purposes for Israel in Canaan.

Serving Increases Your Capacity

The key to receiving the mantle and operating in another person's anointing is to grow in capacity to handle the mantle by serving. Remember, the fifty sons of the prophets stood afar off (2 Kings 2:7). It's one thing to see Elijah's glory from a distance; it's an entirely different thing to walk in it. David said of Goliath, "...thy servant slew both the lion and the bear" (1 Samuel 17:36). You've got to serve with them until they're taken. It's no coincidence that when Elijah asked Elisha what he wanted him (Elijah) to do for him, Elisha responded by asking for the mantle. That's where Elisha's heart was—at Elijah's departure! Three times Elijah told Elisha to stay, but three times Elisha replied, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee (2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6). The double portion stayed on Elijah's head until Elijah said, Ask...what I shall do for thee (2 Kings 2:10). And, he promised Elisha the mantle if Elisha saw him when he was taken away. You've got to pour out your life unto them! Serve them so that when God buries them, you'll receive that which is greater when you're resurrected!

Holding the Staff

When Moses laid his hands on Joshua, something happened. It was at that moment that Joshua's potential became actual. It was at that moment that his assignment, which had been hidden away

in heaven, was released. Joshua's destiny, which had been hidden in submission, was revealed. His anointing, which had been hidden away in service to Moses' assignment, was now being poured out on his own ministry and his own vision.

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.
Amos 3:7

God reveals His secrets to those who serve. That is why I tell you that you will meet a Pastor R.D. Mounts. When they raise you up, they'll shake your hand, look you straight in the eye, and say, "you've got something." They'll shake their heads because they know that God will use them to unleash your potential. But you've got to be worthy of the mantle, and that requires a measure of character and capacity that does not come from serving yourself. That's why Jesus said he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it (Matthew 10:39). That's why Elisha had to destroy his plows (see below).

In other words, you'll learn to be an intercessor by praying for somebody else's house before God allows you to have your own. You'll learn how to administer by carrying another person's load. You'll learn to solve problems before God gives you some of your own. You'll learn to submit to decisions you don't understand before God allows you to receive revelations about your future. All of this builds a level of humility that will keep your own anointing from destroying you when your own season arrives.

There are many who won't develop capacity because they'll never willingly yield the assignments, dreams, ideas, visions, plans, time, and energy required to develop it. They will never learn to be faithful with someone else's stuff before God allows them to have their own. They'll never give up their backup plan. They'll never allow themselves to be loaded down. They'll never sacrifice their own agenda and submit to another's. That's why they'll always be small potatoes. It takes capacity to receive a double portion. That's why Peter had to give up his boat and his nets before God could hand him the keys to His Kingdom. It's a principle that goes way back to Adam, Noah, Abram, and countless others:

Adam received dominion over the whole earth. Noah built something when God chose him. God chose Abram when He wanted a nation. Capacity is a must for those who are called. And this is

what's amazing: Capacity isn't built while you're trying to elevate yourself, it's built while you're serving somebody else.

Jesus said: If ye have not been faithful in that which is ANOTHER MAN'S, who shall give you that which is your own? (Luke 16:12). David was able to defeat Goliath because of what happened between David and another man's sheep:

"thy servant slew both the lion and the bear" (1 Samuel 17:36).

Joshua served another man's vision and assignment for about forty years before God gave him one. Moses held up his rod and Joshua fought Amalek. God used Joshua's faithfulness to Amalek as a proving ground before He released Joshua's potential. The same thing happened in the spying incident (Numbers 13–14). Joshua was one of two faithful spies who came back believing the promises of God. It was Joshua son of Nun.

I have an assignment that is greater than my capacity to perform it. And yet, if I follow through on God's original dream for my life, He'll raise up people who are capable of performing it with me. They'll raise up people who have been discipled and trained by Moses' assignment to serve in mine.

God will raise them up. But first, God will have to raise you up under somebody else. From age sixteen and beyond, I've been discipled by someone else's assignment and ministry. God used Pastor R.D. Mounts and others to raise me up for His assignment for my life. Elisha understood this principle of raising up. That's why he burned his boats before he boarded Elijah's staff:

"Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah" (2 Kings 3:11).

Elisha was a farmer's son. He came from money. He had twelve yoke of oxen (1 Kings 19:19). When he followed Elijah he poured out his life: He took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen (1 Kings 19:21). He burned his boats and surrendered all of his dreams before boarding Elijah's staff. Later, God identified Elisha by

saying, "Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah" (2 Kings 3:11). When the mantle fell on him, the fifty sons of the prophets were there, but they weren't pouring water on anybody's hands—they were standing at a distance. God used Elisha's perseverance and proximity to Elijah to raise him up for the mantle.

How long will you wait for somebody's staff? How long will you stand at a distance from somebody's staff? Are you willing to pour out your life in service to somebody else's ministry and assignment? Are you willing to bury your own dreams in somebody else's staff? Remember that everything that dies in honor is resurrected with interest. God will raise you up when it's your time. Find a staff, lay down your dream, and pour out your life in service. Find a leader and serve. Find a staff and hold on. Find a leader and learn. Find an assignment that isn't yours and serve in it. Find a dream that isn't yours and pray for it. Find a vision that isn't yours and give your life to see it come to pass. Find a dream, vision, or idea that belongs to somebody else and serve in that dream, vision, or idea. Give up your agenda. Serve another person. Find someone's staff and hold on to it.

Questions for further study

List three leaders for whom you're grateful because of the ways they helped to raise you up. What capacities have been raised in you because of their ministries?

What capacities have been released in you that you didn't previously know existed in you? What dreams, ideas, and visions have God given you that you previously thought He would never release in your life?

Have you ever been faithful to serve in an assignment that wasn't yours? Describe.

Are you faithful to serve in assignments that aren't yours? Describe.

If you don't like the answer you wrote in #4, what's getting in the way of your ability to be faithful to serve in assignments that aren't yours?

How long are you willing to serve unseen before you start seeing the fruits of your labor? Describe your answer in terms of what you've seen happen in the lives of biblical characters.

Prayer

Dear God, I'm willing to bury my dreams in someone else's vision. I'm willing to serve unseen and trust that you'll raise me up according to your will and your timing. Thank you for resurrection principle in your word—that everything that dies in honor rises again. Thank you for your faithfulness to raise up leaders to serve in dreams and visions greater than their capacity to perform. Thank you for raising them up and discipling them under other people's dreams, visions, and assignments. Thank you for your promise to raise me up. In Jesus' name, amen.

Chapter Seven

The Prophet's Reward

As a child of God, we need to understand the Kingdom of Heaven principles around honor. Jesus said, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." What does receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet look like?

Let's look at some examples from the Word. First, Solomon went to Gibeon to sacrifice. At that place, Solomon sowed a seed of a thousand burnt offerings (1 Kings 3:4). Immediately after sowing this seed, God met Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee" (1 Kings 3:5). Solomon asked for wisdom, and as a result, God gave him a wise and an understanding heart; God also gave Solomon great riches and honor. God's grace, wisdom, revelation, authority, and the Holy Spirit rest upon men and women of God. Solomon's sacrificial seed honored God's anointing on his life.

Later on in Solomon's life, a very wealthy Queen of Sheba sought Solomon's presence because she had heard about his wisdom. She honored Solomon's anointing with gifts of a hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones (1 Kings 10:1-2). After presenting her gift to Solomon, she asked Solomon many questions. Verse three says, "There was no thing hidden from Solomon which he did not answer her: there remained nothing hid from the king, that he told her not" (1 Kings 10:2-3). There is no doubt that the Queen of Sheba received a prophet's reward after sowing a seed of honor upon Solomon's life.

The widow of Zarephath honored the prophet's anointing upon Elijah's life. At the time of severe famine in Israel, God supernaturally sustained that destitute widow through Elijah's ministry. She honored the anointing upon the prophet by feeding Elijah FIRST before her own household and herself. She obeyed the word of the prophet, "Make me thereof a little cake FIRST" (1 Kings 17:13). Her sacrifice broke the yoke of scarcity upon her life, and God supernaturally sustained her with an inexhaustible supply of meal and oil during a season of famine.

The Shunammite woman honored the anointing on Elisha's life before crisis hit her family. Before her only son died and before Elisha supernaturally revived him, the woman set aside a

guest chamber for Elisha because she recognized the anointing upon his life: "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually" (2 Kings 4:9). For her sacrificial honor upon God's anointed prophet, God rewarded this woman by restoring her deceased son back to life. The prophet told her, "About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son" (2 Kings 4:16).

The author of Proverbs said, "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men" (Proverbs 18:16 KJV). In the Hebrew, the word for gift in Proverbs 18:16 is mattan. Mattan means present, offering, contribution, sacrifice, tribute, or bribe. How do you make room before God's anointed servants? Mattan reveals the answer.

Remember that Jesus taught Kingdom principles. Genesis 8:22 says, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest... shall not cease." As long as the earth stands, the law of the harvest stands! I stand on this! I'm committed to seedtime and harvest. May you be committed to seedtime and harvest as well.

One day, the Lord challenged my life to sow my first sacrificial seed of a thousand dollars after Solomon's example. That seed broke the yoke of poverty upon my life. After sowing that seed, God poured out a new mindset of wealth and wisdom upon my life, crushing any orphan mindsets of lack and poverty. Since then, my wife and I have sown many six-figure seeds into ministries and men and women of God, separate from our tithes. I've seen God's hand of impartation over my life. He's paid off debt supernaturally and provided in ways I didn't expect.

Your Gift Will Set You Before Great Men

Be careful, however, to understand that when you sow seeds of honor upon men and women of God, you're honoring the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon their lives. You're not worshiping them as mere men and women. Remember, the chain of honor goes something like this: "He that receiveth you receiveth ME, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

Remember that when Obed-Edom's house was dwelt in by God's Presence, God supernaturally blessed Obed-Edom and everything he had. Peter warned against receiving the Holy Spirit's power for sale, saying, "Your money perish with you, because you think the gift of God can be purchased with money." Your seed of honor breaks poverty upon your life. Your seed of honor connects you with the impartation of heaven. As Genesis 8:22 says, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest... shall not cease." Sow your seeds of honor. Receive prophets' rewards!

Another aspect of giving is honoring. There's a principle in Matthew 10:41 that goes like this, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." How can we apply this in our own contexts? Honor has always been very important in Kingdom giving. In fact, in 1 Kings chapter 10, there is a woman, the queen of Sheba, who went to honor the anointing that was on Solomon's head. She brought a very great and exceedingly heavy load. Now, this woman was wealthy; she had gold from her country, but that's not all she had. She brought spices and precious stones in great abundance (1 Kings 10:2). Her seed was costly! She crossed the desert to sit under Solomon's shade. When she'd been through all her questions and discussions with Solomon, he gave her all she desired, together with the gifts which came out of his royal bounty (1 Kings 10:13).

Honoring anointed leaders is important. That woman returned from Solomon's court with the impartation of a man of wisdom, riches, and honor beyond compare. It's an old principle that says the lesser is unconditionally blessed by the superior (see Hebrews 7:7).

Honoring the Anointing Is Honoring the Spirit

Jesus said, "He that receiveth you receiveth ME, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." Jesus was teaching us the chain of honor. Ultimately, we're honoring God, but we're honoring Him through vessels. When you honor the anointing that's on somebody's life, you're honoring the Holy Ghost that lives in a person who has yielded their lives to God. That's how I view it.

There's a lot of carnality that's gotten mixed into sowing seeds. It's not supposed to be manipulative. You don't sow to manipulate God. That's why Peter rebuked the spirit of putting a price tag on anointing in Acts chapter 8. We must be careful about the spirits that creep into seedtime principles and distort them. Unfaithful hirelings make seeds into some kind of mechanism to fleece people. Seeds are important, but the ultimate reward of sowing is impartation.

The widow of Zarephath honored Elijah's anointing when she obeyed his words. At that time, she was so poor she was gathering sticks to cook up what was left in the barrel and die. That woman was facing a brutal famine. The book of Kings says this:

And it came to pass, when he was gone far on his way, that the prophet Elijah called a widow, and said unto her, Bring me, I pray thee, a little bread in a vessel. So she went to do it. He said, Bring me also a cake in that thou bringest, and bring my son some thing therewithal. For there is no word of the LORD, saying, There shall be meat in the land these seven years. And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a piece of bread, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse. And now I have taken two sticks, and go in and gather them, that I may come home, and make it for my son and for me, and we will eat it, and die. So he said unto her, Not so, but make me thereof a little cake FIRST, and bring it unto me, and leave some for thyself and thy son.

The word FIRST is capitalized in my Bible. She thought she'd cook up a little something for her son and eat it herself, then die. Jesus mentioned this story in Luke chapter 4. He said there were many widows in Israel during Elijah's ministry, yet this is the only one who honored Elijah during those three and a half years of drought (Luke 4:25–26). What happened as a result of honoring Elijah? She fed the prophet of God, and her barrel of meal and cruse of oil lasted throughout the famine! In addition, when her son died, Elijah called upon God, laid himself upon the boy, stretched himself out, and the boy's life returned to him. God raised that child from the dead (1 Kings 17:16, 22)!

The same can be said about the Shunammite woman. She honored Elisha's anointing, and Elisha said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son (2 Kings 4:16). The book of Kings says she perceived that Elisha was something special when he told her: About

this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. As time went by and the woman became barren, she sensed what could come to pass in her life if she honored Elisha.

She said to her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us prepare a little room with walls; and set him a bed when he comes unto us, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick (2 Kings 4:9). She recognized the prophet of God before anything had happened! She recognized the man of God before crisis hit her life. She understood what could come from honoring Elisha. So they made a chamber on the roof, hung a curtain, laid out a bed, a table, a couple of stools, and even a candlestick, all without Elisha even asking them to provide these things! People can sense when they're dealing with somebody of God. That's why Jesus said there would be no signs in Nazareth, they didn't perceive Him to be anything but a carpenter. When crisis hit the Shunammite woman, when the son died on her lap, the prophet of God stretched himself out on top of the boy in the same chamber she'd built and breathed life into the dead. That boy lived! That's why I'm a seedtime and harvest person. The book of Genesis says this: While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest... shall not cease (Genesis 8:22).

Solomon said, A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men. We're talking about a seed of honor. Some people will never escape the mind-set of poverty because they have never honored the anointing of God on somebody's life. Honoring leaders breaks mind-sets. Obed-Edom's whole house was blessed just for hosting the ark for a season. Honor is part of the equation.

Sheba gave Solomon gifts because of his reputation concerning the Name of the Lord. Jesus spoke about receiving messengers: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward." What is a prophet's reward? Impartation! Sheba came to receive wisdom from Solomon. That is a prophet's reward. The prophet's reward is impartation; the money is the smallest part. So when we give seeds to honor the grace that God has placed upon their lives, we're honoring the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, not worshipping them as humans.

HOLDING THE STAFF

I know it seems strange for me to encourage you to honor leaders, especially in this book about sowing seeds; but, Galatians 6:6–7 says this: Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth of all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. See? It's in Galatians, between the two verses on sowing and reaping! Honor your leaders, those who minister to you, because there's a blessing in doing so. Solomon gave sacrificially because of the grace of God upon him. Sheba honored Solomon's anointing; she honored the work of the Holy Spirit on his life. As we sow seeds to honor leaders, we're honoring God's grace upon their lives, the impartation God has given them, the anointing upon them. That's why Sheba crossed the desert to give Solomon a gift. That's why Obed-Edom's household was blessed when the ark stayed with him (see 2 Samuel 6:11–12). Jesus said, "He that receiveth you receiveth ME, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." Then he said in Matthew 10:41, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." The chain of honor goes back to receiving messengers, which is receiving Jesus, which is receiving God. If you're giving to honor the work of the Holy Spirit in a leader's life, then Jesus' statement applies. The chain of honor leads back to Jesus and God.

At Gibeon, after Solomon offered his sacrifices, the Lord appeared to him that night and said, "Ask what I shall give thee." Solomon's gift at Gibeon led to impartation. Sheba honored the work of the Holy Spirit on Solomon, and God blessed Sheba in return. That's the law of sowing and receiving.

There was a widow in Zarephath during the time of Elijah who was about to pick up sticks and prepare the last meal she could make for her and her son before they both died. God had a different plan for her. Elijah knocked on her door and said, "Make me thereof a little cake FIRST" (1 Kings 17:13). She had nothing! But, because of her obedience to the prophet of God, because of her honoring of God's anointing upon Elijah, God supernaturally fed her through the famine. Honoring the prophet's anointing broke the spirit of poverty. Honoring the work of the Holy Spirit brought forth impartation.

In the book of Kings, Elisha passed by a certain Shunammite woman's house, and she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually" (2 Kings 4:9). She set up a room for Elisha in her house. She honored Elisha's anointing and God blessed her for it. She honored Elisha before crisis hit her family, but, after

she honored him, Elisha prophesied to her: "About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son" (2 Kings 4:16). Honoring a leader brought forth impartation for the Shunammite woman.

All these people gave costly seeds! Sheba crossed the desert with gifts of gold. Solomon gave extravagantly in order to receive wisdom, riches, and honor. The widow in Zarephath was willing to die before God honored the prophet. The Shunammite woman gave Elisha a room, table, couch, lampstand, and chair! She was giving seeds before God brought her into crisis. Honoring God's grace upon leaders' lives breaks the spirit of poverty. It's costly, which is why it breaks the spirit of poverty. You are not bribing God, you are sowing to break the spirit of poverty and scarcity in your own life!

Challenge for Today: Give a costly and sacrificial seed! Honor those who labor in the ministry of the Word of God with material substance. It's costly; it's sacrificial. Sow seeds to leaders to honor the work of the Holy Spirit upon their lives.

Summary of Chapter Six

How does Proverbs 18:16 apply to giving costly and sacrificial seeds to leaders?

Why was Sheba able to give Solomon such costly and sacrificial gifts?

What kind of seed did Solomon sow at Gibeon? What kind of seed did Sheba sow to Solomon? What did Sheba receive in return for her gift?

Why was the widow of Zarephath's seed costly and sacrificial? Why did she give it? How did her gift break the spirit of poverty and produce an unexpected harvest?

What kind of seed did the Shunammite woman give Elisha? What was the fruit of honoring the prophet's anointing?

What kind of seed will you sow to honor the grace of God upon leaders' lives?

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for your provision in my life. I renounce the spirit of poverty and scarcity. Lord, show me places in my life where I'm operating out of a poor and impoverished mentality. Teach me to walk in faith. Teach me to give sacrificially. Show me ways I can honor the work of the Holy Spirit through the lives of Your leaders and honor You for it. Thank you, Lord, for your grace. Thank you for teaching us to sow seeds of Kingdom principles. I praise You for Your chain of honor. Thank you, Father, for impartation through Your anointed ones. In Jesus' mighty Name. Amen

. Honor is the code of Heaven. Honor will take you where dishonor can't. Honor opens doors that dishonor can't open. Honor will elevate you above things that dishonor has lowered others into.

There will be times when you'll be tempted to rebel and be disloyal and offend. We'll be looking at offense, disloyalty, betrayal, rebellion, cursing, witchcraft and more.

Chapter 8

Disloyalty: The Demon Even God Had to Deal With

There is a spirit of disloyalty. Disloyalty is not just an attitude or action, disloyalty is a demon. It's not just a metaphorical demon either, there's a literal demon of disloyalty behind disloyalty. How do I know there's a spirit of disloyalty behind disloyalty? Because of where and how disloyalty started. The first time anyone was disloyal it wasn't on the earth, it was in Heaven. And it wasn't a metaphorical reference to disloyalty either, it was literal, practical, hands-on disloyalty. And the person was disloyal to none other than God Himself! Can a demon get any higher than disloyalty to God? No. That's as high as disloyalty can go. There's no one higher than God to be disloyal to.

The First Betrayal Happened in Heaven

God is perfect. There was no way for Lucifer to accuse God of being mean to him, abuse him, treat him unfairly, ignore him, take advantage of him, overlook him, wound him, hurt him. Lucifer had no excuse. He wasn't disloyal because of trauma from his childhood. There was no way for him to say someone messed him up. He was the anointed cherub that covereth.¹ God says about him, Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.²

Notice, till iniquity was found in thee. That's where it started, inside him. Iniquity started in him. Betrayal always begins near the anointing. Betrayal always comes from someone you helped, promoted, encouraged, trusted, prayed for, stood behind. It comes from people who've been around the anointing. The demon of betrayal always operates from someone close to the anointing.

How the Demon Enters: Offense and Ambition

There are two primary ways the demon of disloyalty enters a person. Number one is through offense, number two is through self-ambition. Lucifer didn't fall into lust, he wasn't overcome with carnal desires for women. He didn't fall into drugs and alcohol. He wasn't overcome with coveting money. He wasn't even overcome with violence. He fell through ambition. He became ambitious to be something he wasn't and try to take something he didn't rightfully have.

In Isaiah, chapter fourteen, starting at verse thirteen we see five I wills. This is what was in Lucifer's spirit, these are the things that motivated him, caused him to stir, got his heart pounding. These were his ambitions and desires, things he was passionate about:

Disloyalty begins with ambition. It's self-centered. It's looking at someone else's position and desiring it. Disloyalty looks at your boss's job and wants it.

Disloyalty is always inside the house. The enemy doesn't throw stones at Jesus, someone throws stones at Him. The enemy doesn't come to the gates of Jerusalem with armies, someone opens the gates.⁴ David refused Saul's crown.⁵ And the enemy doesn't hang himself.⁶ Judas didn't bring an armed mob to betray Jesus, Judas betrayed Jesus and brought an armed mob.⁷ Absalom

didn't stand in the gate of the city charming people into conspiracy against his father.⁸ Absalom charmed people into conspiracy against his father (2 Samuel 15:6). Korah didn't take two hundred and fifty princes with him when he rebelled against Moses, Korah rebelled against Moses and took two hundred and fifty princes with him.¹⁰

Disloyalty is always from the inside. Disloyalty is against those who've done you good. The psalmist wrote, Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, WHICH DID EAT OF MY BREAD, hath lifted up his heel against me.¹¹ Disloyalty always comes from the table, from those who've been at the anointing.

Before anyone can be disloyal and rebel and betray, there's something that has to happen first. Jesus talked about this in Matthew, chapter twenty-four: And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.¹²

Notice the process. People are going to become offended, then after that, they're going to betray, then after that, they're going to hate. Offense always comes before betrayal and disloyalty. You can't rebel without becoming offended first. That's where rebellion starts, with offense. We have to kill offense quickly because rebellion is as the sin of WITCHCRAFT. ¹³

How do we identify and deal with the demon of disloyalty? Learn to identify offense and ambition. Offense lays a legal right for the demon of disloyalty. It creates an atmosphere where disloyalty can operate. Offense always has something to do with me. It's something that was said about me. Someone treated me unfairly, overlooked me, ignored me. They didn't promote me. They didn't give me a raise. They rebuked and corrected me in an area that wasn't even out of order. They made decisions without consulting with me. There's a multitude of things that could be the focus of my offense. All of them are legal rights for disloyalty to enter into my life.

A man that hath friendship with a prudent man separateth a fool;¹⁴ when we're offended we separate from those who've been good to us. We separate because we're offended. The demon of disloyalty operates through offense.

Ambition also lays a legal right for the spirit of disloyalty to enter into our lives. James writes: Ye lust, and have not. Ye kill, and desire to possess, and cannot obtain. Ye fight and war. Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.¹⁵ We become ambitious for positions, promotions, rewards. We see someone else receiving rewards and blessings and become envious and ambitious. James tells us envy and strife (ambition) cometh of your wisdom.¹⁶ That's not godly wisdom, that's the wisdom that is from below, which is earthly, sensual, devilish.¹⁷ And where envying and strife is,¹⁸ there is also confusion and every evil work.¹⁹ We cannot afford to be ambitious for things of men. The spirit of ambition lays a foundation for disloyalty to enter into our lives.

In the next chapter I want us to look at honoring when you have to leave a place. Whether it's the local church or the house of God, learn how to leave with honor. Learn how to depart in blessing. Learn how to walk away from things with honor, face-to-face communication, without cursing and witchcraft and strife.

Learn how Shem and Japheth honored their father.²⁰ Learn how David endured betrayal after betrayal²¹ and yet didn't seek his own. Learn how Aaron's beard received the anointing of the Lord, the anointing of his godly father.²² Honor must be your response, even when others show disloyalty and rebellion. Honor must be your response, because honor is the Kingdom of God!

Disloyalty is a demonic force to be reckoned with. There is a spirit of disloyalty (betrayal). In my book, *Honor: the code and currency of God's kingdom*, I gave examples of times in Scripture where one can see this spirit at work. In each case it begins with a spirit that moves in a person or people to dishonor the person or persons who disciplined, fed, promoted, or anointed them. Examples are Lucifer's rebellion against God (his maker), Absalom's rebellion against David (his father), Judas' betrayal of Jesus (he was given charge of the money bag). This list could go on.

The Anatomy: Gossip, Slander, and Tearing Down the Vision

The signature of disloyalty (betrayal) is gossip. Absalom's betrayal of David began with Absalom consorting with Israel's nobility by flattering those who came into the city to seek judgment (2 Samuel 15:3–4). Gossip is the hallmark of the spirit of disloyalty (betrayal). Instead

of dealing with people in the house face-to-face, those possessed by this spirit will gossip behind closed doors, in hallways, parking lots, text threads, etc. Gossip is the foundation of rebellion. Gossip will escalate into slander. Slander will always involve theology (Numbers 16:3).

Korah slandered Moses' position. Korah and those who agreed with him were saying that Moses and Aaron had gone too far in usurping authority from God. The result was the earth opened up and swallowed Korah and those who agreed with him (Numbers 16:32). The spiritualized Korah still wanders the earth today. Those possessed by his spirit seek to tear down the vision of the house and attack those who have been used by God to raise them up. Korah is not content with gossiping about David. His spirit wants to bring in an agenda of rebellion. Korah led two hundred and fifty princes (Numbers 16:3) in his rebellion.

Korah is a spirit that seeks agreement. Offense always looks for agreement. Offense wants to recruit others to its cause. Lucifer recruited one-third of heaven's worshipers to follow him into rebellion (Revelation 12:4). Absalom recruited Israel's nobility and sent spies throughout the land of Israel (2 Samuel 15:6). Korah called for all of the congregation to assemble at the door of the tabernacle to defy Moses' position (Numbers 16:19).

Therefore, if you are confiding (really not confiding) in someone who is talking offense against a father/mother, pastor, spiritual leader, etc., you are being recruited. Offense always looks for agreement and an audience. If you find yourself agreeing with offense against your pastor, leader, father, mother, etc., you are being recruited to Korah. Resist! Kill offense in a cradle. Never let offense fester in your presence! Offense leads to disloyalty and rebellion! Remember what Jesus said: And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another (Matthew 24:10).

Rebellion is disloyalty. Disloyalty is rebellion. There are some who would never dream of calling themselves disloyal but have been recruited by Korah to rebellion. Absalom's conspiracy against his father's throne is rebellion. Lucifer's fall from grace is rebellion. Korah's mutiny against Moses' position is rebellion. And we see rebellion everywhere in the house of God today! Remember, rebellion is a fruit of disloyalty. For rebellion is as the sin of WITCHCRAFT, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23). Rebellion is a witchcraft fruit. Beware of witchcraft! Beware of disloyalty! Beware of rebellion!

No One Ever Just Leaves Quietly

There is a spirit of disloyalty and a spirit of honor. Those possessed by the former always make a fuss to get out of the house. Those possessed by the latter leave in honor and with a blessing. I have seen disloyalty (rebellion) rear its ugly head in churches across America. Some who have been recruited to the spirit of disloyalty leave in disloyalty and rebellion. Others stay and stir rebellion against those who raised them up. Either way, disloyalty is rebellion and will always produce offense against those who anointed them.

Absalom's conspiracy began with offense against his father. Lucifer's fall began with five I wills that were nothing more than offenses against his maker. You cannot be possessed by this spirit of disloyalty and leave quietly. Offended people don't just leave quietly. They must make a call, tell a story, and exit swinging. Those possessed by a spirit of honor will always leave in a manner of honor.

Shem and Japheth honored their father by covering him. Notice, they walked backwards. Those possessed by a spirit of honor will come face-to-face, give their reason for leaving, bless those who raised them up and exit. Honor demands this protocol. David was patient enough not to take Saul's crown when he had the perfect opportunity twice. Absalom wasn't. Absalom took his father's throne and his concubines!

Absalom is a spirit that promotes ambition. Ambition is another signature of disloyalty. Ambition is another fruit of rebellion. Ambition is witchcraft fruit. Beware of witchcraft! Beware of disloyalty! Beware of rebellion! Beware of ambition! Beware of offense! Kill it when you see it! Cover your father's beard! The holy anointing oil is still dripping off Aaron's beard today (Psalm 133). Be faithful to the vision! Be faithful to those who have been faithful to you!

The prince of this world still roams the earth seeking to steal, kill, and destroy. He still consorts with those who come into the gate seeking judgment. Beware of witchcraft! Beware of disloyalty! Beware of rebellion! Beware of ambition! Beware of offense! Cover your father's beard! Guard your heart! Kill offense when you see it!

The original victim of betrayal was God. Lucifer was the anointed cherub that covereth (Ezekiel 28:14). And yet God declared of Lucifer, Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee (Ezekiel 28:15). How fitting that Psalm 41:9 says, Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, WHICH DID EAT OF MY BREAD, hath lifted up his heel against me. Absalom conspired against his father's throne, but it was Ahithophel who hanged himself. Judas conspired against Christ and took his own life as well. The spirit of disloyalty always produces offense and ambition.

Beware of witchcraft! Beware of disloyalty! Beware of rebellion! Beware of ambition! Beware of offense! Cover your father's beard! Guard your heart! Kill offense when you see it! Be faithful to the vision! Be faithful to those who have been faithful to you!

Betrayal is demonic. The first betrayal took place in heaven before God created the world. The one who betrayed Him was the "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezekiel 28:14). He was covered with jasper, topaz, diamond, beryl, onyx, jade, carbuncle, sapphire, chrysolite, and carbuncle. God said about him, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15).

When Jesus foretold of the end times He said, "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another" (Matthew 24:10).

Betrayal is a spirit. It is demonic and it is evident in the manner of its manifestation. It seeks to destroy, discredit, poison, slander, and diminish. It poisons the well, disgraces the vision, attacks the leader, and scatters the sheep. It seeks to pull down what was built with difficulty. It will recruit those who are discontented and paint leadership as the villain. Absalom and Korah are classic examples of betrayal in the bible.

Betrayal always occurs from the inside. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, WHICH DID EAT OF MY BREAD, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Betrayal always ends badly for the betrayer. Absalom, Korah, Lucifer, Ahithophel, Judas, where are they now? Lucifer fell like lightning and awaits the lake of fire. Korah was swallowed up alive. Absalom was pierced through the heart and hung by his hair in a tree (2 Samuel 18:9,14). Ahithophel the counselor of David hanged himself (2 Samuel 17:23). Judas cast his thirty pieces of silver on the floor of the temple and hanged himself (Matthew 27:5).

Judas led an army with great power and authority into the garden where he identified his master with a kiss (Luke 22:47–48). Absalom set out from Jerusalem with an army to take out his father. Korah took two hundred and fifty princes with him to challenge the leadership of Moses. Rebellion is always against God's appointments. It is illegitimate power. "For rebellion is as the sin of WITCHCRAFT, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Samuel 15:23).

The spirit of betrayal has two primary characteristics: offense and ambition. Offense must die a quick death! Never allow offense to fester in your spirit. Deal with it by prayer and immediate action (confession and restitution) before it grows into something else. Learn to walk according to Matthew 18 and go directly and privately to the person to resolve matters. Never air your dirty laundry publicly!

Ambition is personal agendas that does not yield to God's agenda. Submit your ambitions to honor. Learn to operate according to God's will, assignment, and timing. David had two chances to kill Saul and take his crown. He could have worn the crown, but he didn't want to take Saul's crown. He wanted a crown from God and was willing to wait (1 Samuel 24,26).

The spirit of betrayal must be resisted. Learn to be a son of honor! Honor is the Kingdom of God's code. Honor is its language, protocol, and currency. Honor is how we advance the Kingdom of God! Learn more about honor in my book, Honor: The Currency of Heaven.

Learn to maintain a clear and clean heart toward those who have betrayed you and leave the defense of your name to God. "And [God] remembered him, and came and delivered them out of their hands; and said, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (Psalm 105:15). Spiritual anointing is maintained by honor. Anointing starts on the head and trickles down. It was applied to Aaron's head and trickled down onto his beard.

Learn to exit with honor. If you must exit a situation, exit with blessing and honor. Learn to exit in person, never destructively. Learn to be a person of integrity, one who communicates directly and rejects recruitment. Refuse to be recruited by gossipers! Deal with issues face-to-face with leadership. Never listen to recruiters! The spirit of betrayal is not of disagreement, it is demonic!

Learn to keep your heart from the spirit of betrayal. "Above all things guard your heart, for out of it come the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23). The spirit of betrayal starts on the inside. Learn to cover your father. When your father is naked, Shem and Japheth took a garment and walked backwards into the tent to cover their father's nakedness!

Spirit of Betrayal (Disloyalty)

The last of the seven deadly sins of the flesh is the spirit of disloyalty (betrayal). This spirit of disloyalty is what causes churches to divide and revivals to fail. Sons that embraced this sin died in the field. This sin is the result of dishonor, therefore, Honor is the code and currency in the Kingdom. This is the sin that causes the anointing of God to remain with leaders and not flow down. This sin has been present since before the foundation of the world.

The first victim of disloyalty was God Himself. Lucifer, "the anointed cherub that covereth" (Ezekiel 28:14), rebelled in a perfect environment against the Creator.

Consider the magnitude of Lucifer's rebellion. God created Lucifer as a living, breathing, pulsing jewel box of gems and precious stones (see Ezekiel 28:16–19). He was so dazzling and beautiful that God placed him on the holy mountain as a covering. Yet, as soon as Lucifer's glory and beauty got to his head, his heart was lifted up against God. Lucifer's five I wills resulted in the first act of betrayal (see Isaiah 14:13–14).

Reflect on the fact that Lucifer was worshipping with all of heaven in unison at some point. The fact that Lucifer fell due to disloyalty and rebellion means that a third of heaven fell with him. Where did all of those demons come from? They fell due to the spirit of disloyalty (see

Revelation 12:4). The other two-thirds of heaven have been loyal to the throne of God from beginning to end. Those angels will never fall because their hearts are fixed to serve and worship the Lord. Praise God that some angels stayed loyal! Those angels are still in heaven.

The spirit of disloyalty is a literal spirit that causes one to rebel against God (see 1 Timothy 1:20 and Jude 6–13). It is the same spirit that worked in Judas to lead an army with knives and swords against Jesus when he knew full well that Jesus had authority over nature and armies. This is the spirit of ambition that worked in Absalom's heart to charm the daughters of Israel as he stood at the city gate pretending to judge cases when he knew full well that it was David's job (see 2 Samuel 15:2–4). This is the same spirit of ambition that worked in Korah to gather two hundred and fifty princes and stand against Moses (see Numbers 16). This is the spirit of ambition that worked in Korah's heart. Korah is the spiritualized character of the spirit of rebellion.

Holding the Staff

Betrayal always takes place against your own. Absalom betrayed David, his own father. Ahithophel, David's counselor, betrayed David and hanged himself (see 2 Samuel 17:2–5). Korah led two hundred and fifty men to rebel against Moses. Judas was the one that carried the money bag, yet, he led an army against Christ. The spirit of betrayal is the spirit of disloyalty against your own, especially those that have been faithful over you. It is a demonic spirit. It is one of the seven deadly sins of the flesh. It is the end-time sign of Jesus' return.

In Matthew 24:10, Jesus said, "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."

There is a spirit of betrayal (disloyalty) that seeks to operate through the flesh. Disloyalty is the fruit of the flesh. Disloyalty is the product of dishonor. If we learn how to walk in honor, we will never give an opening for disloyalty to operate. Honor is the code of Heaven and Earth. Honor is the protocol of Heaven and Earth. Honor is the way of God. Learn more about honor in this book.

In Psalm 41:9, David cried out, saying, “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, WHICH DID EAT OF MY BREAD, hath lifted up his heel against me.”

David endured the pains of betrayal from Absalom, his own flesh and blood; Ahithophel, his own counselor; and Saul, a fellow Israelite, twice. In each circumstance David proved himself to be loyal to God by refusing to grab the crown that was rightfully his. Instead, he honored God by waiting on His timing. Learn more about discerning offense, ambition, and rebellion in Chapter Eleven.

For rebellion is as the sin of WITCHCRAFT, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23).

The spirit of witchcraft operates through offense, ambition, rebellion, and betrayal. Learn how to guard your heart in Chapter Eleven.

Reflection and Prayer of Commitment

Before you continue on in this book, spend some quality time before the presence of God. Ask Him to show you places where you have not dealt with your own offenses. Ask the Lord to show you where you have spoken dishonorably of those that have been faithful over you. Has there been a situation in your life where you joined others to stir up gossip about a leader, mentor, or parent?

How have you dealt with those that have gone their separate way from you? How are you going to deal with those who are going their separate way from you? Are you ready to stand loyal if tested? Are you ready to honorably depart from a situation, relationship, ministry, or church like Shem and Japheth who honored their father by covering him, walking backward? Are you ready to anoint with your last drop those who anointed your beard with the first drop of holy oil from Aaron’s horn? Are you ready to depart from a church, ministry, or relationship like a son that wants to hear the last word from their father’s mouth, face-to-face and receive a blessing?

I want you to speak out loud and pray the following prayer of renouncement against Lucifer's five I wills and renounce the spirit of betrayal, rebellion, disloyalty, witchcraft, ambition, and offense. Receive the spirit of loyalty, honor, commitment, faithfulness, perseverance, patience, love, and humility. Ask God to teach you how to guard your heart. Ask the Holy Ghost to teach you how to crucify ambition and stay out of offices and places that aren't appointed for you.

Ask for grace to never again seek to stand in another man's pulpit, usurp another man's office, steal another man's wife, covet another man's congregation, or attempt to grab the crown prematurely. Ask for grace to crucify ambition, stand loyal to God, address issues with those that have wounded you face-to-face and never seek to address issues in front of an audience. Ask the Holy Ghost to teach you to depart from a situation honorably. Pray it like this: