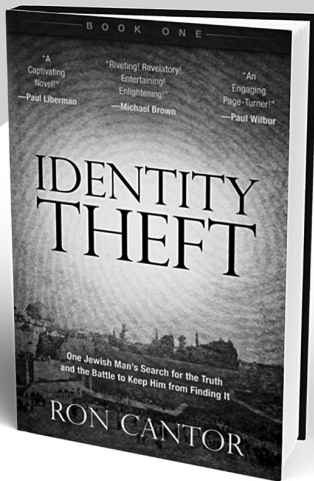


FOLLOW  
**HIS LEAD**

Ron Cantor



**NEVER  
HAS  
FICTION  
BEEN SO  
TRUE!**



**"Ron had my rapt  
attention from page one"**

—Don Finto  
Pastor and Author



**"It's a book you will want  
to read at one sitting."**

—Dr. David H. Stern  
The Complete Jewish Bible

## TESTIMONIES FROM READERS:

"I was gripped by the fictional story to be sure, but more so by what I learned. It isn't easy to put into words how my heart was both excited and troubled by some things I read."

"You will find yourself wanting to read "just one more page" until you realize that the book is finished – it's just that fast paced and fascination."

"So real his words that sometimes I felt I was standing beside him. Tears, joy, more tears and the joy."

"I liked it so much, I ordered 5 more copies."

Starting Read Now: [www.idtheftbook.com](http://www.idtheftbook.com)

**FREE E-BOOK!**

# **LEARN MORE ABOUT ISRAEL IN 15 MINUTES THAN YOU HAVE YOUR WHOLE FILE!**

[join.theisraelinsider.com](http://join.theisraelinsider.com)

**This eBook has made it's way  
to the highest levels of the Israeli  
government!**

- The word Palestine goes back to the Romans and has nothing to with Arabs.
- In 1922 a homeland was created for Palestinian Arabs already!
- Israel accidentally ended up with Jerusalem in 1967!



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"One of the most important newsletter I get is from Ron Cantor, a Hebrew-speaking, Messianic leader living in Israel. I know I am getting information from Ron that I can't anywhere else!"**

–Dr Michael Brown

Nationally syndicated Radio Talk show Host and Messianic Scholar

FOLLOW HIS LEAD

Copyright © 2019 by Ron Cantor  
Printed in the United States of America

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, digital photocopy, recording, or any other without the prior permission of the author.

All rights reserved solely by the author. The author guarantees all contents are original and do not infringe upon the legal rights of any other person or work. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the permission of the author.

All Scripture quotations unless indicated otherwise have been taken from the New International Version of the Holy Bible. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture excerpted from the Jewish New Testament, © 1989 by Dr. David H. Stern, P.O. Box 615, Clarksville, MD 21029, (410) 764-6144. Used with permission. Italics and bold in Scripture references have been added for emphasis by the author.



*“So many leaders are driven by what is external instead of what is internal. They are focused on the visible instead of the invisible and seeking healing for others while refusing to get the cure they so desperately need. In this book, Ron Cantor gives powerful principles of leadership that you will want to put into practice and take your own leadership team through as a group.”*

—Stovall Weems  
*Senior Pastor of Celebration Church, Jacksonville, FL*



Forward for



## FOLLOW **HIS LEAD**

I first became acquainted with Ron Cantor as a student in the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry (BRSM). Ron was one of my favorite teachers and one of the most charismatic speakers I had ever heard. His charm and wit made his classes enjoyable and memorable. Those same qualities come through in his writings, making them a pleasure to read.

I read *Follow His Lead* in just a few hours. I found it easy, engaging, and stimulating – and difficult to put down. Some pages hit the nail on the head. Others hit my thumb with the hammer! Sometimes I found myself saying, “Amen.” And other times, I said, “ouch.” I’ve never read a book on leadership quite like this. Ron Cantor’s approach is totally unique. This is not a book of pithy motivational poster quotes. Ron is honest and vulnerable. He distills many years of rich experience into 13 powerful lessons that are vitally important for all leaders to understand, but especially those involved in local church ministry.

As I read *Follow His Lead*, I was reminded of an experience I had a few weeks ago. I sat in a closed-door meeting with a leader who had just stepped down from ministry. With tears and regret, he explained how he had come to such a tragic place. The pressure to perform led him down a dark path. People looked up to him and thought him more than a mere mortal. He didn’t feel he could be honest with anyone. He didn’t want to disappoint them and ended up living a lie. Finally, the weight of his own guilt made him physically ill. Unable to live that way any longer, he was

now coming clean. If only he could have read and applied the principles in this book, I thought, his life might have taken a very different course.

Leaders are often lonely people. The pressure to be more than they are can weigh heavy. As a result, many leaders suffer silently, not knowing who to talk to or where to turn. In fact, the whole system around them often lends itself to dysfunction. But in this book, Ron Cantor presents a new paradigm of ministry: one that values team leadership, covenant relationships, and accountable and emotionally healthy leaders. He confronts dangerous and unbiblical models of leadership (like being unwilling to confront a leader because he is “the Lord’s anointed”). He challenges what is often considered obvious (like the common assumption that the senior leader in a church is a “pastor”). And he brings clarity where there is often confusion (like explaining where church leaders have authority and where they do not).

I only wish I would have had this book starting out as a young man in ministry, but I’m glad that I can read it now. It is a resource that I will return to often and one that I recommend to everyone in leadership - especially in a ministry context.

Daniel Kolenda  
*President of Christ for all Nations*



# Contents

Forward . . . . .	vii
Introduction: Don't Call me Pastor! . . . . .	1
Chapter 1: Wounded and Leading: Not Good! . . . . .	5
Chapter 2: Elders Must be Empowered—Don't Emasculate Them!. . . . .	15
Chapter 3: Don't Call Me "Pastor"—A Plea for Team Ministry . . . . .	33
Chapter 4: Covenant Relationships 1 . . . . .	38
Chapter 5: Covenant Relationships 2 . . . . .	42
Chapter 6: Covenant Relationships 3 . . . . .	53
Chapter 7: 7 Steps to Surviving a Personal Spiritual Attack . . . . .	58
Chapter 8: "But I'm God's Anointed" Syndrome . . . . .	64
Chapter 9: Humility and How I Received It . . . . .	69
Chapter 10: My Ministry Syndrome . . . . .	75
Chapter 11: Overcoming Intimidation I. . . . .	82
Chapter 12: Overcoming Intimidation Part II . . . . .	91
Chapter 13: The Secret to Seeing Your Prayers Answered . . . . .	101
About the Author . . . . .	107



## Introduction



# FOLLOW **HIS LEAD**

Leadership training is possibly the most vital need in congregations across the world. In the Messianic Jewish world, the world in which I exist, often the training of leaders focuses mostly on theology and issues pertaining to Jewish life. Most seminaries are lacking in their teaching on *leadership*. Instead of employing congregational leaders, classes are mostly taught by lifelong professors who have never had to deal with a husband caught in adultery, a congregational split or a teen who announces that he is gay—all things I have had to face as a congregational leader.

They know how to exegete, but can't make a demon exit. They understand homiletics (the art of preaching) but don't know how to build a ministry team. They comprehend expository preaching, but have never exclaimed the name of Yeshua before an angry crowd. It is all academic.

I have had the great privilege of serving under men who understand *leadership*. They are not theologically deficient. In fact, some of them are the brightest minds in the Messianic world! However, they understand biblical apostolic leadership that creates strong congregations and disciplined believers. This leadership emphasizes due process in the midst of conflicts, accountability for leaders, team dynamics, the power of the Holy Spirit and so much more. I have learned from them and would like to share with you, younger leaders, and maybe some veterans who could use a little encouragement, some of the lessons that have

saved me from disappointment and frustrations, and served me well in my quest to serve Him.

My experience is that many congregational leaders are motivated by pride, plagued by inferiority and obsessed with comparing themselves with others. I recall one pastor who invited me to preach, leaving during my message to go check his computer, to see how many people were watching online. I was once on a stage with a pastor. He whispered for me to move over, because the camera couldn't see him. And, truth be told, I could share some embarrassing stories about how my own pride and insecurity led me to do foolish things. (I once went to pray for a man who was in a car accident so that I could impress the other students at my Bible school. When I put my hand on him to pray, he yelled in pain. Whoops!)

Instead of finding their significance in God, many leaders search for it in “success.” Sometimes this leads to building yourself up, while putting others down. Rather than simply seeking to please Yeshua, they run their congregations like small businesses or (in some cases) a for-profit corporation. They measure their importance by numbers instead of the simple fact that Yeshua died for them—that God “gave His one and only Son” as a ransom for their soul.

Many of them are in deep need of emotional healing themselves but they find themselves in positions of leadership, not because of their *character*, but because of their *gifting*. Many leaders have wounded egos and use ministry as a way of feeling better about themselves. Some of them manipulate their members for gain. I have seen situations where a man was clearly not gifted for senior leadership, but his wife pushed him because of her own ambition. *It destroyed a congregation*. I have seen an elder's wife argue that the eldership could make no decision unless it was unanimous. She would then instruct her husband how to vote and, thus, she could control every decision.

Beloved, we can only lead well to the extent that our motives are pure and our hearts are healed. Yeshua has called us to humble, servant-hearted

leadership. A Biblical leader is mostly concerned with those to whom he ministers, not his own success. The following two verses are in my personal daily confession to remind me of the goal.

*Do nothing out of selfishness or conceit, but with humility consider others as more important than yourselves, looking out not only for your own interests but also for the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4, TLV)*

Many of us are like Yeshua's disciples before Acts 2, when they argued over who was the greatest among them. Of course, we would never be so blatantly outspoken about such things, *but we think them*.

Sadly, most of us have had little to no training in conflict resolution, how to manage a staff or how to raise up leaders. This is more a part of the daily life of a pastor than theology.

This book is meant to equip you as a leader or, at least, set you on a path of passionately pursuing becoming the best leader you can be—*centered* in the fact that God loves you. We minister because He loves us, not to gain His love.

Each chapter can stand alone as an article and the chapters are not meant to build upon each other except when there is a part one and two. Most of what is taught here is a combination of my life experiences, things I have learned from my mentors and biblical teaching on leadership. In certain places, I have changed insignificant details, so as to not embarrass anyone.

To be honest, this is a book I have wanted to write for a long time. But it was mostly theory—like your typical seminary professor (without the PhD). However, in 2013, I was asked to lead our Tel Aviv-based congregation, Tiferet Yeshua. Finally, I would have an opportunity to put these principles into practice in a congregation. And they worked! The congregation grew, the elders walked in unity, people came to faith

and our core team formed into a family. And we successfully turned it over to a long-term senior leader.

I wrote most of the chapters as if I were still leading the congregation because I started the book when I was the senior leader. Since then, we have birthed a new work in Tel Aviv—a small midweek meeting called *Nes v'Café*, a play on words that means in Hebrew, *miracle and coffee*. And we have installed a young couple in leadership and hope to turn it over to them completely within two years.

I trust that these principles will help you in your journey as well. Drop me a line—or shoot me an email—to let me know.

Ron Cantor

May 25, 2019

## Chapter 1



# Wounded and Leading: Not Good!

**B**efore anyone enters into leadership, he or she should go through some level of inner healing. I say *some level* because we will never be fully healed in this life. We are constantly seeking to put to death ego, pride and jealousy. But to the extent that you can enter into leadership as a healed soul, you will succeed.

The greatest need of any leader is simply to know how much God loves you, because only through this revelation will you know who you are as a leader. I have found that this truth—the overwhelming affection that God has for you and the delight that He takes in you—is a revelation that is difficult to maintain. I have to reinforce it daily, reminding myself what God’s Word says regarding His affection for me.

Someone once said that most believers live their lives believing that *God is, at least a little bit, ticked off at them*. Others, despite limited or great outward success, feel like failures—unloved by their Father in heaven. Some of us who had once felt destined for success, find ourselves in our fifties, searching for significance or in our seventies living with regret, despite success. At the end of the day, God will build His kingdom and we have the great privilege of co-laboring with him. Our role is significant, but the establishment of His kingdom will go forward with or without us.

### **My Personal Journey of Healing**

This elusive search for significance can cause us to act foolishly, as we see the years go by, without the breakthrough *in impact on others* that

we expected. Some seek to latch onto the success of peers, hoping to be catapulted to the *medal ceremony*. Others manipulate their way up the ladder, even willing to wound and hurt friends in an effort to *serve God*—when all God wants is for us to be able to rest in the simple fact that He loves us. If you seek to find significance in anything other than the value that God has placed upon you, you are in danger.

What are some of the things that make us feel good about ourselves?

- Job
- Success
- Good standing in the community
- Good family
- Lots of friends
- People look up to you
- As a pastor, *the flock loves and respects me*
- *My wife and children admire me*

## **Poof!**

All those things are good, but they do not make a man. *What happens if suddenly all those things disappeared?* What if you lose your job, your wife leaves you and your friends turn their backs on you? It sounds like a typical country music song, I know. But seriously, what if you lost it all? What if you preached a message and heard that half the congregation was offended? If you found your self-worth in those things, you will be broken. If you *needed* the congregation to love your messages to feel good about yourself, then you need healing. But if your significance is in God's undying, irreversible love for you, you will be okay. God's love never changes.

## My Story

As for me, I was stuck in a rut of feelings of failure, that God was mad at me and that while I had great potential, I would never fulfill God's plan because of my own laziness and lack of prayer. In my first years in the faith, I was a powerhouse (in my own mind). I would share the Gospel with all who would hear—and *many who wouldn't!* If there was a car accident, I would jump out of my car to pray for the wounded.

In fact, once when I was visiting the Bible school I would later attend, there was an accident outside the campus. I boldly, in front of all the students, ran to the scene. I saw a man on a stretcher and went to pray for him. However, when I put my hand on him to pray, he yelled out in pain. Fortunately, the onlookers from the Bible school didn't notice. Indeed, they were impressed with my zeal. And that made me feel good ... for the moment.

But so much of what I was doing was rooted in pride. *See me!* I would compare myself to others. I had to be the best “believer”—I had to pray more, witness more, do more. Not everything I did was with wrong motives, but my ignorance of the depths of God's unconditional love for me led me to seek it through actions and works.

I grew up feeling very little affection from my father. God has now healed that relationship and, even as I write, my father is sitting a few feet from me watching the news. We now enjoy a great friendship. But growing up, he was distant and quiet.

When I became a believer, I felt instantly free of all that rejection. It was amazing. I was so excited to be born again—to know God and know that my name was written in heaven. Everyone seemed to like me and being Jewish in a Pentecostal church made me somewhat of a minor celebrity. But it was only a matter of time before the woundedness with which I had grown up would break through the facade of acceptance. I call it a facade because it was not real. It was based on people accepting me, not God. And people, unfortunately, tend to let you down.

## One Word Brought Back All the Pain

It just took one action from an elder in the congregation to bring it all back. I was sitting next to him at a congregational event, about three months after I came to faith. I can't tell you what he said, only that the words released a wave of rejection over me that I could not escape. I thought I was free of rejection, but it came back on me like a waterfall. After that, I could not see God as my loving father, but only as a dissatisfied judge. This feeling plagued me during my first year of Bible school.

My entire sense of worth was based on what I did for God. If I prayed an hour that day, then God loved me. If I shared the Gospel with someone, then He was pleased. But if I didn't, then I was a failure. It didn't help that my first mentor used to ask regularly "Did you pray an hour today?" I used to pray for an hour on Wednesdays just so I could raise my hand in youth group. He meant well, wanting to get us to spend time with God, but it led me towards a rat race of works-based righteousness. Prayer, for me, was not an act of communing with Yeshua, experiencing God's blessing and presence, but work. I would punch in and, an hour later, punch out.

As long as I could do the works, I felt good about myself. One evening before bed, my roommate turned to me and said, "God is going to take you through the fire early." I said, "What? What are you talking about?"

"I don't know; He just told me to tell you that."

I was thrilled. Fire must be good! Well, it was good, but it also burns. Over the next 18 months, God did indeed take me through the fire. Little by little, it was as if God took away the grace to pray and to share my faith. Prayer became torturous. And then an emotional battle ensued. Paul's words bothered me:

*But by the grace of God I am what I am. His grace toward me was not in vain. No, I worked harder than them all—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. (1 Corinthians 15:10)*

Was it true? Was it true that all my works, giftings, and prayers were merely the result of the grace of God? This was hard for me because the entire essence of who I was—my self-worth—was based on my zeal and actions for the Lord. My zeal made me *better* than others. However, if it was *merely* God's grace, then I can't claim the credit. *I wanted the credit!*

### **Except for Grace**

This plagued me for some time. Keith Green was my favorite musician. What the Beatles were to rock and roll, he was to Christian music. His early songs reflected my zeal: "Don't you care... Don't care..." But his later works reflected a more matured and seasoned believer, focusing on the grace of God and not on our efforts. It seemed that he too had hit the same rut, that led him to the truth—that the only thing that is important is God's grace.

*Lord, the feelings are not the same,  
I guess I'm older, I guess I've changed.  
And how I wish it had been explained,  
That as you're growing you must remember...*

*That nothing lasts, except the grace of God,  
By which I stand, in Jesus.  
I know that I would surely fall away, except for grace,  
By which I'm saved.*

*Lord, I remember that special way,  
I vowed to serve You, when it was brand new.  
But like Peter, I can't even watch and pray,  
One hour with You and I bet, I could deny You too.*

That is where I was: Broken, beat up, lacking zeal. Still, my pride was not willing to give God the glory for whatever good came from my life. I vaguely remember crying at the end of chapel service one

day. Someone came to me to pray for me as if to affirm whatever was happening in me. I said, “You don’t understand. I am broken.” And this person prophesied over me that something was going to happen soon—something of a breakthrough.

And it did.

### **John Sheasby**

A man by the name of John Sheasby was our guest speaker a few weeks later. Every week we had a different guest lecturer. He was teaching on inner healing and I didn’t believe in inner healing. I was taught that it was all dealt with at the cross. I was going to set this man straight. I asked to meet with him and we spoke for four hours. Instead of the new believer correcting the experienced inner healer, he used his inner healing “*Jedi*” powers on me and I found myself in tears, asking for prayer.

He told me of a man who confessed to him, “I teach on the love of God, I preach on the love of God, but I don’t know the love of God.” In tears I said, “That is me.” We prayed together, but the breakthrough came when I admitted two things:

1. I am what I am by the grace of God—my human efforts amount to nothing when compared to the grace of God. Yes, we have free will, and our human will has something to do with our success (or failure), but our gifts/anointings are free gifts from God. I can’t take credit. Human effort cannot produce the power of God!
2. God loves me *period*. He can’t love me any more than He already does. I didn’t earn His love and my works are not what keeps him loving me. He expressed His love for me when Yeshua took my punishment on the cross.

This led me to believe that the Lord not only loves me but also rejoices over me. In fact, I applied Zephaniah’s words regarding Israel to me.

*“He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing.” (Zephaniah 3:17b)*

For the next several days, I purposed to not pray or read my Bible unless I felt a prompting of the Spirit. Don’t get me wrong—that is not my normal practice. However, I needed to go through some sort of *detox* from my addiction to works. I enjoyed God so much that week that I literally felt like I had been born again, *again!*

I have walked out this revelation now for more than thirty years. Despite my imperfections and failings, I know that God loves me and is with me. But why am I beginning this book on leadership here? Because knowing your worth before God, His love for you—knowing that you don’t have to please Him every day to gain His favor and blessing, knowing that you are who you are by the grace of God, that your talents are a gift and nothing more, will transform you into a more confident, humble leader—someone who God can use and who won’t wound others out of their own pain.

### **Testimony Fast**

The transformation in my life was evident to others. As part of crushing my pride, I made a vow to go 90 days without seeking to impress anyone with anything I had done in service for the Lord. No matter what happened in my life, I would not tell others. I had to do this to crucify the “pride of life.” (1 John 2:16)

This discipline changed me. So much of my identity was based on what I did (as opposed to who I was—a child of the King) and I would use *my exploits* to impress others. When I returned to Bible school at the end of the summer, so many people came to see me, saying that they could see that I was different. People were using words like *leader* and *mature*. These were not words that people had used to describe me in the past.

And, the rejection was gone. That entire first year of Bible school I had felt as if no one liked me. This stems back to that flood of rejection that came more than a year before, in the conversation with the congregational elder. And, of course, that was connected with the lack of affection I received from my father. It is interesting that my mother was very loving towards me, but there is something about a father's love, or lack thereof, that can shape (for better or worse) a young man's life.

Now that I had discovered the Father's love for me, I really didn't care what anyone thought about me. I was free. In fact, people sensed my new-found confidence and wanted to be around me. That was when I knew I was a leader.

### **The Porcupine Syndrome**

I call this the *Porcupine Spirit* or *Syndrome*. No one wants to get close to a porcupine. Why? Because they can prick you. When you suffer from rejection, you are like a porcupine. People can sense the rejection and it is unpleasant, like the porcupine's nettles. The person with that spirit of rejection then seeks to force himself on others, and it only pushes them away further as that spirit of rejection feels like the porcupine's sting. When we are healed, not only are the nettles gone, but we simply don't care. *We know who we are in Messiah!* That is attractive to others. What you sought out of rejection, you receive when you don't even care about it because you are healed.

Sadly, so many go into ministry unhealed. They are still seeking that approval from their father or Father. It should be a prerequisite before going into ministry to get counseling regarding your motives. Just like pre-marriage counseling reveals problem areas before the actual marriage. We could help many young leaders by ministering inner healing to them before they are actually serving in ministry. But, as I say in the introduction, seminaries rarely focus on leadership or at least not to the level it is needed. Yeshua spent more of his teaching time with his disciples focusing on personal character rather than theology.

I have encountered so many leaders who are territorial, proud, angry, judgmental and overly sensitive to correction or criticism. I have faced pastors and ministry heads who don't think twice before yelling at those who work for them. They wound out of their own wounding. There are so many who expect to be waited on hand and foot, and don't recognize that to be great is to be a servant.

Of course, if we would raise up leaders in our congregations, rather than hiring them out of seminary, we would see more leaders walking in godly confidence and humility. I have learned far more through godly mentors than I did in my years in Bible college. Only in rare cases is it healthy for someone to graduate from Bible school or seminary and immediately lead a congregation, in my opinion.

In my case, I graduated from Bible college, continued my studies at a college connected to our congregation, while I served as an unpaid youth leader under the oversight of Eitan Shishkoff, our senior leader. Then I came on staff under the mentoring of Dan Juster—learning more and more about leadership and government. All the while, I had other mentors speaking into my life—Asher Intrater, Michael Brown and Paul Wilbur. On staff as an associate Messianic rabbi, I learned from Jerry Miller. During those same years, I enjoyed a deep relationship with David Rudolph—who was able to prophetically see holes in my character and bring insight. Next, I sat under Wayne Wilks while serving in Ukraine and then under Ari Sorko-Ram in Israel. For two years, I was a pastor in Jerusalem and learned much from Wayne Hilsden. And still today, I have mentors from who I am constantly learning—yes, still at 54.

Mentors who act as father figures can bring a deep sense of healing into a person's life. In fact, the three ways we receive healing are:

1. Through inner healing prayer.
2. Through a mentor who is a father figure.

- 3.** Through revelation from the Word of God and prayer of who God is in us.

I have received healing through all three ways.

In summary, we must be healed before we can heal.

- 1.** We are what we are by the grace of God. There can be no pride in simply using the gift that God has given us.
- 2.** We are loved by God. He enjoys us as His sons and daughters and takes delight in our lives.
- 3.** When we discover the unconditional love of God, we will be set free of the spirit of rejection. When we see that God loves us, it will not matter who doesn't.

Only then can we lead and not wound.

## Chapter 2



# Elders Must be Empowered—Don't Emasculate Them!

I was recently in the boardroom of a well-known ministry. I was only there to visit a friend who had a meeting at their Jerusalem office. Every chair was the same and there were no nameplates indicating who was supposed to sit where. When one of the board members of this ministry walked in and saw my wife sitting in the CEO's chair (which, again, looked like every other chair), he flipped out in fear—"Move quickly before [name of leader] walks in. He/She will not be happy to see you sitting in his/her chair."

He didn't mean to be rude, but his fear of offending the leader, even though he was a board member (and therefore an essential leader in the ministry) paralyzed his normally delightful disposition.

### Jezebel and Eunuchs

Jezebel surrounded herself (as do most insecure leaders) with eunuchs—disempowered men, meant to serve her. New Testament leaders are to surround themselves with *empowered men*, meant to serve the Lord's purposes for the people of the congregation, not neutered men. Jezebel ruled by fear and intimidation, surrounding herself with people who would only say what she wanted to hear and do her bidding. A New Testament leader creates a warm environment of love, and surrounds himself with people who will speak the truth.

I have been in congregations (and seen many more) where there were no five-fold (Eph. 4:11—Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers)

ministers, other than the senior leader. Everyone else on staff was there to support the pastor. Elders were for show only, had no real authority and had no intention of challenging the senior leader. As a result, years would go by and anyone with a genuine gift for leadership would move on to another pasture, out of frustration. There was no room for multiple giftings, such as we see in the book of Acts. The ones who stayed long-term were either yes-men—spiritual eunuchs—or those with hidden agendas.

I understand that some ministries are not built to make disciples and raise up leaders. Some traveling ministries minister to groups through teaching or empowering, and a support team is needed. However, as he got older, even the great evangelist Reinhard Bonnke began to mentor young evangelists in an annual gathering. Ultimately, through this process, he chose his successor, Daniel Kolenda. Long before he would retire, Bonnke was pouring into his young disciple so he would be ready when the time came. And, before he chose Daniel as his successor, he surrounded himself with powerful five-fold preachers like Peter Vandenberg.

When I was with Bonnke in Mubi, Nigeria in 2009, there was a young Dutch evangelist there who had ministered in other parts of Africa. He had modeled his ministry after Bonnke. Later in the week, he had this young man preach before the half million people gathered. Bonnke was seeking to encourage him so he could reach more people.

## **New Testament Government**

In so many congregations, when a new leader is needed, they have to look outside for a pastor. In denominations, they call the district superintendent. A young man, sometimes fresh out of seminary, is chosen and sent to the congregation. It is very unnatural and often unsuccessful. The kingdom of God is built upon *relationships*. And, ideally, the congregation would have a relationship with the new senior leader long before he would be installed. But, most often, the former leader never identifies or raises up his successor.

When you chose someone from outside, you can see his gifting, but you can't see his character. Even if someone gives him a glowing report,

how do you know it is true. I just hired a director of communications for Tikkun International, the nonprofit I lead. His former employer sent him the most glowing letter of recommendation. But in the back of my mind, I could think of 100 reasons why it might not be accurate. (In the end, it was accurate! He is amazing!)

When you raise up a leader, you have years to develop his character—to see him go through trials and pass the tests of life, and maybe fail a few.

The model of government that we use at Tiferet Yeshua (The Glory of Yeshua) is based on the Acts 13 model of team ministry.

Now in the congregation at Antioch there were *prophets* and *teachers*: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1-3)

Here we see not merely a senior leader making every decision, but a leadership team made up of the different gifts that we see in Ephesians 4.

So Messiah himself gave the *apostles*, the *prophets*, the *evangelists*, the *pastors* and *teachers*, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up... (Eph. 4:11-12)

On our team, we have an evangelist/teacher (me), two with pastoral gifting, another evangelist and our overseeing apostolic leader, who is also what I call a prophetic teacher. Also, the founding pastor, Ari Sorko-Ram, is still involved. As the senior leader, I choose to greatly rely upon our apostolic leader to help me lead. He has kept me from making silly mistakes. I am so grateful for our three elders, two of whom are very pastoral. Moti will meet people and patiently listen to their needs. And he is a servant. If someone is moving, Moti is there to help. Gil is so good at helping broken people rebuild their lives—both in terms of inner healing and in building systems of accountability to

break old habits. David, who leads our young adults, is a real evangelist, always reaching out to unbelievers.

## **No Rubber Stamp**

When I became the lead pastor, I had not previously been one of the elders, though Elana and I were very active in the congregation. Prior to this, I was involved mainly in traveling ministry from Israel and writing. But, once I was asked to assume leadership, I went to each one of the present elders and told them, “If you are going to be an elder, you need to have teeth. I am not looking for a rubber stamp, but for your true opinion and discernment.” My goal was to make sure they knew that I wanted to keep them empowered and continue to build a strong team of elders, as did the senior leader before me. I was not seeking “yes-men.”

Now to be clear, there have been a few times that my flesh regretted that decision because they embraced my advice. Over the past three years, we have butted heads on a few occasions where I thought, “It would sure be easier if they just let me do what I want to do.” During those times, I remembered what my friend, Steve Erickson, once told me:

*You can build faster by yourself. But you can build further as a team.*

Sadly, many congregations function on the word of one leader. Often, he feels that he is the visionary and no one has a direct line to God like he does. But what he fails to see is that his “direct line” is filtered through his emotions, wounds, pride, impulsiveness, immaturity, and often, a lack of practicality. That is why he needs strong men of God around him to help him discern. Not to constantly tell him no, but to help filter out all the parts that are not of God in order to see what the true vision—God’s vision—is.

To be clear, the senior leader is the chief visionary. He is leading the congregation forward. But he needs to be surrounded by and submitted to good elders or advisors.

And, in our case, it has all been for the good of the congregation. While I did not always get my way, I am confident that in more than 95% of decisions that had to be made, we made the right decision. Elders need to know that it is safe for them to disagree with their senior leader and the senior leader needs to welcome this. If you are reading this and you are a senior leader, you know this is true—you know this is biblical. But it takes real faith to believe that these other men are really there so the ministry can succeed. They are not there to hold you back.

### **No Other Structure for Government**

The lie the enemy will feed you is that empowered elders *are holding you back, and that you could do so much more, if you could just break free of their shackles*. And you may be tempted to get rid of them, but you would be going against the given order for congregational government.

*Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, (James 5:14)*

*This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you (Titus 1:5)*

*Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. (1 Timothy 5:17)*

*Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. (1 Timothy 4:14)*

There is no such thing as New Testament government without having a team of elders. We do not find any one-man shows in the book of Acts. Even Paul submitted to the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 21), when they told him to make a sacrifice to stop the rumors that he was teaching Jews to forsake Moses.

Of course, they (the elders) will make mistakes. As I previously said, 95% of our decisions were right. On the few occasions where we arrived

at the wrong conclusion, the implications were minor when compared to the blessing that God poured out on the team, for seeking to work as a *team in covenant unity*. God blesses unity.

How good and pleasant it is  
when God's people live together in unity!  
It is like precious oil poured on the head,  
running down on the beard,  
running down on Aaron's beard,  
down on the collar of his robe.  
It is as if the dew of Hermon  
were falling on Mount Zion.  
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,  
even life forevermore. (Ps.133)

### **Even Apostles are Submitted**

My primary overseer, Asher Intrater, serves not only as an elder, but also in an apostolic role over our congregation. When we embarked on this journey, one of the first things he told me was that if we are ever at an impasse or if I felt he had sinned against me: “Here are the names of the two men to whom you can appeal.”

Now, I have known Asher since 1985, so there was already a deep foundation of friendship. Friendship with your fellow leaders is a key pillar in successful team leadership. He has been a faithful mentor to me since I lived with his family in 1987-88—right up until I was married. Still, he was making it clear that he, as the “apostle” is accountable to others. He is not a king, but a servant. He has been an amazing example to me.

And these were not mere words. Once, we had a difference of opinion in direction. We tried to work it out between us, but we were both unwilling to budge in our positions. At his insistence, he asked me to

appeal to Dan Juster and Eitan Shishkoff—the men to whom he is accountable. He has served with them for nearly 40 years without division. This is so uncommon in the body of Messiah, as, often, independence wins out over unity. When these two men sided with me, Asher submitted without hesitation. At that point, it wasn't a matter of who was right and who was wrong. It was that the proper procedures were followed and the rest was in God's hand.

My point is that elders/leaders:

1. Must lead as a unified team.
2. Must be accountable.
3. Must be empowered to disagree (without fear of reprisal or dismissal).

## **Restoring Your Manhood**

If you find yourself inheriting elders who had been in a Jezebellic relationship with the previous senior leader, your job is to restore their manhood. Remember how Jezebel died? Jehu rode into town and called up to her balcony:

“Who is on my side? Who?” Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. “Throw her down!” Jehu said. So they threw her down, and some of her blood splattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot. (2 Kings 9:32b-33)

Biologically, these eunuchs would never get their manhood back, but spiritually speaking, Jehu restored their virility by giving them an opportunity to stand up against the one who had dominated them and kept them in fear for so many years. I can't imagine the courage that it took for them to throw their master down to her death, but, when they did, the power of that spirit of intimidation was broken over their lives. We will speak more on this in the chapter on *overcoming intimidation*.

## Royal Pastor Model

The *royal* senior pastor (or the *royal* couple) situation, where people idolize their senior leader (or the senior couple), is not a biblical model. Often congregations like that revolve around the personality and gifting of the senior leader—as he goes, so goes the congregation. If he falls, many fall. People seek power by getting close to the “royal couple.” People play politics, just as they do in Washington, to gain the leader’s favor. That is not a community. That is a show, based on the senior leader’s ability to entertain, manage and control.

A community is built upon the principles in the New Testament—worship, fellowship, outreach and the word of God. In such a community, the elders must be empowered. There is no place for spiritual eunuchs. As we move forward, we will share ways to become free and learn to speak the truth in love.

If you are a pastor and have been using fear, manipulation or guilt to control your board, it is time to change. ***Yeshua raised up leaders; he did not manipulate them to get his way.***

If your elders are powerless rubber stamps for you to get your way (which can often be connected to expense accounts and perks), then it is time to restore their manhood or find new elders who will govern with integrity. If you are building your own kingdom, then this will be very hard. If you are seeking to partner with Jesus for His kingdom, then nothing could be easier.

If you are an elder or leader who finds yourself trapped in an unbiblical system where you have no authority to really govern, then you need to consider leaving. If your leader gives out favors based on what he gets out of it, then you need to confront the system or leave. Yes, it takes courage! But what is a leader, if not someone willing to take a stand for righteousness? It is time to restore your manhood!

## Chapter 3



# Don't Call Me "Pastor"—A Plea for Team Ministry

I am not sure where the tradition of calling the leader of a congregation *Pastor* or *Senior Pastor* comes from, but it is not biblical, and it causes confusion. Not only that, it robs believers of the other essential ministry gifts that God has provided for their growth. I serve as, for lack of a better term, the lead ‘pastor’ of a congregation in Tel Aviv, Israel. However, in truth, I am *not* primarily a pastor. In fact, of the five equipping gifts that are listed in Ephesians 4, the pastoral gifting is my weakest.

The Bible speaks of *five equipping gifts* in the Body of believers.

So Messiah himself gave the **apostles**, the **prophets**, the **evangelists**, the **pastors** and **teachers**. (Eph. 4:11)

Each of these gifts is essential to a healthy congregation. And the primary leader, or *set man*, is not always a pastor. In our congregation, we have five elders on the leadership team. We are all different. To call each of us pastor would simply be inaccurate. In fact, the word “apostle” is used 88 times in the New Covenant, “prophet” is used 157 times, whereas “pastor” is used just once.

### Equipping Believers

These five gifts each have a unique purpose.

He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers, *for the equipping of the saints for works of service.* (Eph. 4:11)

The bearers of these leadership gifts are meant to work in unison and complement one another. The idea of a congregation having one leader who does everything is entirely defective, dysfunctional and unbiblical. It can lead to pride, codependency (i.e. the congregation needs me and I need them to need me), burnout, abuse and manipulation.

Sadly, in many congregations, you have this unbiblical model of government where the pastor, or worse, the pastor and his wife, have all the power and no one dares to disagree with him (or them). People are told it is unbiblical and rebellious to disagree with the pastor. Some shout, “Touch not God’s anointed!” (more on that unbiblical teaching later). Often *servicing* is replaced with *entitlement*, where the leader or leadership couple treats the congregation like a business they started. Ministry is filled with perks that he deserves as the man of God, versus, the biblical model of serving people. Paul often went without common necessities of life in order not to be a burden or offense. Without accountability from other elders, temptation creeps in and leads to abuse.

However, we have a more excellent way—the Biblical pattern. We see it clearly in Acts 13, where the elders of Antioch are an apostolic team with different giftings. Together they pray and fast and counsel with the Lord for direction.

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen... and Saul (Acts 13:1)

While not every gift was represented, there was diversity and together they were an apostolic team. It was in this setting that they, *as one man*, heard the voice of God.

“Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” (Check Acts 13:2.)

We see many other examples of team ministry:

- Paul greets James and the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 21).
- Paul is sent out from the Jerusalem Council with Silas and Timothy (Acts 15).
- When Phillip finds himself alone in the midst of a powerful revival in Samaria, Peter and John are sent to help out (Acts 8).
- On the day of Shavuot (Pentecost), Peter *and the eleven* stood up (Acts 2).
- Yeshua sent out the 72 (Luke 10) two by two.

## The Apostle

The Bible doesn't list a series of definitions regarding each gift, so we have to look at the people who moved in these gifts to understand how they function today.

The apostle is a leader of leaders. When Paul is originally sent out with Barnabas, he is serving in a junior role. But as the grace of God for leadership grows in his life, he becomes the team leader. As an apostle, he oversees congregations and teams of elders. We know that Barnabas was an apostle both from what he did as a leader and from Acts 14:14, where it clearly states that he was an apostle.

Now some claim that only *the 12* were apostles. Without a doubt, they were special. Only those men will have twelve foundations in the New Jerusalem named after them. But we know that both Paul and Barnabas were apostles, and also Andronicus and Junias from Rome are said to have been “outstanding among the apostles” (Rom. 16:7).

Let's ignore the 12 for a minute and look at the two apostles who we know were not part of that original group—Paul and Barnabas. What is their primary ambition? Planting congregations where there are none. I call this *apostolic passion*. A true New Testament apostle burns with a desire to see new congregations birthed. Listen to Paul's passion here:

Therefore I glory in Messiah Yeshua in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Messiah has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Messiah. ***It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Messiah was not known.*** (Romans 15:17-20)

That is apostolic! Understand that when Paul says *preaching to Gentiles*, it is not like today where that is normal. This was only a few years after Acts 15. When he speaks of Gentiles, it is like an explorer going into uncharted waters.

Second to his passion for preaching is his love for the congregations he has planted. Paul and Barnabas, after some time, went back to the congregations they planted to strengthen them. When the Corinthians were rejecting Paul as an apostle for other false apostles, he says, “Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.”

In essence he is saying, “your existence as a congregation and my continued love, teaching and service to you are proof that I am an apostle.” To the Galatians, who had gone astray, he says,

My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Messiah is formed in you, how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you! (Gal. 4:19-20)

As a father, he pleads with them. The apostle’s authenticity is not proven because he carries around a business card that says, “Apostle.” It is proven by his heart of love for the congregations. The elders at Ephesus weep when he says he will never see him again.

In addition, you can’t be an apostle if other leaders do not voluntarily submit to you as an apostle. An apostle without followers is, by

definition, not an apostle. In the 1997 movie “The Apostle,” the drunken preacher portrayed by Robert Duvall baptizes himself and declares himself to be an apostle. Nope. It doesn’t work that way. You know you are an apostle because others recognize it.

You are not born again as an apostle. And you don’t enter into leadership as an apostle. You come into the apostolic through one of the other gifts. The original 12 apostles were disciples and leaders with Yeshua for more than three years before they became apostles. You can’t be a leader of leaders until you are first a leader. I serve very closely with three apostolic leaders and all three of them came into the apostolic only after having served many years in the other giftings.

Asher Intrater, who serves as our apostolic leader, was originally a prophet and teacher—and still is. Eitan Shishkoff walked in one of the most amazing pastoral gifts I have ever seen before overseeing five congregations and several other ministries. Dan Juster was a master theologian (teacher) and pastor, before birthing Tikkun Global (with Asher and Eitan)—a Messianic Jewish apostolic family of congregations, leaders and ministries.

Apostles are visionaries and often birth ministries, and then turn them over to others. We see this with Paul who planted congregations, but then focused his energies on raising up elders and leaders so he could be off to the next plant. My friend, Wayne Hilsden, probably would not refer to himself as an apostle—but that is just because he is very humble. For many years, he pastored King of Kings in Jerusalem, but during that time he birthed a media school, a Hebrew-speaking congregation, a music school, a soup kitchen, a prayer tower and more. *Christianity Today* once referred to an apostle as a *spiritual entrepreneur*.

## **The Prophet**

It is much easier to understand the prophet because there were so many in the Old Covenant. But, in the New Covenant, he is not alone, like Elijah was when he confronted Ahab. He is part of a team and he is submitted to that team.

The prophet hears the voice of God. He sees coming pitfalls. When other leaders may get into the ministry rut, he brings the voice and heart of the father. When I was an associate leader in a congregation and feeling that my light as an evangelist was becoming slightly dim, it was a prophet, David Rudolph, who prophesied over me that I would be moving my family to Odessa, Ukraine.

Within a year I was on an airplane, with Elana and the kids, on our way to live in Odessa. Now to be clear, every word must be tested. I would not move my family across the globe just because of a prophetic word. However, when he spoke that over me, my spirit jumped. The other leaders I walk with all affirmed it, and then Elana and I went on a scouting trip. Only after that, did we make the decision to move. But it began with the word of the prophet.

Some say we have no need for prophets or prophecy because we have the word of God. The New Testament believers only had the Old Covenant. But in the case mentioned above, the answer was not in the Bible and I had no plans to move to Ukraine. I needed the prophet to give me that word. Every believer should be seeking to hear the voice of God. We test every word against the word of God to make sure it is not unbiblical, but not everything we need to know is in the word of God. We cultivate intimacy with Yeshua to hear His voice. Yeshua speaks of this in John 15: “When [the shepherd, Yeshua] has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and *his sheep follow him because they know his voice.*”

A prophet has a more keen ability to hear and see. Sometimes he sees visions or has dreams. Sometimes he will do a prophetic act as we see with Agabus in Acts 21.

After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, **he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it** and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’”(Acts 21:10-11)

Having a qualified and tested prophet on your team is a great asset. But he also must be submitted and accountable to the team. None of this works without mutual humility and mutual submission.

## The Evangelist

An evangelist in the local congregation is not a Billy Graham. This may come as a shock to you, but nowhere in the Bible does it teach that an evangelist is primarily supposed to preach before thousands. Now that may be part of what he does, but his role in the congregation is to *equip the saints to become successful in reaching people with the gospel*. He may not have the same patience and mercy as the pastor, but his gifting is essential. We see this in the parable in Luke 15, where the shepherd is much more concerned with one lost sheep than the ninety-nine who are already safe.

The evangelist, in the local setting, is an *equipper*. He uses his gift to help the whole congregation be effective in bringing people to Yeshua. If we think of an evangelist as primarily a soul-winner, then we tend to assume that the rest of us are not. In fact, though, every believer is called to share the gospel. Many years ago someone said to me, I am not called to evangelism, I am an intercessor. Well, it is true that there are some whose *primary* calling is to pray, but all of us are called to be involved in evangelism at some level.

This is why Paul told Timothy—do the work of an evangelist. This can have two meanings. Paul may have been saying, “Hey Tim, I know that sharing your faith doesn’t come as easy to you as pastoring, but as the *set man*, you need to set the example that we are all called to outreach.” Or he was saying, “Even though you are primarily a pastor, you need to train the people in evangelism.” Either way, it is clear the evangelist is to equip the saints for evangelism. We are all called to reach others with the gospel.

Ray Comfort is one of the best equipping evangelists I know. He gives you the theology, the message, the tools and all kinds of creativity to

reach people. His book, *Hell's Best Kept Secret*, is, in my opinion, the most helpful book about what our message should be. Todd White is an equipping evangelist who moves in the gift of healing with the lost. I just hung out with him for parts of three days and just watching him, provoked me and equipped me. As we toured Jerusalem, he would stop people and, before I knew it, he was praying for them to be healed—and they were being healed.

Without knowing it, he was mentoring me! Suddenly, I was praying for the workers in our hotel and they were all getting healed. On my last day at this hotel, the front desk manager said to me as I was leaving, “I hear you can heal people.” This Jewish Israeli woman was also healed and I left her with a copy of my book, *Identity Theft*, in Hebrew.

My point is that by going out with Todd, I was being equipped by a five-fold ministry-gifted evangelist. My friend, JB Bernstein, is a great one-on-one evangelist. But a few years ago, he had the revelation that he would be much more useful if he took others out with him to share the gospel. Now he goes to congregations and spends several weeks with the same group, taking out people every night to share. He has become an “equipping” evangelist.

To have someone like JB on your team is an asset that will keep your congregation fresh in their desire and ability to reach the lost.

## **The Pastor**

A person with the gift of pastor acts as a shepherd to people. I believe it relates to the Romans 12 gift of *showing mercy*. A pastor has lots of patience and mercy, but he is not always the senior leader. This is where we have made a mistake. Often, he is an associate leader. In a larger congregation, the senior leader must focus on raising up leaders, mentoring them and building friendships with them. This is an apostolic gift. My good friend, Stovall Weems, leads the 12,000-member Celebration Church in Jacksonville, Florida. He is a magnetic communicator,

passionate and driven. But he is not a pastor. He is clearly an apostle, as he is driven to plant more communities in his region and around the world. But he has pastors—Ephesians 4 pastors—on his staff.

The word “pastor” comes from Latin and refers to a shepherd. In fact, I am not sure why most English translations use the lesser understood word “pastor,” when the Greek word *poimēn* is translated *shepherd* in every other place.

Suffice it to say, the Ephesians 4:11 pastor is a shepherd. He loves the sheep. He will do whatever it takes to protect them from wolves and thieves. He loves to gather the sheep; to tend to them. I am not a pastor primarily, but I thank God that I have two men on the team who are Ephesians 4:11 pastors. Moti can meet with people all day long. He can listen to their struggles and empathize with them—even those who are seemingly making little to no progress. I tend to be more direct. I am results oriented and love working with those who are clearly called to lead. However, I can often come across unloving to those who need deeper care, and I have been chided by my team about this. Of course, the more I have been serving as a shepherd, the more I have seen my heart becoming more compassionate and patient. Thank God for pastors!

## **The Teacher**

It is not hard to identify a teacher. He loves the Word. He loves to dig deep. He can spend hours on one verse. He wants to build up the body of Messiah. The teacher sees (through the lens of the gift of the teacher) that the deepest need of the body is to know and understand the Word of God. My strongest gifts are teacher and evangelist. I remember many years ago, I had to teach a college level course on Messianic Jewish Theology. Until that time, I had seen myself only as an evangelist—a preacher. I could exhort and motivate and give you a message on just about any subject for a short time. But teaching was not my thing. In fact, I joked, “I can give you one hour on any subject, but I can’t give you more than one hour on any subject!”

However, as I prepared for this course, something changed in me. Suddenly, I loved to teach. The anointing to preach/exhort is different from the anointing to teach, and I could sense it. Kenneth Hagin, in his book on the Ephesians 4 gifts, taught that each anointing for each of these gifts feels different. I know the difference between the gifts to teach and to exhort—they feel different; I communicate differently.

For years after this experience (when I received the gift to teach), all I wanted to do was teach. I almost began to despise exhortation and evangelism. One day I was in Switzerland ministering, and the Lord told me, *“You can teach on the first night, but on the second night I want you to preach revival, pray for the sick and cast out demons.”* I had almost forgotten what that was. I obeyed and God did a mighty work. Two women, at the end of the message, began screaming out horrifically and we cast demons out of them.

Since then, I have learned to never despise the gifts of God. God uses us according to the need. But still, I love to teach.

## **One Man, Many Giftings**

Most of us in leadership do not flow in just one gift. In my own case, I love training leaders. I love exhorting, and I love teaching the Word. At times I can be prophetic, but I am not a prophet, and it is the same with pastoral. I can flow there by God’s grace, but if I stay there too long, I will get depressed and restless. Most of the brothers with whom I work, flow in at least two of the Ephesians 4 giftings.

## **Romans 12 and Ephesians 4**

I think we can see a connection between the Romans 12 gifts that all believers have, and the equipping gifts of Ephesians 4:11. Romans 12 says...

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then

teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:6-8)

The gift of prophecy is connected to the prophet, teaching to the teacher, the gift to lead connects to the apostolic, and mercy clearly relates to shepherding. The word *encouragement* translated here is *parakeleō*, which is better translated as exhortation. It can mean “to call to one’s side.” The KJV often translates it as *to beseech*—which is a three-dollar word that means to fervently ask someone for something, like when the centurion asked Yeshua to heal his servant. In Romans 12 it would be the opposite—believers beseeching unbelievers to consider Messiah Jesus. So the Romans 12 encourager/exhorter connects to the Ephesians 4 evangelist.

That leaves two other gifts that don’t have an Ephesians 4:11 parallel—giving and helps (or serving). These two gifts are essential to the kingdom of God, even if there is no parallel in the list of equipping leadership gifts.

This doesn’t mean that everyone who has a heart of mercy will become a pastor or that everyone inclined to teach will be a five-fold ministry teacher or that if you prophecy, you are a prophet. The difference is this: Romans 12 speaks of the areas in which God has gifted us to function. Ephesians 4:11 goes deeper, as these are gifts to equip the body for works of service. They are leadership gifts and we know that from the whole context:

So Messiah himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful

scheming. <sup>15</sup>Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup>From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph. 4:11)

Who helps infants grow into adolescents and adults? Parents. Who protects children from the wind and waves? Parents. Who helps children play nicely together? Parents. Now to be clear, I am not saying that leaders in the congregation are parents and congregants are children. In fact, there are often congregants who are more mature than the leaders. But the five-fold ministry gifts are there to help the body mature, be equipped, be free from deceit and walk in unity as a whole body. This is clearly leadership.

### **The Whole Team is Needed**

My present role as senior leader is to lead the team, to bring vision and keep pushing that vision. But I am not necessarily the most merciful person. I am not mean, but I like to see things move forward and sometimes, if I am not careful, that can come across as too aggressive. I always remind myself that the *people* are the vision, not the projects. I have seen leaders become so obsessed with the vision that they brow-beat the sheep, forgetting that the sheep are the vision!

As I mentioned, fortunately, we have two associate leaders who are Ephesians 4:11 pastors. They do what I can't. One of our elders is my primary overseer, as he brings apostolic covering to our congregation and two other ministries. Another is clearly called to evangelism. Finally, we have another elder who is not only an excellent teacher, but also a fine pastor and administrative genius. (He actually replaced me as the senior leader).

When I became the *set man* many people (even other leaders who are friends) protested and said, "*But he is not a pastor.*" They were right. But

they did not understand that leading a congregation or a team of elders is not the role of a pastor necessarily. I can think of many well-known leaders of large congregations and, to be honest, very few of them are pastoral. Most are teachers and exhorters, and all of them have apostolic gifting to raise up leaders.

A set man in the congregation is not necessarily a pastor. What is a “set man” you may wonder? The term set man is one that I picked up from John Kelly—one of the great teachers of apostolic ministry of our day. It refers to the primary visionary leader in a congregation. He is part of a team, but he is the ‘greater among equals’ *in the context of leadership in that congregation*—not in general self-worth. He sets the course. He is submitted to the team, but also leads the team. He is the Moses who stands up to Pharaoh; he is the Peter before the Sanhedrin. We get the term from Numbers.

Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: “Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.”  
(Numbers 27:15-17)

In our case, the congregation had lost momentum. It needed, for a season, someone with an evangelistic/exhorting gifting to bring fresh life. We grew over the next three years in many ways. We built a staff, strengthened our eldership, raised up leaders, began a coffee house ministry, and much more. But after three years, I knew it was time to release it to someone with different gifting. Gil Afriat, who is pastoral, has a strong leadership gift, can teach and is far more administrative than I will ever be, replaced me and the congregation is growing even more!

My point is that not all senior leaders are Ephesians 4:11 pastors, but together, as a team of elders, we can see all of those gifts work in unison to build up the body. Congregations that only have room for the

pastor and teacher gift are lacking, according to Ephesians 4:11-14. Of course, this also flies in the face of the tradition that the senior leader has all authority. I lead a group of men, all of whom are willing and encouraged to disagree with me. As a visionary, I can get excited—even impulsive. I need these leaders to hone the vision, or even fight me on it, if they are not convinced that it is of the Lord.

I doubt this article will change the nomenclature we use for senior leaders, and maybe it is not essential to do away with the word pastor for senior leaders. That is not what I am fighting for—but we should at least enlarge our understanding to make room for all five gifts in the local congregation, or network of congregations, and promote the biblical concept of apostolic team ministry.

## **Titles and Egos**

Whenever you speak about the restoration of apostles, there is a temptation toward pride. Many are obsessed with the title *apostle*. In our family, called Tikkun Global, we have at least three men who are recognized as apostolic in their gifting. I would say we have several more who have not been yet recognized as such, who are walking in this gift (meaning, they are birthing congregations, raising up leaders, starting schools, etc.) Not one of them has ever asked to be called *apostle*.

We are not interested in the title, but in the fruit of the function. Some have sought to emphasize the title merely to help the Body of Yeshua become accustomed to the function. I have no problem with this, but we do not do that. In fact, we rarely, if ever, use titles. I am not Rabbi Ron, Pastor Ron or Evangelist Ron—I am Ron.

But I do get emails regularly and Facebook friend requests from apostles and prophets all over the world. Let me say that if your Facebook name includes the word prophet or apostle, you might have an identity, self-esteem or ego problem.

## Apostles Today?

Some teach that apostles and prophets are no longer needed. They said that after the Bible was completed, there was no longer a need, or that there were just 12. Some say that they were the foundation of the church, but their function or purpose has passed. The problem with this is that Paul writes Ephesians in 60 AD. It is the *last* of his epistles to the churches. He writes about the apostolic gift as if it is needed and ongoing, not being phased out.

He says these gifts are needed “*until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Messiah.*” (Eph. 4:13) I can attest that “we all” have not reached this level of “unity in the faith...” So, clearly the body of Messiah still needs apostles and prophets.

Being his last apostolic epistle, you would think he would deemphasize this gift, explaining that it would soon no longer be needed. And yet, there is not even a hint of this. The question to ask is: *Is the congregation of Jesus fully equipped, never deceived and walking in unity?* Until the answer to that is yes, we will need apostles and prophets. It says that they are here: **to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Messiah may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Messiah.** Until we are there, we will need apostles and prophets.

## Chapter 4



# Covenant Relationships 1

One of my favorite movies is *Lord of the Rings—Return of the King*. The central relationship in the movie is the friendship between the two hobbits, Frodo and Samwise Gamgee, and it is tested to the limit. Frodo is tasked with destroying the powerful, enticing and seductive ring. Samwise Gamgee, his best friend, accompanies him to the Crack of Doom in Mordor (the only location where the ring can be destroyed).

There is a beautiful picture of commitment to the relationship. Sam is the servant in the relationship. Before the Fellowship of the Ring was formed, he was Frodo's gardener. He is like an armorbearer. Sam stays loyal to Frodo, even when Frodo chooses the evil Gollum over him. After their relationship is restored, they continue up the mountain. When Frodo is near death from exhaustion, he confides in Sam that the ring is destroying him. Sam gets emotional—even angry and says, “Then let's be rid of it! Once and for all! Come on, Mr. Frodo. I can't carry it for you, *but I can carry you*. Come on!” He then puts him on his back and heads up to Mount Doom.

I tear up just reading that quote. Sam had every reason to abandon Frodo. Frodo was mean to him and betrayed him. However, Sam understood that Frodo had the ring—he had a target on him. Not only was Gollum conniving to steal the ring (he ended up biting off Frodo's finger to get it), but, far worse, the Dark Lord Sauron desired to use it to conquer Middle-earth. Why didn't Sam just leave his friend?

So many in leadership today would become bitter and start feeling sorry for themselves. *How could he choose that ghoul over me—his friend*, Sam could've thought. But Sam understood the secret of covenantal friendship. It is not based on feeling, but the commitment.

Sam had character. He *covenants* to assist Frodo on the 1,321-mile journey from Rivendale to Mordor. When the larger Fellowship of nine reluctantly realize that Frodo must continue alone, Sam insists on accompanying him. He knows Frodo can't make the journey alone. The story doesn't tell why or where Sam learned the importance of loyalty in friendships, but he is no longer the shy gardener from Hobbiton.

What makes Sam's character even more unique is that he is the only person who willingly gives up the ring when he has to carry it for a brief time. Every other person who touched it—including Frodo—was corrupted by it.

Imagine if we had that same type of loyalty in our relationships with fellow leaders. Imagine if we treated those relationships as if we had a written covenant of loyalty (we actually do—the New Covenant). What if we believed the best of one another, didn't entertain gossip against a fellow leader and fought for him when he was down? We would not have congregational splits. Jealousy would be defeated. *Imagine if you rejoiced in your brother's success, even more than your own!*

## **The Manuscript**

In 1987, I moved to Maryland from New York to continue my studies. One of the classes I took at Messiah Biblical Institute was called *Covenant Relationships* and it was taught by Asher Intrater. It was based on the manuscript for a book he was writing and has since helped many leaders build their congregations and leadership teams. I had never considered many of the concepts that he presented. It caused a massive paradigm shift in my understanding of leadership. And, over the past 30 years, I have worked closely with Asher, watching him live out these principles in daily life.

Our entire life is based on relationships. From the time you go to work, have lunch at your favorite restaurant, greet the mailman, to the time you sit down to eat dinner with your family, you are interacting with other people. God has put us in a world with nearly seven billion other humans to whom we have to relate—not all on the same level, of course—day after day.

In leadership, we are called to work with other leaders. There is no such thing as leadership without intersecting with other leaders. In my brief history on earth, I have seen just as many relationship implosions when it comes to leadership, as I have seen successful, long-lasting bonds between leaders. Actually, I think I have seen more implosions than successes.

Sadly, I was involved in a leadership split that touched the known Charismatic/Pentecostal world nearly two decades ago in Pensacola. During the Toronto Outpouring in the 1990s, Toronto Airport Church was kicked out of their denomination. Leadership is messy because leaders have to deal with other leaders—flesh and blood. Even Paul and Barnabas had a split.

And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed. (Acts 15:39-40)

Leaders, by nature, are visionaries with strong wills; people with conviction. If a leader is not *emotionally whole*, then he is all the more susceptible to getting offended, walking in pride and causing divisions when he doesn't get his way.

## **Relationships Need to be Defined**

This is why we need covenant relationships. *What do you mean by covenant*, you might be wondering? It is an agreement between two parties regarding their relationship. Think about it. Many of our most important relationships have rules and rewards (and consequences) that are spelled out in writing. When I got married, I agreed to certain

parameters. All other women became off limits. When people go into business together, that relationship is so important that, often, a high-priced lawyer might be brought in to make the agreement.

Many congregations, wisely, have rules for membership. If you break those rules, there are consequences. If you walk within those guidelines, then there can be safe and sweet fellowship. We once had to ask someone to leave our congregation because it appeared to us that he was scamming people. When he denied it but was not willing to allow our elders to investigate, we had to ask him to leave. He broke the rules of the *covenant* and our obligation to the flock is to protect them from those with bad intentions. The covenant gives the congregation confidence that they will be protected.

A president or prime minister agrees to serve his people according to the laws. Congressmen and Parliamentarians are *sworn in* and agree to parameters. *Covenants are everywhere.*

Often, there is a *sign* of the covenant. I have been wearing a wedding ring for 30 years. When I was eight days old, I received (unbeknownst to me at the time) a cut in my flesh that connected me to the Abrahamic Covenant. The rainbow is our reminder that God will never again flood the world.

A covenant is comprised of principles of integrity that guarantee the preservation of the relationship and consequences for breaking the principles of the covenant. A man who is addicted to pornography has broken covenant with his wife. A businessman who cheats his partner or company has broken covenant—and there is often compensation for the offended party. But when covenant is kept, it guarantees the healthy continuance of the relationship. Egypt, a mortal enemy of the Jewish state, made a “covenant” with Israel in 1979. In exchange for formal recognition, freedom to use the Suez Canal and other principles, Israel returned the Sinai Desert to Egypt. To the shock of many, that agreement has guaranteed peace between Egypt and Israel for 50 years.

## Chapter 5



# Covenant Relationships 2

### **An Ancient Concept**

The idea of making covenants is not taken as seriously today. I am sure many in ministry or the corporate world can relate to being promised a position and not receiving it. Or being told that in a new position you would have certain responsibilities, only to find out it was not so. I have a friend who is a world-class worship leader. A pastor of a large church lured him away from his congregation with lots of promises. He didn't realize that the pastor's plans for him were much different than promised until after he had moved his family halfway across the country.

However, in the ancient world, people were terrified to break covenant. They understood the meaning of covenant—an oath that was binding. Who can forget the dramatic story of Isaac and Jacob? Jacob tricked his dad by disguising himself as his brother Esau. Since Esau was the first born, the blessing belonged to him. Isaac speaks a great blessing over Jacob only to find out later that he had been tricked.

To our western mindsets, this doesn't present a problem: just take back the blessing. That is because we in western society don't value verbal commitment. In the business world, promises are broken everyday. Men cheat on their wives without thinking twice. But the ancients understood that was not an option. What was spoken was spoken. End of subject. We read in Hebrews:

Afterward, as you know, when [Esau] wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. (Hebrews 12:17)

There is also the story of the shrewd Gibeonites. They heard of the prowess of the children of Israel. They knew that they were no match for the army of Hebrews taking over the land of Canaan. So they devised a scheme whereby they tricked the Israelites into making a covenant with them.

But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they acted craftily. They went and traveled as ambassadors, took worn-out sacks for their donkeys and worn-out wine skins, cracked and patched up, along with worn-out, patched up sandals on their feet and worn-out clothes on them. All the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbly. Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, “We have come from a far country. So now, make a treaty-covenant with us.” (Joshua 9:3-6 TLV)

They pretended to not be inhabitants of Canaan and instead said that they had heard about the God of the Israelites. They came to pay homage and seek a covenant. Joshua and the elders did not seek the Lord, but made a covenant with them.

Once they realized that had been tricked, the people of Israel were angry but the leaders said:

“We have sworn to them by *Adonai*, God of Israel, so now we cannot touch them. This is what we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them.” “Yes, let them live,” the leaders said further, “but let them chop wood and draw water for the entire community.” (Joshua 9:19-21 TLV)

Even though they were tricked, they said, “We cannot touch them” because “we have sworn to them by Adonai, God of Israel.” That is the power of covenant.

I once hired a young man to work for me. We agreed that he would be employed for at least a year. This was important to him because he had other opportunities. Shortly after I hired him, I began to do a lot of work for GOD TV, which affected the work in which he assisted me. It became clear that I didn’t have full-time work for him.

The easy thing would have been to let him go. It would have saved us a lot of money. But I had given my word that we would employ him for a year and that is what we did. To be a blessing to us, he was seeking another job, but it only came through at the end of that year. Being loyal to him, a young believer with great potential, was far more important than saving money. And the Lord blessed it. In the month following, we saw a tremendous increase in support to our ministry. And, even more importantly, that young man is still a dear friend. Had I broken our agreement, it could have damaged the relationship.

Now getting back to the Gibeonites: Centuries later, King Saul did not fear the Lord and broke the covenant with the Gibeonites. “Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had tried to annihilate them.” (2 Samuel 21:2). During the reign of David, a severe famine came upon the land for several years. When David sought the Lord concerning the famine, he was told it was because Saul broke covenant with the Gibeonites. Even though Saul had long been dead, judgement was coming upon Israel for his actions. David went to the Gibeonites to make things right. When that was accomplished, the famine ceased.

## **Covenant is Lasting**

God takes covenant seriously. But covenant isn’t always between two disinterested parties like Abraham (and later Isaac) made covenants with Abimelech over water rights. Deeper covenant, like the one God

made with us through Yeshua, is made between two parties that love each other.

As I write this, I am a little angry with God. He knows why—and I know He is perfect—but our covenant is strong enough that he will not throw me out because I am a little upset.

My covenant with God is based on mutual attraction, not unlike that of a husband and wife. The covenant doesn't say, *until you get in a disagreement* or *until you get disappointed*. No! The marriage covenant is until DEATH do us part! Covenants are meant to be strong. So many people today think that a marriage covenant is until you don't think you love each other anymore. Feelings come and go, but the covenant lasts forever...or until death, in the case of marriage. That is the agreement.

Marriage is the foundation of our society. God ordained that a man would leave his mother and father and cleave to his wife (Genesis 2:24). They would then have children who would mate with the children of others and the earth would be populated. By the way, the greatest argument for homosexuality is *a person should be able to love who they love*. The greatest argument against it is that homosexuality is fruitless. We were created to "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28 NKJ). The marriage covenant that God ordained included the charge to replenish the earth.

### **The Perfect Example: David and Jonathan**

We started out talking about the covenant between two hobbits. It wasn't a written covenant, but it was official. Once Sam decided to accompany Frodo on his trip to Mordor so he could destroy the ring, they were in covenant.

The classic *mano y mano* covenant that we see in the Bible is David and Jonathan. They had a deep covenantal friendship. Let's be honest—very few of us have deep male friendships. Females tend to be far

more willing to build those types of intimate, honest and vulnerable relationships with peers.

David and Jonathan, two warriors who should not have been friends, make covenant together. If you are not humble, the covenant won't last. Paul gives the definition of humility:

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

When you walk in covenant with other brothers, you have to be excited about how God is developing them—not just yourself. You have to rejoice with them in their successes, even if it means (in the natural) greater empowerment or notoriety than you.

(By the way, we will not be judged on our giftedness, but on our humility and use of the gifts God has given us. If you have grace to be a worship leader, you will not be judged as if you were an Evangelist. Our gifts are just that - gifts.)

Jonathan was the son of a king and David was a shepherd. Jonathan was destined for the throne and David had a prophet's word that he would replace Saul. And yet, after David kills Goliath, the Bible says:

After David had finished talking with Saul, *Jonathan became one in spirit with David*, and he loved him as himself...And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt. (1 Samuel 18:1, 3-4)

The older Jonathan does the *unbelievable*. He basically gives up his claim to the throne and yields to young David. He saw the call of God and anointing on David and *had the character and humility* to acquiesce. What is more, Jonathan did not lose the throne because he was not a good leader, but because of his father's sin. If anyone had a reason

to be bitter and angry, it was Jonathan. But, instead, he puts aside his pride and makes a covenant with David!

1. They become one in spirit.
2. Jonathan loved David as himself.
3. He made a covenant with David.
4. He put his royal robe on him, making him a prince in his place.
5. He gave him his tunic, sword, bow and belt.

Leaders, I hope you are grasping what God is communicating to us! This is how we are supposed to walk with fellow leaders. And yet it is such a far cry from reality. So many preachers love to say that they didn't have the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, but we do in the New Testament. We testify against ourselves when we hold on to grudges against other leaders or when we are jealous and offended. Without the Holy Spirit, David and Jonathan make us look like babies in comparison and we have the Holy Spirit! Really?

### **Friendships are Forged in War**

My best friend (I have a few) is a man named Ward Simpson. We became friends because of our wives. I really didn't like him so much. He was too quiet for me and I am sure I talked too much for him. But the more we were together; the more we liked being together.

Then we went through hell together. We found ourselves in the midst of an international ministry split. We were the only two leaders who did not leave with the others. (Let me say here that it would not be hard for some to figure out to what I am referring. It was a hard time and there were many broken relationships. I am not mentioning this to say who was right or who was wrong. We all felt we were doing the best thing. And, thankfully, I am restored to every person with whom we had conflict. This is merely my testimony of a covenant relationship.)

During that time, I received many *false words* and dreams from others (I know they are false because they did not come to pass). Ward also suffered. It was the most difficult thing either of us had ever been through. People were fasting and praying *against me*. I would wake up at 5 a.m. with my heart racing. It was horrible! But it was during that time that Ward and I went from friends to covenant brothers.

That was 19 years ago and he is still my best friend. During all those years, he was always serving me. If I was in town, he'd pick me up at the airport, give me his beach house, and a car to use. He was a big supporter of our ministry. I was always the one doing ministry and he was always supporting me through his business. Then, seemingly overnight, he became the CEO of GOD TV, an international Christian television network.

Suddenly, I was serving him. I came on staff with GOD TV to oversee the Israel office. When he came to Israel for a week of filming, I was like his personal assistant—and I loved it! Our roles were reversed, but the friendship was *exactly* the same. Suddenly he was making decisions that would affect millions of people and I rejoiced for him as if it were me that had received this promotion. And with his new influence, he sought to bring me on the journey.

He is surrounded with a great team of regional directors and it is my privilege to join the team. But you should have heard him barking out orders to me in Israel (I'm exaggerating!). It was great to see him come into God's plan for his life both in ministry and as a leader. He had been on the back burner for many years, just waiting.

## **The Shirt Off My Back**

I remember when Asher was teaching from his book *Covenant Relationships* in the fall of 1987. Several times, during the course of the semester, we had to ask him to stop because what we were learning was so overwhelming. We needed time to absorb what he was teaching. In one class, spontaneously we ended up exchanging items in covenant. I

was wearing my favorite shirt that day. I took it off and gave it to Asher, who gave me the dress shirt he was wearing. We cut covenant with shirts!

You can call that silly all day long, but here I am at 54 and Asher is in his mid-sixties, and we are still walking in covenant. I am now the CEO of Tikkun International and he is the President overseeing me. Our relationship has been tested, certainly, over the years. We have had our disagreements. But we are in covenant. Divorce is not an option. We are closer than ever before, and I can't think of any leader more loyal to me. When he tells me that he only wants God's best for me, I know he means it. I have a similar connection with Dan Juster and Eitan Shishkoff.

Over the years, the commitment between Jonathan and David grew. Saul wanted to kill David out of jealousy. That would have cleared the path for Jonathan to the throne. But Jonathan loved God, not power, and he loved David like a brother. He persuaded his father against the idea.

“Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The Lord won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?” (1 Samuel 19:4-5)

Some time later, David went back to Jonathan to say he heard that Saul again had plans to kill him. Jonathan didn't believe it, so they make a pact between them.

Then Jonathan said to David, “I *swear* by the Lord, the God of Israel, that I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? But if my father intends to harm you, may the Lord deal with Jonathan, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away in peace. *May the Lord* be with you as he has been with my father. But

show me unfailing kindness like the Lord's kindness as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth.”

So Jonathan made a *covenant* with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord call David's enemies to account.” And Jonathan had David reaffirm his *oath* out of *love* for him, because he loved him as he loved himself. (1 Samuel 20:12-17)

Do you see this? Notice the words oath, swear, love, covenant and blessing (when you see the words, *May the Lord...* it implies a blessing). This passage is rich with loyalty and affection. These two men had as deep a relationship as two men could have in holiness. In fact, they were so close, that people who don't understand brotherly love and covenant relationships assume they were gay. Yes, I know...crazy, but the homosexual community actually uses this verse and others like it because they don't understand deep covenant loyalty.

When Jonathan died, David cried out. He said of his covenant friend:

*I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;  
greatly beloved were you to me;  
your love to me was wonderful,  
passing the love of women.* (2 Samuel 1:26)

You can see why someone who doesn't get *covenant loyalty* would misinterpret this. He says that his love was “wonderful, passing the love of women.” If you struggle with that, let me suggest that God's love for Abraham surpassed the sexual relationship between a man and a woman, and there was obviously no sexual contact involved.

I don't bring this up to put images in your mind, but to heighten the image of covenant; brotherly loyalty. It is different than the intimacy between a man and a woman. It is gritty, war... taking a bullet. You can't compare the two. And sadly, infidelity is rampant in the homosexual community (having pastored men trapped in that lifestyle, I know

that sexual encounters between total strangers is normal). That is not David and Jonathan. Theirs was a long-term, *willing to die for you*, covenant commitment.

Once it is clear to Jonathan that Saul intended to kill David

David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.

Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’” Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town. (1 Samuel 20:41-42)

David was devastated. He wanted to serve with Jonathan. He bows to him - even though Jonathan has all but said that David would be king. Can you feel their deep friendship? They are weeping. And, again, they renew the covenant: “We have sworn friendship with each other,” “The Lord is witness.” This covenant is not just between them but also between your descendants and my descendants forever.”

David flees Saul, and it pains him to leave his friend Jonathan. It reminds me of when Paul said to the elders of Ephesus, “And now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again.” Their response was deeply emotional because Paul was their mentor and father who raised them up into leadership during his three and a half years in Ephesus.

There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. (Acts 20:37-38)

Many years later, Jonathan and David meet again. Much has transpired. Saul is more demon-possessed and intent on killing David than ever.

Maybe the commitment had grown cold. After all, now Jonathan has growing sons of his own and perhaps he begins to come to his senses, realizing that giving up the throne to David would not just affect him, but his descendants forever. Yes, David made an oath to him regarding their children, but is it even the same David? Hadn't he gone mad in the desert?

We find that Jonathan's affection for and trust of David had not waned. In fact, he renews the covenant with David and this time says it out loud: ***You will be king over Israel...***

And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. **You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you.** Even my father Saul knows this." The two of them made a covenant before the Lord. (1 Samuel 23:16-18)

Now we have three separate incidents where Jonathan and David affirm their commitment to each other. Each time we confirm the covenant of friendship, it reduces anxiety that the relationship will erode. I think that was Jonathan's goal here. David may have been afraid that time was running out—that Saul was closing in or that Jonathan would betray him. Let's be honest here, it was Jonathan who pursued David. David, the shepherd had nothing to offer, but the King's son sought him out for friendship. Jonathan could have easily ended the friendship. He uses his words to reassure David that nothing has changed and that he would remain loyal to him.

Oh, that we would have these types of loyal friendships in ministry!

## Chapter 6



# Covenant Relationships 3

Several years ago, Asher was approached by a somewhat famous ministry couple that spent time in Jerusalem. They had many connections and were used to people seeking things from them—influence, a platform, money, etc. Asher said to them, “I don’t want anything from you, but to be your friends.” They didn’t know what to make of that. I don’t think that they had any real friends. He offered his friendship again at another meeting and, again, they could not digest it.

Even with those with whom we work, it can often be distant. When I became the leader of Tiferet Yeshua, it became my intention to become deep intimate friends with our elders and staff. They did not work for me, but we were building something together. We celebrated marriages, births, children going into the Israeli Defense Forces and, even more importantly, getting out! We were building our lives together.

It is so sad to see ministers who have no relationship with the people whom they oversee. It is all business. I was with a youth pastor of a very large church—in fact one of the most famous churches in America and he said to me, “Ron, if you put a gun to my head and said, ‘Take me to the pastor’s house,’ you’d have to pull the trigger because I don’t know where he lives.” There was no covenant. They were not building their lives together. He was an employee.

I have seen seemingly successful ministry partnerships break down overnight because of personal offense and ambition, all because the people involved had *ministry* together, but not deep *friendship*. It is really hard to

cause a split when the other leaders with whom you serve are like family. It is hard for an assistant pastor to plan a coup against the pastor, when the pastor is also his best friend or closest mentor. However, it is much easier when you are feeling used like a hireling by the senior leader.

One question I have been asked over and over throughout the world regarding the aforementioned international split is *why did that revival end?* Understand that for more than five years, millions of people came to be touched by God before it waned. During that time, thousands were born again, set free from every imaginable addiction and sin.

First, all revivals are cyclical. They do not last forever. However, if I had to point to one thing, it would be this. The leaders of the revival were thrown together overnight. They had deep relationships during services—in ministry. But they did not have the covenant commitment to each other after the services were over. They had not built their lives together before the revival—how could they? Some of them didn't even know each other—and it was very difficult to do so during the intense pressures and time schedules of the revival.

Charles Finney once said that a revival cannot ever be stopped from outside, only from within. It is true. This revival was attacked from newspapers, other ministers, network news and more...and the fire only got stronger. It began to wane, though, when the relationship between the leaders began to deteriorate.

Now, let me be clear, everyone involved is now 20 years wiser and humbler. I am right now 15 years older than some of them were during the revival. We all learn. Hindsight is 20/20. I am not seeking to level any accusation nor am I saying I would have done any better. In fact, I am still in relationship with several of the people involved. I am merely saying that relationships between leaders are crucial and can be the difference between revival and a devastating international split. Let's not judge, but learn!

But if I could go back to the moments before the revival and offer one suggestion, it would be to build their lives together. Vacation together. Have family meals together. Talk about the potential pitfalls that could

threaten the relationship down the road. We do that with marriage (at least I hope so!). But imagine if ministry teams could foresee the broken relationships before they happen and take measures to prevent them. In fact, I consider my two most important ministry relationships to be with Asher Intrater and Ward Simpson—and as I edit this manuscript (it goes to the typesetter in hours) I am vacationing with Ward and his wife, Lydia and two younger couples that are key to the future of GOD TV. We are building our lives together.

To be clear, splitting a congregation or ministry is messy. Most of the time, it never turns out the way you think. Families can be torn apart—friendships ruined. I have experienced splits from both sides. They are always horrible. After moving to Israel, I had a falling out with a leader. I wanted so bad to start a new congregation. I knew some of the people from the former congregation would come. In fact, if I am honest, *I wanted to them to leave the former congregation and come to our new one!* It would show everyone that *I was right!* I am embarrassed to admit this...and this was *after* I saw the devastation of the revival split.

It is easy to be against splits and division when you have nothing to lose. But in this situation, I had something at stake. Instead of trusting God, I convinced myself that this was God's way of pushing us to start a congregation. *What a lie!* Thank God I listened to my friend Asher. Before I caused too much damage, I abandoned my plans.

It is one thing to claim to live by Biblical principles. But it is all theory until you are tested. In Bible school, and certainly not in seminary, they don't tell you how deceitful your flesh is; how it will help you justify the breaking of the very rules you once taught younger men with passion. That is why you must decide *before* you are tested how you are going to respond. Trust me, if you think God is telling you to rebel against the pastor who hired you and start a new work down the road, I can guarantee you with 99.9% accuracy (I will leave .1% before the extraordinary situation) you are wrong!

The ancient church treated the sin of causing division or *schism* as adultery. The only acceptable reasons would be immorality in the senior leader, false teaching or gross incompetence—and even then, only

under the guidance of other outside apostolic leaders. And yet, some of the most successful churches in the US were born out of splits. God is simply very merciful to us. He has no other mechanism beyond humans to build his ecclesia but His fallible leaders.

## **To the Children**

Covenant relationships mean also that we care for each other's children. We see this in David's relationship with Jonathan. Jonathan was dead, but still David was loyal to him. He sought any living relative from Jonathan's house. He was told of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's disabled son.

In many ancient cultures, a disabled child was a curse. Early Roman culture referred to the disabled as *monstrum*, where we get our English word, monster. In many civilizations, the father was free to kill a child with disabilities. In others, such as Sparta, the government would inspect a child at birth and decide if it was worthy to live.

Mephibosheth was lame in both feet. He had reason to fear. David was his grandfather Saul's mortal enemy. Now both Saul and Jonathan were gone—surely David would not allow *this cripple* to live.

David summons him. Mephibosheth is terrified, thinking David wants to kill him.

And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. (2 Samuel 9:6)

However, David promises to protect him and even have him eat at the king's table. He tells him that his land will be restored to him. Mephibosheth is stunned.

“Mephibosheth bowed down and said, ‘What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?’” (2 Samuel 9:8)

My guess is that no one prays for my children as much as Asher Intrater, who oversees me in ministry. We have been friends since 1987 when

I moved into his house. When we are out of town, he and his wife Betty also check on our children even though they are adults. We are very close with his daughter as well. My wife is always in touch with her. And I have a special relationship with one of his sons. I've taken him to Africa twice and to Ukraine twice. They are like family to us.

## **The Reward**

The beauty of building these bonds is the friendship itself. One of my favorite parts in the *Lord of the Rings* is after the ring is destroyed. Frodo is recovering in Rivendale. When he finally awakes, one by one the members of the fellowship come to greet him. It is warm. There is much rejoicing. But when Samwise Gamgee comes, the mood changes. They look at each with a knowing that the other members will never understand. There is metal in that relationship. They had been to hell and back and survived. I tear up just thinking about how they gazed at each other with a Jonathan/David understanding of friendship, loyalty, betrayal, hardships and covenant commitment.

Frodo, the learned hobbit and the writer, knows he could not have destroyed the ring without Sam, the gardener. Had Sam not demanded that he accompany Frodo to Mordor, Frodo would not have completed his mission. I love their friendship. May we seek similar covenant relationships.

## Chapter 7



# 7 Steps to Surviving a Personal Spiritual Attack

Anyone who aspires to be a leader will need to learn to deal with personal attacks. There is no way around it, so it is best to prepare before it happens. Let me take a lesson from my own life.

Recently, I received the most vicious email attacking my character at the highest—or *lowest*—level. Amazingly just a few days later I received another email from a different person that made the first one look like a nursery rhyme. Rough week? You bet! I can't remember receiving one letter like that, much less two!

In addition to being called a control freak, I was warned that another person who criticized the sender was now DEAD! The person went on to attack every part of my life, concluding that I was not fit to be a leader.

Despite the fact that I knew the person was wounded and acting out of that wound and despite the fact that I knew the motive behind the email had nothing to do with helping, but hurting me—it still stung.

Proverbs says “*reckless words pierce like a sword*” (Proverbs 12:18). It says *like* a sword because there is a difference. Hurtful words don't wound the flesh like a sword, but the soul. We all know what it is like to be stunned by the hurtful words of someone else -- we feel paralyzed, unable to move forward. So, what do we do to survive?

## 1. Forgive

You start by forgiving, whether they ask for it or not. Some people don't think that those who sin against them are deserving of forgiveness. Maybe not, but neither are you! Think about it.

I have sinned more against God than any one person has sinned against me and He freely, unconditionally forgives me. If God has been so gracious to me—and Yeshua died for me when I was still sinning against him (Rom. 5:8), we cannot be like the man in Matthew 18 who received forgiveness from the king but then would not extend to someone whose debt to him was far less.

## 2. Look for the Truth

Even when someone is attacking with the desire to wound, there is often some truth in their words. Dispassionately ask yourself if there is an area where the person is correct. In the situation described above, I could see that there was some truth to the accusations, and by the grace of God, I acknowledged that to the 'attacker' and admitted that there were probably other areas where I had been in the wrong. It is on us to take 100% of the responsibility for whatever percentage of the issue is ours. If it is 10%, take 100% responsibility for that 10%, regardless of what the other person does with their 90%.

## 3. Turn the Curse into Blessing

Take every curse that a person throws at you and proclaim the opposite for blessing. If they say you are stupid, proclaim that you have the mind of the Messiah. If they say you are a loser, proclaim the favor of God on your life. It is amazing how negative words can change how we see ourselves.

When I was younger, I wrote an article for a publication. After it was edited, I did not recognize it as my own. While the person never said it, it was as if the person said, *Ron Cantor, you cannot write!*

For the next several years, that is what I believed about myself. Before then, I thought I had potential as a writer. But my interpretation of that experience became my reality. It wasn't until years later when I began to write about my experiences in Ukraine, not as a *writer*, but just to share with people, that I realized that I was a decent writer.

We cannot let the words of others define who we are. For sure, there are many things I don't do well. I will never be a CPA. I am not a great manager of people. I have to really work at it. I am talking about things that God has called us to do. Those are the things that the enemy will use others—even those close to us—to attack.

So when someone resists me in an area that I know God has called me to, after years of internalizing such things, I now get excited and take it to God. I seek to turn those curses or negative words into blessing!

#### **4. Don't Respond**

By nature, I love to defend. I believe there is a tiny lawyer living inside me and he is not always nice. When someone attacks me, in my mind I imagine defending myself from each accusation the person made and attacking them back with even more venom. Yes, that is my flesh. But no matter how good you think it might feel, it will bear no fruit and cause more pain.

In the movie *You've Got Mail*, Meg Ryan's character dreams of being able to put Tom Hank's character in his place—being able to say the right snarky, witty thing, at the right time. She got her chance and found out that it didn't feel so good to hurt someone else.

Let God defend you. When I was first starting out in ministry, I was an assistant rabbi/pastor. We had four on staff. The one above me assumed that he would one day replace the senior leader. He saw me as a threat and looked for opportunities to publicly belittle me. I finally had enough. I was going to confront him for silly immaturity and jealousy. However, a trusted mentor encouraged me not to, but to pray for him.

That was not what I wanted to hear. However, the more I prayed for him, the more I cared for him. Just a few months later, he left the ministry.

## 5. Focus on Those Who Love You

I thank God for all the friends that my wife Elana and I have from around the world. From Nigeria to Ukraine, we have built some wonderful relationships. And yet one person speaking against me with this type of spiritual force, can tempt me to forget about all those amazing people who love me and focus on that one person who is attacking me. Can you relate?

It is all you can think about it. However, you need to take control of your thoughts and focus them on those who really care for you. I am blessed that I have been part of the same international network of leaders since 1987. These same men and women whom I have served with for almost 30 years, not only hold us accountable, but love me and my wife. Why would I focus on someone who doesn't?

I wrote a series of novels called *Identity Theft*. I know *nothing* about writing novels and only did it at the urging of the Lord. To my shock—honestly—people loved them. I cannot tell you how positive encouragement I have revived from writing those books. Some even telling me, the first book in the series was the best book they ever read!

Why I am telling you this? Because about two weeks ago I read a review of the first two novels that was critical. It was a bit of a blow to me. I spent the whole day thinking about it, and I thought that there was truth in their criticism. I told you, I knew nothing about writing novels, but I decided to learn from the criticism, but then focus on the encouragement I have received. If I let that criticism cripple me, I would never write again—certainly not fiction. But I am choosing to focus on the positive.

There are far more who love you and appreciate you, not the least of which is Yeshua! God loves you! Focus on that, and not on the one person who is mad at you.

## 6. Get Prayer from Trusted Friends

One of the first things Elana and I did after this attack was to get prayer. We have our weekly staff meeting every Sunday morning (In Israel, Sunday is our Monday) and I asked the staff at Tiferet Yeshua (the congregation we serve) to lay hands on us and pray. They did and it was powerful. In fact, our administrator prophesied over us regarding our future and it was right on! There was no way she could have known what we were thinking, and I was having doubts about the direction—in part because of the angry email, but the Lord cleared all that up in seconds.

When someone attacks you or explodes on you, there is a demonic residue that sends you into confusion. Remember the revivalist Elijah after Jezebel sent word to him? He had no one to stand with him, to pray for him. He got *slimed*, if you will, and because he was alone, there was no one around to help break the attack of the enemy off of him.

I remember having a conversation with a staff member. Something was off. At the end, we prayed together and I felt something unclean jumped on me. I went directly to the senior pastor and asked him to pray for me. He did and it left. Years ago, my wife had a meeting with another woman to encourage her. This woman had all kinds of problems. When Elana got home, she asked me to pray for her because she felt spiritually unclean after being with this woman. As her husband, I have authority to bless my wife! No person has more grace to pray for my wife than me—save the great Intercessor Yeshua. I prayed briefly and she was free.

There is much spiritual contamination in this world. It is amazing how a brief prayer in Yeshua's name can get us clean.

## 7. Rinse and Repeat

I remember the first time I bought conditioner. I was a teen. My hair was far more important back then than it is today, and there was much

more of it! I read the directions and at the end it said, “Rinse and repeat.” That is good advice when it comes to forgiving someone who has hurt you.

After you have chosen to forgive someone, you will feel encouraged... *for about an hour*, until you once again think of how the person hurt you, and you start reliving the pain and the need for revenge in your mind. When Jesus was asked how many times to forgive, He said, “seven times seventy,” (Matthew 18:22)—in other words, as many times as it takes.

We often see that as forgiving *different sins*—and I am sure, that is one of the applications—but I think it also means that we might have to forgive the same sin over and over again, until it no longer has a hold on us; until its sting is gone.

Both the enemy and our own fallen human nature will seek to attack your soul even after you have forgiven someone with the memory of what they did. It is a trap! Don't give in to it. Just forgive them anew.

May God give you the grace to be a quick forgiver. You are too important to this world to waste your life trapped in the prison of unforgiveness.

## Chapter 8



# “But I’m God’s Anointed” Syndrome

“It doesn’t really matter what you say I have done. God has called me here, and you can’t stand in His way.”

According to a friend of mine, these were the words a leader of a congregation used as he responded to a congregant, who sought to challenge him on issues of deep concern—issues of sin.

It reminded me of something that happened while I was in Bible school. I had been attending a church on Long Island led by a dynamic preacher. Everyone loved his fiery teachings. He was truly anointed. However, I became concerned when, during a service, he physically attacked an usher. The usher had laid his hand on someone, and the wife of the pastor removed his hand, as he was there to usher, not to pray. The usher reacted angrily to the pastor’s wife, and both he and the pastor had to be physically restrained.

I stopped going to this congregation. A few weeks later, some of my college buddies came back to the campus with glowing reports of Pastor Phil’s (not his real name) latest message. “You’ve got to hear it, Ron!” they crowed.

I popped the cassette into my Walkman (it was 1986!) and listened as Pastor Phil screamed at the people and blamed them for this and that. I did not sense anointing but human anger.

A few weeks later, I was told that Pastor Phil prophesied over a young lady in the church, just after he returned from a four-day prayer retreat,

in which it was discovered he brought the very same young lady with him. Someone saw them return together, and Pastor Phil was confronted regarding his adulterous affair.

### **“He is Still Anointed!”**

When the elders sat down with Phil and his wife for this confrontation, the very first words out of his wife’s mouth were, “He is still anointed.”

Most women would have hit him, yelled at him and called him a cheating #\$\$%^—yes, even believing women. But this wife’s greater concern was for her husband’s authority in the congregation—that it would not be forfeited. While this was an elder-led team, she had much freedom as the senior pastor’s wife and loved being in that position.

In her mind, Phil was God’s anointed, even if that anointing did not help him with his zipper! It was like she was saying, “David committed adultery, and he was still king. Who are these elders to remove us from power? We are God’s anointed!”

The theory that leaders can only be removed by God comes from 1 Samuel 26:9-11, where David warns his trusted friend Abishai not to kill King Saul:

“Don’t destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless? As surely as the Lord lives,’ he said, ‘the Lord himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed’” (NIV).

### **A Dangerous Doctrine**

From this text, some leaders have derived a very dangerous doctrine regarding a senior leader and accountability. According to this doctrine, the senior leader is understood as having a position like the ancient kings of Israel. He is “God’s anointed”; therefore, he is not to be

removed by any process of men—no matter what he does. He is beyond congregational discipline. While he may have elders or a board, they are advisers only, and all decisions are his to make. Within his sphere, he is the final authority (or, as I call it, dictator).

If he abuses people or they do not like his decisions, they have two choices. They can either submit to his leadership and entrust the situation to God, or they can quietly leave the community. In any case, they are to make no waves or protest in their leaving. Those who do are labeled rebellious troublemakers and often become the target of malicious rumors and gossip.

In these circles, the authority of the senior leader is taught in very absolute terms. We are told, “Touch not God’s anointed.” I believe it is a destructive and devilish doctrine, and people should separate from those who teach it.

First, this was not even a doctrine in the Old Covenant. This was David not wanting to take matters into his own hands, and make himself king. There are plenty of examples of kings being rebuked in the Old Covenant.

- Nathan rebukes David
- Samuel rebukes Saul
- Elijah rebukes Ahab
- In fact, David publicly rebukes Saul, after he spared his life. David even says, “May the Lord judge between you and me.” (1 Samuel 24:12)

To be clear, we should honor and respect those who have embraced the yoke of leadership, but leaders should be held to an even higher standard than those in their congregations:

“Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” (James 3:1).

If you find yourself in a place where you need to bring correction to a leader, do so with a loving, humble heart.

## **The Leader Is Not a King**

In the New Testament, congregations are not led by kings. Yes, I know in many circles the pastor and his wife are treated like royalty. Some even refer to the pastor's wife as *first lady*.

Just this morning, a pastor friend was telling me of a young elder who said, "Now that I am an elder, people will respect me."

My friend told him that it was quite the opposite: "Now that you are an elder, you give up your rights in order to serve."

In Hebrew, the word for *minister* (*mesharet*) is the same word for *servant*. A leader is called to serve, not to be crowned. Yeshua said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

New Testament congregations should be governed by teams of elders under the direction of a senior leader who is accountable to the team. Both Titus and Timothy, who were senior leaders, were encouraged to appoint elders (Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 3:1-13). And elders govern the congregation:

*"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching"* (1 Timothy 5:17, emphasis added).

## **God's Anointed**

Saul did not declare himself God's anointed. He didn't tell people, "You can't touch me because I am God's anointed." In fact, when David did not kill him, but cut off part of his garment, Saul did not rebuke him, but repented to David.

It most cases today, it is the senior leader who declares himself to be God's anointed and therefore untouchable by man. In the case of David and Saul, it is Saul's enemy, David, who calls Saul God's anointed. It is a dangerous thing for a man to declare himself God's anointed.

In Bible school, I had the opportunity to meet the great English Bible teacher David Pawson. After one of his messages (he was teaching all week), I was deeply moved. I felt like I had heard from a prophet. I walked up to Mr. Pawson and asked, "Are you a prophet?" He wisely said with his beautiful British accent, "That is not for me to say, but you." And he walked away.

I was blown away. He was right. You don't become a prophet or God's anointed because you post it on your Facebook page or business card. You can't declare yourself an apostle, as did the drunk and abusive character that Robert Duvall played in *The Apostle*. No, *others affirm the gift of God in your life*.

So let us be done with this abusive doctrine. It is rooted in pride and leads to abuse. May God raise up strong leaders who are secure enough to be accountable to their elders. If you find yourself in a situation where a senior leader refuses to be accountable because he is "God's anointed," my advice is to *run!* Find a congregation that has clear standards of morality for its leaders.

## Chapter 9



# Humility and How I Received It

In jest, prolific writer and one of my dearest friends, Dr. Michael Brown, once said to a congregation, “I have written a new book called ‘Humility and How I Received it.’” Again, he was joking, but it is the problem I am now struggling with as I start this chapter: How do I write about humility without sounding proud—proud of my humility!

Well, let’s try. One thing is for sure; most of us become more humble over time. When we are young, we are ready to change the world. We are very idealistic and can be very judgmental. As we get older, we get more acquainted with our weaknesses and become more merciful regarding the weaknesses of others. Some of our grand ideas didn’t pan out so much.

I do remember visiting my home congregation during a break from Bible School. I sat with my pastor and *taught him* about the importance of team ministry. It wasn’t *what* I said that was so outrageous. I still believe in everything I shared with him. But, then, it was only theory. I was 20. I wanted to be in ministry; he had been in ministry since he was a young man. Yet, there I was, teaching him about what I learned in the classroom.

Another time, after I had joined the pastoral team of Beth Messiah, I felt very strongly that if I oversaw our home cell ministry, I would do a much better job than the person who was doing it. I got my wish and I found out quickly that *doing* is a lot harder than *thinking about doing*.

Fortunately, as we get older, we do see our limitations and most of us do become more humble.

I shared in an earlier chapter how I became an elder in our congregation when I was 29 years old. It was a mistake. I was not ready. Just a year earlier, when I became a youth pastor, I told the youth that I expected them to do *stuff* for us: Help around the house, cut my grass, babysit my kids, etc. In my immature and proud mind, it was a perk of ministry. I was ministering to them, so they should serve me. After all, I had traveled with other ministers, serving them. It was my turn to be served.

There is some truth in that, but the minister should not be demanding it or even looking for it. His heart is to disciple, not to be served. Then, one of those *brats* went home and told on me.

:-) Her parents talked to me about it in gentleness and wisdom. I repented to the youth.

A year later, I was being ordained as an elder. As I said, some men in the congregation expressed concern. Those *bozos* didn't think I was ready. Well, as it turned out, I was the bozo, but it took me about three years to see it. Once that was clear to me, I really wanted to humble myself. I so clearly saw my arrogance.

By that time, I was the College and Career group leader. Just after this revelation of my pride, I asked one night if I could wash everyone's feet. This was hard for me, because I am not a touchy person to begin with. So, if you struggle with hugging, imagine touching people's feet!

As we worshiped, I went throughout the room washing feet. As I bent down, I just wanted to go lower. After seeing my pride, I just wanted to go in the opposite direction. If I could have, I would have gone through the floor. I just couldn't get low enough. God was working in me.

I went to the other elders and asked to resign. I told them that I was not ready. They reluctantly agreed, but asked me to not announce it for a few months. When I finally did, it was after I preached a message on

servant leadership. It was May 1996. At the conclusion, I confessed my sin of pride and arrogance to the congregation and told them that I had stepped down as an elder. I would still serve on the pastoral team and still attend elders' meetings, but not as an elder.

As I finished my message and my confession, I was about to turn the service back over to one of the other leaders. Before I could do that, something amazing happened. People began to clap. Suddenly they were all standing. I began to weep. It was one of the most powerful moments of my life. The very people who had resisted me because of my pride, were now clapping and honoring me. The honor I had so desperately wanted came only when it was not important at all.

### **Consider the Other Better**

When speaking of humility, the first passage that comes to mind is from Philippians 2.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

Let's unpack that. This is a book on leadership. As leaders, we cannot be motivated by our own interests. That is the exact opposite of our job. I have witnessed leaders who were so obsessed with the success of their ministry that they would wound the very people they were ministering to, because they saw them as a threat.

### **Yeshua's Greatest Challenge—Raising up Leaders**

I firmly believe that God is restoring the apostolic and prophetic giftings to the body of believers. But He does so *for His own glory and purposes*, not so we can get new business cards! As far as I can tell, Paul never presented himself as the "Apostle Paul," but as "Paul, an apostle." Some fake, *or even real*, apostles can become obsessed with titles. How

often people have introduced themselves to me as “Apostle *Such and Such*,” and I don’t even know them.

This was one of Yeshua’s deepest concerns for His would-be apostles during His three years of leadership training. How would He break them of the need for position and power?

### **Ambitious Mothers Can Cause Trouble**

Shlomit, the mother of James and John, felt the need to fight for her sons’ positions in Yeshua’s kingdom.

“Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” (Matthew 20:21)

Yeshua’s answer brings a dose of reality to them:

“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” (Matthew 20:22-23)

In other words, “*You have no clue what you are requesting...you are looking for a crown, and I am calling you to embrace the cross!?*”

When the other guys heard about this, they were incensed. *How dare those sons of Zebedee!* But they were just the same. They were not so concerned about the two brothers’ lack of humility, but that they had tried to jump to the front of the line behind their backs.

Yeshua decided it was time for a teaching moment. He sat them down and said:

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your

servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:25-28)

You see, a true apostle (whose character has been tested) would not need to let you know that he is an apostle. He wouldn't care, and the fruit of his ministry would speak for itself.

### **Foot Washing Brings Humility**

This took place just days before the crucifixion! In John 13, Yeshua is about to eat the Passover meal with His boys, when He feels the need to address this issue again:

Yeshua knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13:3-15)

He knew He was leaving, and He had little time to teach them this lesson.

“Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. **I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.** Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” (v. 12-17)

### **The Second Foot Washing**

As I read this the other day, I noticed something I had not seen in the past. The meal had already started. It was customary for a servant to wash your feet *immediately* when you entered the home. The sandal-wearing

community would have dirty feet, and that would not be pleasant as they reclined for the meal. You would not wash feet in the middle of the meal—which means **Yeshua was washing their feet a second time!**

So, why do it again? Because, apparently, the same issue of pride and position came up. During the meal, just after Yeshua instituted the New Covenant, Luke tells us: **“A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.”** (Luke 22:24) This is only days after the episode with James and John, and just hours before the crucifixion. After rebuking them for their pride (Luke 22:25-27), He gets up from the table and sets an example for them.

*The issue was urgent.* He was about to die in just a few hours and these guys still didn't understand that their positions in the kingdom would not be as sovereigns, but as servants. Yes, they would have real authority—but their authority would be to serve, support and strengthen the young body of believers, not to act like princes.

## **They Still Didn't Get It**

After Yeshua's powerful example, and some more final words, Peter blurts out:

“Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!” (John 13:37-38)

They still didn't get it. Peter would have to suffer through his denial of Yeshua, before he and the others would finally have the character needed to serve as leaders. It is not about titles or being served. Ministry is about sacrifice and laying down our lives for others. We need apostles today who are leaders of leaders, overseers of ministers, and those who birth ministries. We don't need people who want to be an apostle just for the title. Sadly, there are many!

## Chapter 10



# My Ministry Syndrome

There is a phrase that we used to use in Bible school that I have all but purged from my vocabulary. It is the phrase, “*my ministry*.” We used to ask each other, “What is *your* ministry?” Or confess, “I think evangelism will be *my* ministry.” Now, of course, we all have unique individual callings, but rarely does someone fulfill that call by himself. Yes, when the disciples scattered after Stephen’s death, Phillip goes to Samaria alone, but what is the first thing he does when the Holy Spirit is poured out? He calls for apostolic backup, and those stalwarts Peter and John are sent.

We don’t see this concept of *my* ministry in the New Covenant. The only time the phrase is used is when Paul says, “I magnify my ministry” in his efforts to win Jewish people to Yeshua in Romans 11:13. But Paul was the ultimate team player. He begins his ministry serving Barnabas as a junior apostle. As the grace of God grew upon him he becomes the team leader with Barnabas and John Mark. Later we see Paul with Silas, Timothy and Titus.

Maybe no congregation was closer to Paul’s heart than Ephesus. He spent three and a half years there. He sends for the *team* of elders, not the senior leader alone. These are men that he raised up into leadership. From there he goes to Jerusalem to meet with *James*? No, he goes to meet with James *and* the Jerusalem Apostolic team (Acts 21:18).

In our ministry here in Israel, we have a team of five couples in Tel Aviv. For several years I led this team and just recently turned it over to a

native-born Israeli—but I am still part of the team. We are also in covenant relationship with two other congregations in Jerusalem, and beyond that have a growing relationship with five Messianic congregations in the Western and Eastern Galilee, who have similar core values. We recently gave a name to this group: Tikkun Israel (Restoration of Israel).

Sadly, some leaders have more of a *king* mindset. It is *their* ministry and everyone else is there to serve them. In such a scenario, leaders of substance are rarely raised up. These lone leaders tend to fear men of authority and gifting—seeing them as future competition—and thus, they push away others with calling and anointing for leadership. They fear that if they allow these leaders more exposure, it will lessen their impact. So, they push them away and these potential leaders will often leave in frustration, seeking to work with people where their gifts can be used.

The godly leader *wants* people more gifted than himself! He wants to raise them up and let them do the ministry. Sadly, many grow old with no one to continue their legacy of ministry because they never trusted younger leadership.

Moses' attitude was the opposite. When it was brought to his attention that two men were prophesying outside the camp, Joshua implored Moses to stop them. "Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses since his youth, cried out and said, 'Moses, my lord, stop them!'" (Numbers 11:28). Moses had learned from his father-in-law, Jethro, that the one-man show will surely lead to burnout.

But Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you're doing is no good. *You will surely wear yourself out*, as well as these people who are with you, because the task is too heavy for you. You cannot do it alone, by yourself. Now listen to my voice—I will give you advice, and may God be with you! You, represent the people before God, and bring their cases to God. Enlighten them as to the statutes and the laws, and show them the way by which they must walk and the work they must do. But you

should seek out capable men out of all the people—men who fear God, men of truth, who hate bribery. Appoint them to be rulers over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them judge the people all the time. Then let every major case be brought to you, but every minor case they can judge for themselves. Make it easier for yourself, as they bear the burden with you. If you do this thing as God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will go to their places in *shalom*.” So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. (Exodus 18:17-24 TLV)

Paul abhors these personality cults and he rails at the Corinthians for saying, “I am of Paul” or “I am of Apollos.” He is disgusted at the idea that some have developed rivalries between personalities.

For it has been reported to me concerning you, my brothers and sisters, by those who are from Chloe’s household, that there are rivalries among you. I say this because you are each saying, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Kefa,” or “I follow Messiah.” Has Messiah been divided? Paul wasn’t crucified for you, was he? Or were you immersed into the name of Paul? I thank God that I immersed none of you, except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one should say that I had immersed you into my own name. (1 Corinthians 1:11-15)

One of the great privileges of my life is to work with men who exemplify this mentality toward ministry. Asher Intrater, Dan Juster and Eitan Shishkoff made a decision in the 1980s that instead of birthing their own ministry, they would make a covenant before God to work together and serve each other. From that commitment, dozens of congregations have been birthed in Israel and the US, not to mention Bible colleges and discipleship training schools. But working together costs something. It is much easier to be an island, where you only have to deal with your own emotions, desires, sinful temptations—than it is to walk together in covenant relationship with other brothers. Asher

Intrater writes in the introduction of his leadership classic, *Covenant Relationships*:

I can recall a meeting scheduled with my dear friends Eitan Shishkoff and Dan Juster; the purpose of this meeting was to work in some areas of misunderstanding that had taken place in one of the Ministries we oversee. As Dan was somewhat late for a reason that turned out to be quite important, Eitan and I were talking while waiting for the meeting to begin. We begin to question whether it was really worth it to continue to work out our relationships to the degree that we had been. After all, we observed, if we had only gone our separate ways, each of us could have a larger and more famous ministry; there would have been more money, more people, more accomplished for the kingdom of God. And here we were in prime, midday time, waiting for a meeting to begin in which we would once again discuss our unity and relationships. It hardly seems worth it!

After a while, we decided that the conversation was getting unproductive and that we are to pray. The moment we turned a prayer, a prophetic message came very strongly to both of our hearts. The Spirit of the Lord said to us, "I am not in the business of building ministries, but rather building a body." We were immediately directed by the Spirit to Ephesians 4:16.

*From Him the whole body is fitted and held together by every supporting ligament. The proper working of each individual part produces the body's growth, for building itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:16 TLV)*

Although we felt slightly chastised for our doubts, the message was clear and supportive. It was a confirmation to continue on in the work of relationship building, which we have dedicated many years to do. God is not looking so much for a large organization as for an organism that can continue to grow and

grow. The group of people who are believers in Jesus are not members of an organization; rather we are, as the Scripture shows, interconnected parts of a single body each one of us is a joint or a ligament working and growing in love; each one of us is a part, and that part is not separate from any other part.

## **Synergy**

We work in ministry teams where each one has a unique gifting. This is called *synergy*. The idea is very biblical, and it means that the sum of the parts working together is greater than the total sum of the parts if they worked independently. The concept is that we as leaders can get more done in the kingdom, working in partnership, than we could if we worked alone.

But that takes commitment. It means not quitting when someone disagrees with you. It means embracing humility and rejoicing when your brother succeeds, not just when you do, *looking out not only for your own interests but also for the interests of others*. It means preferring others above yourselves.

## **Reasons to Work Alone**

I understand how many congregational leaders feel—particularly if they planted the congregation. They feel a sense of ownership—which is good, if it causes one to work hard for the kingdom, but bad if they think that the kingdom is like owning a grocery store or other small business. Again, I empathize—they sweated, they worked hard when there were only eight people, they poured out their hearts for the hurting and spent countless hours with the needy. And now they are supposed to trust other people, giving them parental authority, with their baby? That is hard!

But at the end of the day, you do not *own* your congregation. You are a steward over what God has given you charge. To be honest—the idea of a

husband and wife building a congregation as the only two authoritative voices is a departure from what we see in the New Covenant. We never see a situation where someone could even feel as though he were the *owner* of a congregation. We see teams of men sent out from a central apostolic hub, such as Jerusalem or Antioch.

But all across the U.S. we see congregations that are exclusively governed by one man or one couple. Often where there is a board in place, they are merely a rubber stamp for a strong willed and intimidating leader. This is not godly leadership.

We sometimes even see situations where leaders want to leave their ministry to their children. I am not opposed to this, as often, the same spiritual DNA is in the children. It can be a sort of *spiritual inheritance*—to steward, not to own. But many times, a leader has an agenda apart from the call of God. To be honest, it is only natural to want your children to take up your mantle. And that is why you need a strong and honest board to speak truth to you, even if it is not what you want. It is not enough to have similar physical DNA. The next generation must have the call of God.

And then we must ask the C question? Does the adult child have the character to oversee the ministry? I am thinking of one situation where the adult child used the institution's funds to remodel his house 11 times in 14 years—in addition to other questionable expenses and sexual promiscuity. *Was he raised to see those funds as his own?*

The abuses are much harder to get away with when you have a board of peers, working with you in the ministry. In our family called Tikkun Global, we have over 40 congregations worldwide. The primary board members are three older men working together with several younger men. We are accountable to each other. Beyond that, it is a board of seasoned business leaders. Why? Because often the business world is ahead of us when comes to overseeing people. We seek their wisdom in building healthy systems.

Recently I was close to a situation where the board of a ministry removed its leader. The leader was incredulous.

*This is my ministry.*

Actually, it's not.

*God has given it to me.*

Yes, to oversee as a steward, but you are accountable to a board, or in a congregation, to other elders.

You see, no one can steal from me what I do not own. I have no ministry. I simply have the privilege of serving the Lord in His amazing ministry with other godly people in covenant loyalty.

So let's shed the *My Ministry* paradigm and start to think in terms of team, like in the New Covenant. Someone said to me that if I work alone, I can go fast, but if I work in a team, I can go far.

## Chapter 11



# Overcoming Intimidation Part I

I was on a train in Ukraine. I had just suffered what I considered spiritual abuse from a trusted leader. It would not be appropriate for me to share what happened, but let's just say I did not take the proper stand—I allowed him to hurt me—to wound and humiliate me. I should have taken a stand, but I was intimidated.

Now, to be clear, there are times when we need to *not* react, but to humble ourselves when we are attacked. We are not called to *fight for our rights*. As believers, we have no rights—“we’ve been bought with a price.” But neither are we called to submit to intimidation. I needed to confront this man, but I was afraid. If I had not been intimidated, then I could have simply ignored it. But the intimidation revealed my need for growth. The fact that I was unwilling to confront this person, revealed something about me.

Intimidation is a demonic spirit that flows from Jezebel or King Saul. It seeks to get what it wants through making someone afraid. The Jezebel spirit seeks to usurp authority as Jezebel did with Elijah (e.g. when a congregant intimidates the pastor, or a child his parents). The Saul spirit abuses authority, as Saul did with young David when he tried to kill him (or in my case with the leader in the story above).

It can come through a leader or it can come through someone you are leading. We’ve all seen a kid throw a temper tantrum in a grocery store to get what he wants. He is using intimidation. If you are going to be a leader you must have the courage to not allow yourself to be intimidated.

One of the greatest examples of this form of manipulation playing out is in the story of Elijah. Elijah was no pushover. He had prophesied and for three and a half years there had been no rain. Then one day he comes by a servant of the Lord, Obadiah. He tells him to go find Ahab, the wicked king and husband to Queen Jezebel.

### **Don't Be an Ahab**

If Jezebel represents intimidation, then Ahab represents the leader who tolerates intimidation. Some leaders openly give up their authority to others, while others, who tolerate Jezebel, will enforce the plans of the one who is intimidating them, but pretend that it is their own plan. “I am not intimidated—I can just see that such-and-such is right.” I have seen husbands take on the crusades of their wives, pretending it is their own, even though they know it is wrong—all because they don't want to take on their wives. It is easier to go along.

I have seen this played out in elder's board, where one elder is overly strong about his opinions. I've seen it in businesses where an owner is manipulated by his employee because he is afraid of losing him. In fact, and please listen to me here, we often establish life-long unhealthy patterns in our marriage. In some marriages, there is a battle for power in the beginning. Sometimes it is an overbearing husband or a rebellious wife. Put those two together and *it's on*.

Assuming their marriage survives, one of them will eventually win. Their marriage is like a broken arm that was not set correctly. It healed, but it healed incorrectly and never reached its full potential.

### **Battle for Control**

Many years ago the elders of our congregation were considering asking me to be the youth leader. I was really excited. I had been volunteering for years, but I longed to make ministry my full-time job. I was asked to meet with each elder separately and basically candidate. I wasn't new to

them—they were my friends and mentors. But the senior leader wanted me to share my heart with each elder.

It went great. Everyone was on board. Fred (not real name) had a heart for youth and it was possible that Fred and his wife Brenda might be appointed youth leaders instead of me. But when I met with Fred he said, “It seems that the Holy Spirit wants you to be the youth leader.” Boom! Slam dunk. I was on my way to a *\$4,000 a year job!* I wasn’t going to get rich in youth ministry, but I was so excited to serve.

When I saw Fred at a conference a week later, he motioned to talk to me. He said, “After our meeting, I spoke with Brenda and we *now* think that we should be the youth leaders and you can serve under us.”

I held my tongue, but then asked to meet with him later. “Fred, do you realize what you said to me the other day? First you told me that it seemed that the Holy Spirit wanted me to be the youth leader, and then your wife convinced you otherwise. You are choosing your wife over the Holy Spirit!” He apologized and I became the youth leader.

However, no sooner had I been installed, before Brenda, his wife called me up. She was going to seek to control me as she had other youth leaders. She had arranged for an event for the youth. The event wasn’t bad, but it didn’t fit the vision that I felt God had given me for those first few months. I calmly explained that maybe we could do it in the future.

She seemed stunned. Almost in disbelief. She continued to explain why we must do it. A little stronger, I gently explained that while I was grateful for her initiative, we were not going to do what she wanted. She finally got so upset with me that she told me that her husband would be talking to me. I wasn’t too worried about that, as he seemed to cower to whoever he talked to—whether it was me or his wife.

## **When Leaders Back You**

In the end, the elders told them that I was the youth leader and they were free to give advice, but not to set the vision. **Few things are as**

**affirming as when your leadership backs you up. Seeing that the senior pastor and associate pastor had my back, empowered me to move forward.** Within a few months, we had a real visitation from heaven on our youth.

I had another experience where we had an elder that argued that all elders had to be in 100 percent unity to make any decision. You see, his wife would influence his opinion, and with this idea that you needed unanimity (instead of consensus) to make any decision, she could control the entire elder's board. Fortunately, the elders did not give in to it and the couple ended up leaving the congregation.

The point is, *don't be an Ahab!* Find your voice. Govern that which God has put under your oversight.

When Ahab meets Elijah he is true to form. While he has some words with the prophet, he basically does whatever he asks.

When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"

"I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." (1 Kings 18:17-20)

So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel.

Elijah is Ahab's mortal enemy. He has been a menace to his reign. By his prophetic word, there has been no rain for three and a half years. He should've killed the prophet. But instead he submits to him. He tells Ahab to go get the false prophets and meet him on Mount Carmel. You know the story. There is a showdown between the prophet of Yahweh—the Lord—and the prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth.

The god who would answer by fire was God. The false prophets could not get a response out of their gods. However, when Elijah's turn came, the Lord answered by fire consuming the altar and the sacrifice. The people of Israel confessed faith in the Lord.

When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!" (1 Kings 18:39)

Elijah is pumped! The Spirit of God is on him. All 850 false prophets are put to death. The Spirit of God comes on Elijah and he runs ahead of Ahab's chariot from Mount Carmel to Jezreel—around 20 miles.

When Ahab gets home, he tells Jezebel everything.

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them." (1 Kings 19:1-2)

We expect our champion Elijah to march right into the palace and say to the queen, "*You lookin' for me?*" So she threatened him—big deal! He would take care of her as he took care of the rest of those idolaters. Let's read:

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beer-sheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. (1 Kings 19:3-5)

This is stunning! How can it be that Elijah, the amazing, bold revivalist is running for his life? In fact, he just wants to die! Just one day after one of the greatest moments in the history of the nation of Israel; one

day after he stood up to the wicked King Ahab and 850 witch doctors and warlocks, he crumbles and runs for his life.

The average man is much stronger than the average woman—right? I know we have those today who ignore science and say there are no physical differences between men and women, but common sense tells us very clearly that men are generally stronger than women. And yet she caused Elijah to run for his life. This woman, who once controlled 850 false prophets and a king, now had him terrified and asking God to kill him.

### **What Happened?**

In addition to being depleted of spiritual energy, Elijah underestimated the spirit of intimidation that was upon Jezebel. It is not the size of the person, but the size of the demon. Jezebel is not only a usurper of authority, she will use any method of manipulation to get what she wants. This time it was intimidation.

We all know what it is like to be intimidated by someone, but as a pastor or congregational leader, you will have to contend with those who come into your congregation that will seek to bend you to their agenda. I am not saying that God will not send people with ideas and advice to help you, but it is one thing for those people to humbly submit their ideas and advice and another thing altogether to use anger, intimidation and force of personality, to get what they want.

People who will use intimidation to get what they want are engaging in a form of witchcraft. Make no mistake it is spiritual power from below.

### **Hulk on a Cruise**

Several years ago, Elana and I went on an anniversary cruise. At dinner, I excused myself from the dining room to use the restroom. As I was going to enter, a woman nearly bumped into me. I was able to dodge her, as I said, “Whoa...” I didn’t think twice about it.

As I came out of the bathroom, a man who could have been a double for the Hulk was waiting with her. “You owe my wife an apology.”

“Excuse me, for what?”

“You were rude to her,” said Hulk.

I knew at that moment that the only reason he was confronting me was that he was huge and I wasn't. *I hate intimidation.*

“No sir, I was not rude. We almost bumped into each and that is it. I will not apologize for what I did not do,” I said as my insides trembled. I was terrified, but courage is not the absence of fear, but the will to continue in the face of fear. I was a coward my whole life until I met the Lord. I wasn't going to let this fellow intimidate me just because he could have squashed me like a bug. I was betting on the fact that he was not going to hurt me in front of all those people, and for all I knew, he was afraid himself, but was used to doing his petite wife's bidding. Fortunately, it ended with my heart still beating. When I got back to the table I was shaking. But Hulk didn't know it ;-).

## **Revelation in Germany**

It had been two years since the man at the beginning of the chapter hurt me. I had already explained to some other leaders with whom I was in relationship that I could not continue in relationship with this man unless he repented. As we drove near the Black Forest, I began to think about this man and that I needed to meet with him and talk about what happened. However, I noticed something. *I was not afraid.* Before, when I thought about confronting him, I would get nervous.

Then the Lord spoke to me. Something had happened not long before—maybe a year before—whereby I had to speak openly to a leader with authority over me. I was really scared and intimidated, but I knew I had to do it. The stakes were high and as scared as I was, I knew I had to take a stand. The Lord told me in that car, “When you took that

stand you broke the spirit of intimidation off of your life. That is why you are not afraid to confront [name of the man].”

Seven years after the incident, in the presence of several leaders, I finally was able to communicate with this brother about how he had wounded me and how it was so wrong. There was no fear, although he had a very strong personality. Also, it is important to note, that I was not confronting him to get even, to make him repent or to humiliate him. I was confronting him so we could continue to be in relationship. I was seeking an audience so he could see his sin, repent and then change, so that in the future he would not repeat with others what he did with me. We should only confront people *after* we have forgiven them and prayed for them. Confrontation is for them, not for you to feel better.

Initially he defended himself. I was stunned because his sin against me was so obvious. But in some way, I was relieved. He was not seeking to hurt me—he was truly oblivious to what he had done. Fortunately, his wife chimed in and explained to him what he could not see. And then, he saw it and asked for forgiveness. Relationship was restored.

## **Love and Strength**

As leaders we do not want to imitate Saul, who would simply steamroll over the opposition. Neither do we want to be Ahab who would submit to those he was called to lead. We want to be like Jesus, who loved those who disagreed with him, but was not afraid to tell Peter, “Get behind me Satan.” God, according to Psalm 62 has two complimentary attributes.

One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are *strong*, and that you, O Lord, are *loving*. (Psalm 62: 11-12)

Saul was strong, but not loving. Ahabs are often loving (or appear to be) but not strong. Jesus was both full of love and compassion, as well as

strength. Kingdom leaders are able to cry with the broken and speak a strong word to those who need to be broken. They are not intimidated by those they are called to shepherd and not so hardhearted, that they are insensitive to those who are in need of mercy. Leaders who lead in Yeshua's style will not use human tricks of manipulation—which is a form of witchcraft—to get what they want. We are loving and strong.

Take some time now in prayer and ask the Lord to show you if there are times that you allowed yourself to be manipulated by a congregation, employee or even someone in your own home, or if you have employed some of these tricks to get what you wanted—instead of trusting the Lord.

## Chapter 12



# Overcoming Intimidation Part II

## Other Forms of Manipulation

Intimidation is not Jezebel's only trick. She dabbles in all kinds of manipulation. Here is a definition of the spirit of Jezebel:

*The Spirit of Jezebel works against leaders through a variety of different methods of manipulation to cause the gift of God to become dormant, so that the order and government of God will not be established and the people of God will not be blessed.*

Read that again.

Think about it in relation to Elijah. He was called to bring revival to Israel. He did the great miracle on Mount Carmel. Fire came out of heaven. The people chose Yahweh over Baal and Ashtoreth. Elijah would lead them. The Spirit of the Lord comes on Elijah and he runs by foot ahead of Ahab to Jezreel. There is great anticipation that Elijah is about to confront Jezebel.

But wait—Jezebel hears about what Elijah did and goes into a demonic rage! She goes to her computer and sends Elijah an email.

Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” (1 Kings 19:2)

If you are reading this story for the first time, you would assume that Elijah, empowered by the Holy Spirit, would have confronted Jezebel

and treated her like he treated the false prophets. But no, he runs for his life and asks God to kill him. (v. 3-4) and wallows in self-pity, saying, “I am no better than my fathers.”

That is the power of the spirit of Jezebel. Go back to the definition:

1. Elijah was a leader.
2. She used intimidation, but as we will see, this demon has many tricks.
3. The gift of God in Elijah is all but dead—it become dormant. No courage, no zeal, he runs for his life.
4. Thus, there is no leadership to govern this new revival.
5. The people of God miss out on God’s blessing because the leader will not govern in righteousness.

Jezebel is a usurper of authority. She took Ahab’s and now Elijah’s.

To overcome this demonic spirit you must establish God’s government. One of the reasons that Elijah was overwhelmed by Jezebel was that he was alone. This is why I believe so strongly in a plurality of leaders in a congregation—team leadership. **It is much easier to manipulate one leader than a team of leaders. And it is much easier as a senior leader to confront Jezebel if there are five other strong leaders standing with you!**

## Why Jezebel?

Jezebel is the name of the spirit that we attach to it because it has the *characteristics* of Queen Jezebel from 1 Kings 19. In Revelation 2 we see the spirit mentioned again.

Nevertheless, I have this against you: You *tolerate* that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. (Revelation 2:20)

Jezebel was probably not her real name, but this woman had given herself *over* to that spirit. The sin was that the leadership *tolerated* this woman and allowed her to manipulate herself into a position of power. The sin is *tolerating it*, rather than *dealing with it*.

And it is not just women who allow themselves to be controlled by this spirit. It is anyone—male or female—under authority who seeks, through manipulation, to control those who are called to govern over them. Now, I know we don't like to use sayings today such as "govern over them." Indeed, there have been many abuses of biblical leadership such as in the shepherding movement where people could not get married if the leadership didn't give their blessing. I am not talking about that. True, godly government is not to control people, but to create an atmosphere of safety, where God can move freely. Shepherds are called to protect the sheep.

There is definitely an over-control that we must guard against. Here is a simple rule I use: Congregational leadership has authority over that which takes place in the congregation. So, if I am a youth leader and the elders tell me that I need to focus on mentoring young men I have to submit to that. If for some reason I can't, I can leave, but I don't have the authority to tell them, "no."

However, if they come to my house and tell me what color to paint my bedroom walls, I have full authority to refuse. (I know the example is silly—but focus on the principle.) They can't demand that I follow their advice in that area, because it does not relate to congregational life.

## **Shofar Abuse**

Government in the congregation is not established to *control* the people, but to *protect* them. Let me give you an example that addresses government, protection and Jezebel. Several years ago in our congregation, we were praying before a service. We do this every week and typically there are about 15 to 20 people. A woman walked in with a

shofar. Now, I love shofars, but I also know that some people—often overly zealous—can use a shofar to take over a worship service. I have a video called *Shofar Abuse*. Google it.

After about ten minutes, without any notice or warning, she blasted her shofar. It was jarring. I didn't say anything because we were almost done and I didn't want to embarrass her. But you have to wonder, what kind of a person walks into a prayer meeting where he or she is not known and blasts a shofar?

However, before our service started, I took her aside and very gently told her that she could not blow the shofar in the service. She agreed not to. That is called government—not control. And more often than not, when you stand up to Jezebel, the person submits. Sometimes, they are crying out for someone to govern them.

However, one of our congregants who was in the prayer meeting called me up during the week. She was hurt. She felt that the woman was out of order and was surprised that none of the elders that were present corrected her. I explained to her that I talked to the woman afterward and the congregant was put at ease. However, I realized that my not wanting to hurt the feelings of the offender made the other congregants that were present feel unsafe. I should have immediately, but gently, told the woman in front of everyone to please not blow the shofar again. Government is not about control, but protecting the flock. My flock needed to see me govern.

It is never fun confronting people. I don't enjoy it. But hey—are you a leader or not? Has God called you to leadership? If so, confrontation is part of the package and if you are not willing, then your congregation will not feel safe.

## **Many Methods**

While Jezebel used intimidation against Elijah, she knew that it would not work against Jehu. Jehu was a leader. He was bold and fearless. It is

now more than 20 years after Elijah was supposed to kill Jezebel. Elijah's lack of resolve, his fear and timidity before Jezebel, brought two more decades of idol worship. Wow. There are consequences to our failures.

Jehu comes to Jezreel. Jezebel, assuming she was once attractive, is much older. But you must understand that the spirit of seduction—just one more manifestation of the manipulation of Jezebel—is not determined by looks. Jezebel, hearing of his coming, **“painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out of the window.”** (2 Kings 9:30)

She was going to seduce him. That is right, seeing that Jehu was bold and daring and on a mission, she decided that intimidation would not work. Jehu is a lot like President Trump—at least in the aspect that you can't intimidate him. Sadly, at least in his past, he has shown incredible weakness when it comes to women, cheating on all three of his wives. And as of this writing, it seems to be coming back to haunt him, as it has come to light that (through his lawyer) he has paid off several women to keep quiet. **By sleeping with them, he gave them power over him.** It shows that when a man cannot be intimidated, often the same desired result can be obtained through a different method.

Think about this: God created the female to be physically attractive. Men are drawn to women. The truth is, if not, men would never pursue women. Women can use that gift in a godly or ungodly way. Earlier I spoke about how men are physically stronger than women—by and large. Many men use their strength in an ungodly way and abuse women. However, a seductive woman can bring the strongest man to his knees.

Recently I heard of a man who became famous in Christian music. He was drawn away from his wife and family by the seduction of a young fan. He left everything for her. When the band found out about his adultery, they gave him an ultimatum: repent and get help or leave the band. He chose the young seductress over his wife, children, band and livelihood. However, without the band and the fame, she lost interest in him. That is the power of seduction!

A few years ago, a controversial televangelist—not so attractive—was seen walking hand-in-hand in a European city with a very attractive woman. They had flown there on a private jet. While they claimed they were just friends (after they were filmed together), common sense says otherwise. I am not here to tear down anyone—but merely to say that more than one strong man has been brought to his knees by a seductive woman. The minute you go there, you lose your moral authority.

Many years ago, I was in a worship service. I was one of the pastors. Suddenly my eyes caught the eyes of a married woman across the sanctuary. It was a surreal experience, but in that instant, I knew that she was inviting me to sleep with her. Thank God I rejected it. About 15 years later she was caught cheating on her husband. In fact, it turned out that she was a serial cheater. Sometimes Jezebel is seeking to use adultery to get something—other times it is simply a means of gaining power over someone.

Jezebel puts on make-up and goes to the window. But Jehu doesn't fall for this trick. Let me repeat what I wrote in the chapter about elders being empowered. Jezebel surrounded herself with eunuchs. These are men who have been castrated. Jehu, while he cannot physically restore them, gives them the opportunity to be emotionally restored when he tells them to throw her down. I love this aspect of God. He is always thinking redemption.

A eunuch is a slave—he is kingdom property. It never entered her demonic mind that any of these weak men whose manhood had been stolen, would ever turn against her. By accepting Jehu's invitation to throw her out of the window, they became more manly than if they had all the physical attributes.

## **Flattery**

Another method of Jezebel is flattery. I imagine the aforementioned televangelist didn't just hop onto a plane with this woman. My guess is that it started with her telling him what a great man of God he was;

how his wife didn't understand how good she had it. Flattery is the evil cousin of encouragement. The main difference is that encouragement is meant to bless the person to whom you are speaking, whereas flattery is using similar words in order to get something for yourself.

Years ago, just after I had come on staff at our congregation, I had an experience: I had preached one morning and afterward a woman came up to me to tell me how great I was. She told me that I was different from the other teaching pastors. While my ego may have wanted to enjoy the praise, I could see that she was sowing seeds of discord against my fellow leaders.

That night at 3 a.m. she called me to tell me that she was barricaded in a room and her husband—an extremely huge individual—was seeking to break in. That was about two weeks after I had entered into full-time ministry! If my motives were impure before, they were certainly being exposed. This is not what the brochure promised. I was terrified. What do I do?

However, after a brief investigation, it turns out that while her husband was supposedly trying to break in, he was actually downstairs minding his own business. This woman was a master at manipulation and she was using flattery to set me up, to be her advocate against her husband. Thank God it didn't work.

## **The *Why* Behind Manipulation**

Why would a believer resort to manipulation to get what he or she wants? It comes down to three reasons primarily:

1. Lack of faith in God that He will do what He promised.

We control or manipulate because we don't trust God. We feel He might need our help.

2. Fear

The fear of losing control over something or someone can cause us to move into manipulation.

### 3. False responsibility

This is a biggie. False responsibility is when we, without the grace of God, take on a responsibility that God has not called us to take up. For instance, when a father dies young and a preteen boy takes on the weight of being the “man of the house.” I once heard the case of a woman whose father left the family when she was young. Her mother was mentally unstable. She was a teen at the time and had to constantly take her rich father to court to get support. Sometimes, like in her case—you can’t help it. Other times, there are those who feel that they know better than the one in charge, and simply take on that responsibility.

King Saul took things into his own hands because Samuel was late in 1 Samuel 13. So angry was the Lord, that Saul lost the kingdom. Peter thinks it is his job to build tabernacles for Moses, Elijah and Yeshua and God the father rebukes him. Martha puts a guilt trip on Mary for not helping but choosing to be with Yeshua. She gets rebuked for not knowing what was really important.

### **Guilt Trips**

Did you know that when you put someone on a guilt trip, you are manipulating? Husbands and wives are masters of this—just ask me and my wife. Just yesterday we had a disagreement over something and we both sought to persuade the other using the old-fashioned guilt trip.

There is a big difference between speaking honestly and using a guilt trip. For instance, there is a huge difference between “*if you loved me, you would not have been late to the airport*” and “*honey, it is really important to me that you are not late picking me up at the airport. I know you care for me, but when I am waiting, it makes me feel like you don’t care. This is something that may seem small, but it means a lot to me.*”

In the first example, the person is making their spouse feel guilty for what they did in hopes of changing their behavior. That is manipulation. Whenever we use anything beyond honest communication to get

what we want, it is manipulation. However, in example two, the spouse is calmly communicating his or her feelings.

### **Fruit of Jezebelic Attack**

In the life of Elijah we see three results from him giving in to or tolerating Jezebel:

1. Confusion over his calling
2. Fear to move forward
3. Sudden loss of zeal for the call of God
4. Suicidal thoughts

Again, this is the man who just called down fire from heaven. It seems that it is the very same day. Instead of taking on Jezebel he is confused and runs for his life. He is frozen and afraid. Where is the zeal from earlier that day? Finally, he asks God to kill him.

I know what this is like. When I lived in Ukraine, I had a run-in with the mafia. My apartment was on the second floor and below was a retail store used for money laundering. The landlord, the meanest person I have ever encountered, threatened me because water had leaked from my apartment into his store. He told me he was going to have me evicted, cut the water off to my home and sue me. This is a man who *no doubt* had either killed people or had them killed.

Like Elijah, I was terrified. I couldn't think straight. I was the head of my household and we had no water. We were scheduled to come home to the US for a month. In the flesh, I thought about going home for that month and never returning! I just wanted to stay alive until our plane left later that week.

Had I given in, I would have missed one of the most amazing things in our ministry. In May, we led a campaign whereby we birthed a congregation in the famous Ukrainian city of Berdichev. This is the city upon

which *Fiddler on the Roof* was based. Today that congregation is one of the healthier Messianic congregations in Ukraine and is celebrating their 20 year anniversary this year! Had I let the mafia man run me off, that congregation would never have been birthed!

As I walked home on a beautiful winter day, asking the Lord what I was going to do, He reminded me of the story of Elisha, when he was surrounded. His servant panicked.

When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:15-17)

God reminded me that the mafia man was nothing and could not harm me without God's permission. I found the courage to go meet with the man and in the end, he turned my water back on and I never heard from him again.

As men and women of God, we are called to never use Jezebelic ways of manipulation to get what we want and to never give in to those who would use such methods to intimidate or manipulate us. If you can learn this lesson, you will be way ahead of the curve.

## Chapter 13



# The Secret to Seeing Your Prayers Answered

**Y**ou can't be an effective leader if you don't know how to take hold of God in prayer, and this is a *muscle*, if you will, that will need to get stronger and stronger. Years ago, I discovered the secret to having your prayers answered. I am sure I was not the first to make this discovery. In fact, if I was a better student of the Word, I would have figured it out earlier. But once I did, I let nothing hold me back! Let me share it with you.

First, we have some amazing promises in Scripture.

“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.” (John 14:13-14)

“For this reason I say to you, whatever you pray and ask, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:24)

At first glance most people get these passages wrong. One well known teacher taught that these promises are just like a *blank check* that Yeshua has signed. We just need to fill in the amount and cash it. Indeed, many prosperity preachers *misuse* verses like these to appeal to our most selfish desires.

## **Be Honest, It Doesn't Work!**

Let's be honest. If I pray right now in the name of Yeshua for a million-dollar house (albeit in Tel Aviv that won't buy much) it is not going to happen. If I ask God for a yacht, using the name of Yeshua like it is the New Covenant equivalent of "Abracadabra", it is not going to work.

There are two reasons why. First, everything we receive from God is supposed to come from and through a loving relationship with Him, not through executing a formula. And the second reason, which is what we want to focus on, is the issue of *God's will*.

## **Let Your Will Be Done**

God is very strong-willed. He is not manipulated by our will. He has a plan for us and indeed He delights in blessing us. But Yeshua is not a Santa Claus to whom we present our list of goodies. Nor is He some genie sent to grant our wishes.

All these promises were given with the *holy assumption* that we are praying as Yeshua taught us to pray: "**Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**" The children of God, those who have received mercy and the gift of salvation, are assumed to not misuse God's generosity for their own selfish desires, but use the name of Yeshua to pray down God's will.

## **Faith or Manipulation?**

The underlying theme of the New Covenant is that we are dead to ourselves and alive to God. So, when a preacher uses biblical promises to appeal to carnal desires (often in an attempt to get you to give him or her something) he or she is using manipulation and is in error. I believe in prosperity. I believe that God loves to bless His children just like any father. I do not believe that we are all called to be rich. That is not in the Bible. When a teacher tells his audience that the key to their

financial success is to give to him, he is manipulating—and that is not God’s anointing.

They can tell you how it has worked in their life—*look how blessed I am*. Yes, but their blessing has come from manipulating their audience to give. God is not looking to fulfill our selfish desires, He is looking to change us, so that we long for His purposes in our lives. He will not answer self-serving prayers. Yeshua did not come to be served, but to serve, and we are called to be like Him.

Conversely, when we are praying in agreement with God’s will, ***nothing can stop us***. For this reason, I try and pray every day, “God, let your will be done in my life as it has been preordained in heaven.”

In the past the Lord has revealed to me His will regarding certain positions in ministry. I simply prayed, “God, if this is Your will, no one can stop you.” In my first position in ministry, as a \$4,000 dollar-a-year youth leader, there was fierce opposition—well, it felt fierce at the time. This was before I understood these principles. Despite having the confidence of the senior leader, one eldership couple aggressively opposed the idea of me functioning as the youth leader. They felt they should be in that position.

I panicked a little—I really wanted to be the youth leader and was pretty sure it was God’s will. But there was no reason to panic. God’s will prevailed and in short order the other couple left the congregation. It was during this time that another youth leader, Greg Zetts, said something powerful that has never left me: **“God’s will is not some weak membrane that can be easily thwarted.”**

I have learned over the years *there is no reason to panic*. If it is God’s will, He can do it. My job is to agree in prayer with HIS WILL as Yeshua taught and do nothing in the flesh to try and make it happen.

One day, several years later, I was at a conference when I was suddenly burdened and I didn’t know why. I looked for a corner in which I could pray. When I did, the Lord immediately spoke to me that I would one

day lead our congregation. But at the time I wasn't even in the congregation. A few weeks later, after several days of fasting, the pastor called me up and asked me to consider joining that congregation.

I waited years, *doing nothing to make this happen on my own*. Honestly, I wasn't all that excited about the weight and responsibility that would come with the job. As I have said, I am not a five-fold ministry gift pastor. In addition, I was told by other leaders, in no uncertain terms, that this would never happen. I just kept praying the Word:

“For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.” (Psalms 75:6-7)

And literally, after many years, when it was the last thing on our minds, Elana and I were asked to take on this task.

## **We Have a Part to Play**

While God's will is strong, we do have a part to play in battling to see it come to pass—why else would Yeshua ask us to pray that way—“let your will be done”? But we do not battle using manipulation, selfish ambition or jockeying for position—no, we battle in prayer and fasting.

Just a few weeks ago a friend called me. The Lord has placed him in a new position in ministry, but there were those resisting him. I said to him, “This is easy, we simply will pray for God's will and battle in prayer.” We prayed with authority and faith that everyone with wrong, selfish desires over this ministry, would walk away, and that only those God had called to be in it would remain. I talked to him a week later and the change was amazing. Those who were opposing him were no longer doing so.

## **Prayer and Fasting for God's Will**

Before the Lord opened the door for Elana and I to lead Tiferet Yeshua we were in a bit of confusion. Some other doors had opened for us

and we were considering leaving. A dear friend gave us a prophetic word that a turning point was coming. Elana and I took three days during which we only ate in the evenings and prayed during the day. We thought we were going to accept this new opportunity, but as we prayed and fasted God began to work. A few weeks later Asher Intrater asked me to reconsider our move, and instead, to become the pastor of the congregation, and that he would assist me from Jerusalem.

Another friend inherited a ministry where one of the board members had a vision opposite of his vision. I said to him, "You can't coexist. One of you needs to resign." I started praying for him that God's will would be done on that board. One week later he told me that without any pressure or ultimatums, the other board member suddenly resigned!

When you have authority, you can pray with authority. In this situation, my friend was the senior elder in a congregation where the lead pastor had left. He had the authority to pray and the opposition disappeared. However, when you don't have the authority, you pray for God's will.

I could give you many more testimonies. When you have the authority to pray in a situation and you pray in faith, peppered with fasting, things just happen!

### **No Witchcraft!**

To be clear, we are not talking about praying for bad things to happen to other people. God forbid! That is witchcraft! We are talking about praying for God's perfect will for all involved.

*We can have God's will, once we crucify our own.* And God does want to bless us! I do believe in prosperity. As we are faithful, God wants to bless us with every kind of blessing, whether a home to live in or a promotion at work. God loves to bless. But He doesn't want to give us more than we can handle. All we need to do is just look to the entertainment world to see how getting rich quick can destroy you. Asher Intrater once said that the reason he doesn't play the lottery is because

God doesn't bless that way. God gives wealth little by little or else it would destroy us.

Wealth gained by fraud dwindles, but he who gathers by labor increases it. (Proverbs 13:11 TLV)

So here are the keys...

1. Conquer selfish desires.
2. Ask God to show you His will—His perfect desire.
3. Begin to boldly proclaim His will and take hold of him in prayer and fasting.

Then we can ask for “anything” in His name and He will do it, because we would never dream to ask for something that is not according to His will.



## About the Author

### **Ron Cantor**

Presently I host a daily TV show called “Out of Zion” on GODTV, where I serve as the Israel Regional Director. I also serve as the CEO of Tikkun International ([www.tikkun.tv](http://www.tikkun.tv)), a global family of Messianic leaders, congregations and ministries dedicated to the dual restoration of Israel and the Church.

I was born into a Jewish home, circumcised on the eighth day and Bar Mitzvah'd at thirteen, but I did not know God! I realized at age 17, there must be more. This led me on a journey where I discovered that Yeshua (Jesus), whom I thought was for the Gentiles, was in fact, the Jewish Messiah.

I received my degree from Messiah Biblical Institute and served as the Associate Rabbi at Beth Messiah Messianic congregation in Rockville, MD until we moved to Odessa, Ukraine to work in the Messianic Jewish Bible Institute. In Ukraine, we birthed a congregation in the city upon which *Fiddler on the Roof* was based, Berdichev. We then moved to Budapest, Hungary.

In 1999, we accepted an invitation to teach Jewish Roots at the Brownsville Revival School of Ministry. In 2003 my wife Elana, a native Israeli, and I, along with our girls, made *aliyah* (moved to Israel). I served as the co-pastor and interim senior pastor of King of Kings Community in Jerusalem.

During this time we birthed the Isaiah 2 Initiative, taking Israeli young adults to third world nations to preach the message of Yeshua. In Nigeria we saw many miracles and tens of thousands profess faith in Yeshua.

In 2013, I agreed to become the lead pastor of Tiferet Yeshua, a Hebrew-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv. Three years later we turned the congregation over to a native-born Israeli. Tiferet Yeshua is still our home congregation. Please visit if you are in Tel Aviv!