

The Leader's "Next Level"

(The Process of God's Anointing His Servant Elisha)

I Kings 19:19-21



"Next Level" Leaders Are:

- ◆ Serving
- ◆ Selfless
- ◆ Sifted

"Let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." (II Kings 2:9)

Gregg Johnson

The “Next Level” Leader

Text: Read II Kings 2:9

“And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?’ Elisha said, ‘Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.’”

Everyone wants to hear about the “double portion” –

- ◆ Go to crusades, famous evangelist, lay hands, get anointing
- ◆ Anointing is not from laying hands; no instant anointing, process involved.
- ◆ For Elisha, that process began 12 years earlier working behind a team of oxen.

I Kings 19:19 “So he departed from there, found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him.”

I Kings 19:20 “And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?”

I Kings 19:21 “So Elisha turned back from him and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen’s equipment and gave it to the people and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and became his servant (to assist him).”

Question: What does it take to go to the “next level”? (And what does it mean?)

Question: What’s necessary to go to the next level of usefulness?

Question: What was Elisha’s prayer?

Question: “Let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.”

In other words Elijah

- ◆ “I want to go to a new level of influence.”
- ◆ “I want God to use me twice as much as you Elijah.”
- ◆ “I want God to “double” what I’ve seen through you.”

Question: How did Elijah respond to Elisha’s request?

Answer: He didn’t say, “Who do you think you are?” (Or)
“My, you’re an arrogant, egotistical wanna-be”

Instead, Elijah said...

“You can have the double portion...but what you’ve asked for is a hard thing.”

In other words

- ◆ “Going to the next level isn’t easy, it’s a hard thing.”

Why a hard thing?

- ◆ Because it’s a process, not a one-time, hands laid on you experience!

For example

1. **Peter** went to the “next level”, but it wasn’t easy.
 - ◆ Jesus wanted to take Peter to the next level.
 - ◆ And, it was a process that involved Satan sifting him as wheat.
2. **David** went to the “next level”, but it wasn’t easy.
 - ◆ After Samuel anointed him, David went back to serve in obscurity.
 - ◆ He went through the process of fighting lions, bears and giants.
3. **Joseph** went to the “next level”, but it wasn’t easy.
 - ◆ He was betrayed, forgotten and slandered.
 - ◆ He was imprisoned and put on hold from age 17 to 30.
4. **Jesus** went to the “next level” in ministry, but it wasn’t easy.
 - ◆ The Holy Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness.
 - ◆ Before Jesus was released into ministry at age 30, He was led into the wilderness to be tempted, tested and proven.

But what about Elisha?

- ◆ There was a season between the mantle and the double portion.
- ◆ There was a season between being selected (with the mantle) and being effective (with the double portion).
- ◆ There was a season (a process) of maturing faith and deepening of character to support that anointing!

Why the process?

- ◆ Because with higher levels – come higher devils!
- ◆ Because anointing can take you higher – but only character can keep you there.
- ◆ Because only your character can support your enlargement.

And that’s what this story is all about.

- ◆ It’s about the making of a “next level” man or woman of God.

So, what’s the lesson from Elisha to you and me?

I. “Next Level” Leaders are Already Working Somewhere in the Local Church.

I Kings 19:19 “So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him.”

- ◆ The first lesson is found in V.19; God only throws a mantle on those already serving in the field!

In Other Words

- ◆ We don’t wait for the glamorous position to come along!
- ◆ We don’t sit by the phone waiting for that “perfect” opportunity!
- ◆ We don’t expect God to anoint a lazy person (ever)!
- ◆ We don’t let other people do all the lifting!

What a discovery here.

- ◆ That God looks for people not afraid to work, sweat, get dirty and wash feet.
- ◆ Imagine Elisha behind 12 oxen – covered in a cloud of dust.

Fact: God doesn't enlarge you because you run to a Benny Hinn crusade or have an apostle lay hands on you.

- ◆ He anoints you because the anointing is not for you to feel good, it's for you to help somebody!

The take-a-way?

- ◆ The will to win is meaningless without the will to prepare!
- ◆ There's no anointing for a couch potato!
- ◆ There is no unemployment line in the Kingdom of God!

II. "Next Level" Leaders Don't Have To Be Noticed To Be Joyful!

"There were 12 yoke of oxen before him." (I Kings 19:19)

Question: Where is Elisha?

Answer: Behind the 12 oxen!

- ◆ Men are positioned before him (and others are around him).
- ◆ Elisha is in the far back - the 12th man!

In Fact:

"Then Elisha arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant." (I Kings 19:21)

Question: What's the lesson?

Answer: When Elijah looked for someone to throw a mantle on, he walked past the guys up front and went to the guy way in the back!

In Other Words

- ◆ God looks for people to anoint who don't have to be noticed!
- ◆ God looks for people to use who don't need to be seen!
- ◆ God looks for people to promote who don't need to be admired!
- ◆ God looks for people to enlarge who don't need to be stroked!
- ◆ God looks for people to bless who can assist and honor the leaders who lead them!

Fact: Four types of people are wreaking havoc in churches today:

1. **Slandorous Intercessors** (who gossip more than pray).
2. **False Prophets** (who refuse to be accountable and under authority).
3. **Arrogant Worship Leaders** (who resist the pastor as the service M.C.)
4. **Rebellious subordinates** (who cause division through an Absalom spirit).

The take-a-ways?

- ◆ I am under authority or I am in rebellion!
- ◆ No accountability means no credibility!
- ◆ Trouble looms when integrity doesn't keep pace with giftedness!
- ◆ Humility before men reveals our humility before God!

III. "Next Level" Leaders Are Willing To Be Last Not First!

Question: Where was Elisha?

Answer: All the way in the back! (V.19)

- ◆ In the smelliest place in line (the least desired place).
- ◆ In the back end of the opportunity. (Behind the behind of 12 yoke of oxen).

Question: What's the take-a-way here?

Answer: That "next level" leaders are willing to do what no one else wants to do!

What a discovery!

- ◆ God can't use people who want to showcase themselves.
- ◆ God is looking for someone willing to wash floors, fold bulletins, cook meals, clean toilets, sing back-up, assist the pastors, clean carpets, change diapers, make phone calls, send letters, visit hospitals, carry umbrellas in the rain.

In Other Words

The double portion is for those who are humble, small, last, serving, selfless, secure and live for an audience of One!

Question: What is a New Testament servant?

Answer: Someone who:

1. Advances **others** at the expense of themselves
2. Cares less who gets the **credit**.
3. Doesn't need to be "**thanked**" for their service.
4. Takes up their **cross** without complaint.

Question: Why did Jesus wash feet in John 13?

Answer: To show us that real authentic servants can serve:

1. Despite their **pain**. (Jesus was carrying the weight of the world's sin).
2. Despite their **title**. (Jesus was King of the universe yet He's washing dirty feet).
3. Despite their **reward**. (One would deny Him, one would betray Him, and all would forsake Him, yet He's washing dirty feet).

IV. "Next Level Leaders are Conscious of Their Weaknesses and Willing to Slaughter Some Oxen!

"So Elisha turned back and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh." (I Kings 19:21)

Question: Why did Elisha slaughter and boil the oxen?

Answer: Because he had to let go of some things and count the cost.

Elisha was saying "yes" to God.

- ◆ He was leaving the family business to serve God.
- ◆ He was letting go of something valuable and costly.
- ◆ He was establishing his priorities and what was most important.
- ◆ He was diligent and "diligence is a man or woman's most prize possession."

Question: What's the lesson here?

Answer: That God called Elisha while he was still yoked to some things and...

- ◆ God will use you while you are still yoked to some things.
- ◆ He doesn't wait until you're perfect to use you.
- ◆ He doesn't wait until you're sinless to place you in ministry.
- ◆ He doesn't reserve mantles only for a chosen few.
- ◆ He knows your struggle with sin and attachment to some yokes and plows.
- ◆ Yet He calls you anyway, but you're going to have to break some yokes, burn some plows and leave some things behind.

V. "Next Level" Leaders Are Patient In The Process While Serving On The Team!

Question: How long was it between the mantle and the double portion?

Answer: It was 12 years!

Question: What's the big deal about the mantle?

Answer: It marked the start of Elisha's 12 year preparation and process.

Question: What's the discovery here?

Answer: That there's no such thing as a one-time breakthrough prayer!

In Other Words

- ◆ It took Elisha 12 years to become an overnight success!
- ◆ It took patience for Elisha to stay on the potter's wheel.
- ◆ It took perseverance to not "jump ship" for an easier path.
- ◆ It took an understanding that happiness is not a place – but a state of mind!

Conclusion

Some have prayed for God to use them; "take me to the next level".

- But what if the path to greater usefulness is through a season of sifting?
- We're quick to tell you, it's not God's will to suffer; or we'll pray that God takes away the pain and the lack and the loss...

But Paul gives us a different perspective...

- **Rom 5:3-4;** "And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.
- What if the path to greater effectiveness was hotter fire?
- What if the road taking you to the next level was wrought with tribulation and the only way to get there was through perseverance, humility and brokenness?

This is how we get hope

- Everybody says preach hope, give people hope, everyone's discouraged and disappointed and they need hope
- Hope doesn't come from me. Hope doesn't come from a sermon. You can't find hope in a Joel Osteen book or a TD Jakes sermon, or some fancy preacher's internet blog

- You might feel “happy,” but that’s not what hope is. Happy is what happens when your team wins, happy is what happens when someone gives you a present. It is dependent on circumstances
- Too much preaching is nothing more than happy thoughts. You’re wonderful, you’re beautiful, you’re lovely, God’s making you rich, wealthy, healthy and wise – that’s not hope, that’s hype, that’s just giving people happy thoughts to make them clap and shout hallelujah!

Do you know where hope comes from? I can only tell you what the word says:

- It comes through tribulation that produces perseverance that produces character ...and that character produces hope
- Hope is the ability to expect good things even when things are at their worst ...why? Because you’ve been through the fire yourself, you’ve been through the battle...
- Hope is internal, it’s not something I can preach into you or pray onto you; there’s no hope anointing; hope is character, hope is conviction, hope is an attitude, hope is a refusal to accept a defeatist, victim attitude...but instead believe that somehow, someday, even though you can’t see it now, you’re going to prevail, to overcome, to be victorious in the end

Some things can’t be learned in a classroom – only thru sifting.

- Joseph said you meant it for evil – how did he know that, I’ll tell you how, the prison taught him that, slavery taught him that, the betrayal by his brothers taught him that
- Had he lived his life quietly behind his father’s tent, sheltered from the world, he would have never learned that when things happen to you, hard things, evil things ...don’t lose hope, God is working, God is in control, God is able to take the evil and turn it around.
- What’s more, had he never gone thru it, he would have never been established as 2nd in command, he would have never become keeper of the storehouse, he would never had been able to “Strengthen his brethren”.

Paul said, God causes all things to work together for good

- How did he know that, how was he able to say that, words that are still preaching to you and me 2K years later
- Because he had been thru some things.
- He goes on to list some of those “things” – persecution, peril and sword.
- He says, I’ve learned some lessons, I’ve learned some truths...all things work together for the good
- Not all things are good, but they work together for the good
- Like baking a cake...