



DETOURS

OVERCOMING SPIRITUAL
ROADBLOCKS IN
MINISTRY

Devotion #8 - The Dynamic Duo in Ministry

Read: Exodus 17:8-15


September 2021

There is a vital relationship between prayer and action, which is essential for any kind of ministry that advances the Kingdom of God. Prayer needs to be a foundational component of the work that is done, and it needs to be ongoing to sustain the ministry work.

John Calvin wrote about the necessity of prayer in his institutes:

"Therefore we see that to us nothing is promised to be expected from the Lord, which we are not also bidden to ask of him in prayers. So true is it that we dig up by prayer the treasures that we pointed out by the Lord's gospel and which our faith has gazed upon."(1)

Prayer is needed to see those things the Lord has said he would do. As a result, every aspect of ministry needs to be connected to the work of prayer.

The story of the battle at Rephidim (Exodus 17) is a beautiful illustration of how prayer and action work together to advance God's kingdom. Moses does the work of prayer and Joshua is the one who engages in action on the ground. 

Moses and his prayer team engage in the work of prayer and intercession. Joshua, with his army, engages in the physical fight down on the battlefield. As Moses prayed and raised his staff, Joshua and his men were successful in battle. But if Moses became tired and lowered his hands, Joshua and his men would be pushed back.



Rest Stop

When you look at the passage in Exodus 17, do you see yourself more as a Moses (Intercessor) or as a Joshua (worker)?

"As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning." [Exodus 17:11]


[over]

(1) John Calvin, (Trans by F.L. Battles), Institutes of the Christian Religion (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1975) III, 20, 2

While Joshua dealt with the human problem of the Amalekite army, Moses was dealing with the spiritual issues. As the Apostle Paul would remind the Ephesians:

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." [Ephesians 6:12]

Moses as an intercessor was praying for God's will to be done. In this case, this was the preservation of the Jewish people. But he was also praying against the enemy's strongholds, which the enemy was using to try to destroy the Jewish people.

The battle was ultimately won because both did what they were called to do by the Lord. Joshua fought and Moses prayed. Both the physical and spiritual aspects needed to be dealt with for the battle to be won. 



Rest Stop

Can you identify an experience where you saw this step-by-step leading of the Holy Spirit? It could be personal or could be as part of a ministry venture.

- What were the steps of obedience the Lord asked you to take?
- How did the Lord reveal these steps to you?

This dynamic of prayer and action is necessary for the work of ministry today. There is a need for people like Joshua, who are involved with the ministry on the ground. But they have to be backed up by people like Moses, who can do the work of intercession.

Anytime we seek to advance the kingdom of God, we can expect there to be pushback or resistance from the enemy. We may face unexpected challenges or miscommunications leading to confusion and projects slowing or grinding to a halt. Sometimes it can feel like you are trying to move forward while walking through quicksand or are facing hurricane-strength winds seeking to push you back. At times, it is easy to think that a project may just be too much trouble to continue with. Discouragement robs us of the joy of ministry.

That is why 'Moses intercessors' are vital to the work that deacons (and anyone in ministry) do. Moses intercessors have one foot on earth, watching what is happening physically, but they have one foot in heaven (seated with Christ in the heavenly places) listening to the Lord. The Lord will give them a strategy for prayer and direct them to intercede for God's will to be done and the enemy's plans frustrated.

[over]



Rest Stop

Where is the Lord calling you to be a 'Moses worker', someone who does the work of prayer and intercession for those who are active in ministry?

The intercessor provides covering and protection for those involved in ministry. They ask for God's mercy and his blessing upon the ministry and those involved in it. 🌲🌲🌲

Many times our focus is on finding volunteers who can do the ministry ventures that are happening. But we also need to recruit intercessors who can cover the work in prayer.

Finding one or two people who can pray, then resourcing them with accurate information to be effective in the work of prayer can take time. But

the effort will be rewarded when just like Moses, their hands are lifted in prayer, and God blesses the work of Joshua, and His Kingdom is advanced.



The Scenic Route

(optional, as a group or individually)

Think about a ministry project that you are involved in or are planning. Who are the Moses workers who are supporting the ministry through prayer?

Take a couple of minutes in silence. Ask the Lord to bring to your mind names of people you could approach to ask them to pray for the ministry. Write down the names.

Spend some time praying for the names you have listed. Ask the Lord to prepare their hearts for the work of intercession for this project. Pray and ask the Lord to speak to them already about how they can be praying.

Spend some additional time listening to the Lord, asking him to give you some ideas about the best ways to communicate the prayer needs for the specific ministry.

Finally, plan to connect with the people that have been named. Ask them if they would pray about being involved as an intercessor for the ministry.