



PREPARING FOR A MOVE OF GOD

- Can you actually *prepare* for a move of God?

- Before the teams from Bethel and IHOPKC arrived last week, the Holy Spirit gave me this encouragement...

“Brothers, listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. Everyone who believes in him is made right in God’s sight—something the law of Moses could never do. Be careful! Don’t let the prophets’ words apply to you. For they said, ‘Look, you mockers, be amazed and die! For **I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn’t believe even if someone told you about it.**”

As Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue that day, **the people begged them to speak about these things again the next week.** Many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, and the two men urged them to continue to **rely on the grace of God.**

The following week almost the entire city turned out to hear them preach the word of the Lord. (Acts. 13:38–44 NLT-SE)

- When Jesus left the earth after his resurrection from the dead, **he gathered his followers together and positioned them** for what was about to unfold in and through their lives...

Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, **“Do not leave Jerusalem until** the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but **in just a few days** you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, **has the time come** for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know...Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of half a mile...When they arrived, they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying. Here are the names of those who were present: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (the zealot), and Judas (son of James). They all met **together** and were **constantly** united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus. (Acts 1:4-7, 12, 14 NLT-SE)

- The answer is, **YES!** you can prepare for a move of God. This doesn’t mean that you start making plans to accommodate God, but that you position your heart to respond to God’s manifest presence with expectancy and intentionality. Let’s take a look at five keys that may help us prepare our hearts for a move of God.

- Five Keys to Preparing for a Move of God

- Preparing your **SOUL**

- **Mind...***Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.* (Rom. 12:2 NLT-SE)

- **Read a book.** Of course, daily reading the Word of God, the Bible, is the primary way we renew our minds. the Bible gives us invaluable insight into the character of God himself. Another way to exercise our minds is to read authors who have been dramatically influenced by God. The internet gives us immediate access to a myriad of thought provoking titles that will firm up your mental muscles.
- **Write your story.** Journaling is a great way to slow your thoughts down and communicate them back to yourself in a way that will open your eyes to how you think and what you believe. Consistent journaling also reminds you that you are on a journey with God and people. Confidence will come when you realize just how much following Jesus has influenced the direction your life has gone and the blessings that have come along the way.
- **Set some goals.** The apostle Paul used metaphors of the path God has us on to move his heart to stay steadfast and not give up when things get difficult. Spiritual growth will probably not happen randomly. What kind of a Jesus follower do you want to become? What would you like to see God do? Do you welcome the change it will take to grow?
- **Will...** *“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.”* (John. 15:5 NLT-SE)
- **Who is in Control?** American Christians like to be in control (James 4:13-15). That should come as no shock to you. We gravitate toward comfort and control in an almost effortless way. The trouble is, it’s hard to trust God’s lordship in your life if you are calling all the shots.
 - **“No one can serve two masters.** *For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money. “That is why I tell you **not to worry about everyday life**—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?...Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?...“So **don’t worry about these things**, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and **he will give you everything you need.*** (Matt. 6:24-25, 27, 31–33 NLT-SE)
- **Who is serving Whom?** One of the pitfalls of living a life of faith is that we can become people who actually take God for granted (Rom 2:4). If our relationship with God devolves over time to the place where we expect him to accomplish **our will** instead of the other way around, a move of God will likely cause us to resent him when we don’t get our way. Life and everything it offers is a gift from a generous God who loves us and is committed to shaping our character to reflect him well.
- **Emotions...**
 - **Forgiving those who have hurt you is not an option.** Jesus said, *“Forsake the habit of criticizing and judging others, and then you will not be criticized and judged in return. Don’t look at others and pronounce them guilty, and you will not experience guilty accusations yourself. Forgive over and over and you will be forgiven over and over.”* (Luke 6:37 TPT)
 - As the saying goes, **“Not forgiving is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.”** Forgiving doesn’t mean that you condone what happened or that the perpetrator is blameless. It is making the conscious choice to release yourself from the burden, pain, and stress of holding on to resentment.

- **Nurturing your friendships**

- **Do not underestimate the power of friendships.** *There are “friends” who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother.* (Prov. 18:24 NLT-SE)
- **Follow the relationships!** Putting your resources and energy into relationships yields results quicker than any other investments. The key is to not wait until everything is *perfect* to invest. There are no perfect relationships. What we’re after is not perfection, but growth and fruit. Both take time and patience.
- **The more we know and trust each other’s hearts...**the more fluid and united our responses will be to a move of God. Can your relationships withstand the emotional dynamics of a move of God?

- **Building bridges**

- *For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too. So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.* (Rom. 14:17–19 NLT-SE) You **don’t** need permission or agreement to build bridges!

- **Preparing your BODY**

- **We are God’s masterpiece...***He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.* (Eph. 2:10 NLT-SE)
- **90% of Christianity is eating right and getting enough sleep** (“Don’t underestimate the power of a meal and a nap.” Banning Liebscher)...Paul explains in Galatians that one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is self-control (Galatians 5:23). Christians are to exhibit self-control in all areas of life — including in our diets and physical activity. Of all people, we should be good stewards of our bodies because we know that they are temples, valuable and a testimony of our relationship to Jesus for others to see. When a move of God begins to manifest, we will likely have increased demands on our physical bodies, i.e., long hours, sleepless nights, rigorous emotional demands, etc. We’ll need every bit of strength to stay in step with what the Holy Spirit is doing in and through us.
- **Resilience Training...**Preparing yourself to “bounce back” after slow-downs or set-backs is a valuable part of preparing for a move of God. *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.* (James. 1:2–4 NLT-SE) **Resilience** is developed in us over time and is manifested through us in how we trust Jesus. We are at our best when we believe what He says and trust that he is **always** working in and through our lives. *The righteous keep moving forward, and those with clean hands become stronger and stronger.* (Job. 17:9 NLT-SE)

- **Preparing your WALLET**

*“So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and **he will give you everything you need.**”* (Matt. 6:31–33 NLT-SE)

- **The joy of tithing** (*Everything* is a gift from God, so just get over it!)...If tithing is not yet a regular spiritual practice for you, experiment with it by giving a percentage you feel comfortable with. Try to feel how much gratitude you have in your heart for all that God has brought you.

- **Moving from debt-bondage to debt-freedom...**Every Jesus follower in this current economic environment wants to be debt-free. We all know we would be happier if the weight of debt were off our shoulders. Trouble is, debt-free is a destination. I like the term “debt-freedom” better because it refers to the journey, not just the destination.
- **Saving to give...**Typically, we save money to spend it on the things we have a desire for but can't afford immediately. We save to get, not give. During a move of God, the Holy spirit will present us with opportunities to sow into what He's doing. What would it be like to that a “reserve fund” that was money set aside to sow with?
- **Preparing your SCHEDULE**
 - **Simplifying your life...**The culture we live in is constantly “preaching” at us that we need more. We live in an environment of continual comparisons that leave us feeling like we're missing out on the good life unless we have more money, more stuff and more influence. You can see the effect of all this on our lives by looking at our personal calendars. We are very busy people. It's no wonder our time with God is just one of the things we're trying to make time for. We need to get away from the idea that every pull on our lives has the same value. **Simplifying our lives is not just getting rid of the things that devour our time, but giving value to the things that will cause us to become the people Jesus wants us to be and letting go of the things that won't.**
 - **Making room for interruptions...**Margin is scarce in the lives of American Christians. We are often so busy that we don't sever and hear what God is doing in, through and around us. We need time to reflect, time to process and time to respond to the movement of the the Spirit. The real question is, “Have you scheduled God out of your life?” If the answer is yes, clear some time in your schedule and invite him back in. Another way of looking at it is, **a move of God is actually a divine interruption.** We can prepare now by paying attention to the divine interruptions that are happening in our lives today and nurturing responses that will carry over when God begins to move in earnest (Jonah 1:1).
- **Preparing your SPIRIT**

⁷ The wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began. ⁸ But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord. ⁹ That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined **what God has prepared** for those who love him.” (1 Cor. 2:7–9 NLT-SE)

 - **Being a friend of God...**“Spiritual formation in Christlikeness during our life here on earth is a **constant movement toward this eternal appointment** God placed upon each of us in our creation—the ‘kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ (Matthew 25:34, Luke 19:17).” ~ Dallas Willard. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ.*
 - **Prayer as a lifestyle...**Prayer is an ongoing, vital conversation with the God of the Universe. Most of us treat prayer as a monologue. God has things he wants to say to his followers today and he wants us to desire to hear from him. Having a daily “prayer time” with Jesus is important, but if that's the only time we pray, it's a sign of immaturity. **What he really wants is an ongoing, meaningful, two-way conversation all day long** (Rom. 12:12, 1 Thess. 5:16-18).

We have more 'things per person' than any other nation in history. Closets are full, storage space is used up, and cars can't fit into garages. Having first imprisoned us with debt. Possessions then take over our houses and occupy our time. This begins to sound like an invasion. Everything I own owns me. Why would I want more? ~ Richard A. Swenson, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*

- **Knowing the Word...** “There is a generation of people who know the Word of God, who are born again, and who see God’s Kingdom on the pages of the Bible, but who fail to enter what God has for them because they are only prepared to think naturally, or rather, not prepared to think spiritually (see Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 8:5-6).” ~ Adam Thompson. *The Divinity Code to Understanding Your Dreams and Visions*.
- **Loving what He loves and hating what he hates...** Proverbs 6:16 give us a look into the heart of God. In it Solomon creates a list of seven things that God hates, which also reveal what God loves:
 - *God hates “haughty eyes.”* Therefore, God loves eyes that look at people with **humility**, wanting to serve others, to honor and respect them as well.
 - *God hates “a lying tongue.”* Therefore, God loves a tongue that speaks the **truth**, a tongue that values honesty, openness, and speaks the heart of Jesus whenever given the opportunity.
 - *God hates “hands that shed innocent blood.”* Therefore, God loves a heart which devises **good and righteous plans**. God loves our desire to serve, our desire to help, our desire to minister the love of Jesus. When our hearts long to carry out God’s plans for goodness, righteousness, and peace, it delights him.
 - *God hates “feet that run rapidly to evil.”* Therefore, God loves feet that round rapidly toward **goodness**. This priority is really important to have in place when a move of God begins to manifest. Will we let our feet wander to where the Spirit leads us, or will our feet guide us to our own selfish desires?
 - *God hates “a false witness who utters lies.”* Therefore, God loves a **trustworthy witness** who speaks the truth. When we are voices of integrity, truth and honor, God is delighted. Think about it...Can God trust what you say will reflect his heart?
 - *God hates “one who spreads strife among brothers.”* Therefore, God loves those who promote and encourage **peace** among brothers. With one word at a time, God wants us to change our attitude and sow seeds of peace in our relationships. This becomes an invaluable tool for stewarding and nurturing a move of God.
- **Where do we start?**
 - Take personal **responsibility** for your own heart (Prov. 28:13, 2 Pet. 1:10, Luke 10:27).
 - Pay attention to what is **pulling you away** from from the presence of God and begin reigning those things in and eliminating them (1 Cor. 10:13, Phil. 4:8, Gal. 5:16-17).
 - Stir up **expectancy** in your own heart for the kind of good change that can only come from God himself (Jer. 29:11, John 10:10, Matt. 24:44, ROM. 12:1).