

REVISED AND UPDATED

At the end of the race, there are no heroes  
or stars in ministry, **ONLY**  
**WINNERS**

Narrated by Richard Meredith

NO MANS ZONE

Only  
Winners

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this book to all my friends in Ministry who have been through the school of hard knocks to learn the lessons in this book.

## **Thank You**

I wish to sincerely thank all the pastors and ministers who had advised and cautioned us over the years of the perils and pitfalls of ministry that are explained in this book.

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## Preface

The year 2001 will go down in Church history as the year of “unprecedented ministry opportunity” because of September the 11<sup>th</sup> tragedy. In a survey that was conducted after September the 11<sup>th</sup>, more than 90 percent of Americans said that they believed in a personal God. Another report stated that almost all denominations in the country were reporting record attendance. However, six months after the tragedy, Church ministers on national television were saying that they “dropped the ball!” In other words, Christian leaders were confessing that the Church had lost a great opportunity. Ironically before the tragedy, millions of American Christians were fasting and praying for a revival in the nation.

As I was reading the book of Isaiah, Yahuweh showed me how Israel had faced a similar situation and lost their opportunity. So God sent the prophet Isaiah with a rebuke outlining God’s desired response to their crisis; in other words, what they should have done. The background in this situation was that Israel was threatened by a Babylonian occupation and Israel responded to the crisis with prayer and fasting, but God would not answer. So they sought the prophet for a word, and this is what God said:

*“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to YHWH? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?”* Isaiah 58:3-7.

What was God’s desired response to the crisis? It is summed up in one word: **MINISTRY**. God wanted Israel to minister to the oppressed, to the downtrodden, to the hungry, to the poor and to the naked on both a spiritual and physical plane. After 9/11 most of the effort of the Church was concentrated on prayer and fasting and ministering to the victims of September the 11th, but relatively few churches utilized the greater opportunity to minister to their own neighbors and friends who also were victims of another kind. I believe the reason why the Church in America and in other parts of the world did not respond to the needs of the greater majority is twofold. First Christians were just as wounded and needing ministry themselves, and second, most Christians were not prepared and equipped to minister.

When we respond according to God’s desired response, what He promised Israel becomes our harvest:

*“Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of YHWH shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and YHWH will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I*

*am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. YHWH will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in” Isaiah 58:8-12.*

This is quite a list of blessings to expect after a crisis. Contrast this to the aftermath of September 11, which were fear, despair, and outcry for justice which culminated in two wars, one in Afghanistan and the other in Iraq. It is of interest that God specifically promised that if we are obedient to minister, *“healing shall break forth speedily, His glory will be our rear guard, and we shall rebuild the waste places and repair the breach.”*

### **A special note on the pronunciation of the Set-Apart Name of the Father**

In Hebrew, the Set-Apart Name is composed of four letters YHWH pronounced as Yud ך, Hei ך, Vav ך, Hei ך.

This is referred to as the “Tetragram” or “Tetragrammaton” meaning roughly, “The Four Letters” - YHWH.

How the Tetragram is actually pronounced, there is no general consensus among scholars.

Current research points to one of five related pronunciations for the Set-Apart Name:

- 1) *Yah-way*
- 2) *Yah-hoo-way*
- 3) *Yah-oo-ay*
- 4) *Yah-oo-ah*
- 5) *Yeh-ho-vah*

Our research points us to the pronunciation Yahuweh which we have used throughout this book. Where Scripture is quoted, we have opted to use the Tetragrammaton YHWH to allow the reader to follow his or her own convictions on the pronunciation of the Sacred Name in the passages.

The term LORD or Lord as it is used in English Bible translations is a substitute of the Tetragrammaton. Therefore, it is not employed in this book.

### **Other terms that are used in this book**

Yeshua (alternatively Yahushua): This is the eternal name of the Son whom in Christianity is called Jesus. We have retained the use of Yeshua for biblical accuracy.

Ruach haKodesh: This is the eternal name of the Set-Apart Spirit of the Father whom in Christianity is called the Holy Spirit. We have retained the use of Ruach haKodesh for biblical accuracy.

Elohim: This is translated in our English Bibles as God. We have retained the use of God in most places for English clarity.

## ONLY WINNERS

Adonai: This is translated in our English Bibles as Lord or Lord. It means Sovereign or Master. We have retained the use of Adonai for biblical accuracy.

Church: This is from the Greek word ekklesia meaning Assembly or Congregation.

Stauros: This is from the Greek word stauros meaning an upright pole which is accurately translated as a pole (tree) or execution stake.

The Torah: Are the first five books of the Old Covenant otherwise called the Law of Moses.

The reason why I have chosen to use the above Hebrew terms is to maintain the Hebrew roots of the Scriptures and accuracy of terminology.

## Background

I was raised on a small island in the South Pacific called Samoa, where it is said to be the last place in the world to see the sunset every day. Samoa lies some 600 miles to the northwest of Fiji or 1,600 miles northwest of New Zealand. Samoa is a relatively small and isolated country with a population of 200,000 people. The most outstanding fact about Samoa among the South Pacific Islands is that we have the most Church buildings per capita in the South Pacific and perhaps in the world. It is not uncommon to have six different denominations next door to each other in a single village with only a few hundred people. A friend of mine once asked me, “why do your people build so many churches?” because religion is a way of life in Samoa.

When the first missionaries landed in Samoa in 1823, the king of Samoa, Malietoa, a great warrior and the one who ceremonially ate his enemies was greatly impacted by the Gospel that the London Missionary Society missionaries preached. His conversion to Christianity was not a common missionary experience in the Pacific. In many parts of the Pacific, many missionaries lost their lives or were forcefully removed. King Malietoa’s readiness to embrace Christianity resulted in Christianity rapidly spreading throughout Samoa, so that within 10 years, the whole country was “Christianized.” Today so highly esteemed are ministers of



the Gospel in my country that it is the highest paid profession. Every year thousands apply for opportunities to study in our local theological colleges, and only a few hundred applicants can be accepted because of the limited spaces. It was in the face of this religious landscape that I was raised as Catholic in a business family.

My father was a very successful businessman and highly respected in my country for his business ventures. He, however, never developed the religious habits of our fellow countrymen. I cannot ever recall my father going to a Church, although he would give to many charitable causes. I thank God that even though my father did not practice his faith, he came back to it on his dying bed and in his way, made his peace with God before he died.

My father's dying aspiration for me was to become a lawyer. He would say to me, "the reason why I want you to be a lawyer is that lawyers are not easily fooled, son." To this end, he made sure that he sent me to the best foreign schools. Hence I was sent to New Zealand for my education. I struggled to get through my high school years because the academic standards of Samoa were at that time behind New Zealand, but I persevered and passed the entrance exam to one of New Zealand's most well-known University. I spent five years in Auckland University and Completed an Arts degree, and I was midway through completing a degree in commerce and law when my father became seriously ill, and I had to return to Samoa and take over his business concerns. Although I did not realize my father's goal to become a lawyer, I thank God that I was not able to complete my studies because Yahuweh had another plan for my life, a plan that did not require an extended education.

It was in New Zealand that I met my wife of twenty-five years, Marjorie Grace whom I married in 1987, the mother of my son Joseph Meredith. After returning to Samoa with my wife in 1989, my father was then too ill to run the multimillion-dollar business empire that he had built over forty years, and he appointed me as Managing Director of his factories and warehouses. It was not long after my father died. The pressure and commitments of business took a toll on me, which led me to seek for answers not in the places that many of my business competitors found their temporary relief but in the Church. It was in 1990 that I made my commitment to the Master Yeshua and became born again. Although my mother had raised me to be a good Catholic, I did not have a personal relationship with Yeshua, although I had met Him in my early childhood. Less than a year after I made my commitment to serve God, we began our ministry while at the same time maintaining my business commitments. My wife and I started our ministry with a small lending library we had created in our own home.

Shortly after coming back to Church life, I had an unquenchable thirst to understand the Bible, and I started to procure videos and books from Christian bookshops in New Zealand and Australia. Soon my resource library was looking more like the bookstores I had obtained my books from. It dawned on me that we had something in our home that could help other believers. My wife and I started opening our library to people in our own Church, and the word rapidly spread, and other people from other churches began to come and use the library. Within a year, our little home library became unmanageable, and we knew it was time to shift to something permanent. One of my father's warehouses had become vacant at this time, and God impressed upon my heart to start a Christian video and

audio bookshop, the first of its kind in Samoa. I opened this ministry in a small section of a 4,000 sq. foot warehouse, but as you can imagine, our book store could not possibly fill a 4,000 sq.foot building. Being spiritually minded, I saw a great opportunity to use this building for the Master's work, so I dedicated this warehouse to God's work. What happened next has never ceased to amaze me!

What began as a 400 sq.foot bookshop in a small section grew into a 4,000 sq.foot ministry that encompassed a Christian radio station network, a Christian television station network, a Christian audio and video recording studio and a Christian telephone counselling service that covered our nation. In addition to this, my bold experiment with ministry got me starting a variety of smaller ministries – a prayer for the nation ministry, T-shirt printing ministry, an aerobic center ministry, which we did not continue. My involvement in ministry also got me involved in the Gideon's, Full Gospel Business Man Association, Derek Prince Ministries, Dove Ministries, Youth for Christ and Promise Keepers in Samoa. Another one of my bold steps was to plant a Church, which I pastored for three years before being absorbed into the Samoan Assemblies of God. In the midst of these ministry years, I also organized countrywide crusades for many international speakers of whom I hosted, the largest of which was Benny Hinn and Paul and Jan Crouch founders of Trinity Broadcasting Network. For many years after I maintained ministry ties with these international ministries and many other less known servants of God that I had brought to Samoa. All the while, I continued to maintain my business commitments.

As you can imagine, our hands were indeed filled to capacity, and there were many times I felt stretched to the core. The commitment of simultaneously operating a church, a ministry, and business brought a host of trials and

problems that took a toll on myself and my family. The many experiences I had been privileged to undergo, has indeed made us more effective and more seasoned ministers of the Gospel which have helped me weather many storms through the years that would easily shipwreck many churches and ministries. Many of the lessons that God graciously taught me in ministry and in my Church days, I know will be the same experiences you will face regardless of where you have been called to serve.

There are just two simple rules I have applied in writing this book that I would like you to know. First, all of the lessons I share in this book I have personally experienced myself and the examples I relate of others I have been personally acquainted with or have researched. Second, as far as I am able to with the help of many ministry companions and scholastic sources, I relate all of these experiences to Scripture and provide the necessary biblical proof and quotes.

On a final word, I realize that Samoa is by no means a perfect place to conduct a “ministry experiment,” for the purpose of this book, as it does have certain limitations, but as far as God’s “ministry principles” are concerned, they will work anywhere regardless of our beliefs and experiences. I do however, always thank God for my home and paradise of Samoa.

God bless you,

Pastor Richard Meredith

ONLY WINNERS



GBN Television and Radio Ministry in Samoa

## Introduction

In my country, during the decade of the 90s, more people were killed in deep-sea fishing accidents than road accidents or any other cause. The reason for this is because many were lured by the attraction of quick money from exporting fish but were never adequately prepared for the perils of seamanship. This led my Government to make it compulsory for fishermen to pass a basic seamanship course. Sadly many Christians suffer a similar fate in ministry; they are attracted into ministry because of wrong perceptions and are inadequately prepared for the perils of ministry.

Like our fisherman, they are made to embark on a standard eight-week seamanship course, where they are shown “a few hazards of the trade” then handed a certificate where they are declared seaworthy and allowed to go into the deep open sea. One day while fishing on a normal run, a sudden unexpected swell takes them by surprise, and instead of riding the waves, they find themselves swimming in the deep blue ocean hundreds of miles away from shore. The danger that they often took for granted took them completely by surprise. Like the ocean, ministry has so many unexpected dangers and turns that need not take us by surprise if we **KNOW** and are adequately **PREPARED**. We are warned to be prepared,

*“Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour” 1 Peter 5:8.*

Let me begin our journey into ministry by first providing a basic definition of a “ministry” and “a minister” for the purpose of clarifying our discussion of ministry. A ministry by definition is a body or institution headed or governed by a minister. For this matter, it can be a Church, an Evangelical or Charitable organization or Christian Association, or a Trust. The head of the ministry is a “minister” and can be one who operates in any of the fivefold ministries of the Bible as listed in Ephesians 4:11 or one who operates other capacities as outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:28. This person may not necessarily be the founder but can be a successor. A ministry can be one person to as many as a hundred thousand people. The most important aspect in qualifying an activity as a “ministry” is that there is a definite leader and there are definite followers.

Every year hundreds of thousands of individuals graduate from all sorts of ministry courses around the world. The majority of these graduates will end in some sort of ministry in the Church or a Para-Church or launch out into their own ministry. You may have the right degree or the right talent or the right gift, but I am afraid that this is no assurance that you will be successful or last in ministry. Current statistics in America show that some six thousand ministers every month quit or leave the ministry and sadly, it is not any different anywhere. Many of who never return and some of whom fall completely out of the faith. Dr. Edward Louis Cole made a statement in his book *Maximized Manhood* that I believe summarises God’s thoughts about new ministers entering into ministry. He

said, *“God is giving us an opportunity to be one of His few successes or His thousands of disappointments.”* We do not have to be a ministry statistic; if we would take the time to learn and apply the many truths and principles that God has set in place for us to be successful in ministry today. Ministry starts with a sincere and honest examination of our motive.

### **What is your motive?**

Why do you want to enter into ministry? Or if you are already in ministry, why did you enter ministry? Please take time to think this over before you read on. Above all else, God examines our motives or heart. He revealed this truth to the prophet Samuel when He called Samuel to anoint a new king for Israel in place of King Saul. *“But YHWH said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for YHWH does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but YHWH looks **on the heart**”* 1 Samuel 16:7. There are many good reasons why people enter into ministry, but there is only one right reason that God accepts. Let us examine some of these wrong reasons first.

#### **1. It is/was a good thing to do**

Ministry is certainly a good thing to do, but this is not the right reason. The desire to do good under certain circumstances can also be the wrong thing to do. For example; Going on a mission to a foreign country in the midst of a civil war would be putting your life at great risk.



## **2. It is/was an exciting thing to do**

Ministry is exciting but also has its discouragements. The excitement is not the right motive because it does not last long before trials and routine come into effect and will quickly discourage a person.

## **3. It is in the family**

Your parents and your grandparents may have been in ministry, and you may feel it is the family vocation. This too is not the right reason to be in ministry because it is no assurance that God will use you.

## **3. I heard voice**

A voice is no indication that you are called into ministry. In fact, many cults began from a voice the leader believed was God. Later the disastrous fruits of that ministry confirmed it is a cult.

## **5. So and so prophesied over me**

A word of prophecy is a good thing to receive, but it is not the right reason to enter into ministry. Many sincere Christians upon receiving a so-called prophetic word have entered into ministry and failed.

## **6. I have the gifts and talents**

Gifts and talent can be an advantage in ministry, but this too is the wrong reason to enter into ministry. Our gifts and our talents can become a stumbling block to God because we may think it has to do with our abilities.

## **7. I have a Bible Qualification**

A Bible qualification is a good thing to hold, but this too is not the right reason to enter into ministry. Many qualified ministers with even Ph.D.'s leave ministry every year and pursue secular careers.

Then what is the right reason?

The right reason is **“God CALLED ME.”**

ONLY WINNERS

# **Section ONE**

# **Ministry**

# **Call**

“When we are in doubt, God will never fail to give light when we have no other plan than to please Him.”

Brother Lawrence

# ONE

## Who said you are called?

Many years ago I met a seasoned minister who held a master’s degree in theology and diploma in pastoral ministry who had come to our Island with his family and informed us that God had called him to come to our shores to start a particular ministry. He told me that he and his family had prayed and fasted for direction, and a word was given to him to come to Samoa. In good faith, I accepted his word, and I worked with him for a few months thinking that this man was surely called because he had received a word, left his family home and was well qualified. In the course of the next few months, I watched him dwindle his family savings, spend hours of his time and energy trying to start this ministry; he believed God had called him to. After one year he shut doors, packed up his family and went home in complete frustration. Is this something new? Not at all, thousands of sincere Christians make this same mistake? They presume God’s call. Just because you are qualified, you fasted and prayed, or even a word of prophecy was given to you, this is no assurance that God has called. Understanding the call of God is the first step to successful ministry. If you get this right, you will avoid

unnecessary pain and financial loss and perhaps spare your life.

The word “called” in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *kletos*, which means, “appointed.” The word appointed has two connotations. First, it suggests that it is a completed thing. For example, if you removed the tires off your car, it ceases to function because the tires complete the car. God’s call completes the person. God’s call completes your personhood. When a person functions in God’s call, he or she is complete in every respect and aspect of their lives. Second, it suggests a predetermined path. For example, every train has a predetermined path whereby it has to travel. Should it detour from that path, an accident will result. God’s call is our predetermined path. It is His master plan for our lives. Some Bible teachers have termed the call of God as “your destiny in life,” others as “God’s will or purpose for our lives” and others as “God’s vocation for our lives.” All of which is equally true and all converge upon the same thing, a predetermined master plan.

In the first verse of the first chapter of Romans, the Apostle Paul had no misgivings or misunderstanding of God’s call. He knew exactly what God had called him to be. *“Paul, a servant of Yeshua the Christ, called to be an APOSTLE, set apart for the gospel of God”* Romans 1:1. In his epistle to the Congregation of Corinthia, Paul again reminds the Assembly at Corinthia of his call to be an Apostle. *“Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Yeshua by the will of God,...”* 1 Corinthian 1:1. There are two other important facts that immerge from these passages that we need to note and understand. In the first passage, Paul says that he was *“set apart for the gospel of God.”* In other words, the Apostle was called and separated by God to preach the Gospel. God’s call involves a separation! Something that I will explain

later. Second, is the next passage, Paul says that his call to be an Apostle is *"by the will of God."* God's call is an affirmation of His will for our lives! Therefore the call itself is a confirmation of God's purpose for our lives. There is no evidence in the Scripture that Paul or any of the Apostles had any misunderstanding or doubts about their calling.

If there is one danger in ministry today that is more dangerous than the devil himself, is a Christian who does not know and understand his call. In my early pilgrimage as a young believer, I attended a Church who had a Pastor who exemplified all the traits of a worship leader but not a Pastor. Whenever he sang, he would lead us into harmony with heaven, its self, but when he would preach or teach, he would leave us confused and dumfounded. It is not that he could not preach or teach; he simply was not called to be a Pastor. Even in my ignorance as a young believer, I knew that something was out of place. Have you ever sung in a gathering and everyone around you is giving you signals that your singing is out of tune but in your own mind you are saying to yourself, I sound great? You do not have to be a maestro to know that a tune is flat and out of place. So it is the same with people who are out of their call they become extremely conspicuous, and everyone around them knows except the person himself. God may allow such a person to continue for a time, but eventually, He deals with the individual depending on how responsive the individual is to His leading. In the end, if the individual does not listen then often through some painful experience, He brings the person into task because God does not tolerate insubordination in His Kingdom.

When you are out of place in your calling, you do not have a ministry but a finishtry. Everything you touch will be finished. Everyone you proselytize into ministry become out of place and are open to confusion and deception. You

become a danger first to yourself, then to your family and then others that decide to join you. Many cults were started by Christians who believed they were called to a particular ministry. Yeshua rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees of his day because they bore the very fruit of this kind of deception. *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves”* Matthew 23:15. When you are not called to a ministry in which you are functioning in, you produce sons of hell rather than sons of heaven.

An out of place minister in ministry will exhibit the following signs;

1. Restlessness and dis-ease. The person is unable to settle comfortably into the natural functions of that ministry. It is like swimming against the tide.
2. Spiritual blindness. There is blindness as to the appointed path of that ministry, and you are unable to see it when it should be rather obvious. Everybody else can see it except you.
3. Confusion. The functions of the ministry are distorted and twisted, resulting in confused proselytes because he or she is confused.
4. Immaturity or fruitless. The fruits of the ministry will exhibit signs of spiritual immaturity or may be completely devoid of spiritual fruit.
5. I centered. The ministry becomes centered on you and not on the purpose for which it was ordained.
6. Forced not flow. The person is continuously pushing the ministry when it should naturally flow.

When a person is called and is functioning in their God-ordained ministry, it is the most wonderful experience there

is. I cannot explain the joy that I receive when I witness a person functioning in his or her calling. It is absolutely beautiful. It reminds me of the word of the Psalmists expressing joy in the unity of the brethren, with these words, *"It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes"* Psalm 133:2. Never the less I am also a firm believer that we all make mistakes in ministry, and for that reason, if we acknowledge our mistakes He who has called you will also be faithful to redeem you (1 Corinthians 1:9 1; Thessalonians 5:24). Brother Lawrence, a 17th Century Catholic Priest, said these encouraging words, *"When we are in doubt, God will never fail to give light when we have no other plan than to please Him."*



“God doesn't call the qualified; He qualifies the called.”

Author Unknown

## **TWO**

### **Did you hear thunder?**

Perhaps one of the most frequently asked questions in ministry is; how does one know the call of God, and how does God call us? Most Christians awaiting the call into ministry are waiting for some mighty encounter with God. While it is perfectly scriptural to have an encounter with God, it is not the normal way God calls us into ministry. I had people ask me if I had heard a thunderous voice summoning me like when God spoke to Moses or did I see Yeshua as Paul had in his encounter on the road to Damascus. How I wish I had such an encounter, but the truth is I had neither and many in ministry today would testify the same.

### **The call of God**

The call of God is not some mysterious happening or a supernatural voice from heaven summoning you forward. It is more an accumulation of confirmations embedding a fixed impression on your heart that God has called you. It has a definite point of illumination where you will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is what you were born to do. Somehow your whole life experiences have been

orchestrated for this one thing, and as life passed you by, it was never apparent, until that divine moment when it is supernaturally revealed to your heart. Every question you have in life is answered and satisfied at that point of illumination. Whatever happened to you in the past or present completely comes into context.

However, it is a common mistake among ministry to misread or misinterpret the call of God as one of the fivefold ministries listed in Ephesians 4:11 or one who operates in other ministry capacities as outlined in 1 Corinthians 12:28. The call of God is distinguishable from an office or a direction of ministry. For example, you can be called to be an apostle to India. But the call is not the “office of the apostle” or “the direction to go to India.” The call of God is by virtue of its own right is a separate entity. It has its own sovereignty in God. The call of God is never the office or the direction of ministry. These are functions or directives of ministry but not the call. The call of God is an extension of God Himself in your life. It totally and undeservingly separates you from the world. When God places a call on your life, He is effectively saying, “this one is Mine, and he or she belongs to Me only.”

The Apostle Paul tells us that divine moment of the call is at the pleasure of God. *“But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased”* Galatians 1:15. Two other facts about the call of God emerge from this passage that we need to understand. First, the call of God is predestined, and second, it is by His Grace alone. No amount of study of the Holy Scripture or Church ordained service could earn you a place on God’s heart to call you into ministry. This is further confirmed in this passage of Scripture; *“And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified”* Romans 8:30. The Bible

reveals that the call of God actually starts from the womb. He said of the Prophet Isaiah; *“Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away! YHWH Elohim called me before I was born, while I was in my mother’s womb he named me”* Isaiah 49:1. The call of God is there before we are born into this world. Therefore we do not seek the call, but we wait for God’s appointed time to reveal His call to us according to His sovereign will.

The life of the prophet Moses is a wonderful example of the divinity of the call of God. The period of history in which Moses was born in had reached its pinnacle for purposes of God. God needed a deliverer in order to fulfill His purpose for Israel. The river Nile experience was divinely orchestrated to engraft Moses into the family of Pharaoh and Moses apprentice in the house of Pharaoh was to prepare him for the great task of leading the people of Israel. These aspects may appear to the casual acquaintance of Scripture as mere chance, but to the man that knows God’s ways, you are privileged to an insight of the call of God hidden in the man from his birth. Moses being a type of Messiah, demonstrates the divinity of God’s wisdom. For if Pharaoh had known the call of God on Moses, he would never have allowed Moses to live or leave his house regardless of his crime. Even Satan himself is a divine creature possessing wisdom beyond our human ability, did not foresee or know the call of God on Moses. God alone sovereignly possesses the capacity to write history because He knows the end from the beginning, therefore, He is able to pre-designate man. The Apostle Paul clearly understood this insight, when he referred to the death of our Master Yeshua, *“None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified YHWH of glory”* 1 Corinthians 2:8.

Many ministers had told me that even before they had received the revelation that they were called into ministry, they had an inner witness even from their childhood that they were called and many lived lives that were opposite to their call. Often they would recall events in their childhood, days that would confirm that God had called them. Later it was just a matter confirming the call.

## **Confirming the call**

Confirming the call of God is the single most important thing we can do prior to entering into ministry. Confirmation is more of a process rather than a single event. There is no predetermined method and time frame in the process of confirmation. God can use a variety of methods to confirm His call on your life, and it can take one month to several years. Typically these are some of the methods that God uses to confirm His call.

- A prophetic utterance from a credible source.
- Unexpected opportunities converge for the mission field.
- Doors previously closed begin to open.
- Those who cover you in the Assembly impart direction to you.
- Faces that you may not have seen for years show forth with a timely word.
- A passage of Scripture is fixed onto your heart and is unshakable.
- A financial or provisional breakthrough for the need.

Usually, it is a combination of these methods rather than a single method and by no means is it limited to this list either. In the case of the Apostle Paul, following the experience on the road to Damascus, God used a common believer named Ananias to confirm to Paul his call. “But YHWH said to him, *“Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name”* Acts 9:15-16. The method in which God used here to confirm to Paul the call on his life was a prophetic utterance from a credible source.

## **Accepting the Call**

Confirmation of the call is always followed by acceptance of the call. We are all given a choice of whether to accept or reject the call. Problems arise when we deliberately stall or avoid making a decision. In other words, we cannot sit on the fence. When we do, God will drive us to the point of decision. A series of orchestrated events will occur and what these events are is determined by the soil of our hearts. Some hearts are more stubborn or calloused than others requiring some drastic measures. It has been a common experience among people in ministry to be literally on their deathbeds before making that decision. The flesh, the Scripture teaches is rebellious to the purpose of God; Romans 8:5, 8:8. Robert Liardon’s book *God’s Generals*, a survey of the great 19th and 20th Century prophets and evangelists, contains many examples of deathbed experiences preceding the acceptance of God’s call. The rejection of the call of God has a hefty price; some Christians lose their livelihood and others their lives.

The rejection of God's call does not extinguish the call. Many people who reject the call of God believe that God then passes the call to the next available person or to a succeeding generation. This is not true; the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable and holy. *"For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable"* Romans 11:29. Meaning that those who ultimately decide to reject the call of God will go to the grave with the call of God on their life because the call of God is holy and unique to each person as confirmed in this passage of Scripture. *"...who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Yeshua before the ages began,"* 2 Timothy 1:9. Therefore our resistance is futile and the more we resist, the more unnecessary grief we cause to ourselves, if we reject the call we will face the final judgment of God. Yeshua exhortation in prayer, *"thy will be done"* is the desired and correct response. Mary, the mother of Yeshua when she received the revelation of her divine call to be the mother of the messiah, immediately responded with these words to the messenger of God. *"Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of Adonai; let it be with me according to your word""* Luke 1:38. In other words, *"thy will be done."*

The road of disobedience is an absolutely painful experience that I would not encourage any sane person to walk through. A case at hand is God's call to the prophet Jonah. When God called Jonah to go to the great city of Nineveh to proclaim its impending judgment, Jonah fled in the opposite direction to Tarshish having boarded a ship in Joppa. In doing so, God unleashed tragedy upon the prophet and the ship and its crew that transported him. So severe was the storm that God sent, that the ship's crew became suspicious that the tragedy was being caused by someone aboard. When they discovered it was Jonah, they

verbally scolded him but relented to throw him overboard until it was imminent that the ship would sink and so they picked him up and threw him into the sea and the storm immediately ceased. God did not leave Jonah to sink into the depth of the ocean but had arranged for the prophet to be swallowed by a great fish that promptly transported him back to God's original destination. While Jonah was in the belly of the fish, he repented and accepted God's call. But what a process he unleashed by opposing God's call. Not only were innocent people endangered but also the ships valuable cargo was lost.

When you become a Jonah, you become:

A liability instead of an asset in the kingdom of God,  
A burden instead of a blessing in the kingdom of God,  
A problem instead of a solution in the kingdom of God,  
A reaction instead of a cause in the kingdom of God,  
A taker instead of a giver in the kingdom of God, and  
A danger instead of a warning in the kingdom of God.

Have you ever wondered why the ordeal, God could have simply called another and left Jonah to himself? The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable and holy! A word of caution to those who have a Jonah in their Church, being around a person who is disobedient to the call of God can have serious repercussions for us who obey the call.

## **The Separation of God**

After the call of God is confirmed and accepted, this is followed by a point of separation termed in Scripture as the "separation of God." The separation of God is the point

where we are actually released by God into ministry. Some Bible institutions call this ordination or the anointing, but it is impossible to fix a time or procedure to the moment because only God knows when a person is really ready to be separated. From the moment we accept God's call to the point of release, there is a waiting period that can be as short as seven weeks to as long as seventy years. In the case of the Apostle Paul, it was not until fourteen years later that Paul was finally separated unto ministry. Yes, fourteen years later! The Apostle waited for God to release him into ministry. When that moment arrived, God sent certain prophets and teachers to separate Paul with his companion Barnabas. *"Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. While they were worshiping YHWH and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them""* Acts 13:1-2. A closer examination of the verb tenses used by the Ruach haKodesh in the second verse *"set apart me"* is present tense and *"have called"* is past tense. Affirmation that God's call is followed by a separation.

Many sincere Christians, after accepting the call of God, have prematurely launched into full-time ministry only to find that they have moved ahead of God. If we were to look at these time frames of separation from a human viewpoint, we could perhaps be discouraged in thinking that they appear too long, but the truth is if we launch into ministry outside of God's appointed time frame, we will incur damage or loss to the kingdom of God. God's timing is always perfect. King Solomon understood this truth when he said, *"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven"* Ecclesiastics 3:1.



## Humility and Trustfulness

However, there are two fundamental Kingdom principles that determine God's timing for our separation; humility and trustfulness. After the Apostle, Paul was saved on the road to Damascus, and he obeyed God's instructions and went to the house of Ananias where his ministry was revealed to him. After he received this revelation he did not go to Jerusalem as might be expected of ministers of his time, but he went to Arabia and remained there for three years. *"nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterward I returned to Damascus. Then after **three years** I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days"* Galatians 1:17-18. A minister of his time would have snatched the golden opportunity and headed straight for Jerusalem to be with the patriarchs of our faith Peter and James, the brother of our Master Yeshua. But Paul made a U-turn and went to Arabia, a gentile domain that no Jew would consider to be a training ground for ministry. You see, Paul had to learn to be humble and faithful by serving others. It was in Arabia that Paul worked in the ministry of helps and taught in the Assembly.

Arabia was also the place where God chooses to train His servant Moses. Moses is a powerful example of the power of these kingdom principles in action. There are two passages in the Old Covenant that refer to Moses that always amazes me. God meticulously ensured that these two aspects of Moses character were recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures for our example. *"Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth."* and *"Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house"* Numbers 12:3, 7. Can you

fathom what Moses had to do to merit a compliment of this magnitude from God? Yet many Christians would cringe at the thought of having to clean toilets, mop floors and collect trash in their own churches. Having the right attitude can quickly release you into ministry. Someone said that *“God doesn’t call the qualified, He qualifies the called.”*

“You are only qualified to lead to the degree you are willing to serve.”

Edward Louis Cole

## THREE

### Do you like sweeping?

Many years ago, as a young believer in the Church, we had an election for deacons in the Church I was attending for the coming New Year. A vacancy was announced in the position of deacon for maintaining the Church building and grounds. I remember vividly the pastor pausing for a long period of time waiting for someone to volunteer for the position. No one would volunteer because it was the lowest deacon position in the Church. This person was responsible for cleaning and maintaining the Church building, toilets, and grounds every week. I decided to take the position on and to this day, none of the brothers that were there in that meeting with me has their own ministry. It all has to do with having the right attitude. Someone said, “It is your attitude that determines your altitude.”

### Be humble

A humble and teachable spirit attracts the favor of God. Isaiah 66:2 states, “*All these things my hand has made, and so all these things are mine, says YHWH. But this is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who*

*trembles at my word. For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says YHWH.*" The word "poor" in this context means one who is humble and the word "contrite" in this context means one who is teachable. No amount of discipline and enforcement can make a person humble or teachable. Humility comes through adjusting our personal attitudes about ourselves and about work. Ministry is mostly about manual work, and often the work is repetitive and menial. Much of this work is in the background and not the forefront. There are very few frontline positions in ministry, and when someone is in a frontline position in ministry, they inevitably had started from the background by first learning how to work the humble jobs and positions of ministry. Thus, our attitude must be right, and the necessary work experience needs to be there if God is going to promote us in ministry. It is only in Hollywood ministries that you see this process being a shortcut because of the desire to be "on the top." Dr. Edward Louis Cole, a wise master-builder of ministry, made a sobering statement that I will never forget, *"You are only qualified to lead to the degree you are willing to serve."*

My ministry, pilgrimage, has privileged me to experience a variety of Christians. One particular type always grieves me in ministry, one who finds it beneath themselves to do manual or menial tasks or if they did, they do not last at it. Paul encountered this problem in the Assembly in Rome and he suggested that an attitude adjustment was required, *"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you **not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned"*** Romans 12:3. To come into any form of exaltation (promotion) in ministry (frontline ministry), the prerequisite is clear, "humble yourselves!" *"Humble*

*yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time*" 1 Peter 5:6. However, we also need to bear in mind those frontline positions in ministry are not always the best positions, nor the most rewarding positions in ministry.

## **Be faithful**

A faithful person the Scripture teaches will abound with blessings. *"The faithful will abound with blessings,..."* Proverbs 28:20. The Apostle Paul also had another problem in the Assembly in Corinth. They were boasting in the work of Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. To put a sober end to these assertions, Paul had to redefine the definition of a steward to set their attitudes aright. He said, *"moreover it is required in a steward that a man be found faithful"* 1 Corinthians 4:2 (NKJV). I have often made a remark in ministering the Word of God that I have hired pagans over Christians for business and ministry work because they are faithful and trustworthy. I thought I was alone in this thought until I heard a seasoned minister of 60 years in the ministry say the same thing. I later discovered that God had the thought first. *"Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, **But who can find a faithful man?**"* Proverbs 20:6 (NKJV). Faithfulness and truthfulness with another person's ministry and resources, Yeshua taught is a pre-emption to God granting you, your own ministry and resources. *"If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with **what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?**"* Luke 16:11-12.

Has it occurred to you that in the Scriptures, God has never used a person in a prominent position of ministry

unless that person had first faithfully served in another man's ministry? Jacob faithfully served his father in law Laban for twenty years before God released him into his destiny (Genesis 31:38). Joseph served his father, Jacob, then Potiphar, and then his prison keeper faithfully for many years before God released him into his position as Prime Minister of Egypt. Moses served Pharaoh and then his father in law Reuel for over 40 years before God released him into his position as the deliverer of Israel. Paul, we saw faithfully served the Congregation in Arabia for 14 years before being released into his own ministry. Just because you may have a Bible degree or you may be a son of a minister of the Church does not qualify you for ministry leadership. In God's business, faithful service is a primary prerequisite for promotion in ministry. This is a Scriptural precedent and can never be overturned or bypassed in ministry. Many ministers have put people into ministry positions that they were not qualified for and have subsequently paid the price. Mother Teresa made a powerful statement she said, *"I am not called to be successful but faithful."*

## **Be real**

There is an air of romanticism that revolves around ministry that blinds a lot of new Christians. They see the fame and the glory of men and women of God and are attracted to the ministry. They follow ministries waiting for that golden opportunity or that golden touch from heaven. This romantic attitude of ministry belongs to Hollywood. It has no place in ministry. If there is one solemn truth that I have learned about the Ruach haKodesh (the Holy Spirit) is that He is an absolute realist. Many years ago, I heard Dr.

Derek Prince expound on this truth in a sermon on the Ruach haKodesh, but it was not until I was seasoned in ministry that this truth has become real to me. Serving in another man's ministry is not a simple and easy task. It is both demanding and sacrificial. There have been moments in serving many men of God that I have walked on a thin line of patience and understanding. It is comforting to learn from Scripture that others faced the same experiences.

The prophet Elisha followed and served the prophet Elijah for ten years before he entered into his own ministry. Elijah was no easy man to serve. James 5:17 tells us that, *"Elijah was a human being like us"* The NKJV says, *"Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are."* In other words, Elijah was a very emotional man who had emotional peaks and valleys far greater than most men. In the nineteenth chapter of First Kings, we are told of the prophets mighty encounter with the 450 prophets of Baal whom he had all destroyed by calling fire down from heaven and then commanding rain down to end a three and half year drought. Shortly after this Queen Jezebel sends him a letter saying that she intends to cut his throat for killing all of the prophets of Baal. In terror, Elijah runs for his life until he collapses under a juniper tree crying to God to take his life. This is the nature of the man Elisha had to follow and serve for ten years. And we complain we have to sweep floors in another man's ministry. David was relentlessly hunted like a wild beast by his own father in law and mentor King Saul for many years while he was being trained in ministry. And you grumble when your pastor gets a little tough on you.

## Be content

There is an atmosphere of expectations that ministers bring into a ministry that is set up for many disappointments and disillusionments. Family experiences, culture, and traditions exert and command powerful influences upon our thinking and behavior, as do ministry schools and churches. Unfortunately, these institutions also create many expectations that are false hopes or false fears for many ministers prior to entering into ministry. These expectations later create insurmountable problems in ministry. Expectations are assumptions and presumptions that are often based on “perceived facts” rather than facts itself. The devil takes advantage of these assumptions and presumptions and creates misunderstandings and confusion devouring ministers and their ministries. I have learned never to place expectations on God and people because we cannot put God into a box nor predict how people will behave despite the best available training and ministry experience we may have. We must always allow room for God to move and for people to make mistakes.

It may surprise you to learn that Yeshua never placed any expectations on His disciples. He simply taught them what they needed to know and then authorized them to do it. He taught them mainly by example. Even at the onset of the training of His disciples, Yeshua was fully aware that all of His disciples would abandon Him at the end, despite His teachings and warnings. *“And Yeshua said to them, “You will all become deserters; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered’”* Mark 14:27. The old prophets had warned Him that it would happen. Thus, He learned to be content in the perfect plan of His Father. Paul certainly came to apprehend this same lesson. *“Not that I am referring*



*to being in need; for I have learned to **be content** with whatever I have. I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances **I have learned** the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need”* Philippians 4:11-12. Notice Paul’s statement, “I have learned,” implying that it was only after many years of ministry trials and tribulations that he finally learned to be content!

## **Be chosen**

*“For many are called, but few are chosen.”* That is the concluding verse to a parable in Matthew 22 that the Master Yeshua taught concerning a landowner who went out to hire laborers for His vineyard. When we read the parable, its message is not readily apparent until you reach that last verse. Not everyone who is called is chosen. Therefore the supreme thing is not the calling in itself but to “be chosen.” Many talented, gifted, and educated people are called into ministry, but few are chosen. In 1 Corinthians 1:26-27 it reads, *“Consider your own call, brothers, and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;**”*

The chosen of ministry are by the majority, common ordinary people. The reason is seemingly obvious; God takes great delight in using insignificant people because it puts the wise and mighty to shame. *“But God chose what is foolish in the world **to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;**”* 1 Corinthians 1:27. Having a gift or a talent or a qualification are a benefit and can be an advantage, but it is never the reason why God

calls and chooses people for ministry. The Apostle Paul was well educated, having been taught in the best traditions and school of his faith but was an enemy of God. Paul's education was certainly not the reason why God chose him, but it was because of his zeal and passion for his faith, despite his ignorance why God selected him.

Throughout the Bible God had made it known to the people of Israel that the reason why He chose them to be His chosen people is not that they were more in numbers or strength but because they were the least of all the peoples. *"For you are a people holy to YHWH your God; YHWH your God **has chosen you** out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that YHWH set his heart on you and chose you--for you were **the fewest of all peoples.**"* In the NKJV it says, *"**the least of all peoples**"* Deuteronomy 7:6-7. God has a history of using the insignificant, the despised and the rejected because of this one unchanging reason: His untouchable glory. In the words of Apostle Paul *"God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, **so that no one might boast in the presence of God**"* 1 Corinthians 1:28-29. In other words, He chooses the insignificant or the least because they know it was not them but God.

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NO MANS ZONE was founded on the 70th Jubilee year 2009 the Jewish year 5769.

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- NMZ Vision: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 40:1-9; Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 37.
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