

## **The Peter Principle, Part II: Claiming Your Calling**

This is a continuum of the Pastor's Word from two weeks ago. This week I want to get back to our subject of the Peter Principle. Just to refresh you, this is the principle: in all hierarchies, businesses and even ministries employees tend to rise to their level of incompetence. How can we keep this from happening?

### **1. Stay in your calling.**

Last time we talked about knowing your calling, "*For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*" (Romans 11:29). God is not going to change His mind about your particular giftings. You may move locales, you may be promoted or demoted, but the real you is going to come out; the gifts of God will come to the surface. A person who has the gift of giving may go through some hard times, but they always find a way to give. A person who has a prophetic or discernment gift just cannot keep their mouth shut. Let an evil be entertained in any realm and they will denounce it with the fierceness of an Elijah. Place an administrator in a chaotic environment and they will start organizing it without being asked; they can't help it. Put a mercy person in any arena and they won't be happy unless they are lifting somebody's burden, and hurting people will be magnetized to them. My wife has humorously told me, "You only preach one sermon a day...all day long!" I am a preacher!

There is no need to fight the gift that God has put in you. We are most happy doing what God has called us to do. Listen how the apostle Paul admonishes Titus to stay in Crete: "*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee*" (Titus 1:5). He was saying, "Titus, this is your calling; don't move away from it. Stay there and bask in it!" We will flourish when we do what God has called us to do. We will be blessed and bless others when we are centered in God's will, doing God's bidding in God's calling!

The temptation will be to compare our calling with other people's calling. There is a tendency when we do this to feel we just won't measure up. The Bible warns us, "*...comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*" (II Corinthians 10:12). It is unwise and unprofitable to do this. Let me give you an example. Some of my younger brethren have no idea of the magnitude of the ministry of Billy Graham. In his early days he was an old fashioned, Hell-fire and brimstone evangelist. An interesting comparison is to read Graham's life alongside the biography of Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. entitled "Builder of Bridges." There was a time when Billy Graham's sermons were in The Sword of the Lord and before the 1957 Madison Square Garden Crusade, Billy Graham's former school, Bob Jones University had prayer meetings for the Billy Graham meetings. An interesting study is the phenomenal Los Angeles Campaign preached under a tent by Dr. Graham. There is no doubt, God's mighty hand was upon that young evangelist. There was another young minister, younger than Billy Graham who emulated and sought to be like young Billy. He would preach evangelistic campaigns, but never reap the magnitude of results. I heard this minister say, "I tried so hard to be Billy Graham, but I was not Billy Graham." The young minister did not give up. He simply obeyed the Lord step-by-step. He pastored

while still in his youth in an obscure place in Kentucky. While there, he outlined the entire Bible! From there he became a most effective pastor and Bible teacher of the famed Moody Church in Chicago. After leaving that ministry he became the host and magnificent teacher of the Back-to-the Bible Broadcast founded by Theodore Epp. Through the years, he wrote some of the most profound, yet easy to understand commentaries on the Bible ever written in the Twentieth Century. And even in his old age, he is one of the most sought after Bible teachers in the country. As a pastor, I can tell you, if I am stumped by a hard to comprehend text or I want to know what God is saying in a passage of Scripture, although I admire Billy Graham, I don't run to his comments to see what God is teaching us, but I, like thousands of other preachers in the country, want to know what Dr. Warren Weirsbe teaches on that text. Yes, there was a time when Dr. Wiersbe wanted to be another Billy Graham. However, no one could teach the Bible more simply or more beautifully than Warren Weirsbe, not even Billy Graham!

The Bible says, *"But godliness with contentment is great gain"* (I Timothy 6:6). Again, the Bible says, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5). Be content with your calling! God tells us in Hebrews 13: 5 that we are not alone. He is with us in our calling; He is guiding us and it is there He will bless us! In the life of Elijah God sent His distraught servant to a distant brook's edge and said, *"And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there"* (I Kings 17:4). Then God sent him to the widow of Zarephath, *"Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee"* (I Kings 17:9). What all of us need to understand is that we must be "there" in God's calling for the blessings to fully come. For emphasis sake, allow me to embolden some words to make my point: The Lord said to Elijah, "...I have commanded the ravens to feed thee **THERE.**" Then God said, "...dwell **THERE**: behold, I have commanded a widow woman **THERE** to sustain thee." "There" is the place of God's provision! "There" is the place of God's power. However you can get "there" get "there" soon. "There" is the place where you and I must be to know Christ in *"...the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering..."* (Philippians 3:10).

## **2. Make much of your calling.**

Paul said, *"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office"* (Romans 11:13). This Jewish born and bred young man was rooted up from his traditional moorings on the road to Damascus and placed into the gentile world to be a witness to the barbarian heathen. Paul had enough talent to be a pastor or an evangelist, but his calling was to be an apostle. The word apostle means "sent one." The gift of an apostle was one who had seen the Lord and was able to be a communicator in penning inspired Holy Writ. All apostles did not write but they all were "sent ones." Our modern day missionary would easily fall into the category of an apostle. Paul fed his calling; we see this when he said, *"Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation"* (Romans 15:20). He could not bear to stay in one spot or build upon the work of another

man; God called him to go to regions beyond. We would do well by obeying God's call and making much of it, or as Paul would say, "...*I magnify mine office...*" (Romans 11:13b).

One of my father's favorite sayings was "find a need and fill it." Let me break this down. You will sense the need according to your calling. A barber and hair stylist cannot help but notice people's hair. A doctor hears more in a cough than those of us who are not in the medical profession. A builder cannot walk into a room without examining the construction from the floor to the crown molding at the ceiling. I can go to sleep with music in the background, whereas my pianist wife will stay awake analyzing every note she hears. I am not criticizing this; I am applauding the gifts God gives us. When you sense the need, give your contribution to that need. Ronald Reagan saw the need for leadership in America and left his profession to magnify his greater calling. He was criticized, laughed at and mocked by many. However, no one laughed when the iron curtain came down and the wall that divided the world was torn down in Berlin. Here is a perfect example of a man that found and magnified his calling. John Wesley and George Whitefield were kicked out of the formal churches in England and America, but I love the words of Whitefield: "They have closed the church doors against us, but bless God, the fields are open." This was a good thing because soon they were preaching to crowds numbering up to 60,000 people. There were no churches that could have held these crowds! Whitefield and Wesley magnified their office as evangelists and the result? The Great Awakening! May God awake us all to magnify our calling!

-Pastor Pope-