

God's Recruitment Process

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I walked into the hotel room and sat down. Gunnar Olson, the founder and president of International Christian Chamber of Commerce, and James Lockett, secretary of ICC, listened as I began to share a story of two year's of adversity that made little sense in my own mind at the time. After hearing my story Gunnar looked at James with a smile and a chuckle to which I was not sure how to respond. "Os, we are not trying to be rude, but we have heard this story so often over the last few years that it is uncanny. You are one of many who are being prepared as a last days Joseph for what God is planning to do in and through the marketplace," Gunnar said.

This was a turning point in my own pilgrimage that brought an understanding to the challenges that I was facing. Gunnar proceeded to pull out a napkin and draw two diagrams. Since that time more insight into this process has brought even greater knowledge of the recruitment process that seems to be underway with many Christian business men and women throughout the world.

The First Stage

When a Christian business person makes a decision to live for Christ he receives a new heart. Up to this point he has been living more as an "Egyptian" or "Esau" in his business life. They sweated and toiled to pump water from the earth. The business man has sweated and toiled to build his business. In either case, they have been enslaved by a taskmaster-their work.

Upon receiving Christ God begins a process. For some this process is due to their own sin of adopting the Egyptian lifestyle of greed, idolatry, and independence. For others, it is merely a consequence of their faith. In either case the process is similar. God begins to strip away all the things that don't contribute to their Christlikeness.

This painful, but necessary process often involves great adversity for a period of time. The greater the calling, often the greater the adversity. This is because of the message God desires to speak through this person. It is spoken of in Hosea 2:14-17 as a desert experience in which God can speak tenderly to us. It is also referenced in Isaiah 45:7. This process is designed to create a new will of our own attitude, much like bootcamp is designed to do.

At some point the individual becomes dead to his own interests. This death process is circumcision for every believer in Jesus Christ. Circumcision is painful, bloody, and personal. It is the successful passing through this process that the person becomes most useful to God. They begin to experience the fullness and the power of Jesus

Christ. Paul describes this process in Romans 6:4, ...just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Often the person becomes more successful in their business life after this process, although this should not be construed a formula for success.

The Gibeonite Ruse

During this process the person is often presented with several Gibeonite Ruses that are designed by Satan to take him off this important path. This phrase refers to the time Joshua and the people were travelling through the promised land and came upon the Gibeonites. Because the Gibeonites were fearful of Joshua and his people, they tricked them into believing that they too were travellers in the land. The Bible tells us that Joshua did not inquire of the Lord about the Gibeonites. This led to Joshua and his people making a peace treaty with Israel. This was not pleasing to the Lord and resulted in the Gibeonites being enslaved by Israel. The result was Joshua and the people had to manage the Gibeonites and many intermarried with the clan. This was never supposed to have happened because God instructed Joshua and the people to wipe out their enemies completely.

The Gibeonite Ruse in business shows up in the form of a get rich quick scheme that claims to alleviate our problems, or some other meaningful opportunity. This becomes a distraction that gets the person off track for what God is trying to accomplish through this process. However, if the person goes through this process and a change of nature is accomplished, they will never be the same. They will see much fruit in their lives. If they simply change some habits, they will go around the mountain again.

When a person begins a life of obedience they begin to understand the difference between living in Egypt as an Esau versus living in the Promised Land as a Joseph. They learn that their obedience is the key to provision, not sweat and toil. They learn that God blesses obedience, many times spiritually and physically more than before the crisis. A Joseph is one who is both a provider spiritually and materially.

This process was experienced by many in the Bible. Those who had great anointing also experienced great adversity, i.e. Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Joseph, Paul, David, and Peter. Many business leaders such as R.G. LeTourneau and J.C. Penney went through the same type of experiences. Both R.G. LeTourneau and J.C. Penney experienced failed businesses before they became truly successful spiritually and professionally.

The Rebuilding Process

Once the circumcision of heart takes place in the Christian business person a rebuilding must take place. It helps to compare this process to the building of a house. Before the house can be built we must go below the surface in order to find the bedrock from which to build. This bedrock for the Christian business person must

be Jesus Christ and Him alone. Once the bedrock is established next comes the porous rock that is poured on top of the foundation to allow water to be drained. This porous rock represents the deeper work of the Holy Spirit resulting in greater faith experiences. These faith experiences are those times that we experience God at a deeper level than ever before. For example, when the people of Israel crossed the Jordan, this was a faith experience they will always remember as a day God revealed Himself personally to them through a miracle. They marked this day with 12 stones along the river. The width and depth of these faith experiences are directly proportional to the calling God has on our lives. The greater the calling, the greater the faith experiences.

Next we must evaluate our motives. Why are we doing what we are doing? Is our motive pure? Are we responding out of obedience, or are other motives driving our decisions? Perhaps our motive is purely financial. Perhaps it is related to power or prestige. These motives will not stand.

Finally, we are ready to raise the building. In order to do this we must seek to be skilled in what we do. Do we have the skill, ability, and quality to perform the tasks? If not, the shingles will be crooked, the door jams will not match. Many Christians have good motives and solid foundations but lack the experience to carry out the job. Conversely, many Christian business people have been skilled in their jobs, but lack the, spiritual depth to avoid the spiritual pitfalls due to wrong foundations and wrong motives of the heart.