

N Note what God is doing and anointing

**I will bring him near and he will come close to me, for who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?' declares the Lord.
(Jer. 30:21)**

How the Lord longs for people who will feel after Him and who are sensitive to what is on His heart! It is really important to note when God's presence is especially close, and to "capitalize" on it.

**For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.
(2 Chronicles 16:9)**

Do you remember how Naomi said to Ruth,

Wash and perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, *note the place where he is lying*. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.

Ruth is instructed to 'note' (literally 'to know') where Boaz would be spending the night. Her presence there (carefully timed to coincide with him feeling pleasantly full after his meal!) would be a sure sign that she was seeking his protection – and quite possibly marriage with him. We can adapt this lovely and pure picture, and reflect how we too are meant to come trustingly to Jesus and enjoy Him as both Protector and Divine lover.

**Take me away with you – let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine.
(Song of Songs 1:4)**

In the course of this ardent (as opposed to arduous!) relationship with Him, there are times when His power is especially present.

One day as He was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for Him to heal the sick. (Luke 5:17)

It is so important to be ready 'in season and out of season.'

When our spirits are functioning in time with the Lord's, we cannot always wait for people to get round to inviting us to do things. Prophets have to get up and get on with what God shows them to do. We often note things as it were out of the corner of our eye.

Find a way to make a note of what the Lord is showing you. It can be the basis for so much good testimony, and a springboard for faith when we face fresh challenges in the future. When last month's all consuming crisis is done and dusted, we forget so easily how God helped us, unless we have made a note of it. Remember Isaiah 30:8 "Go and write down these words. Write them in a book." (NLT) Keep these notes in an easily retrievable place!

When God speaks to us, and we speak out what He says, only the immediate audience benefits. If we write it down, however, far more people can be touched – and not in one generation only. "The command to "write" (Is. 30:8) has brought untold blessing and challenge to countless numbers." ([NIV Study Bible)

Don't forget too that all this works the other way round. The Lord notes all that we do. When He sees someone pressing into honour Him, He

finds ways to honour them. (see Ezek. 20:37, cf Job 11:11, 34:25; Ps. 106:44; Pvs. 21:12; Acts 4:13, Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:14; James 1:19)

The greatest thing a human soul ever does in the world is to 'see' something, and tell what it saw in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion, all in one. (John Ruskin)

But don't be dismayed if not everything you say or feel is accepted, even if it is right. As someone wrote:

'When a prophet is deified, his message is lost. The prophet is only useful so long as he is stoned as a public nuisance, calling us to repentance, disturbing our comfortable routines, breaking our respectable idols and shattering our sacred conventions.'

Prophets see new ways of doing things, and make suggestions that threaten the way people have always done things. Their task is to say what God is saying, without fear or favour. It is inevitable that they will be misunderstood and that some would do almost anything rather than act along the lines that God has suggested!

Note the vocations the Lord has given you and meditate on them

I know that if people are hungry for the Lord I can usually help to lead them into silence in the Lord's presence, for example, or into intercession, or into developing their writing skills. Ros can inspire women to do well in labour, or students to become good midwives. It

was many years ago that the Lord turned Ros's 'career' into a God-given 'vocation' rather than just a profession.

Think about the things that He is specifically anointing: the particular gifts and vocations that He has given you. Don't belittle them. He wants us to savour the vocations He has given us and to explore them. But we need to practice using them.

- **Know that the host of heaven is with us in all we set out to do for the Lord. There are angelic spirits standing on either side of the Lord in His court (2 Chron. 18:18), and God commissions them to send their help – but only as we set out to do His work.**
- **The more confident you are in using your gifts and developing your vocation, the more readily you can lead people into these areas. In this way, people become *more* than they currently are.**

Fortified by the confidence that God had heard the prayers he had made, and confident too that the quality of his past service had made a deep impression, Nehemiah made his bold request to the king. (Neh. 2:5. Read Psalm 3 in this light too). Nothing is gained by passively sitting down – and nothing is gained in the kingdom without confidence and courage.

(Please note: biblical boldness does not necessarily mean *feeling* great. It is rather the determination to trust God *despite* our feelings!)

We learn so much from watching each other, but don't try to be like anyone else

One type of leader may be very upfront and 'rah rah'; a commander commando who expects others to follow where he leads – but God can

work just as powerfully through those who bring people together and facilitate *their* gifting. One style is not better than another, and leaders don't need to have all the great charismatic gifts themselves. As you seek to develop your vocation, don't be swayed by other people's expectations – let alone by all pervasive worldly criteria.

Note what helps you to flow in the power of the Holy Spirit, and what blunts and hinders the fine edge of your creativity

Make time to go to places and people who refresh and inspire you. Beware things that would lead you to put too much effort into things that, whilst they may be good in themselves, are ultimately less than God's highest call on your life.

Note who you can be strong *and* weak with

I regard this verse from Romans 12 as a kind of crucial litmus test. "Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice." Deep down, many people can only cope with people at one end of the spectrum and not the other.

If you are weak, that may make me feel that you need me – and that can feed my need to be needed.

Or: I can care for you because I have genuine concern for you, with real compassion in my heart – and that *is* good.

I can genuinely rejoice because you are happy, and feel no need to try to drag you into my orbit.

Or: I rejoice when you are rejoicing because that makes me feel good. I gain strength from your strength. But that can lead me to putting you on a pedestal. And from there it is all but a certainty that the time will come when something

happens to let me down and I knock you off your pedestal in a sideswiping pedestal back flip.

When I am struggling, those who have high expectations *of* me, as well as their own an agenda *for* me, tend to be conspicuous by their absence. I may have fallen off their pedestal – but that is their problem for putting me there in the first place! Their love is shallow.

That is why this verse is such an acid test of whether we can both weep and rejoice with someone. The truly compassionate are not easily offended or impatient for people to perform in the way we want them to.

Do you know where your vocation lies?

Many of you have a very good idea of where it is up to. It may be synonymous with your career, or it may be separate from it, but you know where your strength lies and what God is leading you to. Ponder this issue now and see if God has anything specific to say about the way you practice it. He may even chose to show you something entirely new.

As a starting point, take this passage from Jeremiah 6:16:

This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. (Jer. 6:16)

➤ **Imagine yourself standing at the cross roads seeking God's highest way**

Picture, if you like, Jesus at the crossroads with you. What do you say to Him? What does He say to you?

When I last did the earlier meditation about standing with Jesus at the Cross roads, I saw Him pointing *backwards*, reminding me of all the ways by which He has led me over many years.

Try pausing for a moment to remember all the Lord has been to us, and how His love has brought us so through so much. By reminding us of how faithful He has been in the past, He is hinting at how faithful He will also be in the future. May we not do Him the dishonour of not trusting Him.

Finally, make sure you share where you are up to in your pilgrimage with someone. Wise outsiders will see things that you have missed, and make sense of things that are quite obvious from the outside, but whose dynamic may escape us 'from the inside'.

God bless,

Robert

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