

Are You Blocking the Flow of the Holy Spirit?

A few years ago the Lord challenged me about my level of spiritual hunger. He showed me that even though I had stood in many prayer lines and repeatedly sung the words, “Lord, I want more of You,” I wasn’t as passionate for Him as I thought I was.

My church sponsored a conference on the Holy Spirit. At the close of one service, I was lying on the floor near the altar, asking God for another touch of His power. Several other people were kneeling at the communion rail and praying quietly for each other.

Suddenly I began to have a vision. In my mind I could see a large pipeline, at least eight feet in diameter. I was looking at it from the inside, and I could see a shallow stream of golden liquid flowing at the bottom. The oil in the giant pipe was only a few inches deep.

I began a conversation with the Lord.

“What are You showing me?” I asked.

“This is the flow of the Holy Spirit in your life,” He answered.

It was not an encouraging picture; it was pitiful! The capacity of the pipeline was huge—enough to convey tons of oil. Yet only a trickle was evident.

Then I noticed something else: Several large valves were lined up along the sides of the pipeline, and each of them was shut.

I wanted to ask the Lord why there was so little oil in my life. Instead I asked: “What are those valves, and why are they closed?”

His answer stunned me. "Those represent the times when you said no. Why should I increase the level of anointing if you aren't available to use it?"

The words stung. When had I said no to God? I was overcome with emotion and began to repent. I recalled different excuses I had made and limitations I had placed on how He could use me.

I had told Him that I didn't want to be in front of crowds because I wasn't a good speaker. I had told Him that if I couldn't preach like T.D. Jakes does, then I didn't want to speak at all. I had told Him that I didn't want to address certain issues or go certain places. I had placed so many cumbersome conditions on my obedience.

After a while I began to see something else in my spirit. It was a huge crowd of African men, assembled as if they were in a large arena. And I saw myself preaching to them.

Nobody had ever asked me to minister in Africa, but I knew at that moment I needed to surrender my will. All I could think to say was the prayer of Isaiah: "Here am I. Send me." (Is. 6:8). I told God I would go anywhere and say anything He asked. I laid my insecurities, fears and inhibitions on the altar.

Three years later I stood at a pulpit inside a sports arena in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. As I addressed a crowd of 8,000 pastors who had assembled there for a training conference, I remembered seeing their faces in that vision. And I realized that God had opened a new valve in my life that day when I was on the floor of my church. Because I had said yes, He had increased the flow of His oil so that it could reach thousands.

Many of us have a habit of asking for more of God's power and anointing. But what do we use it for? He doesn't send it just to make us feel good.

We love to go to the altar for a touch from God. We love the goose bumps, the shaking, the emotion of the moment. We love to fall on the floor and experience one filling after another. But I am afraid some of us are soaking up the anointing but not giving it away. Our charismatic experience has become inward and selfish. We get up off the floor and live like we want to.

Pentecost is not a party. If we truly want to be empowered, we must offer God an unqualified yes. We must crucify every no. We must become a conduit to reach others, not a reservoir with no outlet.

Search your own heart today and see if there are any closed valves in your pipeline. As you surrender them, the locked channels will open, and His oil will flow out to a world that craves to know He is real. {eoa}

Special announcement: *If you live in the Orlando area, Lee Grady will be speaking at a special event at the Charisma offices on Thursday, Nov. 10 at 7 pm. He will be launching his new book, Set My Heart on Fire from Charisma House. To reserve a free seat, get your ticket here.*