

Bethel's Bill Johnson Shares How Your Choices Can Impact Nations, Generations

We've seen it too many times to count. A faith leader serves God and, miraculously or otherwise, ends up with a huge following. Somewhere along the way, the leader loses their way. Next thing we know, the headlines feature their moral failure, firing or both.

Pastor Bill Johnson, senior leader of Bethel Church in Redding, California, knows how deceitful our hearts can be. But he also knows about the power of God and His ability to help us maintain our priorities and focus.

"He's called us to disciple nations," Johnson tells Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of the *Greenelines* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. "And it's a very large task. And we can't do it until we know how to master the realms of personal promotion—watch over our own hearts so that we step into promotion. ... It's the big challenge, because people tend to get promoted out of their own maturity. They tend to get promoted out of their own strength of their own heart, their own character.

"It's happened through revivals, you know," Johnson says. "Revivals bring increase of blessing, of conflict. Some people can't handle the conflict; they become embittered. Some can't handle the blessing; they become materialistic or self-centered. And yet the move of God always increases stuff in our life. If we just don't know how to navigate that well, we end up choosing where we're going to level off—when God actually wanted to position us to disciple nations.

"That's my big deal is that we are successful in discipling nations, that we truly can raise up disciples, of kings, of

leaders around the world, and at the same time, maintain true humility and accountability in community,” Johnson says. “And that’s my passion.”

Johnson highlights the biblical story of King Hezekiah (Isa. 36:1-39:8) as an example of a leader who stood out in the midst of opposition including idolatry and witchcraft. “But something happened along the line ... The prophet Isaiah told him he was going to die, get his house in order. Isaiah left the room.

“Hezekiah cried out to God; he said, ‘God, I’ve been faithful,” Johnson says. “And the Lord had Isaiah come back and say, ‘You have 15 more years.’”

But “something happened in that moment,” Johnson adds. “The convicting passage in this story is that he didn’t return thanks equal to the miracle he received. It doesn’t say he wasn’t thankful; he wasn’t moved to the measure that God moved on his behalf.

“And so sometimes we, we develop tokenism: prayers, token gifts, token offerings, token thanks, but not really deep from the heart that cost us something,” Johnson says. “And that’s what happened to Hezekiah. And he moved into a form of worship instead of the authentic putting your life on the altar.”

To discover how Hezekiah’s lapse had a generational impact and how your choices can impact your own legacy for good or for evil, listen to the entire episode of *Greenelines* here. And make sure to check out Johnson’s new book, *Born for Significance*, and subscribe to *Greenelines* for more wisdom and encouragement. {eoa}