

# How God Is Sounding a Trumpet Call for Holiness for His People

I learned a great lesson from an Aglow prison ministry leader whom I had years ago. She said, "Protect the anointing at all cost." Her words indicated that sin was the biggest issue with man, and that the way to protect the anointing was to avoid sin when it knocks at your door. She encouraged us to avoid any appearance of evil and refuse to engage in sin.

There are many subtle ways sin can come into a believer's life. The devil won't enter our lives dressed like a dreaded monster. The main problems are offense, unforgiveness and bitterness as well as our speech. Others are even more subtle.

How are we challenged to protect our anointing? In day-to-day situations and activities with others, saved and unsaved. Friend or foe, family members, ministry colleagues and the like.

Face it, folks, we all have that sin propensity because of the fall of man. What was indicated to me was that personal holiness, hiding under the cleft of the rock, refusing to act on temptations and sin, as well as right standing with God would protect the anointing. We do not have to fear or take matters into our own hands.

We need to be *holy*. Holiness sets us apart for God's purposes. How do we get holy? That happens by setting our lives, agendas, purposes and plans for God. It happens through an awareness of sin and by sinning less and less.

David was a man after God's heart, Scripture says. We need not fear losing our anointing if we are as David was. David was less than perfect, but I believe his heart was set apart for

God. He made an alliance with Bathsheba that led him to commit many sins (2 Sam. 11). But God redeemed all with repentance. You know the story, although there was a price to pay for that choice.

I opened the Bible to 2 Samuel 22 yesterday. It was a powerful prayer and message of the power of God's defense of those in right standing with Him! The "how to's" are all in the Bible.

Second Samuel 22 contains powerful visuals of the degree of God's anger and how He rises up on behalf of His anointed when others come against them. When God fixes things, we are not the "bad guy," and the fixes go beyond anything we can imagine. He wants to be our "El Shaddai" or "mighty breasted one."

People, we don't have to isolate or defend ourselves. He will do it for us. All we have to do is model ourselves after our master, submit and avoid sin. Jesus was meek and lowly of heart.

God is our defense, no matter whom we spend time with. Jesus and the apostles were anointed, and their alliances were far from perfect. Being around others does not contaminate us unless we enter into their sin or our sin. The apostles were holy, set apart for God's glory in their hearts and actions.

How did they get there? It is a progression in life called sanctification. It is our journey as well. And it ends when we get to glory.

We must guard against becoming isolationists as we "protect the anointing." The anointing itself is not the goal; holiness is the goal in all we do.

We need to be able to stand before a pure and holy God as a pure and spotless bride. How does God get us without spot or wrinkle? I believe He surrounds us with and allows into our lives people and situations to knock all the chips away. He

wants to see how we will use the tools He gives us to rise above all of life's distractions, distractions and situations.

If we hide ourselves from others whom we think are less than perfect, or a possible contaminant to us, we abort opportunities to become more like Him: meek, lowly, humble of heart and holy.

The Bible talks about being tried and refined by fire to come out as pure gold. In fact, it says He is coming with a "refiner's fire and fullers' soap" to us (see Mal. 3:2-4. ESV). It also says judgement will begin with the house of the Lord.

Our focus needs to be examining our own responses as we interact with believers and nonbelievers alike. God has "eyes" on us, and we must watch our tongues as well.

Another piece of great advice I got in leadership was this: Always take the low place. That word has served me well. In touchy situations, it is very disarming.

I also believe we need to be especially careful that in our concern to protect the anointing or protect our focus, we can slide into self-protection and further injure others.

But I believe there will be grace to perform in these circumstances. I believe God wants us to train us to be focused in these situations, not run from them. Remember, the giftings and callings of God are irrevocable (see Rom. 11:29). So we need to put our boxing gloves down and trust that as we demonstrate love to the hurting and unlovely, God will protect us. He allowed Daniel into the lion's den, and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the fire! Look what God allowed into Job's life. The list continues. Look also as to how He was there for them and redeemed all.

I do believe there are times when we must set healthy boundaries, but that is after we have done *all* that we can

with the scriptural process God has designed for us in His Word: Matthew 5:24-25, Matthew 15:18 and more.

I have seen a saying on Facebook that says something like, "Sometimes rejection is God's protection." I have not seen that in the Word. In situations when others reject us and we have done all we can, we have no choice for that separation. It is on them, not us. But we are commanded to pray blessings on them, and again, they now have choices. Life is a progressive training ground. Relationships are not easy, but I can tell you, they are very important to God!

I believe as long as we progress toward holiness, we have nothing to fear about losing or damaging our anointing. Stay attached to the *vine*, and you cannot lose.

Life is not all about us or our personal agendas. God cares about everything we do. Many have remembered Him as Creator and not as master and Lord. Are our plans submitted to Him in all areas? "Oh, God does not care about the small decisions," you say? Yes, he does! He is looking for people who are totally submitted and trust that His ways are higher. Paul talks about being a bondsman to Christ. I believe that was the disciples' ticket into sonship and apostleship, with signs and wonders following!

Samson allowed Delilah into his life. But it was Samson's choices that hurt him, not Delilah. We are all given choices in life, and we will never be exempt from the consequences of those choices. But God is watching us and providing for us—especially those in leadership positions.

The Bible does warn us about being unequally yoked. There is much to say about this. But again, God warned that this is not sin as much as a warning of the challenges that we face in these situations. Scripture also refers to not being aligned with unbelievers. Sometimes we can unwittingly treat others as though they have spiritual "cooties," which often makes a bad

situation worse.

There is much collateral damage among Christians in their efforts to protect themselves, and we are wounding other brothers and sisters in Christ. Do you know how it starts? It starts with our own judgments about these fellow brothers and sisters. Then it turns into rejection, and on and on.

We are to restore one another in an attitude of meekness and love. Can you begin to see where the enemy has slipped in to cause disunity in the body of Christ? He wants to bring unity to His church. Can you see the strategy of the enemy now? God calls us to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

No one is perfect. Relationship and understanding prevents judgments about others. Isolation and self-protection bring death, not life. It starts with us. Love does cover a multitude of sins. Dorothy Day has said, "We can only love God to the degree we love one another." I believe that also includes ourselves, but that love is a sacrificial love.

Many people are afraid to wear love on their sleeves because they don't want to suffer hurt. Fear is denying opportunities and failing to trust that God is there for protection and defense. What is the sin here? Fear and lack of trust in God. I have been hurt a lot in my life, but I have purposely never lost an opportunity to love. I will have missed out on many blessings if I had stopped to protect myself. I refuse to give in to hurt and offense, which are one of the best tactics of the enemy. This is, in part, how I protect my anointing. I will always reach out to make it better, and if it is not received, it is on them, not me. Then I pray, pray, pray and leave it to my Father in heaven, and move on with what He has called me to do. There is no halo on this head. I am being purified as I write this, as well as being held accountable for what I am sharing.

Can you see Jesus ever saying, “I need to avoid these people because I want to protect My anointing”? No, He died for all of us, and His alliances were the lowest of the low. He did this to the point that He was even judged by His followers. In fact, as He died on the cross, despite the revilings, accusations and more, Scripture says, “He uttered no threats” (1 Pet. 2:23b, NASB).

We are all anointed. God is the judge, not us! By we are the only ones who can take away or destroy our anointing—by personal sin without repentance. God calls us to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters especially. The Bible says, “Don’t touch God’s anointed,” whether you agree with them or not. The real enemy here is the devil. It’s the Lord’s job to make the corrections and our job to love all that we are!

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