

10 Keys to Move to the Next Spiritual Level

So many Christians get stuck in spiritual immaturity. Here are 10 keys to help you move to the next spiritual level.

You and I are living in a time of divine transition. Not only are things changing in the world around us, people's lives are changing too. Yes, God is shifting His people—perhaps even you—from one assignment to the next, from one sphere of influence or authority to the next, from one opportunity to the next, and from one season to the next.

Everywhere I look as I travel the globe, I see that God is moving His people to the next level in our ministries or professional endeavors and in our personal lives. He is moving us forward in our destinies, advancing us in His purposes and equipping us for greater accomplishments than we have ever known. He is doing this so His kingdom can be established and increased in every sphere of every society on earth.

I believe that you are longing to fulfill God's great purposes for your life and that you desire to see His kingdom come and His will be done on earth, just as it is in heaven. If you are like many others, you may also be going through many changes in your life right now as God is preparing you to be used in new and different ways for His glory in the days ahead.

In the midst of transition, you may have many questions and moments of uncertainty. Let me encourage you with some words of wisdom from the book of Daniel. Concerning the times and seasons of our lives, Daniel 2:21 teaches us that "He [God] changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning" (NIV).

Because God does give us wisdom and knowledge about the

changes in our lives, you can be sure that you have everything you need to move to your next level. You have enough to make the shift.

So wherever you are at this moment in your life, relax and say: "God, I want to go to my new level now. I am getting ready to move on and move up." Then follow these 10 steps to help you through the transition process.

1. Be convinced of the call. When God begins to take you through the process of change, you must make sure you are absolutely convinced of His call on your life and secure in His purposes as He has revealed them to you.

When you know that God Himself has called you, nothing can convince you otherwise. You know in your "know-er" that you have clearly perceived God's destiny for your life. You can hear the words resonating in your heart: "This is God's plan and purpose for me."

If you are not convinced of your call, if you waver or hesitate about it, then every time you hit a point of discouragement, an obstacle, or a difficulty, you will focus on your problems and give up. You will not overcome your challenges and pursue your destiny because your lack of conviction will lead you to abandon the mission to which God has called you.

Only a deep conviction of your call will enable you to keep going when facing hardship. If you are going to deal with change effectively and persevere through difficulty, you must be so convinced of God's call on your life that you will not quit, no matter what. This conviction will breed determination inside you, and determination is essential to successful transition.

2. Realize that a prophetic word is not enough. I like to receive prophetic words as much as anyone else does, and I highly value the prophetic ministry. However, I do not change

my address because of a prophetic word. No, I have to hear God speak to my heart personally before I pack my boxes and move to a new address.

How should you respond when you receive a word from the Lord through prophecy? Let me offer some guidelines.

Look for confirmation. Remember that a prophetic word should confirm what God is saying to you, not determine it. In other words, if a prophecy presents an entirely new thought or idea to you, then receive the word—but “hold” it until God sends some other confirmations that make its meaning clear to you.

Don't wait too long. If God gives you confirmation after confirmation of a prophetic word, and you do nothing with that clear direction, then do not expect Him to continue “confirming” the word forever. No, after a while, His Spirit will begin to slowly retreat from speaking to you.

He may keep prompting you to act, but after a while, you can become dull of hearing and miss moving on to the new level to which God has called you. Know the timing of God and move in it.

3. Consider how God has used you in the past. When you are moving on and moving up, God will build on your past experiences, so make sure that you are positioned to allow your past to propel you into your future. See your past involvement and experiences—whether in ministry, in education, in social settings, or in a professional capacity—as training grounds. View those experiences as places where God has prepared you.

When you consider the involvement and experience God has given you in the past, realize that He has been equipping you for the next level. God will expand you in those specific areas or build upon the foundation that is already in you.

Even the seeming failures you have been through, the ones that

bring disappointment and pain, are preparation rooms. Eventually you will draw fresh water from the well of your experience and see that God has used your past to prepare you.

4. Determine how you must change. When God begins to shift you from one assignment to another, you will go through a process of preparation. A great deal of preparation will have taken place through the experiences God has given you. But now, as you sense His leading you to the next level and begin to discern specifics about this new assignment, you will enter into a different kind of preparation.

This preparation is not based on your past but must take place in the present. It involves the practical changes you need to make in your life in order to actually fulfill the new assignment or embrace the new season God has for you.

I want to make sure you know that moving to a new level in God or embracing a new assignment from Him is not only a spiritual exercise. Many times, people think they will be prepared for a new assignment if they pray more, worship more and read the Bible more regularly.

These disciplines are important in times of transition, but there are also natural components to the changes God will bring in your life as He moves you forward. Moving to your new level will impact every area of your life, so be equipped.

5. Commit to overcoming the opposition. When God begins to move you to a new level, you will most likely encounter various forms of opposition. As He moves you forward, the devil wants to move you backward, or at least to cause you to stay where you are. He will orchestrate many thoughts or feelings designed to hold you back, so let me encourage you: Go ahead and commit to overcoming any opposition that will come against you.

Do not expect your transition to be easy. Know that the changes will have their challenges, and make a proactive

decision to emerge victorious, by God's grace, in every way.

One of the greatest barriers to moving forward to the next level is being too comfortable functioning where you are. You may want something different, but when you move into it, you realize that the new assignment has no respect whatsoever for your comfort zone. It will stretch you, challenge you and be full of experiences that are unfamiliar to you.

Choosing to stay in your comfort zone may mean that you never go to the next level in God. He will not force you to embrace anything new, but I believe He wants you to do so in order to fulfill His purposes for your life. Any form of discomfort is worth overcoming in order to say yes to the next great thing God has for you.

6. Build a mentoring relationship. I remember feeling alone at times when I started out in ministry. I, and others in my generation, thought: Well, I will just do it. If I succeed, then I was called of God. If I fail, then God didn't call me after all. We thought asking for help was a sign of weakness.

This kind of approach is what I call "old wineskin" thinking. I thank God that we can now take a "new wineskin" approach that says, "Aligning myself properly in right relationships will help release me into my destiny."

I am referring specifically to becoming aligned in a mentoring relationship with another. When you are aligned with someone in this way, the relationship will keep you from feeling alone and thinking you must "figure it out" all by yourself, whether you want mentoring in your profession or ministry or whether you need a mentor in some area of your personal life.

Especially in ministry settings, having a mentor to walk with you and help you mature in your ministry will allow you to fail without doubting God's call. It will also help you learn from your mistakes as you walk with someone who has the experience, wisdom and ability to help you grow and develop.

Proper alignment with a mentor is not only a great source of guidance and support, it can also be crucial to the fulfillment of your destiny and vital to your getting to the next level.

7. Be prepared for increased spiritual attacks. The more you move into God's unfolding purposes for your life, the more effective you become for Him—and the more of a threat you become to the kingdom of darkness. We know that Jesus came to earth to destroy the works of the devil (see 1 John 3:8) and we know that, in Him, we are assured of victory in every situation (see 2 Cor. 2:14).

But our certain triumph does not eliminate the battle. We have an enemy; we are engaged in a spiritual war; and we must fight.

The attacks of our opposition seem to intensify when we move from one level to the next. Whenever we embrace a new season or take on a new assignment, warfare follows because the enemy wants to stop us from doing what we are called to do to advance God's kingdom. You are probably accustomed to the level of warfare you have experienced in your current circumstances, but you need to know that when you step up, the battles will heat up.

New battles require new strategies, but your basic equipment remains the same. In Christ, you have spiritual armor to protect against the attacks of the enemy (see Eph. 6:13-18). You also have the weapon of His Word, the power of His Spirit and the reinforcement of other believers. Use everything available to you as a Christian, and though attacks will come, you will overcome with God's help.

8. Accept acceptance. Once you are convinced that God has called you to the next level and you truly step into it, you will begin to feel the responsibility and authority of that level. You will sense an anointing and a grace from God to do

what you are supposed to be doing in your new season.

As you are settling in to your new place, you must resist the temptation to be shy, sheepish or apologetic about what God has done in you. Be gracious, of course, but do not let false humility creep into your thoughts or conversation.

A genuinely humble person accepts and acknowledges what God has done in his or her life. If you want to live in true humility, do not try to explain away God's work in your life. Instead, be honest about what He is doing, admit your need for His grace and give Him glory without being pious.

God calls and anoints certain people for certain roles and tasks according to His wisdom and grace. When the time comes for Him to move you to a new level, be aware that you are now released; you can now flow in the Lord without the former limitations.

As you simply trust His wisdom and follow His lead, your confidence and anointing will continue to increase. Do not become proud; but neither should you deny who God has designed you to be.

9. Remember that transition takes time. Successful transition does not happen quickly, and for you, getting to the next level may take time. I want to encourage you now to determine to be patient as you move into your new season. Do not try to change things for yourself too quickly or rush ahead of God's timing.

God has designed change to be a process, not an event. He is certainly interested in the end result of the changes He orchestrates in our lives, but the process of growth and maturity that accompanies change is also very important to Him.

For this reason, He typically works diligently, deliberately and more slowly than you might want! But you need to remember

that His timing is perfect; it is part of a grand plan for your life; and it will bring you great joy and fulfillment as you patiently cooperate with it.

Like the Israelites, you are on a journey toward the full possession of His promises to you—and you will face opposition as you go. But God has the same strategy for victory in your life as He had for His people centuries ago: little by little. You will get where He wants you to go one step at a time, one day at a time, one victory at a time.

10. Move ahead with bold faith. Any time God is shifting you from one level to the next, there comes a point at which you simply must “go for it.”

This is a point beyond commitment, a point past making a firm decision to move forward; it is the point at which you actually put one foot in front of the other and take the critical steps that will solidify you in your new position. This is the point at which faith springs into action and becomes more alive than ever before.

God’s way is a way of faith. You can know all kinds of concepts and principles, but without faith—bold faith—you will never step out to achieve all God has purposed for you.

Jesus is saying to you: “Come on! Take that step of bold faith. I am ready and waiting to walk with you.”

Always remember, God is faithful. He is faithful to finish the work He has begun in you (see Phil. 1:6). Move on and move up. I’ll meet you at your next level!

Naomi Dowdy is the resident apostle and former senior pastor of Trinity Christian Centre in Singapore. She is also the founder of Global Leadership Network and Global Covenant Network and has been dedicated to training pastors and leaders

for more than 30 years. For more information, go to .