

Stop Limiting the Flow of the Holy Spirit's Oil

A few years ago the Lord challenged me about my level of spiritual hunger. He showed me that even though I had 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 about 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, spanning a landscape that looked like the Texas countryside. I was looking at the pipe 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 a picture of the flow of the Holy Spirit in your life," He answered.

It was not an encouraging image! The capacity of the pipeline was huge—enough to convey a gushing river of oil. Yet only a trickle of oil 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 asked the Lord: "What are those valves, and why are they closed?"

His answer stunned me. "Those represent the times when you

said no to Me. 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. Then I recalled different excuses I had made and limitations I had placed on how He could use me. I realized that my fears and insecurities were limiting God.

I had told God 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 a famous TV preacher, 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 another vision. I saw a huge crowd of Africans 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, Lord, send me" from Isaiah 6:8. I told God I would go anywhere and say anything He asked. I laid my insecurities, fears and inhibitions on the altar.

I surrendered all limitations.

Less than two 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.

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 more oil just to make us feel good. He doesn't give us more of His power so we can fall on the floor, or so we can shake under the anointing, or so we can feel good about ourselves.

He doesn't give us rivers of oil to waste on our own agendas. He releases the oil when we are willing to use it for His will and purpose.

I'm afraid some of us are soaking up the anointing without ever giving it away. Our charismatic experience has become inward and selfish. We fall on the floor, then we get up and live however we want to. That is not true surrender.

When I raise my hands to Him I am saying, essentially: "Lord, I belong to you. My life is yours. I don't want to run my life on my own—I want you to direct me. I don't want to control my relationships, my money, my career path or my future—I want to follow Your will and purpose. I am Yours, Lord."

Can you say those words to God? It is only when we empty our lives that we can be filled with Him. Full surrender leads to a full overflow.

If we truly want to be empowered, we must offer God an unqualified yes. We must crucify every no. God never called us to be a reservoir with no outlet. We must become a conduit to reach others.

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.

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