

5 Reasons Why I No Longer Pray for a Double-Portion Anointing

Not long ago I became very troubled in my spirit about a common Pentecostal/charismatic practice: praying for believers to receive a “double-portion anointing.” Many times I have witnessed ministers promoting an altar call with a glowing promise like, “Everyone who seeks God in this altar tonight will get a double portion of the anointing in your life. If Elijah could prophesy that to Elisha, I can prophesy it to you!”

Forgive me if I sound skeptical, critical or nitpicky, but I don't think this practice is real or right. Don't get me wrong! I love the power, the gifts and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, but on the highest level, I am a lover of truth. Traditions are expendable; the truth is not.

For 43 years, I have been involved in power evangelism with an emphasis on altar ministry. And unfortunately, I must admit that years ago, oblivious to my error, I prayed this kind of prayer for believers myself—until I jumped over the rusty fence of Pentecostal/charismatic tradition to find the green pasture of what is scripturally pure. I still pray that God will manifest Himself through His people in greater ways and more fully awaken their gifts, but I no longer pray a “double portion” on believers, especially indiscriminately on large groups at the same time—and for the following reasons:

1. The exponential multiplication factor is astronomical.

Just suppose that someone participates in 20 different “double-portion” services over a period of 20 years, with either the promise that a double portion of the minister's anointing will pass to them or a double portion of their own

anointing will take place.

If this terminology is to be taken literally, every time that believer is prayed for, his or her anointing should be doubled (twice as much as the previous measure of the anointing). If that be so, the second time this prayer is prayed, it would result in a double portion of the previous double portion; then the next time the doubled double-portion would be doubled; and so on.

Here is a math representation of this idea with the number 1 representing the person's original anointing, then doubling that amount 20 times: 1 anointing, $2 \times 1 = 2$ / $2 \times 2 = 4$ / $2 \times 4 = 8$ / $2 \times 8 = 16$ / $2 \times 16 = 32$ / $2 \times 32 = 64$ / $2 \times 64 = 128$ / $2 \times 128 = 256$ / $2 \times 256 = 512$ / $2 \times 512 = 1,024$ / $2 \times 1,024 = 2,048$ / $2 \times 2,048 = 4,096$ / $2 \times 4,096 = 8,192$ / $2 \times 8,192 = 16,384$ / $2 \times 16,384 = 32,768$ / $2 \times 32,768 = 65,536$ / $2 \times 65,536 = 131,072$ / $2 \times 131,072 = 262,144$ / $2 \times 262,144 = 524,288$ / $2 \times 524,288 = 1,048,576$.

So by the time a believer goes through 20 double-portion services (with a fiery Elijah/Elisha message being referenced), over a million times greater anointing should manifest than he or she started out with. Can you see the absurdity of this idea, just on the basis of this mathematical calculation?

2. Greater works should result.

With Elijah and Elisha, the double-portion anointing resulted in Elisha performing twice as many miracles as Elijah (we assume this by the record contained in Scripture). So anyone receiving a double portion should increase dramatically in the amount of miraculous works he or she is accomplishing for the kingdom of God.

I don't think I have ever witnessed that taking place. Usually participants in a double-portion service remain at about at the same level of spirituality and works when they leave, with only a few exceptions. In all honesty, those who actually do

increase in works may accomplish more for the kingdom simply because they got more zealous about fulfilling their calling or became more passionate about manifesting the anointing they already had.

3. Is it biblically correct in the New Testament?

In the Old Testament, Elijah did prophesy a double portion to Elisha one time (2 Kings 2:1-14); however, we find no instance of such a practice happening in the New Testament. So I personally feel it is no longer a proper method to increase the level of a person's spirituality. Ephesians 4:7 says, "But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ [the Messiah, the Anointed One]." Part of the "grace" (Gr. *charis*) God measures out to His people is the personal anointing (Gr. *charisma*) that He places within their hearts.

First John 2:20 declares to every truly born-again member of the body of Christ, "You *have* an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things" (NKJV, emphasis added), and 1 John 2:27 affirms, "But the anointing which you *have received* from Him *abides in you*, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him" (emphasis added).

The Scripture clearly indicates that we already *have* the anointing (the specific application of the Holy Spirit to accomplish a specific God-given purpose). It never says that this anointing can be increased or doubled. Could it be that we just need to yield more completely to the wonderful application of grace that is already in our lives?

Spiritual impartations are a reality in the New Testament. Paul prayed for Timothy and awakened gifts of the Spirit in his life by the laying on of hands. There is no denying the validity of such an apostolic practice. But the Scripture

gives us no account of Peter or Paul or any of the chief leaders of the early New Covenant church praying for someone to receive a double portion. They knew they had already received the ultimate anointing (Heb. *mishchah*) by receiving the Messiah (Heb. *Mashiyach*) into their hearts. Such an amazing, abiding New Covenant gift is far more intense than the Spirit (the anointing) that was on Moses being poured out on the 70 elders chosen by God to serve with Him—for their prophetic sensitivity only lasted a day (Num. 11:24-25).

4. We already have God's fullness.

John, the apostle who loved the Lord intensely, wrote, "Of His fullness we have all received" and Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, added, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him" (John 1:16; Col. 2:10). Jesus was the entirety of "the Word made flesh," and He received from the Father "the fullness of His Spirit" (John 1:14; one version says, "the Spirit without limit," GNB). His inner connection with the Almighty was so absolute, He dared to say, "He who has seen Me has seen My Father" (John 14:9).

If the Son of God dwells within the hearts of true believers, imparting His "fullness" to us, how can that indwelling presence of the Most High God increase? How could we receive more than "the fullness" of the One who is infinitely wise, infinitely powerful and infinitely loving? Undoubtedly, we can yield more completely to His lordship and see greater manifestations of His power and wisdom and love in our lives. But who would be so audacious as to ask for a double portion of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the firstborn Son of God? There is none like Him and none worthy of even being compared to Him. Added to that, we Pentecostal/charismatics have received the baptism, the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Can the Holy Spirit be doubled?

Evidently, there are differing "degrees" of the anointing that manifest through various believers, determined by the callings

they are given, the offices they fill, the purposes that rest upon them or the levels of responsibility in God's kingdom that they bear (e.g., apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, etc.). These varied anointings probably differ in measure and are distinct from the equal shared "fullness" that every believer inherits on a foundational level. At times, these specific anointings might be increased to accommodate new phases of God's purposes; but they are certainly not "doubled" over and over again until they are multiplied exponentially.

5. Have we interpreted the Elijah/Elisha story incorrectly?

The term "double portion" was commonly used in ancient days to refer to the inheritance that would pass to the firstborn son. A double portion did not mean twice as much as what the father possessed (which would be impossible); it meant twice as much as the whole amount passed to all the other offspring, or a significantly greater portion.

When Elijah was about to be carried away into heaven in a fiery chariot, Elisha petitioned, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me" (2 Kings 2:9, NKJV). Another version says, "Let me inherit a double share of your spirit" (GW). That did not mean he was asking for twice as much of the anointing as what rested upon Elijah. Matthew Henry judiciously explained in his commentary, Elisha was not requesting "double to what Elijah had, but double to what the rest of the prophets had." That was a well-known interpretation of the term in that day. So those who use this phrase in a modern sense to mean "twice as much" are actually misinterpreting and misapplying this ancient biblical concept.

In Conclusion

As an addendum, I must offer that there are many great ministers of God who pray this "double-portion anointing" on people they minister to—and they do so sincerely. They are

just trying to help, to edify, to encourage, to empower. In most cases, I would dare to say they are not intentionally being deceptive or manipulative. They are just following a common evangelistic practice without questioning its validity. But if we are to be true worshippers, we should base our expectations only on that which is true—not on artificial, Pentecostal/charismatic hype that produces a high level of excitement for a few moments in a revival, but doesn't really work in the long term. Isn't that a better way of representing our Savior on earth?

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