

1 Factor That Limits Angelic Ministry to Believers

I say this with pain in my heart, but too many believers are sickly, die prematurely, are involved in tragic accidents, and suffer great calamities, often to the point of the destruction of their own homes and families. Our hearts are made heavy at such times when we discover that some of these bad things happen to good Christian people.

The Bible also shares many examples, both positive and negative, which are full of wisdom and tell both sides of the story—the successes and the failures in people's lives. We are to learn from both examples.

The problem today is that many ministers are only telling the success side of things. They tell you what God will do for you through His goodness and grace regardless of how you live and your level of character, obedience, and consecration.

Lack of consecration can greatly limit angelic ministry to the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). For example, the angels are encamped around about those who fear the Lord to keep them in all their ways (Ps. 34:7). This Scripture is conditional. Walking in the fear of the Lord is the condition believers must meet to ensure angelic protection for their lives. The manifestation of the fear of the Lord is obedience.

Not only do angels minister protection, but they are also called to minister provision for the believer. When believers are not consecrated, they move outside of God's path and God's plan for their lives thus hindering the angels from moving on their behalf. Angels will minister very little provision to those who are not endeavoring to follow God's plan for their lives.

We tend to forget about those angels. They are mighty. They

excel in strength and hearken to the voice of God's Word (see Ps. 103:20). They are sent by the Lord to minister to us, but very often our lack of consecration limits them.

Notice how angels ministered to Jesus after He overcame the temptations of Satan in the wilderness (Matt. 4:11). Every time Jesus was tempted He spoke the Word of God. That's what the angels hearken to. But what we fail to often see about these verses is the consecration that Jesus made at the beginning of His ministry. He spent 40 days and nights in prayer and fasting and overcame every temptation the devil threw at Him. The angels then came and ministered to Him.

Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'

Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him" (Matt. 4:10-11).

That word 'minister' generally means to do anyone a service and care for someone's needs. Here's something we may not have seen before. Angels are not only committed to the Lord and His Word. They are committed to those who speak His Word and obey it. In a certain sense angels are drawn to a believer's consecration and their surrender to the Lord's will.

Notice another example of how angels ministered to Jesus at the end of His ministry in the garden of Gethsemane as Jesus battled to fulfill and complete our redemption. Once again we know what a difficult trial this was for Jesus.

In the garden He prayed the same prayer of consecration three times as Matthew records it, and so intense was the struggle that Jesus sweat great drops of blood (Matt. 26:44). We see here one more time the correlation between the angels and the consecration Jesus made. Angels honor the word of the Lord and they are activated by a believer's consecration and surrender.

"Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him" (Luke 22:43).

Not only do angels minister protection and strength to us, but they minister preparation and provision for us also in many different areas. A minister received the following vision from the Lord that wonderfully illustrates this and agrees with Scripture.

The vision was about a young mother with two small children whose husband had left her. At this time she was without a job, her car was broke down, she had no money to provide day care for her children, and she was living with her parents and complaining to the Lord about the lack of provision in her life. The Lord then showed this minister two pathways into this woman's future symbolized by two assembly lines. The first pathway was all lit up and showed angels darting in and out while others stood on the side arranging things. This represented the perfect will of God for her life for the next two years.

All the provision the woman had been praying for and needed had already been commanded by the Lord and prepared by the angels.

The other pathway was not lit up very well and there were only one or two angels on it looking rather inactive. This was the path the woman was currently on which was outside the will of God.

The woman was facing some decisions in her life that required growth and character and a stronger consecration and obedience from her. But she was emotionally unwilling to surrender and do what was right. She was looking for answers but in the wrong place. For example, she was in her parents' church instead of another church that the Lord was leading her to. In that other church God had commanded three different people to bless this woman. One was to fix her car, one was to give her a job as a receptionist, and the other was to babysit her children. All this provision had been prepared by the angels

for her to walk in, but due to her disobedience she was not receiving it.

Remember the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-16). The Lord had commanded this widow to sustain Elijah, but when he arrived there the lady was preparing what she thought was her last meal, unaware that a miraculous provision had been commanded from heaven. Both her obedience and Elijah's obedience to the word of the Lord manifested the provision.

Angels are sent by the Lord to make preparations for our provision, but we've got to stay consecrated to the will and the plan of God to receive it. Angels have no authority to change God's plans nor to give people slack or forgive their disobedience. They are simply sent to do a job and they have no emotional attachment to people.

When my family and I moved from Florida to New England years ago, I was conscious of the Lord's timing and provision. Our house in Florida had been on the market for a number of months and hardly anyone was even looking at it, much less interested in purchasing it. Suddenly the second person that viewed the home purchased it, and we made a trip to New England and found a new home to purchase there within three days. Things had been so slow to develop up until that point, but then they happened so quickly.

I'm convinced that the angels had a definite timetable they were working with. We wanted to be in New England by the spring but the angels had prepared for late summer. It didn't matter how much we spoke the Word or believed God for our home to sell at a certain time. The angels have no liberty to change God's plans or timetable. Often we push things and try to force something to happen outside of the timing of the Lord. Part of our consecration is not only to God's plans but His timing also.

I could list a number of other examples from my own personal life where my obedience accelerated provision and where my disobedience to God's plans or timing caused delays. Let's judge ourselves in these areas of consecration.

Are you walking in love toward others, especially your family and members of the body of Christ? Is there any unforgiveness in your heart toward anyone? Do you want others to succeed as much as you want to succeed?

Are you free of pride and selfish motives? Why do you want God's blessings? Why do you want financial peace and independence? Are your motives worthy of God's favor? Are you consecrated to the will and plan of God for your life whatever that may be? Are things in order in your heart?