

7 Power Principles of John the Baptist

John the Baptist has always been one of the most intriguing men in all of human history. He was an outlier, living outside of conventional norms, and was cited by Jesus as the greatest man ever born (Matt. 11:11). Since Jesus gave John such an amazing endorsement, we need to learn as much as we can from his life.

The following are seven power principles of John the Baptist

1. He had godly parents who raised him.

John's walk with the Lord started from birth as he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15). In order for that to happen, his mother had to walk with God to "house" the Spirit of God. We also find that both his parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, walked blamelessly before the Lord (Luke 1:6). This is not an accident, because Scripture teaches us how important the role of parents is in the formation of their children (Deut. 6:6-9; Prov. 22:6).

2. Prophecies were spoken that declared his destiny.

Zechariah had a word about John's birth given to him from an angelic visitation (Luke 1:11-23). After John was born, Zechariah had a prophecy regarding his calling and destiny that he spoke over him (Luke 1:69-79). With each of our five biological children, I had a word of the Lord that I spoke over them repeatedly while they were in my wife's womb. I believe it is essential that parents have a sense of the prophetic destiny of their children. We are called to speak their prophetic destiny over them when they are young and to remind them of it as they grow older. (Although my parents were not saved until I was a late teenager, my grandmother continually prayed for our family, which resulted in God

saving us all.)

3. John had a ministry model.

John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah the prophet (Luke 1:17). This meant that he came to carry on the mantle of ministry that Elijah left on the earth, which ultimately was to break up the religious ground and turn fathers and sons back to the ways of the Lord. Every one of us needs both a biblical model and an extra- biblical historical (or contemporary) model to inspire us in our earthly calling. Through the years, several people have inspired me. In my formative (Christian) years, I was impacted by the life and ministry of Charles Finney, and later on, Abraham Kuyper became a model of inspiration to me. Among the most powerful biblical models for my life (besides the Lord Jesus Christ of course) has been Elijah in the Old Testament and Paul the apostle in the New Testament. Both these men (and some others) have been models that aid me in understanding my calling in the Kingdom.

4. John prepared 30 years for a brief public ministry.

Many people want to rush into their calling with very little preparation. I have seen many people start off with a huge following after their initial start in ministry only to have a significant collapse several years later. (It is not how you start, but how you finish that matters.) John the Baptist stayed in the wilderness preparing for his public ministry for 30 years until his appearance (Luke 1:80). He ministered only a brief period of time; Jesus said it was only for a season (John 5:35). Some scholars believe he ministered only about two and a half years. Read the following quote:

“... The divine historian tells us John’s ministry began “in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar” (Luke 3:1). Secular historians date that around 29 A.D. John mentions four Passover feasts (John 2:23; John 5:1; John

6:4; John 13:1). The Lord's ministry began before the first, and He was crucified on the fourth Passover. That suggests His public ministry was slightly more than three years. If we accept that the Lord's crucifixion was in 33 A.D., His public ministry began in the latter part of 29 A.D. when He "began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23), perhaps as much as six months after John began to preach. Matthew places the death of John the Baptist before the feeding of the 5000 (Matt. 14:1-13, 21). John tells us the feeding of the 5000 took place shortly before the third Passover (John 6:4-13), about two and a half years into the Lord's ministry. John had been in prison for a time before that, so his ministry, before imprisonment, may have been as short as two and a half years. Such a valuable man! Yet he fulfilled his course (Acts 13:25) within three years. Hence, John prepared about 30 years for a ministry that lasted less than three years.

5. John spent time alone with God in the wilderness.

It tells us that John was in the wilderness his whole life until his appearing (Luke 1:80). Coupled with the instruction given by the angel Gabriel to his father Zechariah, it seems as though John lived with a single focus on serving God (Luke 1:14, 15). Since the wilderness is generally a solitary place, we can assume that John spent much of his time alone (about 30 years), seeking God and learning His ways. This illustrates powerfully that time alone with God is never a waste. When our lifestyle is so full of activities that it greatly diminishes our time alone with Him, it minimizes the imprint we will leave on the earth.

6 He spoke truth to power.

One of the earmarks of John the Baptist was the fact that he was not afraid to speak the truth to both political and religious leaders. John reproved King Herod for the evil things he did and was put in prison for it (Luke 3:18-20); He

also called the top religious leaders of Israel the offspring of snakes and warned them to flee God's wrath (Matt. 3:7-10). Anybody who is going to be effective as God's witness has to be willing to confront both the small and the great with the truth of God's Word.

7. He prepared the way for someone greater.

Many leaders today do not understand that their greatest calling is to prepare the way for another generation of leaders that will do greater things than them. Most transitions from one leader to another fail because of various reasons. John the Baptist was successful because he understood that his greatest ministry was to prepare the way for the one who was to come after Him. His greatest calling was to prepare hearts and minds for the coming Messiah. He did not let ego or insecurity get in the way of his calling, even when goaded by his disciples (read John 3:25-30). Perhaps it was because of his prophetic self-awareness and humility that Jesus said that John was the greatest man ever born up till that time.

My prayer is that all believers will put these seven power principles of John the Baptist into practice. If we do so, we will prepare the way for the next great thing God wants to do in the earth. {eo}