

Before You Minister to Others, Make Sure You Are Armed With This

There are a number of questions we should ask ourselves before we minister or approach people, whether we are counseling them, encouraging or even prophesying over them. They include:

Do you value and love Jesus? Is your love for Him growing every day? Do you cherish His wonderful Holy Spirit? Do you love God's children and do you love those who do not know Him? Do you genuinely care for the person you are ministering to?

Doing this helps ensure you are grounded in His love and grace.

Old Testament prophets and leaders were the few chosen spokesmen on behalf of God, when the Spirit of God was limited to a select few. But now, under the New Covenant, all of us in Christ have the wonderful Holy Spirit and we are all part of the royal priesthood.

1 Peter 2:9 says, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may declare the goodness of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." In our present day and age, our ministry pattern and type is to be motivated by love, grace and mercy, grounded in Scripture as the foundation, in order to declare His goodness to all the world.

1. Our motivation needs to be love—love for God and love for others. Jesus summed up the law and the prophets when He was asked which Old Covenant command is the greatest. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first great commandment. And the second is like

it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

These verses do not state we are to love ourselves, but in saying "love your neighbor as yourself" it implies loving your neighbor as you know God loves you. When I was in India on a mission trip, I remember receiving a revelation of God's love for the children and adults we ministered to each week at an AIDS hospital. I saw His love for them and learned to love them as He loves them, even though it was tough and we heard how someone we ministered to several weeks before had gotten sick and passed away. The love and mercy of God on these precious people was life-changing for me, and I was assured how we obeyed the call of God and shared the gospel that they responded to. That is God's love in action.

2. Our attitude is to reveal His love. 1 John 4:9-11 says, "In this way the love of God was revealed to us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we must also love one another."

Ministry is not about the one ministering; it is about the one who enables and empowers the minister by His Spirit. Revealing His love is an amazing privilege. The signs and wonders that take place are all to point to His love. For a season in my previous youth ministry we saw God manifest gold dust and diamonds and it overflowed to our larger church meetings for all ages. When asked what these things meant, the answer was that He was revealing His love and we are to do the same, first and foremost by sharing the gospel message.

3. Our character must apply His virtue and love in our lives. 2 Peter 1:5-7 says, "For this reason make every effort to add virtue to your faith; and to your virtue, knowledge; and to your knowledge, self-control; and to your self-control,

patient endurance; and to your patient endurance, godliness; and to your godliness, brotherly kindness; and to your brotherly kindness, love.” We need to continually grow in Him and it should be evident to others that we are making these efforts. This is to lead us to maturity, growing in His likeness and image, and fulfill Jesus’ prayer in John 17 for us to be one as He is one with the Father.

God’s love is the key to all ministry. {eoa}

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