

Don't 'Decree and Declare' Without This Biblical Foundation

In recent decades, there has been a rising trend, especially within charismatic and Pentecostal circles, to emphasize the practice of making declarations and decrees. Many believe that simply speaking a word—whether healing, the election of a political candidate or even the end of a pandemic—will produce immediate, visible results. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, saw numerous high-profile leaders decreeing an end to the virus or claiming political outcomes, only for those proclamations to go unrealized. This phenomenon invites a deeper theological examination, especially when contrasted with the biblical practice of intercession and waiting on God's will.

Declarations often fall short when made presumptuously—without the foundational work of intercession, faith and understanding of God's specific will. This issue is not with declarations themselves but with the assumption that one can bypass the deeper processes of discernment and prayer. Hence, making declarations presumptuously often short circuits the process of Spirit-led intercessory prayer, which leads to a breakthrough.

Furthermore, some people mistakenly believe that simply because they hold the title of apostle or prophet, they possess the inherent authority to make declarations that God is bound to fulfill based on their position alone. This assumption confuses an assumed spiritual function with spiritual authority. However, God is not obligated to honor declarations made apart from His purpose, regardless of the individual's ecclesial position.

The Biblical Basis for Making Declarations

The idea of speaking things into existence, or calling “those things that are not, as though they were” (Rom. 4:17, ERV), is frequently cited by proponents of decrees. Abraham, after all, is a model of this practice, confidently declaring that he would father a great nation. However, Abraham’s confidence was not in his declarations but in a specific promise from God. God had explicitly spoken to Abraham, assuring him that he would have a son, and this divine assurance laid the groundwork for Abraham’s faith-filled words.

Similarly, when Jesus cursed the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14), it was not an arbitrary act of power. Jesus often spent entire nights in prayer and operated out of deep communion with the Father. Isaiah 50:4 highlights how, “morning by morning,” God gave Jesus the wisdom and words needed each day. Jesus only did what He saw His Father doing (John 5:19), indicating that His actions, including the fig tree incident, flowed from an intimate knowledge of God’s will. This is an essential distinction. Declarations are effective only when aligned with God’s revealed purpose, obtained through a life of prayer and intercession.

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The Power and Process of Intercession

In contrast to the quick-fix approach of decrees, intercession involves a patient and often sacrificial process of seeking God’s will. It is not simply about presenting requests, but about standing in the gap, mediating between heaven and earth, and aligning one’s spirit with the Holy Spirit’s leading. I

contend that the modern church has largely lost this art of intercession, replacing it with superficial prayer lists or quick proclamations.

True intercession requires time, discernment and the willingness to wait for a breakthrough. As we pray, the Holy Spirit often gives us insight into what God is doing and how we should pray. Romans 8:26-27 speaks to this, reminding us that the Spirit helps us in our weakness, interceding through us according to God's will. Without this discernment, declarations can become hollow, mere words without the backing of heaven's authority.

I remember that in the early 1990s, a Category 5 hurricane headed toward Puerto Rico. Sensing an urgent burden from God, our local church engaged in hours of prayer and intercession, seeking God's purpose for the island. We felt empowered to declare that the hurricane would divert only after gaining a deep sense of faith. And indeed, the storm unexpectedly shifted course, sparing Puerto Rico. This account underscores the principle that declarations should follow intercession, not precede it.

Declarations Must Be Rooted in God's Will

The core problem with many contemporary declarations is that they are based on human desires rather than divine directives. The Bible encourages believers to have faith and speak with authority (Mark 11:23-24), but Jesus' teaching also emphasizes the need to believe in the heart before speaking with the mouth. Faith is not a presumptuous optimism but a confident assurance that comes from hearing God's voice. Romans 10:17 reminds us, "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Without first hearing from God, declarations become empty rhetoric.

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Unfortunately, many believers today want to bypass the labor of prayer and intercession, opting instead for quick declarations in hopes of immediate results. However, faith is not developed through shortcuts. The spiritual authority to declare comes after the investment of time in God's presence, discerning His will, and allowing faith to be stirred in the heart.

The Importance of Spirit-Induced Faith

At the heart of effective declarations is "spirit-induced faith," a faith that arises from the Holy Spirit's leading and the Word of God. It is not enough to quote Scripture or speak positively. There must be a spiritual alignment between the believer's words and God's will. This is what makes declarations powerful. When the words spoken are filled with God's authority and backed by faith, they carry the weight of heaven. But they often produce little to no results if they are made hastily, without the groundwork of abiding in Christ, prayer and intercession.

The story of Jesus cursing the fig tree and commanding mountains to move (Mark 11:23) only makes sense in light of His constant connection to the Father. Before Jesus performed miracles or made decrees, He spent time in solitude, in prayer and intimate fellowship with God. This model shows that spiritual authority flows from relationships, not formulaic declarations.

The contrast between decrees and intercession is critical for the church today. While declarations have their place, they are not a substitute for intercession's slow, intentional

work. Declarations should be based upon a Spirit-induced faith in God's will. Without a foundation of intercession, where the believer waits on God, listens for His voice and discerns His purposes, declarations risk being mere empty words.

In an era where quick fixes and fast solutions are prized, the call to return to intercession is more relevant than ever. The church must recover the art of waiting on God, seeking His will and allowing Spirit-induced faith to shape its declarations. Only then will the words we speak carry the authority to bring about the will of heaven on earth.

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