

The Ingredients of the Anointing

OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS WERE CONSECRATED TO GOD THROUGH THE USE OF SPECIAL OILS. TODAY, WE MUST BE SURE WE DON'T MIX THE WRONG ELEMENTS WHEN WE SEEK TO CARRY HIS ANNOINTING.

Throughout my teen-age years, my aunt owned a catering business. She was known particularly for her ability to bake wonderful cakes—as beautiful as they were delicious. These weren't your everyday oven fare made from butter, eggs, sugar and flour. These were anointed cakes, and they included a secret ingredient.

I remember one occasion when her daughter asked her to bake a huge cake for a friend's baby shower. My mother and I and several others were in the dining room when she was putting the cake together.

Suddenly my aunt stopped and said, "The Spirit of the Lord is telling me that this cake is for a party where there will be drinking and smoking, and I'm not going to make anything that's going to strengthen the hand of the evildoer!"

My cousin laughed and said, "Oh, Mom, it's not for a wild party. It's for my friend's baby shower. Really!"

My aunt didn't respond. Instead, she squeezed her eyes together tightly, pointed her spatula toward the cake and began to pray: "Lord, if this cake is not being made for an event that will bring glory to Your name, then don't let it make it to the party."

We all fell silent. The atmosphere was thick with the drama of the moment. For the rest of the day, we wondered and watched to see what was going to happen to the cake.

Around 4:00 p.m. the doorbell rang, and my cousin ran to the door. It was her boyfriend, all 6 feet 7 inches of him, dressed in a nice black suit and tie. He had come to pick up the cake.

I heard my cousin whisper, "Whatever you do, don't tell my mother that this cake is for the party tonight. Just thank her for making the cake for your sister's baby shower, okay?" He agreed and headed up the hall to the dining area to get the cake.

"I've got to see this," I thought to myself. I have never known my aunt to say something prophetically that God did not bring to pass.

The boyfriend gingerly carried the cake out of the house. My cousin closed the door behind him, then ran to get her purse so she could leave too.

A few seconds later there was a knock at the door. Surprised, I jumped up to answer it. I swung the door open and found myself standing face to face with a 6-foot-7-inch man covered in cake and frosting from the top of his Afro to the tips of his alligator shoes.

He had tripped down the stairs with the cake! My aunt just looked at him and said, "If I had baked that cake with just the normal ingredients, you might have made it. But when I make my cakes, I always add one drop of blessed oil. Whatever I do under the anointing cannot be used for the devil's kingdom!"

INGREDIENTS OF THE ANOINTING The truth is, everything that God anoints for service requires special, God-appointed ingredients. Yet we often expect God to bless our plans or

efforts without stopping to ask ourselves: Do we have the right ingredients to be anointed?

Before speaking at churches or conferences, I used to pray, "God, I just want to be anointed." But no matter how hard I prayed for God's wisdom and anointing, no matter how hard I worked at being anointed, something always seemed to be missing.

Finally I stumbled across Exodus 30:17-33, an obscure passage in which God tells Moses exactly how to mix the oil to be used to consecrate the tabernacle. To my surprise, there, in those verses, I found the ingredients for the anointing!

Suddenly I realized that no matter how much I cried, spoke with other tongues, yelled, shouted, preached, prayed or prophesied, if the ingredients listed in those verses were not a part of my life, then I was probably acting out of emotionalism, not the real anointing of God.

Exodus 30:23-25 states, "Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane, five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil" (NKJV). God told Moses to use this special oil to anoint the various parts of the tabernacle as well as the tabernacle priests. The ingredients were specific and exact, and the oil made by combining them could be used for no other purpose.

I believe this oil is an illustration of the anointing that God pours upon our lives. Notice that the oil was made from five ingredients: myrrh, cinnamon, cane, cassia and olive oil. By studying the qualities of each one, we can see how these ingredients represent specific areas of our lives that need to be available to God before He can use us properly for His

service.

Myrrh. Myrrh is a necessary ingredient in embalming fluid; it is also used as a purifier. In our walk with the Lord, we must be cleansed and purified from our sins. And when God delivers us, we must become dead to those sins—as dead as a body that has been embalmed, no longer able to respond to sinful impulses.

“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Rom. 6:11-13).

Cinnamon. Cinnamon is a spice used to add a sweet smell to the anointing oil. God not only saves us and allows us to become dead to our old way of living, He also fills us to such a degree that our lives can exude the sweetness of our Savior. We can begin to take on His gentle, kind and loving fragrance. “Walk in love,” Ephesians 5:2 tells us, “as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

Cane. Cane, or calamus, is also used to sweeten the anointing oil. The quality of sweetness is so important to the Lord that He requires us to be doubly sweet—to overflow with the kindness, gentleness and love of Christ.

When we become believers, the enemy immediately aims more darts at us than he ever did before. We’re his enemies now! And since we’ll be tried beyond normal measure, God wants us to have the character trait of sweetness beyond normal measure.

This is particularly true of women in leadership roles. As a worship leader, I went through a season during which I felt certain that other women were slighting me and not giving me the respect shown to other leaders. Perhaps I wasn’t given a

cup of juice when everyone else on the platform was; perhaps everyone was handed a tissue except me.

I was sometimes ruined for a whole service if I perceived a slight. From behind my self-righteous wall, I silently began to criticize other women who stood up to minister, noting every flaw or deficiency.

Finally God called me on my bad attitude. "I desire to do so many great things in your life," I heard Him say clearly during a service one Sunday. "I want to take you to the nations. But if you can't pass them on the ground, you certainly will not be able to pass them in the air." I knew immediately that the "them" He was talking about were the fiery darts of the enemy—those pointed missiles that had been successfully stirring up feelings of pride, envy and anger toward other women in ministry.

I began at that moment to change my attitude and thank God for the people He was using to flush out the sin in my life. And I began to experience Proverbs 16:7: "When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." The sweetness of the Holy Spirit overcame the bitterness of Satan's darts.

Cassia. The branches of the cassia herb retain moisture and must be planted in a swampy area near the banks of a river in order to survive. So must we be planted deep in the Living Water in order to experience the anointing of God. As Jeremiah 17:7-8 says, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit."

We must never allow ourselves to believe that the length of time we've been believers, our position in the church or our

years of service mean we're automatically rooted in God. If we do not allow God to plant us in the Holy Spirit, we will not overcome the temptations of Satan—no matter who we are or how long we've been Christians.

The Scriptures are clear that we must “walk in the Spirit”: We must mind, pay attention to and act in accordance with the will of the Spirit of God. Then, and only then, will we begin to see the fruits of the Spirit come forth: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Gal. 5:16, 22-23).

This kind of walk is anything but weak or wimpy. Paul described it this way: “that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy” (Col. 1:10-11).

Maybe the reason some of us are shaky and weak in our walk with the Lord is that we have not been planted in the Spirit! But if we begin to live our lives in obedience to God's revealed will in the Word and are sensitive to the leading of His Holy Spirit, our roots will be able to grow deep and take hold.

Olive Oil. The process required to get olive oil is painful and intense. First, the trunk of the olive tree must be shaken harshly, causing the olives to fall to the ground. Then the olives must be beaten and smashed until the liquid runs out. The oil is used both to dress wounds and, in the Jewish tradition, to anoint objects or vessels that are earmarked to be used for the glory of God.

The process by which we are anointed for God's service is not much different. If we seek the anointing, we must expect to be shaken and crushed for the cause of Christ. Trials and temptations will beat upon us. But if we persevere with an

attitude of love, humility and thankfulness, the oil of the Holy Spirit will flow out of us to others.

It's not easy, but it's necessary. The next time you're listening to a preacher and you sense the presence of the Holy Spirit so strongly that the hair is literally standing up on your arms, remember: That person is not merely talented. He or she has been shaken, beaten and smashed. What you see is the oil of the anointing oozing out from within him.

NEVER DEFEATED When the five key ingredients of the anointing are placed within our spirits, we might be broken, but we cannot be defeated. The power of the Word becomes our myrrh, our purifier, cleansing us from the power of sin. Then the cinnamon, the sweetness of God, is able to fill us with His gentleness and love.

To this God adds the double-sweetness of cane, causing us to love even our enemies and rise above the fiery darts that would divide us. This leads us to be steadfast like cassia, "rooted and grounded in love" so that we "may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:17,19). Then, when the circumstances of life crush and break us, we are able to persevere with a right attitude and find ourselves being poured out, like olive oil, in service to others.

Then—and only then—we will be anointed!

Read a companion devotional.

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