

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying
Message Three : The Need for All Our Service to Be Initiated by God

I. Overview :

All our work and service in the church must be initiated by God; otherwise, we will commit the iniquity of the sanctuary in our service to God. When God comes to a man, prompting and touching him, revealing Himself to him, giving him a calling, and a leading, so that he receives something of God and cannot help but take action. Abel offered sacrifices according to God's revelation, Noah according to God's command, Abraham according to God's appearing, Moses according to God's instruction, David cooperated with God, and Paul served God according to the vision that he saw. The basic principle in our service is that everything must be initiated by God.

II. Truth and Enlightenment :

Day 1 --

A. What are the sins of iniquities committed against the sanctuary?

The book of Numbers shows us that the sins of the priests were iniquities committed against the sanctuary. Using today's terminology, they are sins committed in God's work. Most people only commit sins in their daily life, but a worker of the Lord can commit an additional kind of sin. When the flesh is manifested, when the self-will is exposed, and when one speaks rashly or makes suggestions rashly, one often commits the special sin that pertains to the work.

B. What are the three very important considerations in God's work which we should never forget?

First, the initiation of God's work must be according to His will. Second, the advance of God's work must be according to His power, not our own power. Third, the result of God's work must be for His glory. If we fail in any of these three points, we have committed an iniquity against the sanctuary.

Day 2 --

A. How was Abel's offering not a religious activity?

Abel's offering was not a religious activity, but Cain's offering was a religious activity. Abel's offering was of God, not of himself and his offering of a sacrifice came in response to God's word; he offered because he heard God's word. He believed God's word and by faith he offered a sacrifice to God.

B. Explain how Cain's offering was of himself and was a religious activity.

Cain's offering was not of God but of himself. Although he knew God, thought of God, and worshipped God, his offering of a sacrifice was according to himself. Thus, it was a religious activity. He offered the fruit of the ground to God; this was not according to God's charge but it came from his own thought.

Day 3 --

A. How did Noah serve God according to God's command?

Noah did not build an ark because he had a dream and then became zealous. Rather, God came to Noah one day and told him to build an ark. The building of the ark was not even in Noah's consideration; neither could he imagine that a flood would come one hundred and twenty years later. Even the measurements and methods of building the ark were according to God's determination.

B. How did Moses serve God according to God's instruction?

Moses was dealt with by God in the wilderness for a period of forty years to the extent that all his human capabilities were taken from him. Moses' deliverance of the children of Israel was out of God and all his actions related to that were according to God's instructions. For the building of the tabernacle, Moses followed the pattern God showed him on the mountain; no deviation was permitted. This shows that genuine service can come only from God, not from us.

Day 4 --

A. How do we see that David was one who truly feared God?
And what attitudes should we have?

In David, we see one who feared God. Although he had the opportunity, saw the need, and had the ability to build the temple for God, he stopped. God is the One who decides, and we must wait. When He gives a command, we can work. We should love God, just as the slaves in the Old Testament loved their masters and allowed their ears to be bored through with an awl to a doorpost to wait for Master's command.

B. What did David's stopping establish a twofold testimony in the universe?

First, all the work in the universe should come from God, not from man. Second, all that matters is what God does for man, not what man does for God. David wanted to build a temple for God, but God said that He would build a house for David from which a kingdom would come forth. We must learn deep within that God wants only our cooperation; He does not need us to do anything for Him. All we need to do is cooperate with Him.

Day 5 --

A. Why should we all ask the Lord, "What shall I do?"

We should all ask the Lord, "What shall I do?" rather than telling Him, "This is what I will do." The Lord replied, "Rise up and enter into the city, and it will be told to you what you must do". The Lord told Paul what to do. Paul did not decide; rather, the Lord showed him a vision. We should not decide; only God should decide.

B. Why was God hidden from Job as he was very pious toward God?

Job was very pious toward God. Nevertheless, Job's view and opinion were not broken. The debate between Job and his friends shows that God was quite hidden. Until one day Job said, "I abhor myself", he was referring to his opinion, views, and ideas. God came in only after all the words of Job and his friends ran out.

Day 6 --

A. What will show us of service from man?

Service from man has man's enjoyment, preference, and flavor. When something is initiated by us, we enjoy and like it. Anything initiated by us will bear our flavor and be our boast. Hence, when a service is initiated by us according to our opinion, often our enjoyment, preference, and boast are associated with it.

Moreover, we often feel that it is very good.

B. What will show us of service from God in negative test?

The negative test is whether or not we are able to eat and sleep peacefully when our work is not carried out successfully. Those who are sent by the Lord are often quite patient. When he is doing the Lord's work, he will not be anxious because it is the Lord's business. If we want to determine whether a person's work is of God or of himself, we only need to see if he is anxious in the work. If a person's work is according to God's sending, the sent one will not be anxious, and there will not be many opinions.

III. Conclusion :

God's work in New Creation needs man's cooperation, but the man is not a natural man, rather a man of one with God and being renewed, transformed by Him. David wanted to build a temple for God, who immediately sent Nathan the prophet to him and said "I will build you a house." Because David feared God, he did not react to Nathan; rather, he stopped. Sister M. E. Barber said, "Whoever cannot stop working for the sake of God cannot work for the sake of God." All the work in the universe should come from God, not from man. All that matters is what God does for man, not what man does for God.