

16-Oct-10

Superfluous Discipleship!?

Dear E _____,

I respect your desire for greater leadership in the Lord's Kingdom and joyfully relish with you the challenges, rewards, and duties which accompany that benefit. When a similar issue was presented to the Lord by the sons of Zebedee, the Lord responded in a way in which all of the disciples could benefit. I must, as the *faithful and wise steward*, do the same by answering your appeal and giving to the brethren the benefit of my reply. You stated the following in your letter of October, 16th:

The studies that I have given for the past (almost) 2 years reveal that I have studied to show myself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth. I am formally asking to be appointed the leadership role here in _____, as I can see the need for one to lead. Because I was given this privilege by the Lord to take the Truths that is being distributed by the MSA and share it with the group here, one can imply that I have taken a leadership role. However, it has become more and more evident that before one can be accepted taking on the leadership role; it would need your approval or appointment, as I can foresee some resistance if one took upon himself a leadership role without your consent. —Your E-mail, Saturday, October 16, 2010, 4:49Am EST.

Your appeal for promotion among the group is a natural and understandable aspiration; however it is one that belies and underestimates the election which the Lord has already placed before you, that of being a disciple. Such is a monumental task in itself to undertake; it is one that many, along with you, do not fully understand. Never in the history of the church has any taught of the specific honors, duties, and elevation to power which accompanies that designation; therefore, the temptation prevails to consider the challenges of group organization from yesterday's perspective while ignoring the promotion today at hand. This orientation which confuses yesterday's leadership style with that intended for today is done with the thinking that, amongst the field of potential disciples—today more clearly defined—they need to distinguish themselves by rank. The inspired prophets and leaders of the past, without greater understanding pertaining to the calling of discipleship or the fixed number that was predetermined for them, 12, rightfully gave credibility to the need to ordain group leaders. Thus, they appointed, by the impress of the Comforter, bishops, elders, deacons and the like. Today, that fuel from the proverbial booster rocket has expired. Consequently, I encourage you and all in the group to not underestimate the divine appointment which the Lord has already placed before you. In addition to this, another point of caution should be inserted: The group in your town now appears to be large, but do not fall into the mistaken notion that when you count heads at a Sabbath study, that you are counting the disciples. Such a manner of counting or measuring was not efficacious in the days just before Calvary nor during the years afterward, and it is not so today. Therefore, all in the group should be encouraged to continue to yearn for that rank; it should be your promotional goal.

When the MSA grows and becomes a tree, when it is encompassed with Jerusalem and others who are to join, then you will have your hands full of all the leadership that you can expect—or for that matter have ever dreamed—to possess. Remember, that station is not comparable to any other that we have known because—not only does it encompass civil and theological authority, but—it also encompasses supernatural power to heal, to save, to enliven, and to defeat any military assault. I ask, can the Lord, in wisdom, extend to you more of this power than to the other eleven “stones”? If proverbial Peter, James, and John resurrect three separate individuals, can the one whom you resurrect be more alive than their Lazaruses? If they heal a dying cancer victim, will

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they need your elevated authority to make the infirmed more whole? If they defeat the devil's military assaults on Israel or Zion, would not your more magnificent blast of power be superfluous? If the other disciples, as they are called to do, pity the plight of Jerusalem, will your tears become more profuse and your heart more broken? If the other eleven are smitten by the truth and become humbled to the level of a child, will your humility exceed theirs making you even more infantile? Hopefully, now you can see: For the Lord to grace you with more of His authority would mean to cheat the other disciples, whoever they are; it would be to give them less. Such would detract from the entire purpose of the Kingdom, from the twelve-stone pillar which the Jordan-crossing children of Israel were commanded to erect as a commemoration (Joshua 4: 3-6). Thus, in our aspiration to discipleship, let all take care to not presume that we can identify the disciples. We must also understand that the world will behold magnificent skills from each one even though we may not now behold that brilliance. Additionally, let us realize that, if there are those attached to the MSA who will not pass the test of discipleship articulated in the *Testimony of Jesus*, then the Lord, by our election to that post, has already promoted us above them. Beyond that, I do not know of any tier of authority that exists between the disciples and David just as I do not discern a tier of authority between Christ and Father; therefore, I cannot presume to make such an appointment.

Having reached this conclusion, I do see that the Lord has already graced you with leadership qualities: Your light has not gone unrecognized. For example, often times, by your own admission, your disputed teachings are affirmed by the MSC's writings and teaching without any prior collaboration with this office. Also, it was your boldness that led you to read and relish the paper, *Atonement and Amazingly Sufficient Grace*, the benefits of this have been greatly multiplied. Additionally, you have worked directly with the MSC, along with others in the group, regarding issues of literature distribution and seminar scheduling and accommodations. Finally, you have also shown—as witnessed by the MSA from afar—great leadership by the sacrifices in your personal life as you have therein integrated the MSC's teachings. I especially celebrate your zeal, along with that of some of the other brethren, for mastery of the literature and the help that you and others have given on the DSDA forum. These pulses of inspiration have not been ignored by this office as it continually scans the horizon of MSA adherents for similar flashes of divine brilliance. Yet, your station as a potential nominee to be a “brother” to Christ, a member of the divine family, a *disciple indeed* should not be minimized in your eyes. Instead, I invite you to scan the horizon with me for the brilliant talents to emerge from the others in the group. When this occurs, it will truly be a prized city in Davidia and a light for heaven.

In addition to your assistance to advance the work, you should feel confident that your brethren being honorable men and women have witnessed by the promptings of the Lord, if not by their own human—yet spiritual—sensibilities, that the Lord has His hands on you as a harvester grips the sickle. Such assurances, I know, do not readily inspire confidence and credibility, but today we live in a new age. It is an age where disciples love one another despite any perceived short comings. Such saints no longer enviously or covetously deny the righteous qualities of commendation witnessed in their brethren; they now acknowledge the special talents that the others have. This they do because they are anxious for the work to succeed; they are learning to love each other; and they have been given Christian charity. Those who do not yet manifest this quality of charity need to grow in maturity so as to be classed with the saints. It is with this growth which the MSA desires your help and your leadership, and it is this growth which this very letter will inspire. Therefore, in your next study, this tenet should not be ignored. Your victory over struggles exemplifies to the brethren your anointing and your station, and, I am sure it ignites them to copy your courage and commitment to the Lord. As such, what more can the Lord expect of a leader? For me to, in Bashanian style, endow you with a higher seat of authority, would undermine the Lord's process, already set in motion, to distinguish you. To clarify, it would nullify His good work in you which would cheat you of the accomplishments heretofore already attained and would allow others to wrongly ascribe to those achievements the charge of favoritism. It would send to them the message, “Heed E _____'s wisdom for he is recognized by the home office”, instead of, “Heed to E _____'s wisdom because the Lord Himself has greatly used him”.

The Mustard Seed Advent, 16-oct-2010

Quite naturally, when one gives a study that is hard to “hear”, some are going to direct their anxieties towards the messenger. Others will attempt to succor the loyalties of their spouses to elevate their own concepts, and this growing pain has already been—and will further be—addressed by the Lord. As you have already greatly witnessed in your experience with the MSA since its work in your city began, the Lord will continue to bless your faithfulness and soften the hearts of the grumblers and the protesters. He has great love for them and desires your continued fervor to aid Him in His work of maturation for them. But I cannot carve out any special honor for you to win you greater favor among the brethren; such a maneuver would be superfluous. Instead, you will have to rely upon the Lord’s continued graces to achieve that objective as He seeks to advance the Kingdom. Thus I must deny your request.

Sincerely,

Derek