

A TEACHING FROM THE BRANCH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Flexible for the Mission

Why Spiritual Development Determines Whether You Finish

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Introduction

There is a difference between being *sent* and being *developed enough to be sent*. Many believers can hear a word from the Lord, receive an assignment, even prepare for it in the natural — but when the assignment doesn't unfold the way they pictured it, something in them quietly negotiates for an exit. Not always in words. Sometimes simply in a drop of enthusiasm, a folding of the arms instead of the sleeves, a heart that begins to ask, "Is this really necessary?"

This teaching comes out of a recent journey. I travelled over 800 kilometres overnight by bus to another province, sent to help a brother with a spiritual matter. This trip had been planned two months in advance — he knew I was coming, he had time to prepare. But when I arrived, exhausted from the road, the house was in disarray, and even the room set aside for me was untidy. I did not get to rest immediately. I had to clean before I could lay my head down.

In that moment, alone with a broom in someone else's house, a question rose in me: *how many servants of God would have been discouraged right here?* Not by the assignment itself, but by the conditions surrounding it. How many would have felt slighted, unwelcomed, disrespected — and let that feeling quietly release them from the very thing they were sent to do?

I want to talk about what it takes to reach a place in God where the state of the ground does not determine whether you carry the assignment.

The Foundation: Maturity Is Not Optional Preparation, It Is the Platform

Hebrews speaks of believers who, "when for the time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God ... and have become such as need milk and not solid food" (Hebrews 5:12). The elementary principles — repentance, faith, the doctrines of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection, and eternal judgment — are not meant to be a resting place. They are meant to be a *launching* place: "leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection" (Hebrews 6:1).

Why does this matter for a messy house in another province? Because an underdeveloped believer processes inconvenience as insult. A developed believer processes inconvenience as terrain. The assignment doesn't change; what changes is the soil the assignment was planted in — you.

The Test Is Rarely the Assignment. It Is the Approach to the Assignment.

It would have been easy to feel unwelcomed. Two months of notice, and yet no preparation. Tired from the road, and no place immediately to rest. The flesh has a whole vocabulary ready for moments like this: *disrespected, taken for granted, undervalued*. And once that vocabulary starts running, it rarely stays confined to your feelings — it begins to negotiate with your obedience.

But there is a different way to carry an assignment, and Scripture shows it to us in unglamorous places. Paul, shipwrecked on Malta, still gathering sticks for a fire in the rain (Acts 28:3). Elisha, pouring water on the hands of Elijah long before any mantle fell on him (2 Kings 3:11). These were not men waiting for conditions to align before they served. They served the moment in front of them, however small or undignified it appeared, because their sense of calling was rooted deeper than their sense of comfort.

That night, I did not fold my arms. I folded my sleeves. Not because the situation didn't register — it did — but because somewhere along this thirty-year journey, God had done enough work in me that the mission mattered more than the manner in which I received it.

What Spiritual Development Actually Produces

This is the heart of the teaching: spiritual development is not primarily about how much you know, how eloquently you pray, or how many spiritual experiences you've had. It is measured, in the moment that counts, by *flexibility under friction*. Can you bend to the actual shape of the assignment, or do you need the assignment to bend to you first?

A developed believer carries three things into a disordered situation:

Discernment over offense

Instead of asking “why wasn't this ready for me?”, the mature soul asks, “what does this moment need from me?” The house being a mess was not a referendum on my worth. It was simply the next task before the task I came for.

Endurance over entitlement

I was owed rest, by any reasonable measure. But maturity sometimes means postponing what you're owed for the sake of what you were sent to do. This is not self-erasure — it's ordered love, putting the mission ahead of the moment's comfort without resentment.

Service as the doorway to the assignment, not a distraction from it

Cleaning that house was not separate from the spiritual matter I'd come to help with. It was, in a very real sense, the first act of ministry — a demonstration, before a word was even spoken, of the kind of servant I had come to be. Christ washed feet before He taught. Sometimes the broom comes before the breakthrough.

Why This Matters for Every Believer

You may never travel 800 kilometres for a spiritual assignment. But you will have your own version of “the messy house” — a task that arrives in worse conditions than you expected, a relationship that isn't as prepared for reconciliation as you'd hoped, a ministry opportunity that shows up wrapped in inconvenience. In each of these, the same question applies: has your inward life been developed enough that the outward conditions don't get to decide your obedience?

This is why the daily and weekly rhythms of prayer, Scripture, repentance, and silence are not decoration on the Christian life — they are the very training ground where this kind of flexibility is formed. You do not develop the capacity to fold your sleeves instead of your arms in the moment of the test. You develop it in the quiet, ordinary days leading up to it.

A Closing Word

If you find yourself facing a situation that feels beneath you, or unfair, or poorly prepared for your arrival — pause before you interpret it as disrespect. Ask instead what the Lord may be asking of you in that very disorder. Sometimes the assignment doesn't begin at the meeting, the sermon, or the sit-down conversation you were expecting. Sometimes it begins with a broom in your hand, tired, in a room that wasn't ready for you — and your willingness to receive that as still being sent.

“Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men” (Colossians 3:23).

Be developed enough that the mission survives you — and you survive the mission.