

2014: Reviewing the Last 7 Years

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I have written little in the last seven years, as my journey has taken me into more failure, setback, and difficulty. What kind of witness is this, I thought? There is nothing to write, nothing I can say that will build up or edify the Body of Christ; and when there is nothing to say, it's best to keep quiet. Right when it seemed things couldn't get worse, they did. What's going on, I pondered? I had seen so much victory and clearly heard God's voice for years, yet now I am walking with a loser's limp without knowing why. Over the span of years my power source seemed drained, my hearing dulled, creativity and wisdom diminished. And then, I awakened one morning to realize, like a dog returning to his vomit, I had returned to the same world system (in finance) that once destroyed me. Somehow, ever so slowly, I was sucked back into the vortex of 'the system.' The realization of the slow death that comes from adhering to principles of the world was alarming. My challenge didn't come in the death of loved one, a disease, or even total financial collapse, but came in the stress and strain of nothing working, extraordinary difficulty in the simplest of task, relational issues, false accusation, fatigue, and spiritual dryness. I wasn't depressed, but life had become depressing. I prayed, read my bible, journaled as always, but no real life came of it. On the outside everything was fine enough, but my strength ebbed as His Joy seemed far away. Oh yes, there were the normal health issues – several surgeries, and the ordinary wear and tear of age, business, and relational issues, but this was much greater – the pain of mundaneness. Of greatest importance, what was God saying to me? After all, my spiritual daddy of sorts, Arthur Burt, teaches "God allows in His wisdom what He could have prevented in His power." Why would He allow such? I am "called according to His purpose", yet I am wasting away in Margaretville, looking for my lost shaker of salt. I knew there was no woman to blame; perhaps my dilemma was my own dang fault!

Had He withdrawn His presence from me? I anguished for hours, days, weeks, and now years without experiencing the joy I had once experienced. Was there unconfessed or unknown sin in my life? Had I knowingly or unknowingly taken a path outside of God's will? As I look back on this difficult time, I admit all were true to some extent; but one above others. The subtlety of the world's system and its lure are difficult to avoid, perhaps more so in the marketplace than other sphere. It is safe to say 'the spirit of the world' can be subtle. We often think of 'the world' in terms of lust, perversion, drunkenness and such, and this is indeed one head of this two headed monster – the other, the more subtle side, rest in the things the world applauds, like ambition outside the lead of the Lord. The world congratulates success and high achievement, and in and of themselves, there is nothing wrong with these. But for a 'called' man or woman, using an ambitious nature to further a career or calling is dangerous. My best is my worse before God. Why? Because it is the place of least dependence upon God. I had remained attached to 'the world' in the area of business and finance – I remained bound to 'borrowing money'; continuing to love business success and probably money; but the largest of my errors was, once again, becoming dependent upon man (often myself), and not God. David counted his troops and was severely punished. When our dependency shifts, we have shifted systems – from the Kingdom to the world.

The Kingdom has characteristics just as 'the world'. For those seeking 'The Kingdom', it is paramount to know its characteristics. Since I am 'called' to the

Kingdom on earth, I must avoid the world at all cost; yet the very business I am called to spins on the top of the world's system. As stated, one of the most glaring differences in characteristics between the two systems (competing for my affection daily) is DEPENDENCY. Upon who and what am I dependent? The Kingdom in operation (in me) is characterized by my complete and utter dependence upon God, while 'the world's system' is evidenced by my complete and utter dependence upon man. The garden pre-fall was a place of life; the Tree of Life provided communication with the creator. When the forbidden fruit was consumed from the wrong tree, man became dependent upon himself and the systems of men to survive. Today, as born again believers, we are given a choice of systems – The Kingdom, or 'the world'. When we flow in God-dependence we are flowing with 'The Kingdom', just as surely as engaging 'the world' will require dependence upon man. Which tree I eat from determines who I can hear – Tree of Life (God); Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Me).

What system is operating when Pastor preaches tithes as church finances dwindle? When, in our personal or business lives, we seek a loan instead of God for provision? When an issue arises, we take matters into our own hands instead of seeking God for direction and answers? When we manipulate and coerce our spouse to get our way? I could go on and on, but these questions evidence the toil and strain, shortage and lack, and unfilled needs that spring from engaging the wrong system. It may take time, but eventually the bad fruit of engaging the wrong system (wrong tree) will reveal itself. Our own dysfunction and disorder are signs of a lack of God's government/order/Kingdom in particular spheres of life. Dysfunction and disorder are knocking at our door repeatedly, but will we open it? Will we honestly embrace our areas of dysfunction, and seek the Kingdom. Amazingly, I was now back into toil and strain, shortage and lack, and unfulfilled needs, yet failed to recognize my entry, or the depth of 'the world's system' I unwittingly allowed back into my life. How could I linger not recognizing my error? Who is the most subtle beast of the field? What character trait had failed me, casting me back into the abyss I had been rescued from? For me, the answer eventually came. My character failure was my own ambitious nature, attempting to achieve for myself what God intended to give me anyway. Such people will not inherit the Kingdom of God (Galatians 5: 19-21).

Ambition has cost me much time and other valuable resources – its latest assault revealed a part of my failed character. For the record, ambition is not limited to business and finance. There are empty buildings all over America that once housed big ministries, built on the back of ambition, yet when the winds of adversity blew the house fell. For a man or woman 'called' to walk in the Kingdom on earth, nothing else but 'the Kingdom's way' will work. The systems of men are condemned; they will fail. When we, as called men and women, engage them we are engaging a 'failed system'; it will never work for us. The Kingdom's purpose is to offer a different methodology from the world's way – our job is to find it, abide in it, and enjoy its fruit. Its fruit is not necessarily a lack of adversity or challenge, but peace, righteousness, and joy in spite of circumstances.

Amid much turmoil in 2013, I found what I was looking for. In late October, God began to once again speak, initially through a local prophet. As His Word and direction began to pierce my heart again, the flow, peace, joy, and rest returned. During the latter days of 2013, and thus far in 2014, the prophetic gift within me has been flamed by the fires of God. I can again hear, and even now sense a powerful word for His true ecclesia. Many, as myself, have been through 'the pain of circumstance' during much of the last seven years. A prompting within has produced

an alert; a knowing that something is taking place in 2014 that is entirely different from the past. For those who sense this, be ready to receive an embrace from the Father; a hug that will release His government into all spheres of life. He has brought you full circle, back into His arms, readying you for service and purpose – yes, destiny, His plan for your life! God’s Order is available as Order and 2014 are virtually synonymous terms. This order extends into issues of health, finance, ministry, marriage, relationships, and calling. What has been impossible is now possible, only believe as the grace for faith (for whatever the need) is available upon asking. Brokenness before the Father is key in 2014, as we remain humble before him, moldable in His hands, we will see Him use us as never before.

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