

## Ephesians 3: 20–21

“God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us” (MSG).

Other translations put it this way: He can “do above and beyond” or “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.”

God’s ultimate desire is to see us filled and overflowing with every good, wonderful, perfect gift from Him

- His purpose in that desire is to build His church and expand the Kingdom
- The point of serving God is that we live to succeed and succeed to serve – **Matthew 20:26**

God has Gifted You Specifically and Uniquely

You Have Been Appointed by God

Life is filled with situations and opportunities that were specifically chosen by God in order for you to fulfill the above and beyond purposes you were destined for

## John 15:16 (NKJV)

<sup>16</sup> You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should

### Matthew 18:3–4 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup> and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

- Am I living life receptive to the Lord’s will?
- Am I ready to follow His lead?
- Do I have a child like expectancy?
- Children are like sponges
- They absorb everything

Experts say that children become who they will be for life within the first five to seven years

- Behavior
- Boundaries
- Empathy
- Social skills

At birth, the average baby's brain is about a quarter of the size of the average adult brain. Incredibly, it doubles in size in the first year. It keeps growing to about 80% of adult size by age 3 and **90%** – nearly full grown – by age 5.

- Do I remain attentive, receptive and childlike to the Lord’s voice?
- Or have I allowed His voice to become background noise to a busy life?

## Mark 4:23, 24 (NKJV)

<sup>23</sup> If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” <sup>24</sup> Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.

- Living life alert, alive, present and receptive will open doors of opportunity
- We will hear the things we need to hear

Zander awakens with an expectancy and excitement for life

- Wide eyed and alert everything is a new adventure
- He has a simplistic excitement for life
- He hears and sees everything
- He seems to always be “Switched On”

But how “Switched On” are you to the world around you?

- Do you hear the whispers of the Holy Spirit?
- Are you deaf even if He were to shout?
- The world is full of distractions, worries and concerns
- They fill our hearts, block our ears and dim our vision
- The noise of life can drown out the voice of the Lord

So often our complacency and inability to hear the Lord can rob us of the “measure” He intends to bring into our lives

Do you have and expectancy and vision for your life that will get you up early?

- Do you have the anticipation of an exciting future in God?
- Or have you settled into living a quiet, safe lifestyle content with spending eternity with Him?
- No one is saved for heaven alone
- You are saved, graced, called and purposed to make a difference here on earth, NOW

Yes, Jesus died to save you from your sins, but He also died to bring heaven to earth through your life

- Don't lose sight of the fact that you were created to live as life "Above and Beyond"
- Don't let disappointment and discouragement cause you to become jaded, familiar, critical and cynical

### Acts 13:41 (The Message)

Watch out, cynics; Look hard—watch your world fall to pieces. I'm doing something right before your eyes that you won't believe, though it's staring you in the face."

- Without receptivity we can live just like this
- Things can be staring you in the face and you just don't see them
- Familiarity and presumption will rob you of wonder
- Cynicism will cause you to lose your expectancy for great things

We live in a society where criticism and cynicism are commonplace

- These attitudes creep into our families, homes and churches
- We criticize our spouse or find fault with our children
- We are forever looking for the “suitable” church
- We complain about the church building, parking arrangements, loud music, dancing, drawing, length of service, etc.....
- Criticism will only harden your heart to what God wants to show you
- Hurt and pain lock you out of being open and accessible

Avoiding forgiveness and allowing bitterness to take root will cause negativity and drown out receptivity

The apostle Paul hailed the Macedonian believers as examples of immense openness and generosity

- Their circumstances were extreme

### 2 Corinthians 8:1–2 (NKJV)

Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: <sup>2</sup> that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

- They didn’t allow their circumstance to diminish their undeniable joy and generosity

As a pastor I have noticed that there are two things that disappear in a person that has become cynical and hardened their heart toward the church

They lose their joy and generosity

- Their countenance changes
- They draw back
- They are not as open as they used to be
- They no longer have the same smile or generous words they once had
- They no longer give of their time, treasure and talents as they once did
  - Maybe it was a personal offense
  - Maybe they have taken on the offenses of others
  - Maybe they have lost their “first love”

Whatever the case they seemed to have, at least inwardly, “checked out”

They have allowed their circumstances to jade the way they view the world

- Their hearts have grown cold
- Their unprotected heart stifles receptivity
- Familiarity can breed contempt – **Proverbs 25:17**
- Mediocrity quickly becomes bondage

## Matthew 13:57–58 (NKJV)

<sup>57</sup> So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” <sup>58</sup> Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

- The people saw Jesus as the “Carpenters Son” – Verse 55

It was because of their perception that they were offended by the words that He spoke and the truth He told

- Their familiarity locked God out of His own home
- Because of their unbelief Jesus did no great miracles there
- They missed out on what could have happened

The same thing can happen if we limit God through our lack of receptivity and become familiar with what He has to offer

I understand that life can seem to become repetitive, mundane and just a routine

- Work, family, bills, etc.

Realize that God is in the details

- The smallest detail doesn’t go unnoticed by God
- He will reward you for your faithfulness in the mundane details
- He that is faithful with little – **Luke 16:10**

Don’t let familiarity rob you of a God encounter

Don't allow yourself to become familiar with the blessings of God in your job, family, relationships or even church

- The worship doesn't move you anymore
- You don't sense God's presence the way you once did
- The pastor's message doesn't feed you the way it once did
- Your sense of family or appreciation wanes
- You see yourself highlighting the negative and forget the blessings

Familiarity has caused you to think that it's the church, not you that's changed

- You've heard all the worship songs before
- You've heard the same old stories before

Perhaps it's not the pastor or the church that's changed, perhaps it's you!

Openness, spiritual hunger, gratitude, and receptivity are attributes of a healthy church, and every one of us has a part to play

## Nehemiah Chapter 8

- The Jerusalem wall has just been rebuilt under Nehemiah's leadership
- It was the feast of tabernacles
- The people built a temporary platform for Ezra to read the law
- He opened the Torah and read



## Nehemiah 8:5–6 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was *standing* above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. <sup>6</sup> And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. Then all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

- All Ezra did was open the book
- The people shouted and sang
- They bowed and worshipped the Lord
- The atmosphere was charged
- Receptivity does that for you
- It brings an atmosphere of expectancy

The level of expectancy can be felt!

- The worship is easier
- The preaching is a joy
- It is tangible, powerful and brings unity

Has your sense of expectancy run dry?

- Perhaps you need revival in your soul
- Ask God to reignite the fire for the things of God
- Ask Him to develop a hunger and thirst for His word
- Ask Him for a new passion for life!

## Tear Off the Roof

### Mark 2:1–5 (NKJV)

And again, He entered Capernaum after *some* days, and it was heard that He was in the house. <sup>2</sup> Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive *them*, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. <sup>3</sup> Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four *men*. <sup>4</sup> And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”

- Are you willing to whatever you have to keep your receptivity and expectancy alive?
- Don't allow mediocrity to creep in
- Can Jesus see your faith?

### Luke 19:5–6 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup> And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” <sup>6</sup> So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully.

- He had a hunger to see Jesus
- He had wide-eyed enthusiasm to see God move
- He climbed a tree to get His attention

Are you bold enough to petition God for more responsibility and blessing for the future?

Are you eager and receptive for all of the things he has brought into your life now?

### Psalm 19:5 (NKJV) Speaking of the sun

<sup>5</sup> Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber *And* rejoices like a strong man to run its race.

- Are you living with anticipation for what God is doing in your life?
- Are you confident in the beauty that awaits you?
- If you don't live with anticipation you can miss out on what God wants to do

### Matthew 7:7–8 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

- Receptivity opens the door for possibility
- Let's live with intention
- Free from distraction
- Aware of the abundant potential in Christ

Isaiah 40:21–22, 26 (NKJV)

<sup>21</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? <sup>22</sup> *It is* He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants *are* like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. <sup>26</sup> Lift up your eyes on high, And see who has created these *things*, Who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, By the greatness of His might And the strength of *His* power; Not one is missing.

Are you robing yourself of potential and robing others by not paying attention and receiving

- Attention brings retention
  - *Consistently attuned to God and His word*
- From retention comes intention
- From intention comes conception

Having the word inside you and hearing God's voice should invoke a response

- From that response comes a place of conception
  - *A birth of new things*
- So much potential comes from just paying attention