



## Editor's Note

As with all Christian ministries, we at ESN want to glorify the Lord and bring blessing to His people. Our special focus is to encourage and edify assembly elders, and the Lord has His ways of encouraging us in that work. One of those ways is to occasionally review the lists of the various countries to which the publication is going—either electronically or by postal mail.

This is not a matter for pride, but a

wonderful reminder of the promise given in Malachi 1:11: "For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the nations..." Some nations do not yet appear on our records! Perhaps you might know a missionary, a friend or a family member somewhere in the world who might enjoy receiving ESN. Why not share our contact info with them?



### Leadership Principles

## Mentoring Principles from the Elijah-Elisha Relationship: Embracing the Mantle, Part 2

by Warren Henderson

Before identifying more biblical principles for mentees to consider, let us first contemplate the similarities and differences between Elijah and Elisha. This will give us a better appreciation for their interaction. These men were vastly different, and were called to different types of ministries, yet enjoyed a special mentoring relationship which lasted about ten years.

Both men were called by God to be prophets, were teachers of the "sons of the prophets" (2 Kgs. 2:3, 4:38), and were enabled by God to do extraordinary miracles. Yet, their differences are much more pronounced than their similarities. Elijah came from rustic Gilead beyond the Jordan River and thus, likely grew up in a poorer home. Elisha, on the other hand, came from Abel Meholah in Israel proper and appears to have had a wealthy upbringing (e.g., plowing with twelve yoke of oxen). Elijah seems to be prone to mood swings, but Elisha is more even-tempered. Elijah was a hairy man (2 Kgs. 1:8), while Elisha was bald (2 Kgs. 2:23).

Perhaps the chief distinction between these two men was their callings. Elijah's ministry was more public as he was confronting an apostate nation, whereas Elisha's ministry was more personal and compassionate; he strived to meet the needs of the people. Yet, Elisha's ministry superseded Elijah's in duration and

in the number of miracles performed. Elijah's miracles were dramatic (e.g. a severe drought and fire coming down from heaven on three different occasions). By contrast, Elisha's miracles were modest and personal.

Although Elisha did more miracles and showed compassion to individuals, it is Elijah who is more predominant in the New Testament. These men were vastly different in social upbringing, emotions, and ministries, but their mentor/mentee relationship enabled both

men to wonderfully serve the Lord. This indicates that God may bring vastly different people together in mentoring relationships, and also serves as a reminder that the goal of mentoring is not to recreate ourselves in those we mentor, but to enable the mentee to understand and fulfill his or her divine calling.

Previously, seven principles for guiding the mentee's relationship and attitudes towards his or her mentor were drawn from 1 Kings 19:19-20. Three more principles from the narrative in 2 Kings 2 are now added to this list:

*The goal of mentoring is not to recreate ourselves in those we mentor, but to enable the mentee to understand and fulfill his or her divine calling.*

### 8. The mentor must go for the mentee to grow

There came a time when it was beneficial for Elisha and Elijah to part ways. As long as the mentor is available, there will be the tendency for the mentee to rely on him or her for solutions to their problems. Doing what a

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## Biblical Foundations

### How Important is Oneness? by Jack Spender

We know that unity among believers is important to God, but how much emphasis should we place on it? We live in a day where division surrounds us: nations at war with nations, political parties unable to work together, families breaking apart, and even the church is affected. It's a subject worth considering, one for elders to take seriously.

Much could be written but for the present, I'd like to direct our thoughts to two questions. "Why is this subject so important?" (this article), and "What steps can those who lead in the church take to promote it?" (next time). We may be sure that if the conscience is engaged, the Spirit of God can lead us further.

#### Why is this subject so important?

There is no need to convince any spiritual reader of the importance of unity among believers since it is often mentioned in Scripture. So it may seem like overemphasis to devote an entire article to something Christians generally believe. But over time, our thinking can drift into the hazy notion that oneness, whatever it means, is merely preferable, or that it is proved by the attendance of the saints at the meetings, or even by the fact that the people in the church tend to agree with what goes on. Can it refer to something deeper than that, and is it really all that important? Many passages might be studied; I have chosen three.

#### A direct appeal to saints and church elders

In Philippians 2:1-4, God's imprisoned servant Paul makes an appeal to the church at Philippi for oneness. He actually states the matter no less than four times in a single verse! He appeals to the saints to be "like-minded," "having the same love," "being of one accord," and "of one mind." Search the Scriptures for any other example of an appeal repeated four times in one verse. Not only so, but it occurs in a book written to a church for which Paul has warm feelings and that clearly cares for him, not in a letter such as to the Corinthians where we might expect it.

The context of this appeal is very significant. Following his appeal, Paul

links oneness to one of the most vital of all Christian blessings: fellowship. "If there be any fellowship of the Spirit" (vs. 1). Interesting that he does not put the emphasis on other important functions of the church (Acts 2:42). "If there be good Bible teaching," or "If there be sweet times at the Breaking of Bread," or "If you expect answered prayer at the prayer meeting." Rather, he mentions love, tender mercies, and compassions as ingredients of the fellowship of the Spirit. And finally, he goes directly into one of the greatest texts in the Bible, Phil. 2:5-11 which describes the "mind of Christ." Apparently, this matter is of critical importance in the Christian life.

#### The High Priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus

The great prayer of the Lord Jesus in John 17 contains several requests made to His Father for the little band of disciples He has loved and taught. But when He prays for "them also who shall believe on me through their word," (vs. 20), He makes but a single request for the coming age: "that they all may be one" (vs. 21), and repeats it again, "that they may be one" (vs. 22), and again, "that they may be made perfect in one" (vs. 23). With 2,000 years of the church age stretching out before His omniscient mind, with all its battles and troubles, He limits His prayer to this one request.

If we wonder at the reasoning for this, we have only to look at the context once again. Note how the Lord connects the oneness of believers with outreach to the world. He prays for oneness "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me," (vs. 21), and "that the world may know that thou hast sent me." (vs. 23). Think of it! Before His death, the Lord Jesus handed to His own the very key to evangelism in the coming age. Was it received? One will search the early chapters of Acts in vain for any "outreach programs" to win the lost. Rather, those in leadership took bold steps to preserve unity, as evidenced by

the testimony again and again that their activities were "with one accord." No wonder thousands were saved!

#### A passage with a promise

In Matt. 18, the Lord Jesus gives warnings and instructions for the safeguarding of harmony among His followers, with specifics on how problems in relationships must be resolved, (vss. 15-20). First, we get three practical steps to follow (vss. 15-17), often referred to as "the Matthew 18 principle", and then three interesting verses that relate closely to the subject (vss. 18-20).

With regard to these last three verses, a paraphrase of their content may read as follows. Heaven will honor the steps so taken to resolve conflicts (vs. 18); one motivation for such obedience is the promise of answered prayer (vs. 19); and the assembled company of believers, no matter how small, may be sure of the Lord's watchful presence in their midst (vs. 20). It is verse 19 that we must consider carefully.

Many Scriptures establish the link between prayers offered and answers

given. But here is a remarkable promise that puts a special blessing on prayers made by saints who "agree." The Greek word is *sumphoneo* from which the English word *symphony* is derived. It means much more than two people simply wanting the same thing. It literally means "sounding

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together." A symphony orchestra is not several instruments just "sounding off," but is rather the result of countless hours of practice. Thus we may understand this word as a beautiful "heart harmony" among believers.

Just as a symphony orchestra may receive fame and wealth as the reward for long hours of working together until the result is a true unity of purpose, so the Lord promises a blessing to believers who labor to come to "heart harmony" as they pray. That promise is answered prayer, one desire of every Christian gathering!

*(Continued on next page)*

Reader, pause and think. How often have prayers for needs in the church gone on for extended periods—sometimes for years, with little change. Well-meaning saints are quick to explain, “Well, we live in the last days,” or “the Lord’s ways are not our ways,” or “perhaps the time is not right...” Certainly all of these reasons may be true. But is it possible there is another reason?

For those unwilling to do the work—and it is work—of coming to heart harmony, this verse may explain the symp-

tom of unanswered prayer! Note that the effort is not toward agreement in details in which personal opinions may differ, but in the condition of heart relationships before the Lord. Can bitterness, envy, and grieved hearts co-exist with heart harmony? God forbid.

#### **Conclusion**

Yes, oneness among believers in the church is vitally important. Of course it must be understood in harmony with other biblical subjects such as the liberty

of individual believers in matters of personal preference, etc. But in regards to the functioning of the church in matters not commanded in Scripture, it cannot be stated too strongly or too often that any hope of true hearted fellowship in the church, or outreach in the community is a sham if believers are at odds, spirits are grieved, and business is carried on as if all is well. In light of the above, few subjects should be of such high priority in the work of elders. 

## **Elijah-Elisha** (continued from page 1)

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mentor says is easier than applying what one knows to be true to one’s own life and learning through personal experience, which includes gleaning lessons from one’s mistakes. Normally, children grow, mature, and eventually leave the safety of their parents’ care to marry and begin their own families, or pursue education or employment, or to engage in some ministry for the Lord. Just as the development of a local church can be hindered by a missionary or church-planter who stays there too long, the same is true of a close mentoring relationship.

Paul instructed Timothy, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). While a mentor may provide lifelong counsel to a mentee, their close mentoring interaction will be short-lived if it follows the biblical model. It is important for the mentee to become a mentor of others in order to pass along what he or she has learned. As the Lord Jesus taught, this is an important aspect of making disciples—teaching new believers all that the Lord taught His disciples (Matt. 28:20).

### **9. Elisha wanted to go further than his mentor**

When given the opportunity to request a blessing from his master, Elisha requested a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. What did Elisha desire from Elijah? His request likely relates directly to what the firstborn son received from his father under the Law. According to Deuteronomy 21:17, the firstborn son received a double portion of the family

inheritance and became the rightful successor of the family.

Elisha had become so identified with his master Elijah that he wanted Elijah to consider him as his son; he wanted to represent Elijah in his ministry and proceed with his God-given blessing and power to do so. Elijah had accomplished great things for God, but Elisha had a heart to do even more than his mentor. After Elijah went to heaven, Elisha picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah—Elisha desired to do the work of the Lord as Elijah’s successor. His first statement after receiving the mantle reflects this truth: “Where is the LORD God of Elijah?”

Elisha watched Elijah use the mantle previously to part the Jordan River, and he was determined to use it in the same manner and in Elijah’s name. As a result the Jordan River parted and Elisha crossed over on dry land; God endorsed Elisha as His new prophet by the miracle. A record of Elisha’s ministry confirms that he did receive a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. Elijah did seven miracles during his ministry, one of which was restoring life to a dead boy. Elisha did fourteen miracles, two of which related to raising the dead back to life. The second resurrection occurred after a dead man was thrown on Elisha’s bones in an impromptu burial by the pall-bearers to avoid capture by the approaching enemy

### **10. Elisha was not a clone of Elijah**

Elisha was called to a very different type of prophetic ministry than that of Elijah. Elijah had confronted an apostate nation and pronounced divine judgments on Israel and its leadership. Conversely,

Elisha would be a champion of the people. God would use him to perform acts of kindness and bless the broken-hearted. Elisha was appointed to be a prophet of God, but he was not called to be an Elijah; God had given him a unique ministry.

Yet, with this said, he carried within him the spirit of Elijah in doing the work of the Lord which he had been given to do. Mentors do not try to clone themselves, rather they want to see their mentees go further than they have gone. Success is being faithful to God’s calling for your life and is not related to how you compare to others or how much approval you get from them. Each believer is a unique creation of God and requires tender care and sincere respect to reach his or her full potential for Christ.

The development of mentoring relationships requires that both the mentor and the mentee maintain a proper perspective of their ministries to each other. The mentor must be willing, available, transparent, and a good example to follow (1 Pet. 5:2-3). Maturity in the mentee both endorses the mentor’s ministry and prepares the mentee to be able to teach others in the future. Good mentoring relationships are active and will ultimately develop into a peer type of mentality, where counsel is given when required, but the ongoing interaction is not needed. The goal of mentor relationships is to adequately equip mentees so that they can better train the next generation of disciples (2 Tim. 2:2). 

## Wives' Corner

### Bathsheba, the Adulterous Queen *by Maria Forcucci*

We have finally come to the last woman in the Lord's genealogy, Bathsheba (or Bathshua, 1 Ch.3:5), the adulterous queen. Like Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth, Bathsheba's backdrop is painted against the battle between flesh and spirit, doubt and faith, rebellion and obedience. Of all the women we have studied, Bathsheba is perhaps the most perplexing.

There is disagreement among commentators as to whether Bathsheba was an innocent victim of a man of power, or if she shrewdly set David up for a fall. It was when kings should have gone to battle that David stayed behind and "saw a woman washing herself." We can ask why she would do that considering David was much older and she was probably a young bride (she was very beautiful and she had no children), but there are some things we won't know until glory.

Some have asserted that Bathsheba wanted to have the king's child so as to give birth to the future king of Israel, which is ultimately what happened. There is evidence of such ambition in 1 Kings 1 where Bathsheba goes to David on behalf of Solomon (their second son together) when Adonijah was setting himself up as king. However, her later actions can also describe a woman of faith who knew God wanted Solomon on the throne, and none of David's other sons.

There is no indication in 2 Samuel 11 that she resists David's advances, but she also mourns for her husband for the required period...usually between 7 and 30 days. The Bible does not tell us if this was strictly adherence to the law, or if her heart was broken.

Yes, Bathsheba is perplexing. Almost everything in her story can be interpreted in two opposing ways.

Even the "washing herself" can mean either a whole bath (not usually done in the evening, or even in the home), or just washing a part of the body (like the feet—always done in the evening). What would it take to entice the king? Who knows? David was already primed with pride since 2 Samuel 8 tells us that he had "made a name for himself."

Was Bathsheba taking advantage of the man's complacency or did David see an easy conquest?

I am so eager to meet them and find out! But until then we can only come to one conclusion. The Lord God saw fit to put Bathsheba in a long list of male forbears leading to His Son. Like the

other women, God saw in her the one requirement to become His family member—faith.

Have we noticed this common thread throughout these few articles? Tamar: faith that got her a temporal and eternal inheritance. Rahab: faith that saved her family and brought her eternal safety. Ruth: faith that put the solitary in a

family and gave the stranger a place of honor. Bathsheba: faith that brought honor to a sinful beginning.

We can conclude then that whatever our flaws, sins, and past lives might contain, with true faith, we are no less important to God's plans and purposes. 2 Peter 1:1,3-4 (KJV): "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like

precious faith...According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature..." 

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### THE SMALL PRINT

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**Contact Info.** Elders' ShopNotes, c/o 112 Doolittle Dr. Bethany, CT 06524, USA  
E-mail: [alan7s@yahoo.com](mailto:alan7s@yahoo.com)  
Phone: 203-393-0078.

Publisher/Editor: Jack Spender  
Editorial assistance: Ruth Rodger  
Layout: Ryan Farrington

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