DEVELOPING AND LEADING WITH A PROPHETIC HEART

Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary?...He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous , who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue , who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman , who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the Lord , who keeps his oath even when it hurts , who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent . He who does these things will never be shaken.
Psalm 15:1-5

God is not merely calling us to adopt new ways of doing ministry or to embrace a new Kingdom philosophy. He is calling us into a deeper transformation of the heart. The new wineskin represents our capacity to carry what God entrusts to us. That capacity involves our mindset, character, spiritual maturity, relationships, leadership, and the structures through which we serve. At the centre of this transformation is the heart—the place from which our motives, desires, intentions, and decisions flow.

A new Kingdom wineskin requires more than changed behaviour; it requires a heart increasingly aligned with the nature, values, and purposes of Jesus Christ.

For example :We can change our outward methods without changing our inward motives . We can use Kingdom language while pursuing personal recognition. We can desire spiritual influence without wanting the responsibility of spiritual maturity. We can seek God's power while resisting His work of transforming our character. The goal is not simply to do new things for God, but to become people whose hearts genuinely desire what He desires.

1. **Understanding the New Wine and the New Wineskin**

Scripture: Matthew 9:17 “Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins: otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined: but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.” NAS In the biblical illustration, new wine required wineskins that could accommodate the pressure created during fermentation. An old, rigid wineskin could split and lose its contents.

Jesus used this illustration in the context of His ministry and the religious expectations of His day. The new wine, can illustrate the life, work, gifts, opportunities, and purposes of God that we are called to receive and steward.

The new wineskin can illustrate the renewed mindset, transformed character, spiritual maturity, and practical capacity needed to carry that responsibility.

The heart is central to this process because it influences how we receive, interpret, desire, and use what God entrusts to us. Consider two people who receive the same opportunity to lead a ministry. One is motivated by love for God and a desire to serve people. The other is motivated primarily by recognition, influence, or the need to prove personal worth. The outward opportunity is the same, but the inward motives are different. Over time, those motives will influence their decisions, relationships, and leadership. This leads to an important principle:

The capacity to carry Kingdom responsibility depends not only on what we know or can do, but also on the condition of our hearts and the motives governing our actions.

2. The Heart: The Source of Our Motives and Desires

Key Scriptures: Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 6:21; Luke 6:45 Proverbs 4:23 instructs us to guard our hearts because the issues of life flow from them. In Scripture, the heart is more than our emotions. It represents the inner person, including our thoughts, intentions, affections, will, and moral orientation.

Our motives answer the question, "Why am I doing this?" Our desires answer the question, "What do I truly want? "Our values answer the question, "What matters most to me?" Our decisions reveal how these inner realities are expressed in everyday life. For example, we may desire to preach, prophesy, lead, teach, build a ministry, or influence our community.

These desires are not inherently wrong. The important question is what is shaping them. Are we motivated by love, obedience, compassion, and a desire to glorify God? Or are we primarily motivated by recognition, insecurity, competition, control, or personal ambition? Sometimes our motives are mixed. We may genuinely love God while also wanting approval from others. We may want to serve while secretly hoping to be noticed. The answer is not to become paralysed by self-examination. It is to invite the Holy Spirit to reveal what needs healing, repentance, renewal, and realignment.

Three questions that reveal the heart

1. What do I desire? What outcome am I hoping to achieve?

2.Why do I desire it? What is driving me beneath the surface

3. What will I do with it?

Will this desire lead me toward Christlike service, integrity, and obedience? A renewed Kingdom heart does not mean we never experience selfish desires. It means we become

increasingly willing to recognize them, surrender them to God, and allow Him to reshape us.

3. The Old Wineskin : When Our Hearts Resist Kingdom Transformation

An old wineskin is not simply an old tradition or an established way of doing things. Applied to our inner lives, it can represent a rigid pattern of thinking, desiring, or behaving that prevents us from responding faithfully to God. We may welcome new opportunities while resisting the heart transformation required to steward them well.

Five heart conditions that can restrict Kingdom growth

1. Pride instead of humility :We want to be seen as spiritually mature, gifted, or important. We may find correction difficult or feel threatened when someone else succeeds.

Kingdom response: Cultivate humility, teachability, and a willingness to serve without needing recognition. Scriptures: Philippians 2:3–8; James 4:6.

2. Recognition instead of faithfulness We measure our value by visibility, position, applause, or the approval of others. We may become discouraged when our contribution is unseen.

Kingdom response: Learn to value obedience and faithfulness even when no one notices. Scriptures: Matthew 6:1–4; Colossians 3:23–24.

3. Control instead of trust. We want God to work, but only in ways that preserve our comfort, plans, and influence. We may struggle when others have different gifts or approaches.

Kingdom response* Surrender our need to control outcomes while maintaining biblical wisdom, healthy boundaries, and accountability. Scriptures: Proverbs 3:5–6; James 4:13–15.

4.Competition instead of honour. We compare our progress, gifting, ministry, or influence with others. Another person's success may feel like a threat to our own.

Kingdom response: Celebrate the gifts and fruit of others, recognizing that the body of Christ has many members with different functions. Scriptures: Romans 12:3–10; 1 Corinthians 12:14–27.

5. Personal ambition instead of surrendered desire. We may want a position, platform, or spiritual gift more than we want the character and responsibility associated with it.

Kingdom response: Ask God to purify our ambitions so that our desires increasingly reflect His purposes and our love for people. Scriptures: James 3:13–18; Matthew 20:25–28.

These examples help us recognize areas where our hearts need the grace and transforming work of God. The old wineskin is not merely an outdated method. It can also be an unrenewed pattern of the heart that causes us to use new opportunities for old purposes develops the following characteristics: -

Humility: We are willing to learn, repent, and receive correction.

We desire to act with integrity rather than manipulate outcomes for personal advantage.

Love :We seek the genuine good of others, not merely what they can do for us.

Surrender: We bring our plans and ambitions before God and remain willing to change direction.

Faithfulness :We obey God even when obedience is costly or unnoticed.

Generosity: We hold our resources, gifts, and influence as things to steward for God's purposes.

Discernment: We test our desires and impressions against Scripture, wisdom, and the character of Christ.

The new wineskin is not a claim that we have achieved perfect motives. It is a commitment to remain responsive to God's transforming work. We become more capable of carrying Kingdom responsibility as our character, desires, and decisions increasingly reflect Jesus.. How we define success, power, greatness, leadership, and influence., the world's values can encourage us to pursue status, possessions, personal achievement, and recognition. Jesus presents a different way: greatness expressed through service, leadership expressed through love, and success measured by faithfulness to God

Five Kingdom shifts in the desires of our hearts

A. From self-promotion to God's glory. Instead of asking, “How can I become more important?” we ask, “How can my life bring honour to Jesus?” Scripture: John 3:30; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

B. From personal gain to serving others. Instead of asking only what we will receive, we consider how our gifts, resources, and opportunities can benefit others. Scripture: Philippians 2:3–4.

C. From the desire for position to the desire for Christlike character

Instead of pursuing influence at any cost, we pursue the maturity needed to exercise influence responsibly. Scripture: Galatians 5:22–23; 1 Timothy 3:1–7.

D. From controlling outcomes to faithful obedience Instead of demanding that God fulfil our plans, we bring our plans before Him and remain willing to obey His direction. Scripture: Luke 22:42; Proverbs 16:3.

Instead of measuring success only by numbers, visibility, or growth, we consider whether our lives and ministries produce love, integrity, discipleship, reconciliation, and faithful service. These shifts do not mean that growth, achievement, influence, or leadership are wrong. They mean that such things must be governed by Kingdom values rather than becoming the ultimate objects of our desire personal heart examination .

Before undertaking a significant ministry opportunity, making a decision, or pursuing a new vision, ask:

- Am I seeking God's glory or primarily my own recognition?
- Am I motivated by love and obedience, or by fear, comparison, and the need to prove myself?
- Am I willing to do this faithfully even if I receive no public recognition?
- Am I willing to let God change my plans, my timing, or even my understanding of what success looks like.