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Transcending Holy Spirit

In Dr. Terry Wardle ministry book, *Outrageous love Transforming power*, Dr. Wardle addresses the audience of the transcending fire upon the holy spirit that builds our spiritual maturity with Christ. He then engages the audience with the eight characteristics of being transformed; identity, intimacy, community, character, brokenness, ministry, empowerment, and authority. In this society today, Christians are decreasing their spiritual maturity because they are being distracted by materialistic things on Earth that don't satisfy their needs. The Church of God needs their disciples to lead with a leader willing to lead them with the holy spirit. He illustrates this idea by developing a questionnaire based on the belief, ability in ministry and characteristics of christlikeness for doctoral students at Ashland Theological Seminary. Which in result, made students reflect on their spiritual journey.

Christians have struggled with the meaning of building into the likeness of Christ which can be very problematic. Dr. Wardle goes in depth by explaining Jeremy's spiritual immaturity. Jeremy, a pastor, seminary graduate, and preacher who serves a ministry, lacks the capabilities of playing a key role in his ministry, to be like Jesus. Jeremy has fallen into wearing a disguise that pleases everyone and his profession as a Pastor, but in doing so, he has lost his identity. For instance, "The Lord had an intimate relationship with the Father, but Jeremy is so busy in ministry that he seldom has time for such a relationship, He also has no time to be a part of a community of people who genuinely care for him, though that too was part of the Lord's life," (Wardle, 14). As Christians we allow ourselves to be misguided into thinking we need

higher authority, money, popularity, fame. Dr. Wardle mentions how when he made the local little league team and his friend Dennis didn't, it made Dennis feel less significant because he was searching for his source of "worthiness". The same way for Dr. Wardle for when he continues to contrast Jeremy and Jesus to his failed behavior to Jesus. Jeremy allowed his brokenness to become an obstacle of his relationship with the Lord and his community. Instead, Jeremy should've embraced intimacy with the Lord and allowed his wounds to become his testimonies and a guide for his community. Jeremy has blindly led his community into what he "thought" would be the best to him instead of going deeper with the holy spirit to lead him through the right sermon and path. Testimonies allow others to understand more about God's grace and his mercy, which creates a foundation of a powerful connection with the Lord. The more you understand the Lord's doing, the more you understand who you are in the holy spirit. Leaders should be able to direct their community with the holy spirit and authority of who they are with Christ. The holy spirit is their identity and creates a power walk to heaven. In 2 Timothy 1:8-12, "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God...". The Lord allows suffering to be the main content of our spiritual journey. Without a leader being present to share out his testimonies, it forms fragmented Christians. As Christians we allude ourselves into thinking we are "perfect" and "holy". This "idea" actually allows us to misconstrue our true identity and secrete what the Lord wants us to be. When we embrace the suffering we've faced or still facing, we understand the spiritual maturity that has been restored in our lives.

Dr. Wardle continues on with his analysis by developing a questionnaire for doctoral students majoring in Theology, but this questionnaire revealed how the students scored high in

belief and ability but scored low in characteristic of Christ likeness. This reflected the students dearly because “One of the students said that he had been growing increasingly dissatisfied with his christian walk and now he knew why,” (Wardle, 16). The student felt transgressed into thinking that he would be able to fulfill his/her spiritual maturity into an investment that didn't play a significant role in his life. The students have developed a skill of mastering behind the mask and identity, and spiritual journey with the Lord. Dr. Wardle analyzed that the holy spirit is needed for Christians to be transformed into the likeness of Jesus, but in order to do that, he or she must “accept Christ into his or her heart” then you're reborn. In Acts 2:38, it states, “And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Dr. Wardle mentions how the holy spirit will be placed in you, when you accept the Lord or undergo baptism. After the baptism, the seed or the holy spirit becomes a new creation. Within this new creation, your past self (what was evil and broken) has the potential to reflect spiritual maturity.

Reading Dr. Wardle's book has made me realise how even pastors or those majoring in theology, don't have a full understanding of what it truly means to be empowered by the holy spirit or what it means to be like Christ. If they're majoring in theology, think of how difficult it may be for other Christians to understand how to become spiritually mature. Dr. Wardle has given us ways we can follow Christ's footsteps to be shaped like him. The Lord has fallen in love with the way we are, but we change our essence, in order to blend in with this society. The Lord wants us to love every cracks and peaks in us to understand what it feels to be loved by someone who loves every bit of pieces that you might consider to be broken or irrelevant. In his eyes the brokenness is what he admires the most because we allowed him to be in our journeys as well.

In Conclusion, Dr. Wardle has engaged his audience to be shaped in the likeness of Christ by the holy spirit. Dr. Wardle has exemplified ways to become spiritually mature to lead others in the right direction. It can become quite difficult to not distract ourselves from worldly distractions because of the way we avoid our mission to lead. Without the right content to learn how to be led, there can be thousands of lost Christians.

