

# MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Willing Not Perfect

Dear Friend,

Something I believe to be a challenging concept for most Christians to appreciate is the fact that God is perfect, but He must use imperfect vessels to spread His message in the earth. That being the case, perfection must flow through imperfection in order for God to reveal Himself to humanity. This is not something easily grasped and yet it is God's only means by which He can minister to mankind. Without the body of Christ in the earth, in all its imperfections, ministering life to the lost, humanity would have no hope.

In the devil's attempt to complicate and confuse matters, he invests tremendous effort into convincing Christians of their inadequacies by getting them to believe they are just not good enough for God to use. Think about this, God used a donkey to speak through to get Balaam's attention. Yet, the devil sometimes succeeds at convincing believers to look at them self and their own inadequacies instead of looking to God and His perfection. When I look to Him at my point of weakness and yield to His strength working through me my victory is certain. He makes me adequate to face any challenge, any obstacle, and win.

So, all God needs is a **willing** vessel **not a perfect vessel**. Once a person says, "yes" to God and His plan for their life, then God wholeheartedly supports their decision and involves Himself in every area of their life the person allows. In so doing, God is given an outlet through which He can flow. The end result is that humanity is blessed through the surrendered lives of imperfect people.

If you think about it, even when Jesus went looking for men to disciple during His earthly ministry, He didn't go looking for the most perfect people He could find. Notice how He didn't go straight to the temple and begin drafting the religious leadership of the day to become His disciples. Jesus intentionally chose men who were clearly faulty vessels to be His followers and began to pour Himself into them.

This was true before the cross, as well as, after the cross. When the message of the new birth needed to be revealed to mankind, God chose as His voice in the earth a man so messed up that he initially believed that killing Christians was pleasing to God. Now that's pretty messed up, don't you agree? That person was Saul who later became Paul. My point is this; we are not even qualified to determine our own usefulness to the kingdom because while we are stuck on all our faults, God is looking at our potential. Only He is able to accurately place us in the body of Christ where our potential can be realized. The reason God can so successfully do this is because He knows better than we do what He has invested in us. The prophet Isaiah prophesied of the day we live in today as he wrote these words: (Isaiah 64:8)

***“But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.”***

Think about this, in our first birth we were born under the weight of sin and spiritual death. It is accurate to say that in our first birth we were the children of the devil, which is what Jesus actually said to the scribes and Pharisees in John 8:44 when he told them; ***“you are of your father the devil”***. I think Jesus said that, not only for the sake of the scribes and Pharisees, but of the politically correct “Christians” of our day who are afraid to call sin, sin, but I digress.

In our second birth we are formed by the Potter in the womb of the Spirit and are created with a place in His body to fulfill. From the moment we emerge from the womb of the Spirit (born again) we step forth with a calling on our lives that fits perfectly with the gifting God has equipped us with. As we grow and develop spiritually we begin to discover the person the Potter made us to be and where we fit into the body of Christ. Keep in mind; the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (Romans 11:29) Just because we choose to ignore God's calling on our lives doesn't mean God forgets about it. We still have an obligation to God's calling whether we choose to walk in it or not.

As for those who question their place in His body I have this word of advice, it is never a good idea to question God. God's reasoning for why He chooses the people He chooses to accomplish specific tasks isn't based on the same criteria we use. For example, consider God's choice to use David to be king over Israel in Saul's place. God's selection process had absolutely nothing to do with the outside appearance of the person. God looks at the part of man no one else sees, the heart. He sees man's future potential, and it's not based on yesterday's mistakes.

When the prophet Samuel was directed by God to the house of Jesse and Samuel was looking over the sons of Jesse to see which one God would select, notice what God said. (1 Samuel 16:7)

***“But the Lord said unto Samuel, look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”***

One bad habit the church is guilty of is taking a new convert who has notoriety in the world and quickly promoting them to positions of prominence long before they are ready. I'm sure you have seen this for yourself. In so many cases the person's lack of spiritual maturity leaves them vulnerable to satan's attacks and sadly all too often the person slips back to their old ways and the body of Christ ends up with a black eye. As a result, the world has one more opportunity to say, "I knew that 'Jesus stuff' wasn't real". All of which could have easily been avoided had man resisted the temptation to do God's job and promote the person prematurely.

Don't misunderstand; God can use a person who just gets saved in the morning to witness to his family that same afternoon. At the same time don't think that there is not a preparation process to go through in order to fulfill your place in the body of Christ. One of the problems that arise when anything is mentioned about a preparation process is that people seem to automatically think that they can't do anything until the preparation process is complete, and I think that is not accurate. I believe that God can and wants to use us far more than we want to be used. No matter what place we are at in our preparation process, He wants to use us.

Don't let the enemy convince you that you are not ready or that you are not good enough or that you do not know enough yet for God to use you. What does the Bible say about how we overcome? (Revelation 12:11)

***“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”***

If you don't know anything to share from the scriptures, if you can't even remember John 3:16, you at least have your own personal testimony of how God saved you. That's enough!

God's looking for willing vessels to work through, not perfect vessels. If God could only use perfect vessels, then He would never get anything accomplished

because every single one of us is flawed. Don't buy into the notion that this person or that person is so much further along than what you are that God won't use you because that is simply not the case. Maybe that person has discovered a little more of their potential than you have but that doesn't mean your potential is any less spectacular than theirs.

The apostle Paul, in all his tremendous success, still had issues that made him vulnerable to the enemy's attack. We see in 2 Corinthians 12 how it appeared the enemy was dialed in on Paul's character flaws. The oppression was so intense that Paul went to God three different times asking God for relief from the enemy and each time God responded by saying; (2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

***“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. (9) And He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”***

What was God saying to Paul? Was God telling Paul He didn't care about what Paul was going through? No. We are told in Hebrews: (Hebrews 4:15)

***“For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities...”***

Jesus knows exactly how we feel because He had to endure the same pressures we endure. So, God's lack of action in Paul's case was not a sign of God's indifference to Paul's situation, nor was God trying to teach Paul something. What God was really saying to Paul was that he had everything necessary to run the devil off because God had already won the victory once and for all in Jesus. It's up to us, not God, to face down our enemy. Not in our own strength, but in God's strength. Remember, how Paul responded to what appeared to be God's indifference to Paul's circumstances. (2 Corinthians 12:10)

***“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”***

The answer isn't for us to wait until we are perfect before we pursue our place in the body of Christ, because we will never be perfect. The example Paul set for us is to pursue the things of God in the midst of our imperfection, not relying on our own natural strength, but on who we are in Christ. Our victories are already won in Him and will become reality in our lives so long as we trust in the finished work of the cross and not in our own abilities.

In ourselves, we will never be perfect in this world, which means that God would never make our success in this world contingent upon being perfect. God simply asks us to be willing, willing to endure the pressure the enemy exerts against us. Don't allow your imperfections to stop you. Be willing to be used by the Master and rest assured that He will use you.

~ Jesus Loves You!

*Mark Jenkins*