

TOOLS

Tools are used in every profession known to man. They are as diverse as the gifted professionals in whose hands their functions are put to use. A true gifted professional demonstrates the use of his or her tools in a manner not unlike a musician performing a symphony or musical score. Watching a gifted professional “putting to music” his or her tools of the trade is an art form in and of itself. No matter what the profession, or the product of this professional in whose hands these tools are put to use, it is “poetry in motion” to witness tools put to the use for which they were intended.

In a like fashion, God uses man as tools to carry out His mighty works. It was through the leadership of Moses that God was able to deliver the Children of Israel from the oppressive “iron hand” of Pharaoh. Moses was used as an Emissary Spokesman to announce the coming plagues through which this deliverance was to take place[1]. Using this same “tool”, Moses, the Children of Israel were subsequently led out of the land of Egypt and immediately given instructions on how to Worship the God whose mighty hand had destroyed the first born of their former Egyptian slave masters as a culminating act in this deliverance[2].

The seemingly ubiquitous and versatile Moses was also the tool of choice for God as He looked for someone to be the leader of the tribe of Israel as they wandered through the desert, seemingly aimlessly. Greeted with complaints, rebellion, mutiny, and sin by the people, Moses remained steadfast and true to God’s words because of his humility. We are told that Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth[3], which I presume would be the governing factor in God’s choice of a person who would receive instruction from God, rather than act on his own. In other words, Moses was a gifted tool in God’s Hands because he did what he was told to do. Like a wrench or pair of pliers, Moses performed the task for which he was best suited. When called upon to be the orator in addressing Pharaoh for deliverance of the Israelites, God ultimately acquiesced to Moses’ request to make someone else the orator[4], partially because Moses’ talents and gifts lay elsewhere in God’s plan.

However, Moses was not the perfect tool. He failed at the waters of Meribah because he struck the rock twice in order to bring out water for the thirsty throng, after he had been instructed to only speak to the rock. Striking the rock was Moses’ idea, not God’s. As a result of his failure he was denied the privilege of leading the children into the land of promise[5]...Even after 40 years of leadership. If this sounds harsh and strict, remember that God expects and deserves full and total obedience, just as a master craftsman expects and deserves a tool which operates as it is supposed to do under all conditions. Partial obedience is tantamount to disobedience. Just as a wrench or pair of pliers must be dependably functional when they are needed, so a servant of God must be obedient to God if his or her value to God is to be retained. Just as King Saul failed when he offered the sacrifice for the Israelites[6], and again when he failed to destroy everything taken in battle against the Amalekites[7]; God’s servants must not waiver in obedience. God values obedience even over sacrifice[8].

If we are to keep God’s Kingdom running smoothly like a symphony, we must each use our God given gifts as He intended. Moses knew when to yield to another whose talents lay in the direction God wanted to go, his own talents not fulfilling the needs. He selected leaders of smaller groups, got metal workers to overlay the altar and make the breast pieces, got workers in fabrics to weave the sacrificial robes and designated others to fill in the gaps left in the leadership of such a large group of people as the Israelites were. Thus, each person in God’s kingdom becomes a useful item, whose gifts and abilities work together like a symphony, keeping the “body of Christ” working together as an integral unit. Some have leadership abilities....They should lead; others may be preachers....They should preach; others may be singers and encouragers....They should use their gifts appropriately[9]. If we use our God given gifts with spiritual wisdom, God will have a full “toolbox” from which to draw the right tool for the right job He has in mind to be done.

[1] Exodus 1: 1-11: 30

[2] Exodus 11:31-13:16

[3] Numbers 12:3

[4] Exodus 4: 10-16

[5] Numbers 20:1-13

[6] 1 Samuel 13: 1-15

[7] 1 Samuel 15:1-35

[8] 1 Samuel 15: 22

[9] Romans 12: 3-8