

Five Self-Defeating Blind Spots in the Five-Fold Ministry

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Let us examine five self-defeating blind spots that hold back the five-fold ministry: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers.

- Stubborn resistance - blinded by denials
- Arrogant entitlement – blinded by selfishness
- Justifiable resentment – blinded by resentfulness
- Disconnected isolation – blinded by detachment
- Blind Ignorance – blinded by disobedience

God gave us the five-fold ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry (see Eph. 4:11-13). We are to be submitted to the pastor/elder in our life. As saints and ministers in the five-fold ministry, we often have difficulty seeing the blind spots in our lives. We all need to be under spiritual authority (this applies to a saint and to those that are in the five-fold ministry; both need to be submitted to an elder in their life) and to be able to take correction, instruction, and rebuke. We see throughout the Bible examples of men that were under the proper order that God set for His people.

These are several examples of men of God and their successors:

1. Moses - Joshua
2. Elijah - Elisha
3. David - Solomon
4. Elisha - Joash

Examples of Blind Spots in the Bible

When we take a look at the ministry of men in the Old Testament, each of them is uniquely different. In a careful study of the art and science of leadership, all of these men had blind spots in their lives. Elijah battled fear and pride. In 1 Kings 19, a messenger came to buffet the prophet with words from Jezebel, basically saying, by this time tomorrow his life would be taken. Elijah ran from this fear and hid out in a cave. Also, in 1 Kings 18, Elijah stated that he was the only prophet left who had not bowed his knee to Baal.

This showed that Elijah had a blind spot of spiritual pride. Moses had an issue with anger, yet the Bible says he was “very meek, above all the men which *were* upon the face of the earth.” Blind spots can be hidden in the life of any man of God who is a minister in the five-fold ministry.

As we read through the Bible, we look into the divine library of God and see the men that God called to the office of a prophet or even a king and see the blind spots that God uncovers in their lives so that He can deal with those individual flaws. In the book of 1 Samuel, the Lord called David from the sheepcote to the palace. He came from very humble beginnings as a shepherd of his father's sheep; however, all the while, God was training him for the office and calling in which he would serve.

He went from fighting with lions and bears to fighting Goliath. The preparation and process that David went through as a shepherd boy was for his date with destiny. It was God who arranged this battle with Goliath. We see the humility of David when he was rejected by his brethren the day his dad sent him to check on them. When David was on his assignment to fight with Goliath, God prepared David for his office as king, prophet, and priest. God always has picked the unlikeliest to serve in His work.

This is where David took the challenge to fight with Goliath. He tried on Saul's armor, but it did not fit. All he had was his weapon that God had been preparing him with to conquer the giant, the slingshot, and five smooth stones (one stone for Goliath and the other four stones were for his brothers, just in case they wanted to join him in battle). God raised David up that day before all his peers. The day David defeated the giant, he displayed great leadership skills. He showed that he was fearless, full of faith, and confident in the power and might of the one true God of Israel. David was instrumental in revealing the blind spot of jealousy and rebellion in Saul's life.

Pitfalls are blind spots that one may eventually fall into and are present in the lives of great men of God. Pitfalls need to be brought into correction by an elder in our life. However, when dealing with blind spots, many refuse to take instruction and submit to an elder. Success can be a very dangerous thing because it can lead to pitfalls. When examining the life of David, he too had growing issues as a result of his success. David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba revealed that he had a growing blind spot called lust.

David stayed home from battle so that he could be a “chocolate soldier.” Although he was a warrior, he was battle-weary, lonely, and depressed that day. He found himself looking over the veranda and saw Bathsheba bathing. This is where we see the manifestation of his blind spot through the lust of the eyes. You know the story; he fell into sin. To make matters worse, he plotted the murder of Bathsheba's husband.

God used Nathan, the prophet, to bring correction to the king-prophet-priest to expose his secret sin and bring him into accountability. David was not above the law; he too was a man of frailty. Even though he was the king-prophet-priest, he still needed to be under authority and submitted to the law of God and to the prophet of God in his life. We see the record of David's repentance in Psalms 51. David's blindspot was exposed after he was sharply rebuked by Nathan the Prophet and it led him to true repentance, realignment with God, and restoration. Though he made this mistake and received forgiveness, he reaped the consequences throughout his lifetime. Unfortunately, regrets are always poor companions. We could make a list of men and women throughout the Bible that revealed their blind spots.

There have been many manufactured cars that have blind spots and have caused countless wrecks and deaths. Blind spots cause accidents that can sometimes be fatal. We, as ministers in the five-fold ministry, need to constantly self-examine ourselves and to be in a covenant relationship with our elders. Likewise, the same goes for the saints of God with their pastor. We need to be in Apostolic fellowship with peers of like-precious faith and not just surround ourselves with friends that will tell us what we want to hear, but rather what we need to hear. The Old Testament prophets all had flaws and blind spots. Some prophets will eventually fail because they will become lone rangers or mavericks who are not accountable to anyone.

Just a little bit of advice, never go against the man of God that birthed you into the gospel or the elder that took you under his wings. It is never in God's plan when we think we have outgrown our man of God. Just because we built a bigger and better church than he ever did, it does not mean that we do not need a wise counselor or that we are more spiritual than he is, my dear friend. By having this kind of mentality, our demise is imminent in that we are digging our own spiritual graves because we have a blind spot. Joshua stayed with Moses until he died, and Elisha stayed with his man of God until he was translated.

I am sure that each of these protégés could see the flaws in their own man of God. I am not talking about sin or a backslidden leader by any means. Run if they compromise the Apostolic-Pentecostal doctrine and holiness within and without! The list of men whom God tried to chastise and bring into order is like a soda machine that took your money and then said “out-of-order.” It is too late to get your money back because you have been tricked! We better run from men in the five-fold ministry who have gotten out of alignment with their elders and man of God because they have no accountability in their life.

Absalom was a young and upcoming heir to King David. He would not take correction from his man of God and father. He did not show up for the round table meetings of the king because he was impatient and busy plotting his revolt to overthrow his dad. He thought he could do better than his father. He thought it was time for a new leader who could bring a new direction. He had charisma, but he did not have the call or the anointing. He was getting out of alignment with the authority in his life. His feet were not pointed in the right direction because he was too busy undermining the man of God. Absalom was shaking hands and working the crowd with his charisma.

This young man was puffed up, self-willed, heady, and high-minded. He did not have the experience or the training that his father had, nor did he have his anointing, wisdom, and knowledge. He had a spirit of delusion; this was another blind spot. He would not take rebuke, correction, and instruction. Eventually, his rebellion and revolt lead to his death. The oak tree in the middle of the field caught him off guard as he rode upon his mule to the battle to carry out his self-willed plan to touch God’s man. It was not just that he was coming against his dad; Absalom was coming against the established authority of God. God’s dealings with Absalom went unheeded, and it ended up in his death. The result of these blind spots and pitfalls led to a tragic death.

We, as Apostolic-Pentecostal ministers and saints in the local church, need to check the front-end alignment of our spiritual car to see if we are drifting to the right or left. We need to examine ourselves to see if we are just under authority and submitted when it feels good. If this is true, when our elder corrects or rebukes us, we will easily quit and run to the next opportunity.

As Apostolic believers (whether a saint or a five-fold minister), we need to do a regular inventory of our lives and be subject one to another. Paul the apostle said to the Corinthians, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith...” We need regular check-ups and self-examination lest we fail to see our blind spots and shipwreck in the faith.

Safeguards Against Blind Spots

Here are some ways we can safeguard ourselves from blind spots:

- Stubborn resistance - blinded by denials
- Arrogant entitlement – blinded by selfishness
- Justifiable resentment – blinded by resentfulness
- Disconnected isolation – blinded by detachment
- Blind ignorance – blinded by disobedience

1. Stay aligned with your pastor/elder.

2. Stay in Apostolic-Pentecostal fellowship with others in the five-fold ministry so that you can have proper accountability and transparency.

3. Stay in contact with your elder as a minister in the five-fold ministry.

4. Study and read the Bible for yourself and not just to have another sermon to preach. Read good Apostolic-Pentecostal books and other materials to help you develop and discipline yourself to be aligned and well-balanced in life. Many in the five-fold ministry get out of balance and have blind spots concerning their family. We need to have the ministry in proper order and not put things above our wife and children. It is important that to have a balanced life in all respects.

5. We must be consistent in prayer, fasting, and Bible study. It is the mirror of the Word of God that will reveal and correct blind spots and pitfalls. Blind spots and pitfalls in the lives of the five-fold ministry aren't always sin or disobedience. Sometimes it could be flaws that are in a person's upbringing through assimilation; we have things in us that need to change that can hinder a five-fold minister or saint.

That's why we need elders and a pastor in our life that can see these things that may not be a sin but could be a flaw or a weakness that can be worked out of us through preaching and teaching and mentorship that will better us for the work of God.

6. Surround yourself with Apostolic-Pentecostal five-fold ministers that your elder/pastor approves of. One of the dangerous blind spots is isolation. A "loner" spirit is very dangerous to many that are in the five-fold ministry. This happens due to being wounded, lack of trust, and unresolved differences with the five-fold ministry. Many never fulfill their assignment from the Lord because of isolation and a lack of connection. They have become disconnected, disgruntled, and critical of others in the five-fold ministry.

Life alone is easier, but it's emptier. We become isolated from relationships that bring out the inner truth about ourselves; we do not have to face who we are. We remain unaware of the areas in which we need to grow. We stop developing the maturity and wisdom God wants for us. The disconnected life is based on an assessment that the world is unsafe, people are not dependable or worth the trouble, or their relational skills are inadequate.

God has set His divine governance in the Apostolic-Pentecostal Church of the living God. It is built upon the Apostle's doctrine of Ephesians 2:20-22 and Acts 2:42. We are to continue in the Apostle's doctrine and in fellowship. We need to be connected to our community; this is the way God made us.

We need to fellowship with people of like precious faith, who are built upon the rock of Jesus Christ; this is essential. Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone and we are lively stones to bring forth the sacrifice of praise and worship unto our God!

The Purpose of the Five-Fold Ministry and the Outcomes of their Synergistic Work

The one single scripture which captures what the five-fold ministry is in its essence is the revelation presented by the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians:

Ephesians 4:12-16, *“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we [henceforth] be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [even] Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*

The following list entails common blind spots that are in those of us in the five-fold ministry, if we would be transparent and honest with ourselves.

- Stubborn resistance – blinded by denials
- Arrogant entitlement – blinded by selfishness
- Justifiable resentment – blinded by resentfulness
- Disconnected isolation – blinded by detachment
- Blind Ignorance – blinded by disobedience
- Blinded by pride
- Blinded by self righteousness
- Blinded by hypocrisy
- Blinded by bitterness
- Blinded by unforgiveness
- Blinded by money and materialism
- Blinded by lust

It would take an extensive study to bring out all the definitions and terms of these blind spots. May I encourage the reader to look them up and search your heart by asking the Holy Ghost to reveal and shine His light on any area of your heart that may have blind spots. Ask Him to keep you from any pitfalls and to help you to be open to correction from a minister in the five-fold ministry so that in the end you will be saved.

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