

Episode 036

Raising Sons Of The House

Again and again, I have seen leaders who build a great ministry than struggle with succession because they fail to have someone who can carry the torch on to the next length of the journey. I have known senior pastors who handed their mega-church to younger leaders who then takes it a very different direction or even out of their movement. It saddens my heart to see such occurrences. Why does it happen?

One of the reasons is because they failed to raise sons of the house, or to discern one in their midst. Where by house, I mean the church or ministry. Apostle Paul grasped this and expressed this principle to the Philippian church. Philippians 2:19 - 22 (NIV) 19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

As we seek to grow God's house, we need a team of great people in the house. What is particularly important for the longevity of the house are people whom we can call our true spiritual sons and daughters. Title For ease of communication, I will simply use the term "sons" though I mean both genders.

WHAT ARE SONS OF THE HOUSE?

True spiritual sons bear the genetic code of the house. Philippians 2:20 (KJV) states "I have no man likeminded" or NASB version "kindred spirit." Timothy had the same spirit as his mentor. He was kindred spirit and would care for the Philippians just as Paul would. A true spiritual son embraces the culture and values of his "father".



Servants and soldiers are easy to find. But sons are hard to come by. Servants do what they need to do. Soldiers do what they are told. But sons come to understand and become instinctive of what the father would want. More than that, they make into their own the values of the father. A servant needs to be told. A son does not need to be told as he understands the father's heart.

Here we are not talking about spiritual sons who are "born" in a certain church or ministry. We are talking about those with the heart of a true spiritual son. True spiritual sons are rare because many "seek for their own interest". When our hearts are self-oriented, we cannot embrace another's heart. But when we die to self, we are able to feel the heart of another and use our lives to fulfil their purpose. This is true sonship.

We become sons and daughters either by birth or by adoption. Adoption is a 2-way street. We adopt a child but a child must also adopt us. This is the same with the church we find ourselves in. Do we carry the spirit of the house?

How much we are spiritual sons is revealed when we are corrected, disciplined or adjusted. Do we stick with our fathers? Though Lot was with Abraham a long time, he was not a son. Lot experienced Abraham's blessings and his flocks multiplied. If he was wise, he would have continued building under Abraham. But he allowed strife to arise and instead of resolving it with Abraham, he allowed it to be an issue to separate from Abraham. Genesis 13:11 tells us that "Lot chose for himself...". Instead of choosing for God's bigger purpose, he chose for himself. Lot never embraced the faith of Abraham. The generosity, the character, the courage, the self-sacrifice nor the family life.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SONS

1. Serve the vision of the House

Philippians 2:22 (NIV) "But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel."



A true spiritual son appreciates the spiritual vision that God has given to the house and serves that vision. They seek to build the house of God, not their own house. There is a crucial concept here that is often neglected in many leadership books. Most teach about the leader's vision but neglect to emphasize of the vision of the house. Should it be the vision of leader or the vision of the house? When God is truly shepherd of the house, God is the initiator of the vision of the house. A godly leader builds upon the God-given vision, not their own vision. The true son understands the vision of the house and makes it their own. This does not mean that the new leader does not expand upon the existing vision. What is most important is what God's vision for the house is.

It is crucial that we understand the relative importance of the leader in contrast to the house. If a leader goes off, we must deal with the leader and not let the house be destroyed. For the house should have greater importance than the leader. A son of the house understands this. A true son who serves the vision of the house will be proven in due time. Phil 2:22 states that "Timothy has proved himself..." Timothy has proven himself through his serving in the apostolic team. My heart is to serve the house that God has built in the HIM movement. My heart is to preserve what is great in our house and build upon it.

It is under tough testing that the true allegiance of our hearts is revealed. Some have fallen to the wayside, and it has revealed where their hearts were. I have watched some who sadly serve their own agendas more than God's agenda. All of us have to be proven. God will prove us.

We are not saying at all that those who turn out not to be true sons, are wrong in their heart. Some may be, some may not be. But the issue is simply that they were not really true sons of this house. Because their heart is not deeply with the house.

If any house is to continue to grow, we need true spiritual sons. For only these will truly become the pillars of the house. Only these will truly carry the weight of the house for the long-term. It is a deep joy in my heart to watch true sons of the house rise up under my leadership. I am fully assured that they will carry the vision of the house and develop it under God's guidance. I have also seen those who were not true sons of the house and I am grateful that I can release them to other roles that God is calling them to.



2. Sons take ownership for the House

Philippian 2:21 (NIV) “For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.”

Sons take ownership of the house. They look after the interests of the house, rather than their own. They notice when things need attention. They feel it when things are not going well. They think about ways to improve the house. Sons of the house are willing to pay a price to see the house do well. Because they consider it their own.

Those that take ownership of the church, will take pride in it, will desire there to be good atmosphere in it, to have excellence. When we are proud of our own family, we will have no problems inviting people to our home. They boast in their family. Proverbs 17:6 (NIV) Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.

When we are proud of our church, we will have no problem inviting people to our church. We would not be embarrassed. As leaders we should aim for excellence. When there is excellence in our heart, there will be excellence in our church. A key mission of leadership is to ensure our people feel great about our church. We should nurture a healthy pride in what we are and what we do. When such a culture exists, it tends to foster more sons of the house.

3. Sons accept discipline in the house.

Hebrews 12:5-7 (NIV) 5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.” 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?

A true son is willing to receive correction. It develops character in us when we are being corrected. Sometimes, we need to be broken. It is when we emerge from trials with softened hearts that the character of Christ flows much more easily. For the fire purifies us.



Hebrews 12:11 - 13 (NIV) 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. 13 “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Some prepare for the call of God by going to Bible College, but behind the scenes He sends us to the furnace. We study success in seminars but in our lives, He hammers us on the anvil to shape us. We seek mentors to develop us but the Potter moulds us on His wheel.

We can only truly correct, adjust people who are teachable. If their reaction is unpredictable, it is very hard to shape them. There are different leaders that I have led over the years. The ones that grew the most, the ones I can trust the most, are those who respond well to correction and adjustment in their lives.

4. Sons give birth to sons.

We reproduce what we are. We infect others with our attitudes and perspectives. That is why Paul used Timothy extensively. He wanted others to get the same spirit that Timothy had. True sons bring people not only to God but to house they are in. They not only become immersed in God, but in the house.

I can see that our former HIM President, Ps. Simon used me because he knows he can trust me. He knows that I stand for. Because I stand with him. Not unthinkingly. But I stand to support him in God’s vision because I know he seeks to be obedient to God.

When we carry the heart of a true spiritual son, we understand the value of extending and continuing on with the house that God has put us in. We see the value of this house growing into the fullness of its destiny. We invest into it for the long-term. We guard it jealously even – that it may keep true to God’s call and be pure.



HOW DO WE NURTURE SONS OF THE HOUSE?

Following are some quick tips for nurturing sons of the house:

- When we love them and see the God-given potential in them. Even when others do not. Their hearts will trust us more because they know we have their good always in mind.
- When we nurture them, bringing out their potential. They feel grateful to us.
- When we impart our heart and values to them. They need to see our heart. Otherwise, it is hard for them to catch our values and priorities.
- When we treat them like sons. Family is so important. When they feel a part of our family, then they can be family.

HOW DO WE TURN SONS AWAY FROM THE HOUSE?

Following are some quick warnings:

- When we do not love and accept them.
- When we exasperate them. When our leadership does not instill confidence, but we exasperate them, they grow so frustrated they may give up following us.
- When we do not treat them like a son. But only like a servant. This is one of the problems with many senior pastors churches. Then they constantly worry that their leaders will split their church.

Conclusion

Let us pray for true sons of the house. Let us build true sons in your house. Then the mission of the house will continue through generations.



Discussion Questions

These questions could be done personally or as part of a group discussion.

1. What are your thoughts about the concept of the sons of the house? Would you want to have sons of the house? Discuss.
2. A number of characteristics of sons of the house were given. Which characteristic impressed you? Why?
3. This article distinguished between the vision of the leader and the vision of the house? What are your thoughts about it? Discuss.

Actionable Steps

Following questions are to prompt us on suitable actions. Importantly, come up with steps you will take to make progress. Give them datelines and priority.

1. In order to nurture sons of the house, there has to be certain key characteristics that has to be develop in yourself and the house. Identify those that are needed and some practical steps towards it.
2. Are there some characteristics that are hindering the nurturing of sons of the house, in your house? What are some specific steps you can take to remove or reduce it?





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