

By: Calvin Ray Evans

II Timothy 2:19-21



Thanks
for
Using
Me!

There is a common thread running through the heart of every person who has experienced a genuine born again experience. After the Lord converts us, we want the Lord to use us in some way for His glory. This passage uses a wonderful illustration to explain how the Lord uses us. He writes about the most common thing available in every home of that day

– vessels. These vessels were not to merely look at but they were to be used for particular purposes. The Lord is not being a respecter of persons when He puts these vessels into different categories. He is merely teaching us an important lesson. We need to discern what role we are playing in His plan for our life and to desire to be useful in His work. The text tells us there are **Priceless Vessels** (Gold & Silver), **Common Vessels** (Wood) and **Disposable Vessels** (Earthen) in a Great House. I want to be a golden vessel. Please Lord; never let me become a disposable vessel in your work.

I. THE LORD KNOWS US!

I hear people often say in services where I preach, “I am so glad to know the Lord.” Now the intent of my writing is not to be critical. I have said the same statement myself many times. However, the reality of it all is there is no way I can really fully know Him. He knows me! I am longing and trying to know Him! He is so great and mighty and His knowledge is higher than I can ever understand. A man one time was telling me how wrong I was and that he knew all there was to know about the Lord. About a week later, he came to apologize. He said that his children, who are grown adults now, had come to visit. While they were eating a family meal together, the kids started talking about things they did when they were younger. He did not have a clue about their conduct in years past. In all truth, we cannot really know our own children. How then can we proclaim that we know everything about the Lord?

The Apostle Paul wrote in an epistle, *“That I may **know him**, and the **power** of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death...”* (Philippians 3:10). If this great man of God wanted to know Him, then what a challenge this should be to us. The Lord knows everything about me, good and bad. However, I find something new and wonderful about Him each day and it is always good and never evil!

II. THE LORD WILL USE US!

Not only does the Lord know us, the amazing thing is He will use us! It is a precious thought to think the Lord would use someone like me. However, the way He uses me is determined by my willingness to let Him mold me into what He wants me to be. I can attempt to do enough to get by or else I can try to be a vessel of gold for God. There is a process to being used of the Lord.

A. PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST

If we want the Lord to really use us then we must pray. I know there are many people who seem to be afraid of the phrase, “praying in the Spirit.” They automatically have all kinds of thoughts come to their mind. I have learned we should never be afraid of anything taught in Scriptures. Nobody I know personally, who has been really used by God in a great way, got to that point without praying. They pray and more important they pray in the Holy Spirit. In Jude 1:20 we read, “*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Ghost.***” Again, in Ephesians 6:18 we read, “**Praying** always with all prayer and supplication **in the Spirit**, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints...” So the Bible teaches this principle is vital to success.

It is easy to point out particular passages like these but HOW AND WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? Look at the promise made by Jesus of the coming of the Spirit. Since we are talking about praying in the Holy Ghost, the logical thought would be to see the characteristics of the Spirit. If we are praying in the Spirit, then we will see the evidence of the Spirit when we pray.

First, look at John 14:26, which says, “*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and **bring all things to your remembrance**, whatsoever I have said unto you.*” Since He will teach us and bring all things to remembrance, it is reasonable to conclude we should learn more about God, His Word, His ways, His teachings and find help to remember things the Lord wants us to know. There are some things we can only learn through prayer! I really believe this truth. The Lord has taught me more in prayer than I learned in Bible College or Seminary. Now, I am not opposed to education. However, knowledge comes from college but the wisdom in my life has come from God. The things He has taught me, I never forget.

Second, in **John 16:13**, “*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and **he will shew you things to come.***” Did you catch this thought? Praying in the Spirit gives us direction! I feel we so often really fail to pray because we want to go our own way. If we pray in the Lord’s will, then He gives us clear direction. Also, He reveals things to us.

Then too, in **John 16:14** we see, “***He shall glorify me**: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*” When we pray in the Holy Ghost, everything we ask for will glorify the Lord. We will never ask or do anything inappropriately when we are praying under the influence of the Spirit because the Spirit seeks no glory for man. He seeks to lift up Jesus and give all the honor to Him.

B. PRACTICING GODLINESS

The next step to becoming a vessel of gold is to practice godliness. This is not to say we are God, but we are to pursue the things of God. The text tells us we are to “...*depart from iniquity*” (verse 19). The Bible says, “*But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness*” (I Timothy 4:7). The word, “exercise” means vigorous or the longer you do it the better you get. When I use the word “practice,” please do not mistake my meaning. I am not referring to something that is done in a hypocritical or fake way. I use it in the same way we talk about exercising. The more you do it the easier it gets and the better it gets. We use the same term when we talk about “practicing” medicine or law. It does not mean the lawyer or doctor is not qualified or don’t know what they are doing. However, the longer they practice it the more wisdom they have in their field. We find ourselves in the same position concerning godliness. It is not making ourself to become a God. It is showing our God to a world that does not know Him.

C. PERSEVERING TRIALS

This is the part we hate to think about. It would be so much easier to be used of the Lord if we just didn't have to go through so many things. However, it is impossible to have a gold vessel molded into a beautiful shape without fire. The Scripture lesson teaches us that we are "... prepared unto every good work" (verse 21). No matter what anyone may tell you or preach to you, the fire which molds us is our trials. Why do I say this? Because the Bible teaches us this! In **Job 23:10** "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." It does not say, when Satan has tried me. We give way too much credit to the devil. It does say when He (the Lord) hath tried me. You cannot make a man something that God does not want him to be. We have no power to mold anyone. We are the police of only one person, ourself! If we start to pray in the Spirit and then practice godliness, the final step is the Lord molding us into the finished vessel of honor. He does that through trials. Someone gave me this beautiful poem:

TRIALS

*He sat by the fire of seven-fold heat, As He watched by the precious ore.
And closer He bent with a searching gaze As He heated it more and more.
He knew He had ore that could stand the test And He wanted the finest gold,
To mold as a crown for the King to wear, Set with gems of price untold.
So He laid our gold in the burning fire, Though we fain would have said Him, "Nay."
And He watched the dross that we had not seen, As it melted and passed away.
And the gold grew brighter, and yet more bright And our eyes were so dim with tears,
As we saw the fire, not the Master's hand, And questioned with anxious fear.
Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow, As it mirrored a Form above
That bent o'er the fire, though unseen by us With a look of infinite love.
Can we think that it pleases His loving heart To cause a moment of pain?
Ah, no, but He saw through the present cross The bliss of eternal gain.
So He waited there with a watchful eye, With a love that is strong and sure,
And His gold did not suffer a bit more heat Than was needed to make it pure!*

(Source Unknown)

Here are a few quotes, which I have saved and pondered on over the years of ministry. They have been such a help to my understanding about trials.

In adversity we usually want God to do a removing job when He wants to do an improving job. To realize the worth of the anchor, we need to feel the storm.

-- Source Unknown

A small girl had been promised the privilege of climbing to a nearby hilltop where her brother enjoyed playing. But when she came within sight of the steep, rough path, she drew back in dismay. "Why, there isn't a smooth spot anywhere. It's all bumpy and stony!" she exclaimed. "Yes," said her more experienced older brother, "but how else would we ever climb to the top if it wasn't? The stones and bumps are what we step on to get there." --Source Unknown

*Mishaps are like knives that either serve us or cut us,
as we grasp them by the blade or the handle.*

-- J.R. Lowell

God brings men into deep waters not to drown them but to cleanse them.

-- Source Unknown

Thomas Edison invented the microphone, the phonograph, the incandescent light, the storage battery, talking movies, and more than 1,000 other things. December 1914 he had worked for 10 years on a storage battery. This had greatly strained his finances. This particular evening spontaneous combustion had broken out in the film room. Within minutes, all the packing compounds, celluloid for records and film, and other flammable goods were in flames. Fire companies from eight surrounding towns arrived, but the heat was so intense and the water pressure so low that the attempt to douse the flames was futile. Everything was destroyed. Edison was 67. With all his assets going up in a whoosh (although the damage exceeded two million dollars, the buildings were only insured for \$238,000 because they were made of concrete and thought to be fireproof), would his spirit be broken?

The inventor's 24-year old son, Charles, searched frantically for his father. He finally found him, calmly watching the fire, his face glowing in the reflection, his white hair blowing in the wind. "My heart ached for him," said Charles. "He was 67—no longer a young man—and everything was going up in flames. When he saw me, he shouted, 'Charles, where's your mother?' When I told him I didn't know, he said, 'Find her. Bring her here. She will never see anything like this as long as she lives.'" The next morning, Edison looked at the ruins and said, "**There is great value in disaster. All our mistakes are burned up. Thank God we can start anew.**" Three weeks after the fire, Edison managed to deliver the first phonograph.

(Copied from: *Bits and Pieces*, November, 1989, p. 12.)

D. PURIFYING MOTIVES

Another thing we see in the process of the text is the importance of the individual desire. We cannot have selfish intentions and expect the Lord to use us. Our prayers, practices and purposes are not to be tools of manipulation to work others into coming alongside us. In short, our motives must be right for the Lord to use us. If there is any wrong expectation from your actions, then a person must "...*purge himself...*" (verse 21), of those persuading influences. If we really let the fire of the Lord into our hearts and mind we will come out as gold. The prophet declares, "*And I will bring the third part through the **fire**, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as **gold** is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It [is] my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.*" (Zechariah 13:9). The message is clear. **We are to be used and not to use!**

III. THE DEVIL WILL ABUSE US!

The passage closes with a warning to those who want the Lord to use them. Just as sure as God will bless us, the devil will try to trap us. The enemy of our soul knows he can't defeat the Lord. He also cannot stop the blessings from coming. However, he will set snares to hold us back and try to steal our liberty. So, we must be aware the devil wants to abuse us as much as the Lord wants to use us! (verse 26)

There is a perfect illustration of the cruelty of Satan against the vessels of God. Nebuchadnezzar, a type of the devil, took the gold vessels of the Lord and put them in a house for his false god. This wicked king went so far as to use the vessels from God's house in a feast of debauchery. The Lord answered with writing on the wall. Sometimes the devil will put us in an ungodly environment. When we find ourself in a place like this, we need to remember what we are. We are still a vessel of gold. The people were wicked. The environment was evil but the vessel was still gold and brought honor to God. In time, God will say it is enough! The Lord brought judgment to the wicked king and his kingdom. We, too, shall one day be delivered from this world of sin and taken to the "great house" in glory.

A man came to me at the end of Camp Meeting service. Years ago, their little girl was born with no hip sockets. Medical professionals at a major hospital in this nation said she would never walk and would crawl on all four feet and hands like an animal. They said she would never have children and the doctors recommended abortion. They opted not to abort her. When she was three or four years old the parents were driving through a little town called Cooperstown, West Virginia. They saw a little church sitting right on the edge of the road. That night those loving and caring saints of God prayed for that little girl. The child was scheduled for surgery in a few days. The day of the operation, the surgeon came out and said when they made the incisions and went in that she had the most beautiful hip sockets he had ever seen. She not only lived but now, all these years later, she is married and in the service of the Lord! **TAKE THAT OLD DEVIL!**

Something to Think About...

People will forget what you said,
People will forget what you did,
But people will never forget how you made them feel.



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Calvin Ray

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