BREAKING THE CYCLE OF UNPREPAREDNESS (IV)

(GETTING YOU READY FOR WHAT GOD IS PREPARING YOU TO DO)

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Primary Scripture

Joshua 3:4–6

Big Idea

Preparation is faith expressed before the opportunity appears. God prepares us for what lies ahead as we surrender old patterns, develop godly habits, and become the people He is calling us to be.

Introduction

God's people were standing at the Jordan River, facing a transition that required both faith and preparation.

Behind them was the wilderness. Ahead of them was the Promised Land. Between the two stood a river they could not cross by their own strength.

Their assignment was not to figure everything out. They needed to follow God's presence, consecrate themselves, and prepare for what He was about to do.

Likewise, we sometimes become so focused on what we want God to do next that we overlook what He wants to develop within us today.

The question is not merely, "What's next?" It is also, **"Who must I become next?"**

Key Teaching Points

8. Prepare Today for What God Will Require Tomorrow

There are things we need to begin doing today because of where God may be taking us tomorrow.

Godly preparation means recognizing that future responsibilities may require qualities and habits we have not yet fully developed.

- If tomorrow requires greater discipline, develop discipline today.
- If tomorrow requires greater wisdom, seek wisdom today.
- If tomorrow requires forgiveness, release the offense today.
- If tomorrow requires stronger faith, strengthen your relationship with God today.
- If tomorrow requires leadership, develop your character today.
- If tomorrow requires stewardship, become faithful with what you already have today.

The responsibility to prepare does not begin when an opportunity arrives. Preparation begins when we recognize that God may be developing us for something beyond our present circumstances.

Preparation is faith expressed before the opportunity appears.

Biblical Examples of Preparation

Noah prepared before the rain. His obedience demonstrated faith in God's instructions even before he witnessed the coming flood.

David practiced before Goliath appeared. His experiences protecting his father's sheep helped prepare him for the challenge he would later face.

Joseph developed administrative wisdom before Pharaoh promoted him. His earlier responsibilities became part of his preparation for leadership in Egypt.

Esther prepared herself before approaching the king. She recognized the seriousness of her assignment and acted with intentionality.

The disciples followed Jesus before being sent into the world. Their time learning from and walking with Him preceded their larger ministry assignments.

Each example reminds us that preparation often takes place before we fully understand how God will use what we are learning.

Personal Application: Identify an area in which you are expecting God to open a door. Then ask yourself what you can begin doing today to become more prepared for the responsibility that may accompany that opportunity.

9. The Next Season May Require a Different Version of You

We often ask God to change our circumstances, open new doors, or bring us into another season.

But what if the next season requires more than a change of location, opportunity, or responsibility?

What if it requires a change within us?

"God, what's next?"

Perhaps God is asking:

"Who must you become next?"

God does not merely want to give us something new. He wants to develop something new within us.

This means that spiritual preparation also involves identifying and breaking patterns that hinder our growth.

New Godly Patterns Prepare Us to Walk in Purpose

We must intentionally break:

The cycle of procrastination. Stop postponing the responsibilities and changes that require attention today.

The cycle of compromise. Develop the conviction to remain faithful to what is right, even when taking shortcuts seems easier.

The cycle of fear. Refuse to allow fear to determine every decision concerning your future.

The cycle of bitterness. Release offenses that keep your heart anchored to yesterday.

The cycle of quitting. Develop perseverance when progress is slow or difficult.

The cycle of negative thinking. Challenge thought patterns that constantly anticipate failure or prevent you from trusting God.

The cycle of being spiritually unprepared. Cultivate consistent habits of prayer, obedience, and attentiveness to God's Word.

Breaking these patterns is not merely about eliminating negative behaviors. It is about developing godly habits that support the life and responsibilities God has called us to pursue.

Personal Declaration:

"I cannot control everything coming in my next season, but with God's help, I can become prepared for it."

Standing Between Seasons

Israel stood beside the Jordan River.

Behind them was the wilderness. In front of them was the promise. Between them was a river.

They could not return to the wilderness as their destination, and they had not yet crossed into the Promised Land.

They were standing between seasons.

This is a place many believers recognize.

The old season is behind you, but the new one has not fully begun.

You have recognized the need for change, but you have not yet experienced everything you are believing God for.

It can be tempting to become discouraged, impatient, or distracted while standing in the middle.

Yet Joshua's instructions remind us that preparation still matters while we are waiting.

Israel had to follow the ark of the covenant and consecrate themselves in anticipation of what God would do.

The instruction in Joshua 3:5 points to the coming day when God would perform wonders among His people.

In the same way, our responsibility is to remain attentive to God's direction and faithful in the preparations He has placed before us.

Don't become discouraged in the middle. Prepare yourself.

You don't wait until the door opens to get ready. You get ready because you believe God can open the door.

Supporting Scriptures

Hebrews 11:7: Noah's preparation was an expression of his faith and obedience to God's warning.

1 Samuel 17:34–37: David remembered how God had helped him through earlier challenges when he faced Goliath.

Genesis 41:33–41: Joseph demonstrated wisdom in planning for Egypt's coming years of abundance and famine.

Ephesians 4:22–24: Believers are instructed to put off the old way of life and embrace renewal.

Reflection and Discussion Questions

1. What is one area of your life where you have been expecting God to open a door but have not yet begun preparing for the responsibility?
2. Which quality do you most need to develop today: discipline, wisdom, forgiveness, stronger faith, character, or stewardship? Why?
3. What does the statement "Preparation is faith expressed before the opportunity appears" mean in your present circumstances?
4. How might your daily choices change if you focused less on what comes next and more on who you need to become?
5. Which old pattern is most likely to interfere with your growth in the next season?
6. When have you felt as though you were standing between seasons? What helped you remain faithful while waiting?
7. What practical step can you take this week to replace an unhealthy pattern with a godly habit?

Practical Application: Preparing for Tomorrow Today

1. Identify what tomorrow may require. Consider a responsibility, calling, relationship, or opportunity for which you need to grow.

2. Examine your current habits. Determine whether your daily actions are preparing you for that responsibility or making it more difficult to fulfill.

3. Choose one pattern to break. Avoid attempting to change everything at once. Identify one recurring behavior that needs attention.

4. Establish a replacement habit. If procrastination has become a pattern, begin completing one important task before moving to less important activities. If negative thinking has become a pattern, intentionally bring those thoughts into alignment with God's Word.

5. Practice faithfulness where you are. Become a better steward of the responsibilities, resources, relationships, and opportunities already entrusted to you.

6. Keep following God's presence. Do not allow impatience with the waiting season to lead you ahead of God's direction.

Closing Declaration

We are breaking the cycle of unpreparedness.

We are releasing old patterns.

We are developing new habits.

We are moving from patterns to purpose.

And by Your grace, we will be ready for our new season.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for reminding us that preparation is part of walking by faith.

Forgive us for the times we have focused so much on what we want You to do next that we have neglected what You want to develop within us today.

Help us grow in discipline, wisdom, forgiveness, faith, character, and stewardship.

Show us the old patterns that need to be broken and give us the strength to replace them with habits that honor You.

When we find ourselves standing between seasons, keep us from becoming discouraged or running ahead of Your direction.

Teach us to follow Your presence, trust Your timing, and remain faithful in our preparation.

We believe that You are able to open doors according to Your purpose. Prepare our hearts to walk through the opportunities and responsibilities You entrust to us.

By Your grace, help us move from patterns to purpose.

In Jesus' name, Amen.