



discovering your purpose

A SHORT INTERVIEW WITH
BILL JOHNSON

Lance: How would I know my assignment and what God has called me to do?

What thoughts come to you around these questions because I know people are anxious, as though they might mess something up?

How can we really know we are properly aligned in what we are called to do?

Bill: Whenever you step into what you are called to do, it gives life back to you and doesn't drain you as much as it builds you. There is a divine grace.

Jesus said, "My will is to do the will of Him who sent me." When Jesus was doing what he was supposed to do, he received nourishment. It was something that supplied strength to him for all of life. You will know you are stepping into your assignment because it gives you life.

Secondly, look at the people who relate to you. There are some who believe in you and who live for your interest and have laid aside their own agendas for you. They don't try to manipulate their agendas for you, but they are standing by you to see you step into your destiny. These kinds of people should have a voice in your life.

It is a really big deal to pay attention to the prophetic words over your life. Keep record of them, but also pay attention to prophetic prayers because sometimes people will pray things over you that they don't have the courage to prophesy. Yet they are in that anointing. And when they tap into a true prophetic stream of intercession for you, they will start pulling

things out for you, for your potential and for your future. They may not have all the complete language to give you a prophetic word, but it is the same because it is revealed in the anointing as they define and describe things for you. People of faith are generous, calling out your destiny that you can't see for yourself. Jesus did it with people. Gideon was called a mighty man of valor when he wasn't. Things are visible to those who have faith and generosity, enabling them to call the destiny out in others

Paying attention to prophetic voices you trust as well as paying attention to what brings life is really helpful.

Lance: And desire fulfilled is a tree of life. That is a verse that fits into that.

Bill: Yes. It is the backside of "Hope deferred makes the heart sick." It's not a promise but a warning. Desire realized is a tree of life, and the tree of life is only found in Genesis, Proverbs and Revelation. Genesis is what was, Proverbs is what is, and Revelation is what will be. Anytime you tap into the tree of life, you tap into eternal destiny. Every prophetic word for our life lays down a track for an eternal destiny. It has immediate implication, but it has eternal impact.

Lance: Let's take a look at Revelation 22. Bill, you must have a tremendous demand on you, going and giving. But you retain a fairly disciplined capacity to stay in the garden you create for your own access to this fruit, the Spirit, and the tree of life. What are some of the secrets of Bill Johnson's Maintenance Program to keep you connected to the anointing in the midst of all the demands of your schedule and the expectations of

others? Take us behind the veil of the devotional, personal renewal life of Bill Johnson!

Bill: I don't ever study the Bible so that I can teach; I only study so that I can learn.

Then what you do, when it is time to minister, you break off the bread of your own life, and you start feeding people out of what you have become.

Anytime ministry becomes too intentional, we are prone to hype. Ministry is a lifestyle. My approach to life isn't, God is number one, my family number two and ministry number three. I approach life this way: God is number one; there is no number two. My service to God is going to contain my love for my family, my love for rest, my love for ministry and my love for life. It is an all-in-one package, and recognizing the moments and seasons and divine purpose in a moment is how you are able to take a vacation without guilt or work 18-hour days because you are in a season of extreme harvest and you have got to go for it now. But you do have to realize when one season ends and another begins.

I don't mean seasons in the sense of fall, winter, and so on because I feel like the more that we learn to pull tomorrow into today, the more we learn to accelerate the unfolding of events to the extent that we lose the excuse of "seasons."

Lance: We have to cultivate that statement here. Let's unpack that.

Bill: The church has needed the concept of seasons.

The Lord is trying to remove our excuse of the seasons

because we have hidden our own gifting and restricted it to natural laws. Natural laws have seasons of productivity and seasons of no productivity. In the acceleration of time, we remove the excuse of the seasons. That is why you can have planting and harvesting in the same motion. That is why you can have trees that bear fruit 12 months of the year.

In our prayer house at Bethel, my wife has a plant that should only flower two months out of the year, but in that environment is a glory that rests over the prayer house, and the plant blooms 12 months out of the year. Being in that environment of glory has changed the nature of the plant. The more the kingdom becomes present, the more this world yields to that one.

Jesus is the only one who has the right to demand fruit out of season. He is the only one who has the right to demand fruit of the impossible because He has given access to the solution. He doesn't demand unfairly, but He does demand it because He has connected us to a kingdom that does not operate by seasons.

The fundamental principles of the kingdom are tied to nature, e.g. sowing and reaping. But the accelerated manifestation of the kingdom violates nature. Not violates in the sense of destroying it—it overrules it, as in walking through walls, being translated from one place to another. Sowing and reaping is the beginning place of economics, but it's not the ultimate. The ultimate is the law of blessing. In sowing and reaping, we receive according to what we've done. With the law of blessing, we receive according to what He has done. Sowing

and reaping is the foundation for the law of blessing. You have to have something to build upon.

He takes us line upon line and precept on precept, until we are able to come into a measure of understanding of His world that has no earthly parallel. Right now we are struggling with the economy. Jesus said in John 3:12, “If I talk to you about my kingdom—natural things—and you don’t get it, then how are you going to get it if I talk about spiritual things?” And He was speaking about birth, illustrating conversion; and wind, illustrating the nature of the Christian life. He says, “If I talk to you about the kingdom and how it pertains to nature and you’re not getting it, then how are you going to get it when I talk to you about the kingdom and how it connects to my world that has no earthly parallel?” He is building that foundation here because He wants to take us somewhere else.

In this world, our assignment is to bind and to loose according to what is in heaven. If I have no heavenly revelation, I don’t know what to loose, I don’t know how to replace. We displace to replace. We know where the powers of darkness have been at work. We know death, loss, and destruction. So when we see disease and broken homes, we know the enemy has been involved and we know how to come against those things, but we don’t know how to replace. Because we have a lack of heavenly revelation, being seated in heavenly places has been reduced to a doctrine instead of an experience.

Lance: So the believer is seated in heavenly places where they are seeing their life and their circumstances, their assignment, their measure of rule from that resource into

this realm, rather than praying from this realm of limitation to try to connect with His realm.

Bill: Exactly. We become brokers of another world.

Lance: “*We become brokers of another world.*” You sometimes quote the three dispositions/hats you wear. What is that quote? The rich man, the beggar....

Bill: We wear different hats in life and it's in prayer that we have different approaches to the Lord. Sometimes I go as a beggar. David was the richest man on the planet, and he came before the Lord and he said, “God, I'm so poor.” He wasn't hyping it. You can't deceive God. David is talking out of what he sees, “All this hasn't made me rich, God; you're the only thing that makes me rich. I'm so desperate, I'm so needy.” Coming to the Lord as a beggar is a really big deal and knowing when to do that.

Sometimes you have to put on the hat as the rich uncle. When I am before the people of God, I have to wear the hat of the rich uncle that has access to unlimited wealth. If I come before the church as the beggar, they will admire my transparency but they won't be better off. No impartation of grace would be given to make them stronger in life. So when we minister to people, we have to go with an understanding that we have been assigned access to God's resources to equip these people and put them into a better position.

Then there is the hat of the victorious warrior. You don't want to wear the hat of the victorious warrior when you are ministering to the saints because then you chop their ears off.

You do that when you are confronting the powers of hell. We aren't fighting for a victory; we are fighting from a victory. When Jesus said, "It is finished," He really meant it. He meant, "I did it." The whole deal is done and now needs our enforcement. When we put on that hat, the confidence is not in our ability, or our faith in our calling. Our confidence is in the One who called us and has given us a divine assignment.

We have overt and covert ministry. The overt is confrontational. Seeing the person in the wheelchair in the mall and bringing healing. Learning how to find people at work where you invade their space and minister to them. You go to the poor parts of town and feed people. Giving words of knowledge and prophetic words to the waitress. We do all these sorts of things that are very strong and bold externally. We have to train in that element because the overt ministry helps to displace powers that have influenced our cities. Once you start moving in the miraculous, you start driving out powers that influence the minds of people because you have brought in another worldview. Exposing a city to the miraculous shifts the people's consciousness.

Covert ministry, by contrast, is more about getting into the business, into the Babylonian systems and bringing change from the inside because we are kingdom people. It's realizing that everyone's life on the ship is saved because one person is there on a divine assignment. An entire public school can be saved because of one person on a divine assignment. The same with a business; it can prosper because somebody is in his or her assignment.

Our problem is when we describe ministry as something we do. We can't really say that everyone is a minister until we say every occupation is a ministry. And once we can describe in practical terms how every occupation is a ministry, then we have raised up an army that not only knows how to do the overt confrontational stuff but knows how to do the subtle secretive "leaven" approach where things change over time. We define and reshape culture because we are architects of divine culture. We are architects of revival culture in that we select those values and lifestyles that permeate systems and change people's worldview. This takes time.

I am thankful for the opportunities to confront sickness or torment on someone's mind or hopelessness in a family business. These confrontational things are really divine opportunities to inject the presence of the kingdom. But there has to be a long-term invasion by the covert, a subtle invading of the system so we have the Daniels and Joshuas in their place. These people are making decisions and gaining the hearts of the kings.

For example, the school system is a really difficult area or has been thought to be. Most closed heavens for the believer are between the ears. Because we have thought that schools have been an impossible realm to invade, we are combative when we try to get involved. We want to remove a teacher, we want to get rid of a textbook, and we want to get our people on the board. Instead, let's go in as servants, not as rulers. We don't go in to run things; we go in to help. We go in to make the principal look like a genius. The teachers and principals, what

do they want? They want students that are responsible contributors to society. We want the same thing. Find your common ground and serve them.

It's time to serve like royalty and reign like servants. When you get into the system with that attitude where you serve all the while realizing you have access to unlimited resource to make this person succeed, then your position really brings about a revolutionary change. Your identity is not wrapped up in your title so you don't need to run anything. Your identity is wrapped up in the one who assigned you.

So when you go in to serve, the success is in that schoolteacher delighting in the fact that the kids are actually excited about learning and changing their attitudes and approach toward life. It is a subtle shift, but those things have to happen because the system is so void of hope. So as we infiltrate the systems of life, we go in as servants. It's not a military takeover. It's better to be put into position because you are the smartest person on the block for the job, not because you've manipulated your way into it.