

[A LEADER'S PREPARATION]

[excerpt from **THE MAKING OF A LEADER** by **FRANK DAMAZIO**]

Every leader whom God uses in any capacity must first be prepared to function in that capacity. Proper preparation is the only assurance of a leader functioning effectively for God. Many leaders greatly desire to function effectively, but far fewer are willing to pay the price of being made ready for the task. God prepared every leader in the Bible before he began to do his full work for the Lord. Some were in preparation longer than others. Each was trained differently. God himself has a tailor-made education for each one of His leaders, depending upon the work to which He has called him or her.

The Church greatly needs prepared and trained spiritual leaders		The act of preparation is to make ready for a special purpose, to make suitable, to fit, to adapt, to train, to equip or to furnish. The Greek idea of preparation emphasized the act of making something ready to function properly. The following extended synonyms help us appreciate the full meaning of the verb "to prepare":
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- to provide properly for
- to foresee problems
- to predispose a certain reaction
- to rehearse ahead of time
- to train for a specific task
- to educate with special knowledge
- to set the groundwork and foundation of
- to cultivate for fruitful reproduction
- to mellow and mature the character of
- to arm or fit out with the necessary weapons of warfare

The great importance of preparation is stamped indelibly in the very fiber of three areas: *nature, craftsmanship* and *Scripture*.

The Law of Preparation in Nature

Preparation is stamped upon the world of nature in many different ways. First, by instinct, the animals themselves prepare their food for winter by their discipline of gathering food during the harvest seasons. If God has given the animals an instinct for preparation, how much more should man feel the same for the ministry of the Spirit.

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Second, the ground is prepared by nature and the farmer to bring forth fruit. The rains, the snow and the sun all help to prepare the ground for spring. Nature is continually preparing itself for its next cycle of life and reproduction.

Third, stones are prepared by nature in rivers. Stones are continually tossed and turned in the river until they are very smooth. Nature has a beautiful way of developing her stones for human use. In **I Samuel 17:35-50**, the shepherd boy David was faced with humanly impossible task of slaying the giant, Goliath. As David approached Goliath, he stopped by a stream and carefully chose out five smooth stones, one of which would find its place in the forehead of the giant. David merely used a smooth stone which nature herself had prepared.

The Law of Preparation in Craftsmanship

Skilled craftsmanship and professions provide an excellent example of the need for preparation. All technical occupations in society require a certain level of technical training. A mechanic be trained to quickly grasp the relationships in a complicated diagram. He must understand how chemical, mechanical, electrical and electronic component systems work together. Most professions require years of education and training, and constant updates.

Medical general practitioners must have at least eight years of university training. Who would visit a medical doctor who had no medical education?

Great skill in a craft, trade or profession demands years of apprenticeship, practice, on-the-job training and consultation. How much more do we need seasons and years of preparation for spiritual ministry unto the Lord, in the school of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

The principle of preparation in craftsmanship also has a biblical illustration. Throughout Scripture, the analogy of the potter and the clay is used (**Romans 9:20, 21: Isaiah 45:9 and 64:8; Ephesians 2:10 and Jeremiah 18:1-4; II Timothy 2:2-21**). Both clay and potter must receive much preparation before the potter can produce beautiful works of pottery. The following is a partial list of preparation for potter's clay. Clay must be:

1. dug from ground, blasted out and separated

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2. washed and soaked in water
3. smitten and thoroughly worked by the potter's hands
4. investigated for air bubbles by a thin wire
5. perfectly centered on the wheel for shaping
6. stretched and pulled up and down to be molded seamlessly
7. set aside on the shelf to dry and harden
8. undergo firing in the kiln to develop ceramic qualities

Just as a craftsman follows all of these steps to prepare clay for a beautiful vessel, so God follows comparable steps in preparing each one of His ministers.

The Law of Preparation in Scripture

God has also demonstrated the principle of preparation in His Word. Scripture describes many things that must be prepared to fulfill their specific purpose. The following list--each a study in itself--contains many of the principles God follows in readying his leaders for effective service.

- Preparation of a habitation for the Lord (**Exodus 15:2; Psalm 107:36**)
- Preparation of offerings for the tabernacle of Moses (**Numbers 15:3-12 and 23:1, 2**).
- Preparation of the people to pass over the Jordan (**Joshua 1:11**).
- Preparation of a man's heart to seek God (**I Samuel 7:3; Psalm 10:17**)
- Preparation of the materials for Solomon's Temple (**II Chronicles 2:9; I Chronicles 22:3-14**).
- Preparation of the ant for the winter (**Proverbs 30:25**).
- Preparation of the way for the Messiah (**Isaiah 40:3; 62:10; Matthew 3:1-3 and 11:10**).
- Preparation of the Levites (**II Chronicles 35:10-20**).
- Preparation of the horse for battle (**Proverbs 21:31**).
- Preparation of an honorable vessel (**II Timothy 2:20-21**).
- Preparation of the Messiah's natural body (**Hebrews 10:5**).
- Preparation of the Bride of Christ (**Revelation 19:7 and 21:2**).

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In all these Scripture examples, we can see the importance of the law of preparation. It is obvious that God is a God of preparation. All whom God will use must go through God's process of preparation.

The Church greatly needs prepared and trained spiritual leaders. The Church needs those who have been trained and prepared by the Lord. The Church needs those who have been shaped and fired to be formed into godly leaders.