

# THE MANTLE WITH YOU

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### 1. THE MEANING OF A MANTLE

Mantle was first mentioned in the Old Testament (see excerpts below) as a garment worn by Scribes (e.g. Ezra), Rich men (e.g. Job) and Prophets (e.g. Elijah and Elisha).

*Ezra 9:3 - And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, ...*

*Job 1:20 – Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, ...*

*Job 2:12 - And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent everyone his mantle, ...*

*1 Kings 19:19 - So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.*

*2 Kings 2:8 - And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.*

*2 Kings 2:13 - He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;*

*2 Kings 2:14 - And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.*

Mantle has been used literally and figuratively. Literally, it is a loose sleeveless garment worn over other clothes. It is a coat (cloak or robe). Figuratively, it is a symbol of authority and position. However, in relation to our discussion, a 'mantle' is a Scriptural

symbol for a particular calling, ministry, anointing and - when applicable - office, given to individuals by God.

## **2. HOW MANTLE COULD BE RECEIVED**

In the Old Testament (1 Kings 19: 19-21), Elijah found Elisha “while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: Elijah passed by him, and casted his mantle upon him.” Elisha left the oxen and followed Elijah.

Elisha’s decision was controlled by the Biblical values, priorities and eternal perspectives he had developed in life. As a result, he acted on his faith by following God’s call. He was willing to be uprooted from his quiet, peaceful, and rural life with its financial security to follow the Lord. Obviously, he knew that what his nation needed was the Word of God. Like the sons of Issachar, he understood the times and knew what he must do (1 Chr. 12:32).

The farming implements Elisha was using suggested that he belonged to a family of considerable wealth. To obey the prophetic call would mean doing so at a considerable personal financial loss. It meant counting his financial security as loss and becoming a soldier of God in the face of a tremendous spiritual conflict. Accepting a mantle comes with sacrifices.

In the New Testament, we take up a mantle when we believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him into our lives. It is the mantle of discipleship by God's Holy Spirit. To accept the mantle means being willing to do the work of God and make all the sacrifices that comes with it. Today, every believer is a priest of God (1 Pet. 2: 5&9) and is in some sense called to full-time service to represent the Lord even if their occupation is secular. As believers in Christ, we are God’s representatives and called to ministry according to the gifts God gives us. Part of this occurs in the work place, part in the home, part may occur in the church, and part may occur with neighbours, etc. Every believer has a spiritual gift (or gifts) and this represents at least a portion of the mantle of God’s call on one’s life.

However, due to fear of change and extra responsibility, many are reluctant to inherit a double-portion of God's Spirit. So they resist change and don’t take up the mantle. They conclude that they are unfit before they even try it.

Elisha's response was immediate. There was no hesitation. For Elisha (and so it should be for all of us), there was no decision to make. The fact that it is God's call automatically made that decision for him.

### **3. BENEFITS OF HAVING A MANTLE**

Mantle comes with power, position, authority, protection and respect. One of the reasons David did not kill King Saul when he had a few opportunities to do so was because he knew that Saul was still the King. Thus, if he attacked him he was coming against the position and authority of his mantle. The mantle requires respect. This doesn't mean you have to like the person, but you need to respect the position and authority of the person.

In 2 Samuel 1: 9-10, one of David's servants who killed King Saul (on King Saul's request) thought he would make David happy by bringing the news of King Saul's death as well as the crown on his head and bracelet on his arms. Verses 14-16 captured David's response to that servant as follows: <sup>14</sup> *So David said to him, "How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?"* <sup>15</sup> *Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go near, and execute him!" And he struck him so that he died.* <sup>16</sup> *So David said to him, "Your blood is on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the Lord's anointed.'* "

It is important to note the following about mantle:

- a. You can only enjoy the benefits of a Mantle if the Spirit of God is with you (1 Samuel 10:1,6-7&9).
- b. You can lose your Mantle by not keeping God's commands (1 Samuel 13:13-14; 15:10-19)
- c. Your Mantle becomes futile without the Presence of God (1 Samuel 16:1; 17:4-11)

### **4. SIGNIFICANT LESSONS ABOUT RECEIVING YOUR GOD'S DESTINED MANTLE**

Every person has a mantle according to the will of God. This mantle may be missed, rejected and worn carelessly or it may be worn correctly and with dignity. The following are some significant lessons about receiving your God-ordained mantle, from the stories of Joseph and Elisha:

### **a. Understand that God determines your mantle ahead of time**

We do not select a mantle; it is established and destined by God. Elisha didn't just receive Elijah's mantle because he happened to be at the right place at the right time. It was already his according to God's word (1 Kings 19:16). Elisha needed to cooperate with the call of God on his life to receive the mantle that was his by God's appointment. Elisha's response was a sign of what God had placed in his heart. Joseph knew at a young age, through prophetic dreams, that God had called him to rule. *Thus, a mantle is not ours for the choosing, it is determined ahead of time by God. The desire God places in our hearts is just one indication, among other confirmations, of the calling that is ours.*

### **b. Servanthood positions you for the mantle God has for you**

For a long season, Elisha was a servant to Elijah, supporting him in a menial capacity and learning at his feet (2 Kings 3:11). Joseph practiced servanthood for years - first he served his father, then Potiphar, then the prison warden - before he received the mantle of rulership he was destined for.

*It can be tempting to go directly after a mantle, but just as with Elisha and Joseph, God has established His timeline for your life. God positions you with people and leaders that He wants you to serve now. Serving with faithfulness and a teachable heart is a powerful means of being positioned to attain your God-ordained destiny.*

### **c. Realise that you may wear a series of mantles**

Elisha was first a worker in his father's farm, and then served Elijah, before he took up Elijah's mantle. Joseph had a series of physical mantles along the way. The 'coat of many colours' his father gave him indicated favour, as well as his position as overseer to his brothers. Later, he was given a cloak as head slave in Potiphar's household. *Ultimately, Joseph was robed in garments that represented his position as ruler next to Pharaoh in Egypt (Gen. 41:42). But he didn't go from being a youngster with prophetic dreams directly to the palace. He wore a succession of mantles, being faithful with each, and so it is for us.*

#### **d. Wait for appointment to establish your mantle**

Elisha was appointed by God as Prophet and successor to Elijah - but God used Elijah to recognise, prepare and establish that appointment. God used Jacob, Potiphar, a prison warden, and ultimately Pharaoh, to appoint Joseph to a position in Egypt that was already his through God's intention. And it is the same today. *We do not 'self-appoint' to a mantle or ministry. God uses those in oversight and authority to recognise and establish us in that calling at the right time (Acts 6:6, Acts 13:1-3)*

#### **e. Understand that your calling will be tested over time**

As Joseph received the royal robes over his shoulders, maybe he recalled the earlier mantles that he wore:

- The richly ornamented coat of many colours his father gave Joseph as a young man became another reason his brothers hated him. And when his jealous brothers threw him in a pit, and sold him to Egyptian slave traders, they pulled the coat from him. That coat became the evidence the brothers used to 'prove' Joseph's faked death to their father (Jacob).
- Later, Joseph became a trusted slave, promoted and given charge over all his master's (Potiphar's) estate. But then Potiphar's wife approached Joseph, wanting to seduce him. However, he valued his master's trust, his purity and the call of God - and so Joseph ran. But Potiphar's wife grabbed his cloak - and used it to accuse him. *Not only was that cloak taken from him, it was used as evidence against him of a crime he didn't commit, and that landed him in prison.*

*Have you had this happen to you? And pushed to say: God, I thought that mantle was from you. That mantle had promise. It represented good things to come. And now it's been lost, robbed. That role, that job, that ministry opportunity - why was it taken from me?'*

Know that God is seeing the big picture, from Heaven's perspective. He wants to show you how He is converting those trials, even the failures, and how He is using them for His purposes.

Like Joseph and Elisha, as you stay faithful and committed in the long haul, you will ultimately receive the mantle God has for you. And the ministry God has for you will be above and beyond anything you could ever have dreamt.

## **5. HOW TO KNOW THE MANTLE YOU HAVE**

*What God has gifted you to do; He has called you to do. What He has called you to do; He has gifted you to do. Therefore, you know God's call by knowing your gift(s).* Understanding that all believers have been given a spiritual gift(s), we should seek to recognize our gift(s), develop them, and through God's leading, put them to work. Knowing what our gifts are automatically determines a great portion of God's will and direction for our lives from the standpoint of priorities, commitments, goals, and training. For instance, if a person does not have one of the speaking gifts (teaching, exhortation, etc.), God has not called him to preach or be a pastor. While we are all to do the work of evangelism and should look for opportunities to disciple and mentor others on a one-to-one basis, we should do people a favour by staying out of the pulpit or classroom as a teacher unless we are so gifted. 1 Peter 4:10 says, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." A good steward is one who employs his gifts (accepts his mantle) by faithful development (training and use).

Furthermore, it was God that appointed David to replace Saul. Samuel didn't know who he was anointing when He went to Jesse's house. He operated under instructions (1 Samuel 16). It was God that appointed Elisha to succeed Elijah. Elijah didn't know who Elisha was until God brought them together. Elisha didn't even know he was going to get that mantle until Elijah showed up (1 Kings 19:15-19). *You don't get to choose your mantle. God is the one who decides which mantle you get. Therefore, if your mantle is unknown to you, you pray to God to reveal it to you.*

There are many people asking for mantles they are just not anointed to wear. It is best to wear the one that is God assigned, anointed and appointed, because you will flourish in it.

It is possible to have anointing for a particular mantle and do not know about it. So start paying attention because there is something in you that you may not have realized is there. It could be one thing that everybody does (e.g. preaching, singing, playing of

musical instruments, etc.) but when you do it, heaven opens and the miraculous happens. You may not be the best in doing that particular thing but yours produces miraculous result.

Remember *Acts 16: 16-26* <sup>25</sup>*But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. <sup>26</sup>Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.*

Remember *David and King Saul? David would play his instrument and the demons that were afflicting Saul would leave (1 Samuel 16: 23).*

You may not even want to do it but it keeps coming anywhere you go. Your mantle will keep coming to you no matter how hard you try to push it away.

You need to start embracing what God has anointed you to do. You may not have grown into it yet. You may still need to go through the process. You may still need to learn, train, serve, position yourself so that when the time comes you can step into the role. You will be fully grown into your mantle when the time is right.

*1 Samuel 2:19 says that every year while Samuel was a little boy and under Eli's training his mother would bring him a "little coat". I would imagine that every year he grew bigger and bigger until he was big enough to fit into Eli's mantle.*

*David didn't become King immediately after being anointed by Samuel. He needed to grow into it.*

Once you have known your mantle, important prayer points to God would be the following:

- Show me where to go so I can learn how to serve.
- Position me so that I will be in place when it is time.
- Grant me grace to go through my process.
- Give me a heart of patience so that I may wait for your perfect timing.
- Give me eyes to see the progression of my mantle.
- Guide me by your Holy Spirit on how to use my mantle in a way that will please you.
- Let me never take credit or glory for what you have given me.

- Help me to be a light to this world with my mantle and lead people to you.

## **6. HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MANTLE FROM GOD**

Below are seven ways to make the most of your mantle from God.

### **a. Know that your mantle is personal and unique**

*Just as Jacob gave his son Joseph a coat of many colours, your Father has given you unique and colourful gifts. Don't be intimidated by another person's gift or calling, and don't let your light be dimmed. Embrace and honour the unique spiritual gifts God has given to you; wear them and shine brightly.*

### **b. Be a steward of your spiritual gifts**

"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet 4:10). Steward means the manager of a household affairs, who has the power to distribute the owner's resources as needed. You are the 'manager' of your gifts from God and can choose to release the spiritual gifts God has entrusted to you. You have the power to develop and grow those gifts, and faithfully distribute them, in the context of the church body (1 Cor. 12) as well as your everyday life. *Thus, be positioned in faithful service to others.*

### **c. Walk in qualities that release the Spirit's anointing**

*'She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed" (Matt 9:21). 'Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong' (Acts 3:6-7).*

The power of the Spirit is released through faith on the part of the receiver, the giver, or both. This power can be released in a word of declaration, through prayer, a touch or an act of obedience. Compassion is also related to the release of God's power. *"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick" (Matt 14:14). So, foster the qualities of compassion, love and faith in your life. You can receive these qualities from the Holy Spirit.*



#### **d. Have a vision of walking in increasing power**

*“As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by” (Acts 5:15).* Peter walked and his shadow healed the sick. The mantling of the Spirit was upon him in a powerful way, surrounding him in a wide area.

May you grow to the fullness of what God has for you. *With the eye of faith, may you see the Spirit of God upon you and surrounding you. May you see God’s power touching others wherever you go.*

#### **e. Highly value commissioning**

*“They presented these men to the Apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them...Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:6&8).*

*Something powerful takes place in commissioning.* After the Apostles laid hands on the deacons, this new band of leaders operated in great power with signs and wonders. Timothy also received gifts of the Spirit through the laying on of the Apostle Paul’s hands (2 Tim. 1:6).

#### **f. Stay full of the Holy Spirit**

*“And do not be drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).* Apostle Paul exhorts us to *‘be filled with the Spirit’*, using the present continuous tense, ‘to be filled’.

On one hand, the Bible tells us that we are filled with all the fullness of God (Eph. 1:17-23; 3:18-19) and that He gives the Spirit *‘without measure’* (John 3:34). On the other hand, we also learn in Scripture that God wants us to pursue encounters with Him, and to seek more of His Spirit and His power (Eph. 5:18).

*So rejoice in the fullness of the Spirit that you already have and stay positioned for fresh encounters with Him.*

#### **g. Choose a wardrobe that honours God everyday**

*“...put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:24b).* In receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, God has supernaturally clothed us with

His power (Acts 2). The Scripture makes it clear that we have a responsibility to cast off our 'old self' with its sinful ways and to put on our new life in Christ (Eph. 4:20-32; Rom. 13:12).

*Make it your heart's desire to be sensitive to the person of the Holy Spirit and to live a lifestyle that is compatible with His holiness.* This is not through your own strength, but through the grace which the Holy Spirit freely supplies (Rom. 8).

See yourself walking in that colourful and powerful garment that is the Person and Presence of the Holy Spirit and His anointing on your life.

## **7. PASSING THE MANTLE**

Elijah was the fiery type. He is the one, who on the mount of Carmel, confronted the prophets of Baal and called down the fire of God upon the sacrifice. He was the one that was filled with lightning. He was the one who could call down fire or rain, which ever was needed. On the other hand, his young successor (Elisha) seems to be more of the gentle spirited kind. *God uses different personalities. God uses different kinds of servants in different ways and at particular times.*

Elisha was out in the field working when the call of God came upon his life. *The ministry is no place for lazy people.* It's hard work serving the Lord. The Bible accounts of how people were called into the service of the Lord reveal that no two seem to be the same. There is no pattern necessarily. Sometimes God calls in circumstances. Sometimes God uses people to call you into God's work. Sometimes God just builds a great desire and interest in your heart to do a particular ministry.

Besides Elisha, it would be interesting to note how many great men of the Bible were called into some special ministry after they had already demonstrated the ability and willingness to work and had also shown faithfulness and loyalty:

- Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law.
- David was tending sheep for his father.
- Peter was a fisherman.
- Paul had a trade making tents.
- The Lord Himself was a carpenter by trade who was trained by Joseph.

*Indeed, working helps to develop character, faithfulness, resourcefulness, and responsibility.*

## **8. CONCLUSION**

God has placed a mantle (a call) upon every believer in Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 4:10-11). This mantle is our God-given spiritual gift(s). God expects us to: (1) know our gift(s) (Rom. 12:3), (2) never neglect our gift(s) (1 Tim. 4:14), (3) stir up and be zealous for our gift(s) (2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:19-20), and (4) use our gift(s) in love, serving others by the strength He supplies and for His glory (1 Peter 4:10-11; Romans 12:4). This requires Elisha's kind of commitment. When commitment is not there, we will be unable to make the tough decisions needed to follow the Lord. According to Luke 14:26, 27 & 33, it requires total surrender. Without total surrender, we cannot be His disciples; we simply will not be able to make the sacrificial decisions that following Him will require. This calls for a reevaluation of our values, priorities, attitudes, and pursuits. Elisha, like Elijah, was an ordinary man, but he became extra-ordinary because he was available to the Lord, because he turned his life over to the Lord, and God was able to use him in tremendous ways. If only you can totally surrender your life to God, HE will also reveal your mantle to you and use you in tremendous ways.

**REMAIN BLESSED**

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