

# ALAN TAYLOR

P O BOX 700623; TULSA, OK 74170-0623

918-447-8951

alantaylorministries.org

## Moving Forward in Maturity

I want to share a little of my personal journey with you, which helped shape my understanding of God's desire for me to fulfill the call on my life.

In my early years, I had a limited understanding of God. However, being part of a wonderful church changed everything when I started to serve the Lord. I felt thrilled that God would even consider me an active member of His family. Together, we sought out people and found creative ways to meet their needs in the name of the Lord. Our church focused on creating many ministries to bring the city closer to God, and it was incredible to witness the church growing larger each week.

One ministry that touched me deeply was our bus outreach to the poorest sections of town. We shared our faith with anyone willing to listen and brought these individuals to our services, offering them hope and love. When one preacher encouraged us to pray for the sick and believe in miracles, I eagerly participated, laying hands on those who allowed me and witnessing remarkable results. People would sometimes fall down under the power of God. In fact, while working at a fast-food place, I prayed for a co-worker who was deaf in one ear. He fell to the floor in front of our customers and other co-workers, but when he got back up, covered in grease and french fries, he was completely healed. It was a moment that left me as shocked as he was, filling my heart with purpose and validating my faith.

Despite feeling like an imposter at times because I wasn't raised in the church, I compensated for my lack of knowledge with great zeal and passion. I quickly rose into leadership, and by the age of nineteen, I was in full-time ministry. However, as time went on, I realized that my immaturity contradicted the true desires of my heart. Focusing on taking action allowed me to avoid areas where I needed personal growth, and I could easily hide from those places I needed to overcome.

After about three years, the Lord stirred a desire within me to pursue a deeper relationship with Him. Soon He spoke to me about making the difficult decision to leave my first church and move from Canada to the United States, immersing myself in a completely different culture. Although I felt sad about moving on, I will always cherish those leaders and pastors who believed in me.

I discovered that God was determined to see my calling come forth and needed me to move on. The Lord is always more concerned about your spiritual growth than your loyalty to a specific group or person. Please note that I am not referring to those who leave a church out of dissatisfaction or disgruntlement. I'm speaking in line with the example of Abraham when God called him to move. In Genesis 12:1, it says, "*Now the LORD had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.'*"

A few times, the Lord asked me to move on to a new place, yet I found that my heart stayed behind at the previous location. I felt I was disappointing and failing them, but the Lord wanted my obedience. I needed His help to understand why. He explained that He had more to teach me, which was the reason behind the change.

He led me to Romans 12:1-2, which says, *“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

The focus was on the three different levels of the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. He explained that these represent varying levels of maturity and commitment within the Body of Christ. We all start in a place of good, meaning upright and useful. We remain there until maturity takes hold of our spiritual walk, and then we ascend to the level of being acceptable to God. The term “acceptable” describes being fully agreeable and well-pleasing to Him. Lastly, there is the standard of perfection, which means being brought to completion, fully accomplished, and fully developed. These three levels are directly tied to your personal spiritual maturity rather than your actions of serving God.

I am aware that many preachers advertise attending their conferences as a way to reach the “new and next level,” but that’s not how it works. God, as the general of His army, reserves that task for Himself alone. If you desire to progress from good to acceptable and then to perfect, your path lies solely in maturing your spiritual self in Him. God is pleased with every group and willingly pours His anointing and blessings upon each of them. However, He can accomplish more of His will through the acceptable group than with the good group. For those of us pursuing revival, it will only be found through the group of individuals walking in the perfect standard of being fully mature in Him.

When He graduates us from one group to the next, it is similar to how a child goes from one school to a higher school as he matures in the knowledge taught to him. When I was frustrated with the lack of maturity of the modern church world, the Lord told me to leave them alone and don’t ever destroy what they have. He said, “Every person gets the pastor they deserve.” Meaning that many who have settled into the good group are content and are not hungering for more, so they stay in a group or church system led by a pastor who has also consented to that position. God lovingly works within this group of good because, at least, they are on the way to Heaven.

When I moved on from Bert Ambrose Elementary School, I went to another school called Dr Kearney Middle School. The requirements were higher, the expectations were more demanding, and the teaching was much more than I could have understood before. I was surrounded by other students who moved up with me to this next level. My first-grade teacher never slipped me a note stating that I shouldn’t leave her and that I

owed her loyalty because of all she did for me. She celebrated my move up to the next teacher and next grade.

This is how I now look at all the ministers that God moved me on from. I needed them at that time of my spiritual maturity and fed off them until God graduated me to a group walking in a higher standard. I wasn't being disloyal to them; I was simply following the will of my Father. He will always, and I mean always, focus His desires on you moving up in your spiritual maturity and never hold you back to appease a church or a minister in your life. He desires more than anything to march an army of those in His mature (perfect) group into the enemy's territory to destroy the works of the devil and harvest those under his oppression.

In this beautiful walk with God, you and I never need to fixate on what group we are not in yet. Celebrate your Christianity, enjoy those around you, and appreciate and honor the ministers in your life. Keep focusing on the spiritual tools that cause us to mature into Him. Then when you are ready in your spiritual maturity, God will present you with an instruction to come up higher with Him.

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