

What Must We Do?

by K.P. Yohannan

This sermon emphasizes the importance of abandoning conventional ways, decontrolling and empowering others to achieve radical change and growth in ministry.

Scripture: Revelation 2:4

Topics: "Empowerment in Ministry", "Personal Transformation"

Description

K.P. Yohannan emphasizes the necessity of personal change to effect societal transformation, arguing that mere ideas are insufficient without action. He discusses the importance of 'abandonment' to rediscover God's original vision, 'decontrol' to balance freedom and accountability, and 'empowerment' to foster a culture of trust and growth within organizations. Yohannan encourages believers to pray for a renewed passion and to take ownership of their responsibilities, while maintaining a structure that supports innovation and freedom. Ultimately, he calls for a return to the radical edge of faith that drives genuine change in the world.

Transcript

Karl Marx said, "Philosophers have only interpreted the world differently. The point is to change it."¹ You can have all the ideas, dreams and desires for change in the world, but that will not make one ounce of change. So, how do I effect change in the people around me--or in an entire society? It has to do with a deliberate decision on my part, as an individual, to change. Thinking about change only produces new philosophies, as Marx observed; it is only changed people who will see progress in others' lives around them.

If we stray away, how do we recover God's original plan for us? How do we change? What must we do? Abandonment If our radical lives have become conventional, the way out is to start over. If we have come to the place at which we have accepted the means to the end as the end in itself, it is time for us to leave that all behind. Begin to work with the end in mind. We should no longer ask how we are going to get things done. That will automatically be answered if we concentrate on what we must do to change and move forward.

We must pray for the Holy Spirit to give us a fresh vision of hell, of the lost world and of revival. Abandonment means going back to the original vision and passion for which the Lord called us (Revelation 2:4-5). It means we are no longer motivated to serve because of structure or because of a leader who is over us; now we are gripped with the vision we have received. Abandonment always causes

people to become more innovative at what they do. They take ownership of the tasks they've been given.

They now have freedom to make decisions--and the mistakes that naturally accompany those decisions. In no way am I saying that we should abandon structure altogether. A train can't run without its rails, and neither can an organization move forward without structure and leadership. But if there is no fire, no steam, no fuel, the train will go nowhere. What we must do is pray that God will protect us from stagnancy and a conventional life; and we must be willing to abandon whatever is holding us back from the radical edge (Philippians 3:13-15).

Decontrol If you have raised or are raising children, you are aware of the delicate balance there is between freedom and accountability. As they grow physically, you slowly allow them to grow in areas of taking responsibility and making their own decisions. As Jesus was leaving the disciples to return to heaven, He did not present them with a carefully planned agenda and schedule for world evangelism. Instead, what Jesus gave them was a passion and a vision that drove them to the ends of the earth and filled them with a willingness to lay down their lives for His sake.

They never walked away from their calling, because they were following Jesus out of love and freedom. That same balance between accountability and freedom must exist in an organization. When Jacob worked 14 long, hard years of anguish to win Rachel's hand in marriage, the Scripture says it was like a few days because of his love for her (Genesis 29:20). No one forced him into it. He simply loved her. In the same way, within the context of accountability and submission to spiritual authority, we must have freedom to serve our Lord with love and joy, not because of some demands that are made of us.

My philosophy has always been that if the Lord called someone, then I will see the fruit of that calling in their confession, their circumstances, their maturity, their faithfulness and their trustworthiness. I don't ever want to come to a place where I demand respect and hold a heavy hand over my brothers and sisters. Let us not end up with a life filled with heaviness, control and calculation. If an individual has been entrusted with a particular responsibility within the ministry, let us regard him as our leader with regard to that responsibility.

Let us give each other freedom to make mistakes, and then we will grow as an organization. If we don't, we will die from within. Empowerment What do we do when our relationship-oriented ministry has become more focused on ability rather than servanthood? We must come to the place at which we let go of our controls and give freedom to one another. Empowerment happens when we can say to a brother or sister, "By the grace of God, I just want to trust you. Do the best you can--dream the best you can--and let us continue moving forward."

Empowerment happens when we give freedom to faith and potential in our dealings with people. Those who are in a position of responsibility over others should be discipling at least one person to take their place (2 Timothy 2:2). I believe that the best is yet to come. Nearly 3 billion people are waiting to hear the Gospel; the Lord has committed this burden to the Body of Christ and will continue to work in us. We have the opportunity to change our generation! And I believe that the Lord will continue to bless the Church with growth to accomplish His task--through many means such as increasing staff, expanding physical facilities and raising needed finances.

One of the greatest blessings God raises up within an organization is the leadership. The responsibility for a ministry rests not upon one man, but upon a group of leaders. I am committed to the leaders in our organization, so much so that if their consensus is different than my own plan, I am willing to change. I

have no desire to have my own way in anything. No matter how the size of an organization increases, it is important to continue to maintain unique love, fellowship and excitement about what the organization does.

Let us continue to develop a culture within our organizations in which individuals have the freedom to do their best and grow personally, without compulsion, restrictions, rules or regulations; but with the perspective of submission and reasonable structure. Let us keep the freedom the Lord has given us and never lose the original vision He has set before us. There is a balance that is absolutely important when it comes to freedom. Consider this example: Birds have two wings, and the only way they can fly straight is if both wings are healthy, functioning normally and operating simultaneously.

As people grow together in any ministry, two things must happen simultaneously. One is this whole concept of continually renewing and maintaining freedom and freshness, both individually and as a ministry. The other wing of the bird is a framework of accountability and submission to leadership. It is absolutely vital if we are to continue moving forward and to find ourselves equipped to do the work the Lord has given us to do. It is within this context that freedom, trust and empowerment actually work best.

You need to have the freedom to take ownership of your God-given responsibilities. So, as you look at the specific tasks that He has set before you in your ministry, take the freedom to pray, dream and imagine what He can do through you to reach the lost world!

We will discuss some very practical ways to implement these three steps in the next chapter.

Notes:

1 Charles R. Swindoll, *The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart and 1,501 Other Stories* (Tennessee: W Publishing Group, 1988), p. 622.

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