

## **Crisis in Leadership:**

***Jack and Trisha Frost***

### ***A Season of Chagrin in the Church***

#### **CHAGRIN AMONG PASTORS**

Many of the pastors and ministry leaders with whom we are in contact are very dissatisfied with their present place in life, ministry, and family. Many want a way out but know no other way to live or support themselves. Many feel they are in burnout. Others are discouraged and are tired of the price they and their families are paying for ministry. Some simply live in "numb-numbville", barely existing, just going through the motions of ministry. They have had enough of ministry in its present form.



More and more ministers are now being honest and open about their problems. They may be crying out for more of God and are now beginning to deal more openly with their problems. It is interesting that this season of chagrin coincides with the season within the church when the Lord is seeking to bring us to an end of ourselves and what we can do and give us a greater revelation of personal child-likeness, brokenness, humility, and intimacy with the Father.

#### **CHAGRIN AMONG STAFF AND LEADERSHIP TEAMS**

From what we are hearing from senior pastors and from staff members, there seems to also be a major increase in staff and leadership team members who are dissatisfied with their positions, the church, the pastor, or the pastor's vision. It seems that many staff and team members are focusing on the personality flaws of the senior pastor, especially the flaws that have nothing to do with Paul's list of qualifications for a pastor. Others are trying to see their own vision and personal preferences for ministry styles implemented within the church or ministry. If they are not getting a favorable response to this, then many are responding with hurt feelings and offense. Apparently, they are not willing to let this be an opportunity for their own hidden darkness and impure motives to be exposed so that there may be greater intimacy with the Father and with family.

While the chagrin is stirring inside of them, many leaders are not openly discussing this with their pastor. It may be because they fear rejection from authority. Others then pick up on their closed spirit and thus respond to them in kind. Some feel they have no open door for honesty with their pastor. It may be because the pastor is insecure with anyone who doesn't think like he does. Or it may be that the leader has lived out of his wounds so much in the past that trust in the pastor's insight or wisdom has been broken.

Whatever the reason, many leaders are responding by isolating themselves from their pastoral authorities. These feelings of separation may leave them doing their own thing,

and now they start trying to compete for the people's love and acceptance. They may start striving for their personal emotional needs to be met through ministry. Then, perhaps they begin looking to use the church ministry as a launching pad for their own vision and feel personally rejected when this does not occur. This leads them to hardening their heart against the pastor, but it overflows to others. They no longer see that many of their motives behind ministry are tied to trying to impress God, others, and themselves. They now only see others' faults on the ministry team. Feeling they are right seems to justify their negative attitudes. No longer motivated by God's love but by the need for earning love and acceptance, they find themselves trapped in seeking counterfeit affection or hyperactivity in ministry or are left feeling completely disgruntled with the ministry or church situation. This results in a church or ministry experiencing division and strife.

## **THE PITFALLS THAT SEASONS OF CHAGRIN MAY CREATE**

When we, as leaders or pastors, focus more upon comforting the pain of the now than we do upon resting in the bosom of the Father's love, we begin to close our ears and eyes to truth. When we do this, we open our hearts to deception! There is nothing easier than self-deception! If we are not careful, a destructive pattern or cycle can begin to develop in our lives and ministries.

FIRST, we can begin ministering out of an unhealed need that we have for love, acceptance, and value. We begin ministering out of a need to be needed. Jesus ministered out of a loving, intimate relationship with His Father, but these are burning out because they are seeking to minister from anointing, gifting, or position. We may then end up addicted to the praise of man, hype, or crisis in order to find the adrenaline rush needed to keep going. Then we may begin to believe that people who do not see things our way are a threat to us, so we close our spirit to them.

SECONDLY, we may then move into isolation and independence. We all have been burned one too many times in church life so walls of self-protection go up. As leaders, if we separate ourselves from intimate, transparent relationships, people identify with us in the same way and they become closed to us. People are longing for a father and mother figure to embrace their heart. If this does not occur, they may begin to work out many of their parental issues on us.

Isolation breeds opinionation and a demanding attitude! People may end up getting mad at their leaders because they feel their leader's heart is closed to them. Then the leader separates himself more and he then only receives and values people who think just like he does. Intimacy with God diminishes. He ends up in denial. "I'm okay! It is everyone else that has the problem!" He ends up controlling his relationships in order to protect himself and to keep further pain or feelings of rejection away from his door.

THIRDLY, the feelings of insecurity or pain often can overflow into our families. Our families feel our pain and take it as a personal problem with them. The family becomes guarded when the leader's stress, anger, and impatience pours out upon them for the least little mistake. When the family approaches him about his downcast spirit, he takes it as rejection or criticism, and he closes up even more.

FOURTHLY, no longer is the home a source of comfort, so we may start seeking wrong answers for right needs. We may become more committed to ministry than to God and family. An intimate love relationship with God is hindered, so we turn to counterfeit

affection. Spiritual adultery (getting our emotional needs met for comfort and understanding in someone other than our spouses) can set in. We start seeking love, comfort, and understanding in all the wrong places. Then the family ends up wearing religious masks, living behind walls and cover-ups. Often this is then imparted to the church or ministry.

The enemy takes advantage of this season of chagrin by increasing sexual temptations. Many pastors and leaders are telling us that they are experiencing a heightened sense of impure sensuality in their thought life. Many are yielding to this by getting involved in pornography, spiritual adultery, or affairs. All this serves to increase the number who presently are leaving the ministry and/or the Christian life.

## **CONFRONTING THE CHAGRIN**

Instead of finding fault and placing blame upon others or the demonic realm, we need to allow God to reveal what is in us that is hindering His peace from flowing within us. Certainly there is great spiritual warfare occurring all over the world against leaders, but many of these problems simply are tied to our seeking to escape the Cross. We are trying to deliver ourselves from God's process of humbling and breaking our outer man so that He can bring us into greater childlike innocence and dependence upon Him. It is at the place of brokenness and humility that His love will consume us, and we then find rest in the bosom of the Father.

Father is bringing forth a new generation of leaders to release a wave of His love flowing across the world. If it is going to be a revival of love, then it must flow from a heart whose character is able to sustain walking in His love, though much offense come. Much of what we believe is spiritual warfare is actually the Lord testing us to see if our character will be faithful to the word that He has given us.

These seven things will help to protect us and to draw us out of this season of chagrin and bring us into the power of His presence:

1. Identify our areas of chagrin. Let's stop putting blame upon others and see the hand of the Lord exposing the uncrucified areas of our heart.
2. Move into a season of repentance. Repentance is to be so grieved at the wounding and grief that our actions and attitudes have caused others that now we will do whatever it takes to heal their wounded hearts.
3. Walk in forgiveness daily towards those who have helped to expose impure motives in our lives. Receive them as the blessing of God for our life to help us find out what is in us. Forgiveness and pain are two different things. We can forgive and still feel the pain of the wound. Forgiveness will allow healing to begin.
4. Be completely transparent with spouse and family. Let them know the insecurities, pain, and frustrations we are feeling. Seek intimate times of play and communion with them.
5. Become accountable. Start meeting several times a month with a trusted confidant or prayer partner so you can minister to each other. Allow them to examine the motives behind what you are doing and thinking.
6. We need to talk to our leadership team. Make them aware of the present frustrations we are experiencing. They feel it and feel as if they are part of the problem. It leaves

them feeling insecure. Let them become part of the answer. Do not focus on their faults but upon the dealings of the Lord you are experiencing. Seek their prayers.

7. Seek quality time with the Father, waiting on Him. Take time daily to just lay on the floor like a little child and fellowship with Him as a loving Father. Put in music that is about the Father's love and let Him come and take you into His bosom.

Today, the Father is searching the hearts of leaders to see whether the poise of our spirit is towards intimate relationship with Him and our families or towards ministry and the praise of men. In this season, no longer will He allow our identities to be yoked to our personal ministries and position. He will lead us no farther towards fulfillment of the vision He has given us until our heart is motivated purely by a love for Him. A heart burning for intimacy with the Father expresses itself with quality time actively "waiting upon the Lord." It is in the waiting that He gently deals with our motives. He then gives us the grace to exchange our inability and weaknesses for His strength and ability. It is in this place that our self-life no longer controls our desires and actions. It is here that the Father pours in the grace to sustain us during these seasons of chagrin. So much of the chagrin (distress and discomfort) that leaders go through is because our loving Father has targeted our self-love, pride, self-reliance, independence, counterfeit affections, and cleverness. They must be destroyed. We are bearing the wounds inflicted by the Holy Spirit. He intends to further weaken us until we are crushed and pliable in His hands. The final result will be a broken will that will release the Father's love flowing to the nations through us in greater ways than we have ever imagined. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Romans 8:18)

In the Father's love,

Jack & Trisha Frost

If you are in a season of chagrin, may we suggest the six audio tape series by Jack, "Confronting the Taskmasters of Your Life". It is now required listening for all SPM team members. This series will kill you. It is designed to help expose the hidden motives and darkness that tends to increase the chagrin in our lives. It is not for those struggling with depression but for those wanting to move more deeply into repentance and intimacy with the Lord. It will help prepare you to be the gift of love to the nations that Father has created you to be!

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