

Move With the Cloud -or- Move With the Crowd

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The believer is faced with a choice. Shall I follow the cloud or follow the crowd? Shall I follow the cloud of God's glory? Or shall I flow with the crowd? Shall I go on with God or shall I just be part of the crowd? Will I be led by the Spirit or will I be led by popular opinion? Shall I fit in with everyone else or shall I march to a new drumbeat and sing to a heavenly melody? Shall I step with the crowd or shall I be in step with God?

NUMBERS 9: 15-23

"And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle; then after that the children of Israel journeyed and the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, the children of Israel kept the charges of the Lord and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it was two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the Lord, they journeyed: they kept the charge of the Lord, at the commandment of the Lord, by the hand of Moses."

Notice in these verses that **AT THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD THEY CAMPED, AND AT THE COMMANDMENT OF THE LORD THEY JOURNEYED.** When the cloud was stationary, they stayed put. When the cloud was taken up, they moved on. The children of Israel were obedient to the cloud of God's glory. **THEIR JOB WAS TO FOLLOW THE CLOUD.** The children of Israel were not "born again" in their inner man as we are today under the New Testament. They were not "indwelt" by the Spirit of God as we are today. They "had" a tabernacle in those days. Today, we "are" the tabernacle. Back then the Holy Spirit had to manifest Himself in some way that was visible, physical and **OUTWARD** to get their attention. Today, the cloud is invisible, spiritual, and **INWARD**. But the cloud still camps and still travels as it did for Israel. Today, the believer is blessed with a more sure method of being led by God's Spirit. Today, the believer has "spiritual antennas" to perceive the movement of God. The believer "knows in his knower" whether the cloud is moving or staying put. When the glory cloud begins to move on, the believer knows he must change and "go with the flow". The believer knows that the only secure place is under the cloud, wherever it may go or stay. The believer understands that safety is under the cloud regardless of "whether it be two days, or a month, or a year" or longer that the cloud remains in one place. The believer endeavors to keep abreast with the cloud. That's all that matters. The cloud within the believer lets the believer know when there is a change in the wind. Sensitivity to the Spirit within lets the believer know when he must move spiritually, to a new dimension; physically, to a new location; move into certain relationships; move career-wise, move into more kingdom responsibility, or to stay put.

The cloud will also let you know when you must forsake traditions for freshly revealed Bible truth. All that matters is **FOLLOWING THE CLOUD!** The cloud is where God is. The cloud is on the cutting edge of Holy Spirit activity. The cloud is always riding the crest of the wave of God's glory. The cloud within is in perfect timing with the Father. The cloud moves in perfect harmony with heaven. The cloud is moving with God. But the **CROWD** usually is not!

This is a truth we must understand. CROWDS are usually wrong. Even good people often make decisions in a group setting that they would never make by themselves. The majority is usually wrong. So CLOUD-FOLLOWING is not compatible with CROWD-PLEASING! Crowds are noisy. The crowd is not listening to God. They can't hear him for all the noise. Crowds are always motivated by popular opinion. And the crowd always takes the path of least resistance. But the believer is called to do what is PROPER not what is POPULAR!

In John 6:15 the crowd was wrong when they wanted to crown Jesus as king before His appointed time.

In John 6:26 the crowd was wrong again when they wanted to follow Jesus for bread only.

In John 19:6 the crowd was terribly wrong when they shouted "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!"

In Acts 14:5 the crowd was wrong when they wanted to stone Paul.

In Luke 4:29 the crowd was wrong when they decided to throw Jesus off the cliff.

In Acts 4:18 the majority was wrong in their attempt to stop the apostles from preaching in Jesus Name.

In Numbers 14 the majority was wrong when they voted not to go into the promised land because of the giants.

The truth is that the crowd is usually wrong. The cloud is always right because the cloud is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence. So the price you pay for following the cloud is that often you will have to stand alone in your obedience to God. You can't FOLLOW THE CLOUDS and PLEASE CROWDS at the same time. Sometimes you may have to follow all by yourself. (I wish people really believed the words of that song: "Though none go with me, still I will follow...") Other times, there may be a handful of believers with you who understand and are following the same course. The good news is that by moving with the cloud, later on the crowd will eventually see that your actions were wrought in God. Jesus said: "BUT HE THAT DOETH TRUTH COMETH TO THE LIGHT, THAT HIS DEEDS MAY BE MANIFEST, THAT THEY ARE WROUGHT IN GOD." It may cost your flesh discomfort, inconvenience, or outright pain to follow the cloud instead of the crowd. But it will pay rich dividends over the long run. It may cost you being misunderstood and criticized at first, but in the end it will bring you respect and honor from your critics as they see God bless your obedience. Often the crowd may include family members, relatives, parents, a boyfriend, a girlfriend, or even your Christian friends. When Satan wants to discourage you or divert you from God's plan for your life, he will try to do it through someone close to you. People who don't understand what God has placed in your heart may impugn your motives; but God knows your heart! Follow Him! Jesus said, "Where I am, there will my servant be!"

But the CLOUD-FOLLOWER must learn not to be intimidated by people's JEERS and not to be impressed by people's CHEERS. Actually it pays to follow the cloud. Failure to follow the cloud COSTS! It will cost you leanness of soul, frustration, defeat, emptiness, and in many cases, could even cost you your very life.

"Dreamers Boldly Dare! Critics Merely Glare!"

Today, I challenge you to make a resolution and consecration before God. Which shall you be? A CROWD-PLEASER? Or a CLOUD-FOLLOWER?