

The Encouragement Newsletter

The Hats We Wear



I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work You gave me to do.

*St. John 17:4
(NIV)*

The scripture to the left found in St. John 17:4 are the words Jesus spoke to His Father as He was preparing to go to the cross. To break it down further Jesus was saying this—

I have brought You glory on the earth; by finishing **(To complete, accomplish, carry through, bring to a successful conclusion; reach a goal and fulfill)** the work **(deeds, labor and toil)** You gave me to do.

The Message Bible is even clearer as it states, **“I glorified you on earth by completing down to the last detail what you assigned me to do.”**

Jesus came to earth with several tasks to complete and in the end He was able to confidently say I have finished what you gave me to do. The title of this newsletter -“The Hats We Wear”, speaks to the many responsibilities we have, which are the hats we wear. I know you are aware of what a hat is, but let me give you the definition from Dictionary.com.

Hat— Shaped covering for the head

Idiom (Another Word) for Hat - To function in more than one capacity; fill two or more positions

Thesaurus - Helmet; headpiece; topper; headgear; bucket; head protector

Think about it...What Hats Do You Wear? What Responsibilities do you have? Take a moment and list the hats you wear.



You may have a list that reads mother, father, employee, husband, wife, son, daughter, caregiver, student, minister, deacon, singer, musician and the list goes on. Some of the hats we wear are weighty, great and are hard to bear at times. The enemy's job is to make every work we put our hands to do fail by bringing discouragement that leads to giving up wearing the hat you should wear. Or, he will deceive you into believing you can wear the hats in your own strength without the Holy Spirit. He freely gives the false sense of “I can do it without God”, which leads to developing an independence from the Holy Spirit rather than dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Reading John 15: 1-5 – I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in ME, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing—we realize as we go a long on our journey, we must maintain. “Without God I can do nothing and with him I can do what He has assigned me to do. I can wear all of the hats He has given”.

Why do hats become difficult to wear, bear or overwhelming at times?

Acting like superman/superwoman – I've been guilty of trying to do it all and that is not God's way. Remember the commercial - *I can bring home the bacon. Fry it up in the pan. And never, ever let you forget you're a man...!* If you are woman and believe this, it is time to change your belief system. With the superman/superwoman mentality we get seriously worn and stressed out. We cannot do all the stuff that we think we can do.

We try to continue our responsibilities without proper rest and diet. Physically we cannot go on because the energy tank is on "E". Stress is a very big issue in our day. People are stressed on every level – work, home, financially, etc. – it is now a major concern in the work place and they are offering all types of wellness tools. The body is not designed to handle continuous stress. Stress causes physical strain. It also causes one to be unproductive and unfocused. Also when fatigued sets in and you cannot think clearly. Take off the superman or superwoman cape, get some rest, regroup and reprioritize the schedule.

Trying to please everybody

It is impossible to make everyone you come in contact with happy and satisfied because people can be so fickle. They are up one day and down the next. They are like the commercial, "Sometimes



you feel like a nut. Sometimes you don't". The only thing you can do is be consistent and constant with who you are and what you do. Trying to please everyone will put you in the place of being controlled by everyone instead of being under the control of the Holy Spirit. Being controlled by others mean they will control your time and schedule. In this trap, you will find yourself trying to be approved by man and afraid of their disapproval. We must all learn to be secure, be confident and continuously seek to please Him. The later part of the verse in St. John 5:30 says, "...for I seek not to please myself, but Him who sent me. This was the goal and purpose of Jesus. Being like Jesus and doing what He did is having this same mindset and understanding that there will always be opposition—something to oppose you and keep you from being focused on pleasing the One that sent you and the one that gave you the hat or hats to wear. Do not try to please everyone. Seek to please the One Who sent you.

**I must work the works of Him Who sent me...
St. John 9:4**

Not recognizing it is a season of change - Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us, "For everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven..." (ASV) Just as the leaves prepare to fall in the autumn season, we have to recognize when some things are to fall off because there's no life in it because it is dead. We also need to recognize when we are suppose to do things differently—instead of trying to use the same method to accomplish God's will when He is saying CHANGE.

I know you are familiar with the stages of the caterpillar. The caterpillar goes through a metamorphoses. A metamorphosis is defined on Dictionary.com as any complete change in appearance, character or circumstances. A caterpillar does not stay a caterpillar. It is destined to become a butterfly. It will go through a metamorphosis to become something entirely different from what it was. When it changes, it will no longer crawl on the ground. It will miss the next phase of life. Once it changes into a butterfly, it never goes back. It will fly in the air. It will no longer look the same because of CHANGE and if it does not change, it will die. By nature, it cannot refuse to change. We are not entirely like the caterpillar that will change by force of nature. We can refuse to change and hold on to the old because it is more familiar and comfortable. We can refuse to change because of fear. Or refuse to change because of the energy and effort necessary for a metamorphoses. Lack of timely change can cause the hats difficult to wear. Perhaps, it is time to change in order to get another result. You know it has been said that "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over expecting different results." Is it time for CHANGE? It may be time to move on and come out of the comfort zone.

Believing in the world's system - We are actually pressured (overtly and subtly) to be like the world every day and in everything from dress, taste in music, attitudes to character, identity, definition of success view of salvation and more. If you are different you are strange. In reality, that is what we are suppose to be—"a peculiar people" (different from usual).

Romans 12:2 says. "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God". His way is not the way of the world. What is in the world? The lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and pride of life. (1 John 2:16) This is what is in the world and it is the way of the world. This is how the world operates. If we love the world the love of the Father is not in us. (1 John 2:15)

In our past, we used to walk in the way of the world, but now as believers, we must put off the world according to Colossians 3:1-14 and believe God's way for governing our life. For example, the world believes pre-marital sex is fine and makes provisions for one to engage. They even provide methods for "safely" coming together and fulfilling the lust of the flesh. Even if the result is pregnancy, the world has a way of dealing with the "unwanted" pregnancy. The world's way is different than God's way. Scripture provides God's order. Genesis 2:24 tells us that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. Cleave means to join together in intimacy. Therefore, God's order is that man is to cleave to his wife after marriage. Climbing the corporate ladder is another example. The world's way is cut throat, stepping on and over people without regard to kindness or fairness, making other's look bad and doing whatever it takes to get to the next level, even if it means hurting others. But, Joshua 1:8 provides God's way to success, which is to meditate on the word. This does not mean that you do not do anything, but the way you do things to achieve success is entirely different. Meditation leads to prayers to God and then receiving God's direction and instruction. This will lead to prosperity and success. Lastly, the word of God says to seek the kingdom of God and all of these things will be added. (Matthew 6:33) It may take longer as you follow God's way, but that is because it is not just being successful that is His ultimate goal, He wants us to have godly character and represent His Kingdom well.

Doing something not equipped to do - Everyone born is gifted to do something. This is just the law of God. What we are gifted to do, from His perspective, is designed to bring glory to him and build His Kingdom. However, our gifts comes with boundaries. On occasion, what seems to happen is one is gifted in one area and become successful, they move into another area they are not equipped to move into at that time. Or, they will never be equipped to function in that area. The end result is confusion. This is a dangerous thing because many are hurt, damaged and bruised when one functions outside of their area of grace. Our sole purpose should be to build and be fruitful, but stepping outside of the boundaries of that God-given ability will bring destruction, bareness and frustration to you and to everyone involved. 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:3-8 expresses that we all have a piece of the pie. We are not the whole pie, no matter how successful we have become in a particular area. We have been created to have an interdependence on one another—in a healthy way, not a controlling or manipulative way.

Here is my last thought on this. Sometimes people try to move you from your grace because you have done so well and accomplished much. With words, they stroke your ego with compliments and accolades. They may knowingly or unknowingly set in motion the process of moving you from God's purpose. Stay in His will and do not move into an area that you have not been equipped to do. As my dear friend, Verna Broady, always says, "Do You!" and "Play your position!". In other words, if you are the linebacker, do not try to be the quarterback..

Think about the hats you wear and ask some questions..

Are these the hats I should be wearing?

Are these hats I wear really God's will for me at this time?

Is this really His purpose?

Jesus said I have finished/completed the assignment/work YOU (*His Heavenly Father*) gave me to do. There were many in need. He did not heal everyone nor cast out every demon. Mary got mad because He did not come when they wanted Him to come and see about Lazarus. His family was upset because He did not come when they called.

So many wanted him to do so much, but he had a keen sense of what the Father had called him to do and how he was to do it in the 33 years allotted to him. We always say we do not have enough time to do what we should in a day, but there's an interesting twist I read on the need prioritize and that is – We have enough time to do what God has for us to do, but not what everyone else has for us to do or put on our schedules.

We have to set boundaries and stay in our lane. When we do not do that, we put on a hat that we are not designed or graced to wear. This means, sometimes we have to say "NO".

Without God I can do nothing and with Him I can do what he has assigned me to do.

THE HAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO WEAR

I want to switch up a bit with the hats we wear thought. On page one, I listed words from the Thesaurus that mean "hat". The words were head protector, headpiece and HELMET.

In Paul's writing from the Roman jail, he uses the pieces that make up the armor of the Roman soldier to describe how the child of God should be dressed for battle. The helmet worn by Roman soldiers was made of metal and designed to protect the head, face and neck without blocking vision. Centurions and other officers wore crests on their helmets, so that their men could see them and follow them into battle.



Image from lifecoachingforchristianwomen.com

Naturally, the helmet covers head as a protection, but spiritually, it symbolizes what covers our mind. It represents what we allow to come in and control what we think about ourselves and others. Our thinking is what controls our behavior because "For as he (a man/woman) thinks within himself (herself), so he (she) is". Proverbs 23:7 (NAS)

REMEMBER – the enemy does not want us to finish our course and we must remember that when we wear the hats or carry out the responsibilities that is purposed by the Father, he will be after us fighting us all the way. He wants us to be bogged down with personal issues, off focused and ineffective. We need to have the head covering called the helmet of salvation.

Ephesians 6:17 – "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. Being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all saints". 1 Thessalonians 5:6–8 explains to us that the hope of salvation is confidence and confident expectation. Researching the phrase "hope of salvation" at Wordlibrary.com, I found that "Hope on the other hand is of the mind. It covers the head. It is our helmet. A man can survive several days without food or water, but take away hope and he will commit suicide immediately". The site also stated, "An understanding of what God has promised us brings us hope. God does not lie. Our hope is based on Him and what He has said in His word. Christian with the helmet of the hope of salvation will not get confused with the fleeting pleasures of sin. Nor will they trade their birth right (salvation) for the temporary lusts of the world".

Now, for some of us, we have worn other hats like jealousy, envy, strife, striving, confusion, control, fear, doubt, unbelief and manipulation. This comes from what is in our mind, which translates into our behavior and interactions with others. The Father wants to change our behavior today. He wants us to be free in our spirit, soul and body because He is a God of liberty. This is what the helmet of salvation/helmet of the hope of salvation is all about. The helmet of salvation brings freedom and liberty. We can receive continuous freedom from the bondages of Satan and liberty to walk in the grace to finish the work HE has given.

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CONCLUSION

As I conclude, I want to encourage you with some points—

- We all have hats and we need to always seek the Lord for the wisdom to wear them.
- At different seasons of life we must assess the hats we are wearing and determine if it is time to change.
- Recognize when to put on a new hat, add a hat or take off one.
- Acknowledge Him. He will direct your path, give you wisdom and peace.
- Learn to say “NO” gracefully. Not when you are already at your wits end and pulling your hair out because you are overwhelmed and stressed.
- Remember, you cannot do everything.

There’s an immeasurable love of the Father that He has already bestowed or given us as His sons and daughters. We are not bastard children. I think He looks down and smiles at our efforts to please Him as mother, wife, minister, leader, employee, or whatever the responsibility may be. Many of us are truly doing our best, but either people, ourselves or others tell us otherwise; not to mention the accuser of the brethren who is always there to condemn us.

Let me give you a short testimony. About 4 years ago, I was riding home from work and the enemy spoke very clearly, “You’re not a good mother nor wife”. I then began looking at my faults or what I did not do right. I was becoming heavy with the thought, but at the same time fighting through it. When I arrived home, I actually had to end up taking my husband to the hospital. After that incident, the Father affirmed me and showed me how in His love I was doing what I was supposed to do. His words trumped the enemy’s.

The enemy is always looking at the negative and what we are not doing. This is what he will magnify in our minds. But, God is looking at the heart. He is looking for the humble heart that he can raise up, He is saying come unto me all ye that labor and I will...*not I might*, but I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. For my yoke is soooo easy and my burden is light.

Look at your hats, seek the Lord about them. Change if you have to. Give up some hats and/or ask for God’s grace and wisdom to wear the hats He has given. So that in the end you can say like Jesus—

I have bought you glory on earth by completing the work You gave me to do.

St. John 17:4 (NIV)

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Jesus Christ is the Author & Finisher of My Faith
Veronica B. McCray, Co-Author
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