



Building Ministries with Lasting Value

By Michelle Flippin
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Worry threatened to stifle my excitement about establishing my own writing and speaking ministry. Doubts filled my mind and clouded my vision. How could I possibly do all that God had instructed me to do?

The Lord's response to my unspoken question eased my mind and encouraged me to press on. *Ministries are not built over night. You don't have to do everything at once; just take one step at a time.*

Nearly four years have passed since I stepped out in faith and started my own ministry. God showed me how to build a ministry with lasting value—one firmly founded on His Word. My next step is sharing with others—through speaking and writing—how to build lasting ministries of their own.

Accept God's Vision

Accepting God's vision for our ministries is vital, because His vision will always be greater than our own. We may not know how the vision will come to pass, but we can be sure it will in God's timing. According to Habakkuk 2:3 (NIV), "The revelation awaits an appointed time. . . it will certainly come and will not delay."

Writing down the vision God gives us will help us see it through to completion. I wrote down everything God had given me, from the name and tagline for my ministry to the services I would offer my target audiences. When doubt or discouragement came, rereading my vision assured me of my aim.

Follow God's Instructions

Following the Lord's instructions, whether or not they make sense, is essential for building well. After all, He has the blueprints for our ministries. My ministry developed when I moved to a different city (one with seemingly less opportunities for assignments), wrote my first book manuscript, and then prepared to teach my own Bible study.

Preparation, one of the Lord's key directives, comes in many forms. Bible teacher Joyce Meyer studied God's Word and taught it to 25 people in her living room long before she launched her worldwide television and radio ministry and wrote hundreds of books. Joel Osteen worked behind the scenes producing his father's television program prior to becoming pastor of Lakewood Church, one of America's largest churches today. Even Jesus' public ministry followed an extensive time of preparation—30 years to be exact. God also has a unique plan for our preparation.

Rely on God's Spirit

Relying on God's Spirit for the help, strength, and wisdom we need is a much more secure building method than relying only on ourselves. Dr. Eriko Valk, founder of Liberty Path, Inc., testifies that her reliance on the Lord took the non-profit organization from an office with 400 square feet in 2004 to an office suite four times that size, where six other women now join her in providing Christian-based counseling services. The Lord's words to Zerubbabel about rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem also hold true for us as we build our ministries: "Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6 NIV).

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Cherish God's Beginnings

To build ministries that endure, we must start where God tells us to. Zechariah 4:10 (NLT) says, "Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin. . ." We, too, can rejoice at every stage of the construction process, even the beginning. We need not be overwhelmed; God is in control and will give us only what we can handle. He will advance us little by little.

Remembering and respecting our ministries' beginnings can have a profound impact on how we progress and how we finish. I often look back at the very first letter I sent to my prayer team, my initial writing contracts, and notes from my first speaking engagements. Looking at photos of first buildings, offices, or events can help us remember how much our ministries have grown.

A picture of our beginning can propel us forth much like our vision of the end does. Whether we're in the time of small beginnings or looking back on that time, we will marvel at the greatness of God. He empowers us to succeed in spite of our weaknesses and where we started.

Build Ministries With Lasting Value

Accepting the vision God has placed on our hearts for the ministries He has entrusted to us and following His instructions step by step are keys to our success. We can rely on the Holy Spirit to empower, equip, and guide us. God chose us, because He knows what we can do in Him.

From time to time, let's recall our beginnings and thank God for how far He has brought us. Let's trust Him to take us all the way to the finish line. When we do, we will build ministries that advance God's eternal kingdom—ministries with lasting value.

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