

The 4 Stages of Apostleship

Prepare: Read Luke 10:1-9

In Luke 10:1-9, Jesus sends his disciples forth as evangelizers. This is our mission; it's the mission of the Church. We're sent forth as evangelizers at the end of every Mass. The priest, speaking for Jesus, empowers us with words such as: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord" or "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." Or, as in Luke 10:3, "Go on your way! Behold, I am sending you!" Jesus commissions us and commands us to go and make a difference in the world.

"Go!" is the main action verb in Christianity. "I am sending you" is the main agenda in Christianity. The original Greek word for being "sent forth" evolved into the word "apostle" – an apostle is a disciple sent by the teacher to do the work that the teacher assigns.

We all have apostolates: assignments from Jesus.

There are four stages of apostleship. First is PREPARATION, when we are discipled and disciplined by Jesus. We learn from hardships. We discover what impassions us. We mature in the recognition of and use of our gifts and talents.

Next is INVOLVEMENT, when we become active in ministry. Even before our preparations are finished, we start using our gifts and passions and newly gained wisdom in the service of God.

Then, if we truly desire to be effective apostles, we enter into TESTING. We experience trials that challenge us where we're called to serve, like gold purified in fire. For some, it's the "dark night of the soul" and it might continue for years.

For example, we find ourselves in difficult relationships that challenge us to love and forgive more sacrificially. Our ministries might be interrupted by obstacles that challenge our trust in God and stretch our ability to discern where he's leading us. If we don't run away from these challenges or quit for the sake of an easier life, we're ready for Stage 4: SIGNIFICANT INVOLVEMENT, when we're useful enough to reach our full potential and make a huge difference.



To help you advance in your usefulness to God, you can use the following prayer:

A Prayer to Become God's Instrument

O, my heavenly Father, I give all of my life to you in the name of Your Son, my Lord Jesus Christ, and through the power of Your Holy Spirit.

I ask you to stir up within me the fullness of Your Holy Spirit. I have heard You calling me, and I choose to follow where Your Son leads me. I want to help others find their way into Your kingdom. I want to serve others so that they can experience Your love. Use me. Use the hurts and sufferings I've endured. Use the talents, the resources, the time, the experiences, the spiritual growth and everything else You have given me. Use me. Help me to love all people unconditionally and reveal Jesus to others through me. Help me to grow in my desire to love all people. Today, and every day, help me to decrease so that Your Holy Spirit may increase in me. Help me to love purely, humbly, and generously. Show me how to receive more of Your love so that I have more love to give. Heal me of every obstacle that holds me back from serving You. I give You permission to change me. Here I am, Lord, I want to do Your will. Come, Holy Spirit; renew me. In Jesus' name, Amen!