

2017 - The Year of the Arrow

**"He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver."
(Isa. 49:2)**

I sense the Lord saying, *I desire to send you out to make a far greater impact than you could ever make on your own. Your calling and purpose are sure and desperately needed in this day, and because of that great need I am taking time to refine and transform you.*

For the year 2017 will be more preparation for the days ahead—a year of purification and refinement so that you will live and move and have your being in me alone. Many are asking, “Why do I feel as if I’m stuck, making no progress toward my destiny? Why is this process taking so long?”

You wonder whether others even know you exist. You feel invisible and unimportant, and the enemy constantly attacks your self-worth and sense of purpose. His lies are like fiery arrows that wound your heart, but I say to you, my child, that I’m moving behind the scenes and I’m most active when you feel as though nothing is happening. Simply believe me when I say I’m at work.

I’m calling you to lay down your agenda and exchange it for mine. For you desire to run out aimlessly and do something—anything—for me, but that is not my will for you. In the year 2017 you must run hard after me, letting nothing distract you from that course—that you begin a relentless pursuit of me alone, urgently seeking my face and my will for your life. That you love me enough to trust me, now ready and waiting, eager for me to refine, purify, and make you a precision arrow, ready to hit the target dead on, and succeed in the task I’ve prepared for you.

You may wonder if refining is even necessary, and, if so, what that process entails. It is essential. The Holy Spirit is the only one able to prepare and equip you; His training is not easy and requires effort and patience from each of us. Spiritual maturity does not come through a prayer line or impartation, but is walked out in each of our lives. There are prophetic principles we can learn from the arrow-making process that will apply to the year 2017.

In the hands of an Old Testament archer, a piece of wood went through a long and time-consuming process before it became a polished arrow. Even now the process requires great patience. Precision arrows cannot be made in haste. Skilled Old Testament archers

actually began making their arrows a year in advance. They first had to find just the right kind of wood, usually the branches of an almond tree because they grew straighter than any other. That tree was also one of the first to bud in spring. For our purposes, the almond tree symbolizes ‘resurrection power’.

God takes time and great patience to develop us into vessels of honor. As the fire burns away the dross (sin) in our lives, our obedience produces resurrection power (like the almond tree) that burns away the old things that hinder us, and we become brand new creatures in Christ. In fact, in time we become those mighty warriors He designed us to be!

Once the almond branch was cut, the next step was to strip off the bark. Dead bark represents the flesh that needs to go. Maturity takes time. Once He cuts away the knots (strongholds) and burrs (bad habits) we become usable tools in the Master’s hands. ‘Stripping’ is never comfortable but is a vital part of the process. Joseph was stripped of his coat of many colors (favor) before he finally wore the garments of a prime minister. He endured a long and painful stripping process before he eventually assumed his place of honor and authority (a polished arrow).

Archers begin to shape the wood by sanding it. In the same way, friction (sanding) will bring you closer to Him if you let it. Don’t become discouraged or disillusioned during the sanding process, because He is making the (Isa. 45:2) **“crooked places straight”** (removing the knots and burrs). Next, the arrow is soaked in water to expose the wood grain. Just when we think we’re ready to be used, He lets us soak in the water of the Holy Spirit to reveal the inner workings, thoughts, and imaginations of the heart that must be banished if we want God to use us.

More sanding and more soaking follow until the arrow is exactly the right size and shape. Though such repetition may seem excessive, it’s absolutely necessary for the production of high-quality arrows. The Word of God sands flat the ungodly things in our lives. This, of course, is a humbling and painful process, but without it we would fail to fly straight or hit the mark. Skipping steps and cutting corners will produce inferior arrows that are useless. Character development is vital if we want to be useful arrows.

Next the archer places the arrow shaft in his quiver for a prescribed period of time—a waiting room—that will prove whether the arrow will bow or warp. The archer must make sure the new shaft is straight before he can attach the arrowhead. Short changing this process means it may not make the grade. The quiver is a very dark and lonely place where we may feel frustrated as if nothing is being accomplished. But our heavenly Father knows best, and if we begin our journey prematurely, the result is great frustration that may make us question the call of God on our lives.

If you stay in the waiting room until God takes you out, you will prove to be of great value. The archer will add the head then select the bow and release you to accomplish exactly what He’s called you to do.

God is the Master Archer and we are His arrows. It’s not easy to endure; you may feel impatient during the process, but take comfort and hold your course, because God is getting ready to propel you into your unique calling and destiny!

I sense the Lord saying:

“For even now I have a plan for you. In order for you to live out your destiny you must first endure the process of sanding, soaking and waiting. But after this preparation you will fly with great effectiveness, great anointing, purity of thought and motive. I will then consume you with my love so you will carry my very heart, and I will put my words in your mouth.”

"He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver."
(Isa. 49:2)

Even now the Lord is transforming your mouth to use as a sharpened sword in 2017! A fire that burns from deep within is coming forth from His people. A greater accuracy in the prophetic is being activated . . . but only after refining, so that His pure, unadulterated message can break forth in power and not be hindered by your own agenda. There are many who claim to speak for God, but they do not hear. The Lord is tuning your ear to hear His voice so that you may be a voice crying in the wilderness of the nations in 2017. Your voice will come forth like thunder shaking the very foundations. It will break down and defeat the plans of the enemy to perpetuate evil, and move with power and signs following to turn around for good what the enemy means for harm.

“Is not my word like a fire, declares the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?” (Jer. 23:29) So put on the ***“helmet of salvation and (take in) the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”*** (Eph. 6:17) *on a daily basis* to guard your heart from every trap of the enemy in 2017. I declare that you shall speak my heart from a father’s and mother’s perspective, standing strong against the trickery of the evil one. Reject those thoughts that do not originate with you, but are planted by your enemy, and refuse to speak words that are not from the Father.

I see a bride leaning upon her beloved speaking what He speaks, doing what He is doing. For she will not say, “Lord, anoint what I am doing.” Instead, she will be so in harmony with the Lord that she will begin to move and function in what He is already doing. She has been processed by God and like a flaming arrow she will hit the target with incredible speed and accuracy because she is speaking His pure heart.

I am your arrow oh God, prepare me no matter how difficult the process that I may hit my target in 2017. Make me that vessel of honor fit for your use. I am in the quiver waiting, but I will sing here, for you will soon launch me into your divine purpose for your good pleasure.

Steve Porter

www.findrefuge.tv

Steve Porter is founder of Refuge Ministries. He has written many books and has a special anointing to bring forth the deep truths of the Spirit with a clarity and simplicity that draw one up into a closer walk and deeper relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Steve's books, articles and videos have touched countless lives around the world.