

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, October 16, 2011
Defining Our Time

People Magazine's Special Edition this month was called **TOP 100 Celebrities Who Define Our Time**. Pictured on the cover were Michael Jackson, Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, George Clooney, Elizabeth Taylor, Beyonce Knolls, Lady Diana, and Brittany Spears. While I did not purchase or read what People meant by "defining our time" my immediate impression as I was standing at the check-out counter where the magazine was displayed was that the Lord has called us, his body, his church to define our time.

The Apostle Paul in his 2nd letter to the Corinthians said that God had made him competent as a minister of a new covenant, "*—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*" (2 Corinthians 3:5-6 (NIV)) (The letter he was speaking of is the Old Testament or the Law through which no one can be justified because we have all sinned. However, the Spirit gives life through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the full price for our redemption.) He goes on to bring some explanation contrasting the glory of the old with the glory of the new. When Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai he came down off the mountain with a literal radiant glow. It freaked the people out to the point that Moses put a veil over his face because they were afraid to come near him. Imagine that! Yet Paul was telling the Corinthians that this was nothing compared to what God is doing in us through the Holy Spirit. That old glory was fading but the new glory gets better and better. **2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (NIV)** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.* ¹⁸ *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

In Jesus' prayer recorded in John 17:20ff he reveals that he has given us the same glory he had so we could be one with him and the Father. God is looking for us to walk in the confidence that it is not by our self-effort that things are accomplished. Rather, it comes from our union with him. Jesus in us wants to express himself through us. Paul's confidence came from realizing who he was in Christ. He did not earn it or achieve it on his own. Look at the following passages to get some more of his insight. **1 Corinthians 15:10 (NIV)** ¹⁰ *But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.* **Colossians 1:29 (NIV)** ²⁹ *To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.* **Ephesians 1:18-20 (NIV)** ¹⁸ *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,* ¹⁹ *and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,* ²⁰ *which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,*

Jesus told us that as the Father sent him he was sending us in the same way with the same power. Then Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:17-20b (NIV)** ¹⁷ *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!* ¹⁸ *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:* ¹⁹ *that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.* ²⁰ *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.* (emphasis mine) We represent Christ. He is making his appeal through us. It is not us trying really hard, it is resting really hard! That is, allowing him to flow in and through us. The glory we have is even greater than the glory Moses had and he glowed! Let's take seriously the Word of God and trust that he is going to come through as we step out in faith. Imagine how we can influence **OUR TIME! We are the ones that need to define our time.** **Romans 8:19 (NIV)** ¹⁹ *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.* It's time we give it what it's waiting for.