

## **DEDICATION**

This bible study manual/pamphlet is dedicated to God Almighty, the source and giver of inspiration (2Tim 3:15-17), who made the first manual possible and also permitted the annual printing up to this level; especially the rebranding of this year's manual (2020). He is indeed the founder and the sustainer of Christ Apostolic Church Campus Fellowship (CACCF), Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology (OAUSTECH), Okitipupa, Nigeria (The Nazarites Family). May His name be praised, AMEN.

**President  
Olatunbosun Kayode**

## **ACKNOWLEDGE**

All glory to Abba Father ("source and sustainer") of the fellowship; the greatest teacher of the Bible study unit, who has never stopped to illuminate the heart of everyone with the truth (knowledge) of His word (Heb 4:12). All thanks be to God who started the release of the Bible study manual up till date in spite of challenges and obstacles.

My sincere appreciation goes to the Alumni body of the fellowship (especially the Ex. Presidents), who gave their full support by having a hand in the exposition of the topics (write up). Also, without exception, the present ExcOs (2019/2020), right from my amiable President (Bro Olatunbosun Kayode) and the Gen. Sec (Bro Kosinkan Samuel) down to all ExcOs (unit leaders and respective post/office holders) who contributed so much for the success of this manual. Thanks to everyone, we waxed stronger in the Love of God, Amen.

Special thanks to my active unit members who by the strength of God, have participated greatly to the publication of this manual; I see us growing in the knowledge of God's word, Amen. In addition, to all workers/members of the fellowship who have contributed greatly, patiently waited and gladly accepted this offer in cooperation, thanks so much family, love you all.

## **PREFACE**

It is evident that we faced some challenges that seems to slow/shut down the success of this manual in its new form compared to the previous usual printing. Some of which are; increase in the numbers of topics, period of time exceeds the given time, writing and compiling of the topics take longer than expected and the printing that needed brain tasking since the option of the printing press was denied due to cost. All these could not exclude the strategies of the adversary but thanks to God who proved His mighty power.

I'll urge everyone not to see the manual as too bogus or as a reference book, but as a constituents of knowledge about the word of God; that we all might reach the stature of Christ in accordance to the tenure theme "Unity of Faith".

**Bible Study  
Coordinator  
Dada Oluwayomi**

## **GUIDE**

To God be the glory, great things He hath done. Thanks to Him for the compilation of the topics of this manual. It is of no fallacy, that each topic encompasses the light of God's word to teach and build everyone (who is delighted in studying), to the stature of Christ and the Unity of faith. To achieve this aim, it is therefore necessary for us to study every concept in the manual before and after the weekly Bible Study in order to rightly divide the word of truth (2Tim 2:15). No one should shun the aspects or categories of the topics; spiritual growth, finance, relationship and politics, as all does not exceed or exclude the word of God. Our daily study is encouraged and motivated by the "Caccf bible study daily quotes" on the fellowship platform.

**Asst. Bib. Cd (Unit Member)  
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TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY  
**CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH CAMPUS FELLOWSHIP**  
Ondo State University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

## **THE HEART AND THE ACT OF FAITH**

**Aim:** To help the students understand the concept of Faith and how to practice and grow in it in all areas of life, and that the Heart of man is responsible for his practice of faith.

**Memory Verse:** *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”. Heb 11:6*

**Texts:** John 3: 1-8, Rom 10: 1-17, Heb 11: 1-40

### **Introduction**

Faith was the genesis of the cordial relationship between men and God in the Old testament and it's also the only key that gave them hope of eternal salvation to be offered by Jesus Christ; this was what made their Spirit alive and released from the bondage of sin and death when Jesus resurrected (Matt 27:52-53). Even though, men had faith in God then; because of His promise and covenant (of salvation which is to be offered by Christ the saviour) which they held onto, but now, right from the new testament, Christ made us to know that the basis of being saved and walking with Him to fulfill the will of the Father, even to having an everlasting relationship with the Father(eternally) is Faith. This is why He asked if He would still find faith on earth when He comes back (Luk 18:8).

### **Lesson Exposition**

In this study, we shall focus on two words 'HEART' and 'FAITH'.

The word “HEART” (Greek kardia-figuratively the thoughts or feelings (mind); also (by analogy) the middle) according to the scriptures does not refer to the physical organ that pumps blood. If it was the physical organ, then you can believe God with your fingers, or lungs or any other part of the physical human body.

The Heart is used to convey a thought, for example, when we say the heart of a subject, it means the most important part of that subject. When God speaks of the human heart, he means the very centre of man’s being i.e His Spirit. Man is a spirit.

We know that God is a spirit and we are made in the image and likeness of God. It is not our physical bodies that are like God, for God is not a man.

Paul in his letter to the Romans said that a true Christian is the one who has circumcision of the heart and who is praised not by man but by God (Rom 2:28-29).

God is a spirit and we must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24), this can only be done by faith.

We are who we are by what we think or imagine, same way our heart is important in the act of faith.

What is FAITH? (Greek pistis –persuasion that is credence, moral conviction (of religious truth or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher) especially reliance upon Christ for Salvation; abstractly, constancy in such profession; by extension the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself). So many people quote Heb 11:1 but do not actually understand what it means.

According to Moffatt’s translation, Faith is being confident of things we hope for and we are convinced of what we do not see.

One point to note about faith is that Faith is NOT Hope, rather, Faith is Believing, therefore Faith births Hope. Faith does not say “I hope to receive something” but faith says “I believe I have received already”. That is why Jesus made us to understand in Mark 11:24 that, when we believe that we have received what we ask for, that is when it is truly ours.

We can ONLY have faith by the WORD OF GOD (Rom 10:17). We can only practice faith when our hearts are fully convinced that what we do not see are true (Heb 11:6).

When we continually feed our hearts with the Word of God, it is impossible not to act in faith. By faith we are saved (Rom 10:9-10), healed (Acts 4:7-10), we can please God (Heb 11:6).

When we check through the bible and study on those that practiced faith e.g Abraham (Rom 4:17-21), the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:27-18, 34) etc., we see that they had full conviction in their heart about what they have received even when it was not visible to physical eyes.

For us to fully practice faith, we MUST believe in our hearts and be convinced that what we do not see are true. We should not be like Thomas who wants to see before believing. Heb 11:1-40 tells us of how different people walked and worked in Faith.

We cannot practice faith by confessing with our mouth only, we have to believe in our hearts because the heart is the part of a man responsible for believing, doubting, and even thinking evil thoughts (Matt. 15:19).

### **Question**

‘So then, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God’ Rom 10:17, Discuss.

### **Conclusion:**

Mark 11: 23-24. “For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them”.

## LOVE AND THE TRUE NATURE OF GOD

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the true nature of God by the scripture.

**Memory verse:** *"Every good gift and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" James1:17*

**Text:** 1John3:1-3, Rom.13:8-10, Gal.5:22, 1Cor.13, Heb.1:1-3, John10:9-11, John13:35, John14:6-11, James 1:13-18, Gen.1:1-25, Ps.8:3-4, Isa.55:6-13, Joel2:32

### Introduction

There has been misconception about who God is. Many people defined God based on their experience. Even the same people misinterpreted the scripture. No prophets or priest is able to give us exact picture of God, but they only show us shadow of things to come. Only his Son revealed to us the blueprint of the Father. John 1:18

### Lesson Exposition

#### (A) The true nature of God (1John1:4-5, Isa.55:6-13)

Based on the account of old testament given by prophets, none of them was able to give perfect image of God. But with the help of the four gospel and the epistles written by the apostles, revealed the true nature of God (Luk 9:53-56, Jh 14:10-11, Jh 10:10). The perfect nature of God was revealed to us in Christ Jesus (Heb 1:1-3). Anything that is good was created by God (Gen 1:31, James 1:17). Evil is not in the nature of God (Evil like sin, diseases, death, etc (Heb 2:14-15, 1Jh 3:8). God delivers i.e God saves from destruction (Joel 2:32).

God is Love (1Jh 4:16, Matt 5:44-45).

The nature of God is love (Jh 13:35). God's love was opened to us by his Son to die for the whole world (1Jh 2:2). The love of God has delivered us from the power of darkness and

transforms of into the kingdom of light. Life eternal now given to them that believes (Rom 1:16). *"But God commandeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:8)

### **(B) Essence of Jesus Ministry (Gospel) (1Cor 15:1-4;20-22, Matt 1:21)**

Jesus was made manifest in appointed time to bring many from death to life, bondage of sin (i.e servant of sin) to sons of God (Col 1:19-22), also for us to be partaker of Abraham's blessings (Eph 1:8-14, Gal 3:6-9;16). Essence of Jesus Ministry is to fulfill the word **"Emmanuel i.e God is with us"**. We know that God is with us by his Spirit given to us (Gal.4:5-7).

### **(C) Believers' Emulation (Jh 14:11-12, 2Cor 5:14-16, Jh 13:35, Col 3:1-2, Gal 5:16-17)**

Jesus is the perfect person that a believer need to emulate. In given ourselves to what Christ has done. Believers can only die as a martyr not as a saviour. We can also emulate the apostles in preaching (Act 28:31), persuading men (Act 26:28), in giving (Act 2:45), in prayer and studying of the word (Act 6:4,1:1).

The eternal Congregation who have known the true nature of God (1Jh 3:2, 2Cor 3:18). In eternal Congregation the way we see Christ is the way we are, because his blood has brought us to the platform of Sonship (Gal 4:5-6). We carry the same nature of Christ (1Cor13:9-11).

### **Question**

1. Can God do evil to a man? Give your answer with scriptural backup.
2. What is the true nature of God?
3. Some part in old testament speak about God which is imperfect. Explain by the knowledge of the four gospel and the epistles.

### **Conclusion**

None of the prophets were able to give accurate image of God, but the true nature was revealed to us in Son Christ Jesus. God is good all the time, in him he has no evil thought (Heb 1:1-3).

## SALVATION AND REDEMPTION

**Aim:** To teach and enlighten believers on the reality of our Redemption and salvation.

**Memory Verse:** *For there is one God and one intermediary between God and humanity, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all, revealing God's purpose at his appointed time. 1Tim 2:5-6 (NET)*

**Text:** 1 Tim 2:1-6, Rom 10:8-10, Eph 1:3-23, Col 1:12-15, Isa 45:16-25, Tit 3:4,2:14, Matt 26:28, Exo 12:1-13, Jh 1:29.

### Introduction

The word **Redemption** refers to the price paid, that price is one's value. (1Tim 2:5-6), the word

**Ransom** was translated from the Greek word ***Lutron***, meaning the price paid.

(Matt 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*), Jh 1:29, Col 1:12-15, Eph 1:7. The blood of Jesus was the price paid for sins. Glory!

It's a free gift of God to man in bringing man to God in Jesus (Rom 6:23).



## **LESSON EXPOSITION**

### **(A) The Essence or the need of Salvation.**

People of the world seek for solutions all round the world to be saved but all their humanity efforts, ability and knowledge has given them no solution. All thanks to God who had loved us and has given us his only begotten son to die and redeem us from our sins. He was made the propitiation for our sins (Rom 3:20-26, 5:6-11, 1Jh 2:2, 3:16, 4:10). The old testament and the prophets enquire and also long for the salvation from the Lord God but it was not given unto them because the savior Jesus has not been crucified. They only used blood of animals which does not take away their sins away. (Exo 12:1-13, Heb 10:1-19). Due to the love in which God so loved us and the world, He gave Himself for us unconditionally (Eph 2:7-22). Jesus, the Express image of God, the way, the light and the truth, in order to redeem humanity, died for our sins that we might be saved eternally.

### **(B) On whose account are we redeemed?**

We are not redeemed by our works nor by our ability of human ideology but only on the account of the finished work of Christ Jesus on the cross for us (Rom 4:24-25, 1Cor 15:1-4, 11-24). Our confidence is in his death, burial, resurrection and ascension. As a believer of Christ, we must remain steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in what Christ has done for us (Tit 2:11-14, 3:3-7). The level at which man is saved and reconciled back to God is on the account of what Jesus has done. It's not of man's work or self-righteousness. No other foundation which is laid can save a man but only the foundation which is laid by Jesus (CACGHB 627). Jesus is the only solution laid down for man to be saved (1Cor 3:9-12, Eph 2:18-22) and he is the chief corner Stone (2Tim 2:19, Heb 12:2).

### **(C) Our utmost gain or benefits of Salvation**

1. (Heb 7:22-27) The word **Uttermost** is the word forever, this means Jesus saves forever because he is risen and lives today (1Cor 15:12-20).

2. (1Jh 2:1-2) He is our advocate before the father, therefore, we would not be judged for sins neither are going to be condemned anymore.
3. (Rom 8:1, Jh 5:24) We are free from eternal condemnation.
4. (Heb 8:8-12, Jer 31:32-34) There is no remembrance of sins in salvation, God does not point out sin to the believers.
5. (Heb 10:12-14) All that Christ has done, he did it forever and he is seated at the right hand of God.
6. (Heb 9:11-15, 12:22-23) Our redemption is described as eternal and the price he paid once and eternal. Eternal is the opposite of temporal. It means forever, everlasting. Those that have believed in Christ have received eternal inheritance by the one and for all sacrifice of Jesus.
7. (Jh 10:28, Heb 13:5) Jesus makes an absolute statement here, NO ONE i.e nobody can take us from him including Satan himself. As a believer, we must establish this in our mind. A believer is eternally secured in Christ alone.

## Questions

1. What is God's plan for your life, is it temporal or eternal?
2. What is your plan and focus to God's generous love towards you, is it to refer him later or to stay with him forever?

## Conclusion

(Phil 3:20) *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.* The word **Conversation** was translated from the Greek word *politeuma* that means Citizenship. Therefore, our salvation is eternally secured and this is where the believer stands. This is the reality of our Redemption (Eph 2:19, Luk 10:20).

## **GOD'S ATTRIBUTES AND THE ROLE OF MAN.**

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the characteristics of God and what man actually need to posses

**Memory Verse:** *Look unto me, and be ye saved all the end of the earth for I am God and there is none else Isa 45:22.*

**Text:** Matt 7:7-11, Jh 1:14-17,9:31, Rom 1:16-32, Gal 5:22, Heb 6:10-15,11:6, Jam 4:6-10.

### **Introduction**

When we talk about God's attributes, we are trying to ask questions like; Who is God? What is God like? and What kind of God He is? Attribute of God is something true about Him. God thus make Himself known in a variety of ways through what he revealed about Himself, through His word and in His creation, now we can start to wrap up our mind around our awesome loving God and creator.

We can only start to comprehend the attribute of God when we start to love God. God is unlike anything or anyone we could ever imagine. He is one of a kind unique and without comparison.

Even describing him with our words cannot do justice in describing our Holy God. Our God who is INFINITE (Col 1:17, Ps 147:5, IMMUTABLE (Mal 3:6), LOVING and MERCYFUL (1Jh 4:9). The love of God to man actually saved us from condemnation. When man fall, God in His infinite love pave a way to save man from destruction through Christ Jesus. Now the role of man is to accept and love Him (Jh 16:27,14:15,23-24, 1Jh 3:1).

### **Lesson Exposition**

**(A) God's Attributes:** let us take a look at some of the attributes of God;

- **God is infinite:** God is self-existing; without origin. The fact is that we should all understand that God has been and He will forever be in existence before and after us. He does not depend on us to exist as a God but we really need him for our existence.
- **God is immutable:** God never changes, He is the same yesterday, today and forever in words attitude and life (Ezek 12:28). God is forever faithful to those that diligently serve Him and He is the only unchangeable truth (Deut 7:9, 2Tim 2:13).
- **God is love (full of grace and mercy):** God loved us; definitely “GOD IS LOVE” (1Jh 4:7-8), and full of grace and mercy. He is inexhaustibly compassionate because of love. As noted above, God's mercy is inseparable from his justness. He is infinitely, unchangeably, unfailingly merciful – forgiving, lovingly kind toward us. He is inexhaustibly, actively compassionate. His mercy is also undeserved by us, “It is undeserved mercy”, as indeed all true mercy must be, for deserved mercy is only a misnomer for justice. There was no right on the sinner's part, to the saving mercy of the Most High God. Had the rebel been doomed at once to eternal fire — he would have justly merited the doom; and if delivered from wrath, sovereign love alone has found a cause, for there was none in the sinner himself. “Without the love and mercy of God, we would have no hope of heaven CACHB “Hymn691”. Because of our disobedient hearts, we deserve death. *“For all have sinned and fall short glory of God,” and, “the wages of sin is death”*. But because of mercy, we don't get what we

deserve. Instead, because of the mercy of God, we get life through faith in Christ Jesus (Jh 14:6, Matt 11:27, Luk 15:17, Gal 4:3-6).

**(B) The role of man:**

- Having salvation; *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the lord Jesus and shalt believed in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved Rom 10:8-10.* Salvation is a must to have for every man before living the earth.
- Having the fear of God and possessing His spirit; Pro 9:10. Having the fear of God can actually lead man to many things. Go through these verses Pro 1:7,29,2:5,8:13,10:27,14:27,16:6, Ps 111:10.
- Having the love of God; Matt 22:36,38. The best way we can pay back the good deeds of God is to love Him and to keep to his commandment, remember he loved us first (1John 4:19).

**Questions**

1. Are there things that are supposed to be done by man that God would never do or that which is done by God without the involvement of man? Make a list of comparisons of those things with scriptural back up.

**Conclusion**

God has never been deciduous in performing His role as our Creator; that is why He has provided all that man will ever be in need of. Are you faithful to Him by paying allegiance and reverence to Him?

## **MEN AND FATHERS OF FAITH**

**Aim:** To encourage and enlighten believers on how faith was acted by men and fathers of faith both in the old testament and new testament.

**Memory Verse:** *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report (Heb 11:1-2)*

**Texts:** Heb 11:1-40, James 2:17, 2Tim 4:7

### **Introduction**

Christianity is regarded as a journey of faith most times i.e to say that believers' origin and the end of their fate is founded on faith. Even as we have started studying on faith, it associates and most especially to be united in faith as believers (of which is the eternal plan of God), it is of utmost importance that we vividly check through the lives of men and fathers of faith both in the old testament and the new testament, make comparison and find out what their faith does, what is and was their gain for being faithful and if Christ (the author and finisher of faith) was truly the source of their faith.

### **(A) Old Testament (Fathers of Faith)**

- Faith; a test for their righteousness (1-6): God knew that after the fall of man, they can in no way be righteous before him not to talk of if they portray good works. But God regarded their faith instead as a test to boast of how righteous they are before Him. Therefore, then, men could testify of God's righteousness (goodness) because they please Him (vs 5).
- Faith; brought to fulfilment the promises of God to redeem them (7-12): Their obedience and blind action to the word of God redeem them i.e forgetting their background, nature of sin, past deals and fulfill His promises as a covenant to them; thereby revealing His faithfulness to strengthen their faith in the latter redemptive plan which is to come (Joshua and Caleb).
- Faith; as their vision in salvation (13-16): The faith they had in God, made them see that which was to come even the salvation they might not partake in, yet they accepted it as though they were partakers of it and that their hope is made alive. This made God to constantly remind them of these promises and covenant and to how He will bring them to pass.
- Faith on Christ's Salvation brought the hope of eternal life with God (17-26): Because of their faith in the promises to come (ie the salvation to be offered by Christ), God made them partakers (i.e shadows) of His redemptive plan for man to replicate the birth, life and death of Christ, even without their awareness of living eternally, they were brought to life.
- Faith; manifesting the power of God through and in them (27-40): Although the basis of their faith was not in the power of God but His words, covenant and promise, yet God manifested His power in them and through them to reveal His faithfulness to His word before, on and after they acted their faith in respect to the power of His word, that He will fulfill it.

## **(B) New Testament (Men of Faith)**

- Manifestation of Christ on those that had faith (Jh 4:45-53, Matt 9:28-29): It's as though God whom the fathers had faith in, had come down to earth and so, how could men still have faith in Him and His word. But Christ encouraged the faith of men through the demonstration of power on those who believed on Him.
- The power of faith on those that believe (Matt 8:6-13,9:2,20-21,15:22-28, Mrk 10:51-52): Right before Christ's manifestation, these men had summed up the result of their faith, thereby making the power of faith effective in their lives; this is the act believers should emulate.
- Love as a test of their faith (Jh 21:15-24, Luk 7:37-50): Though faith was a test for the righteousness of men in the old testament, but it's love that became the test of faith of men in the new testament. To keep our faith in God, there is the need for us to love Him. That strengthens our faith in Him because faith is a virtue of love and also the constituent of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22).
- Unity of faith; the Holy Spirit prerequisite for the demonstration of power (Acts 4:29-32, Eph 4:13): It is evident that the Holy Spirit requires the unity of the faith of men for a higher demonstration of power especially for the Gospel when they gather together and also, for men to grow up to stature by becoming beneficiaries of edification and Holy Ghost impartation when they are in one accord.
- Men gifted with Faith: Stephen (Acts 6:5-8), Barnabas (Acts 11:24), Paul (1Tim 1:12,2:7, 2Tim 4:7).

## Questions

1. Were the fathers of faith able to obtain the promise of God? Explain with scriptural references.
2. Any difference between the believers (new covenant) and the old covenant men and have we been made perfect without them? Heb 11.

## Conclusion



If men in the old testament could have faith in the promise of God towards His redemptive plan to offer Jesus as their saviour and although some didn't believe Him when He came in the form of man, yet many who believed Him were transformed. If the Apostles and believers who saw Jesus physically and those who didn't still hold onto their faith when Jesus isn't with them physically but in the Spirit; therefore, we believers shouldn't be exempted or segregate ourselves, let's emulate the faith that believes what is not seen are true (Jh 20:29).

## THE TRINITY AND THE DIVISIONS OF MAN

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the tripartite nature of man and the will of the trinity over man.

**Memory Verse:** *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*  
*1Thess 5:23.*

**Texts:** Heb 4:12, John 6:63

### Introduction

1. **The Creation of Man (Gen.2:7)**-God breathed into man the breadth of life (Man's spirit), which ignited with the body and form a living soul. Man's spirit differs from Holy Spirit (Rom.8:16), the in-breathing of God produce two-fold life-soul and spirit. When you are born again, the life you receive is God's own life (tree of life). The Spirit could be likened to be the master, the soul a steward and the body a servant/slave. Also; the body-world-consciousness (senses), the Soul-self-consciousness (Intellect), the Spirit-God's consciousness.

The spirit cannot act directly on the body; to ensure proper order i.e not losing the right relationship; the lowest (body) is subjected to the spirit and the spirit govern the body all through the soul. The soul looks up to the spirit for what it has received from the holy spirit so that after been perfected (renewed), may transmit what it obtains to the body, then the body after sharing in the perfection of the holy spirit becomes spiritual body.

2. **The fall of man (1Tim 2:13-14)**-satan operates from the outward to the inward parts but divine work is from the inward to the outward parts. Eve was deceived by being soulish and Adam sinned deliberately by making his feeling/emotion to rule over his mind. Before the fall of man, the spirit controls but after the fall, man began to live by

his choice and decision (soul). Tree of life being dependent portrays how God wants man to be dependent on Him but the tree of knowledge of good and evil being independent portrays man living by his own will and under the will of the devil. After the fall, man died and his sensitivity to God was cut short. **Death means cessation of communication with God i.e lost of sensitivity.**

3. **The Holy Temple and Man (1Cor.3:16)**-The Temple is in three parts: Outer court (external worship visible to all), Holy place (only the priests to presents oil, incense and bread) and Holy of Holies (presence of God visited by priests once annually; the secret place of the most high, no lamp/light but the glory of God). Holy of holies-spirit, holy place-soul and Outer court-body respectively. The priests could hear from God on behalf of the people in the holy of holies; it's only through your spirit that you can hear from God (1Cor 2:9-16).
4. **Salvation and Regeneration (Jh 1:12-13, 3:15-16)** - Man already enjoyed the pleasure/glory of sin, Christ suffered that we might be saved. Jesus' suffering was through all his body, soul and spirit. In the resurrection state; spirit will be the ruling power (1Cor 15:44) even for a believer. Regeneration means to be born of God by being renewed; believing the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:24).  
**Unregenerated Spirit functions as the soul (Isa 29:24, Gen 41:8, Dan 5:20).**

## **Lesson Exposition**

### **(A) Flesh (Gal 5:19-21)**

The word Flesh (Greek-*Sarx* and Hebrew-*Basar*) means the soft part of human body; human body (Rom 7:23); total mankind. Regeneration is the basis of building up as a believer, while a spiritual believer is governed by the Spirit, a carnal/soulish believer defines him/herself not regenerated. Christ has delivered a believer from the power of sin but the Holy Spirit who dwells in the believer makes it possible for him to deny self-daily till perfection. Confirmation that one

is regenerated; when doing the things of the Spirit he will be glad but that of flesh, he will be grieved.

**-Characteristics of the fleshly:** being babes for long, unfit to absorb spiritual teaching, jealousy and strife (conducts like ordinary men).

**-Necessities of human body:** nourishment (food), reproduction (lust) and defense (self). A carnal Christian is dominated by one or two.

**-5 divisions of the works of the flesh:** -Sin that defile the body; -Sinful supernatural communication with satanic forces; -Sinful temper and peculiarities; -Religious sects and parties; -Lasciviousness

### **-Warnings**

- As a believer, don't see that you sin a second time.
- A believer has to realize the power over flesh isn't war and discipline over it but entreating the Holy Spirit to reveal God's holiness to him to know his flesh in that light
- God's way is that the flesh must die
- To enter into the reality of the flesh being crucified, believers must pronounce that their sins (flesh) are crucified. Disregard feelings or experience. believers are crucified together; carnal or spiritual (Gal 2:20, Rom 6:6)
- Rom 7:5-6; each time lust arouses, apply the command that you're being dead (old man) to your members (body)
- Rom 7&8; after being dead to flesh, be risen to the things of the Spirit.
- Even though the nature of sin has been crucified, yet the need for continual overcoming of the flesh when it sprung up.

**-Boastings of the flesh:** the works of the flesh are of 2 kinds; -Unrighteousness and -Self-righteousness. Flesh not only produce sin but also perform good (It's will above God's).

**-Believers' ultimate attitude towards the flesh (Rom 8:6-7):**

- To set the mind on the flesh is death

- The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God (Phil 3)
- It does not submit to God's law
- It cannot please God
- If believers submit to the Holy Spirit on holiness, they will realize they are not better than others
- It's highly dangerous to receive the truths of the word with human wisdom (2Cor 1:12)

### **(B) Soul (Luk 1:46)**

The word Soul (Greek-*psuche* which means breath that is (by implication) spirit abstractly or concretely which is the rational and immortal soul; other usage is soul, life, mind, heart etc) refers to intellect, thought, ideals, love, emotion, discernment, choice, decision etc. It's fully expressed in Volition/Will, Mind and Emotion.

- Volition/Will-decisions, power to choose, willingness/unwillingness (Ps 7:12, 41:2).
  - Believers will: submissiveness
  - Believers mistake: co-death with Christ, work (Phil 2:13), spiritual life (Matt 10:20, Rom 5:5, Jh 14:26, 2Cor 10:12)
  - Freedom: knowledge of truth, self-control.
- Mind-thoughts, manifest of intellectual power, wisdom, knowledge and reasoning (Lam 3:20).
  - Battlefield
  - Passive mind (thoughts, pictures, dreams, insomnia, forgetfulness, concentration, vacillation, symptom of the eyes etc
  - Deliverance: wiles of the devil, renewed mind, lies denied etc
  - Laws of the mind: spiritual mind, open mind, cleansed mind, controlled mind (1Pet 1:13, 2Tim 1:7).
- Emotion-likes/dislikes, love/hate, joyful/angry (Affection-1Sam 18:1, Deut 6:5, Desire-Deut 14:26, Isa 26:9, Feeling/Sensing-Matt 26:38, Ps 107:5).

- -Affection, -Desire (Natural-pride and boasting), -Feelings, Life of faith

**-Soul Life:** Life is from the Greek words; *bios*-life/living, *Psuche*-natural life(soul), *Zoe*-highest life of the Spirit.

**-Deliverance from Sin and the Soul life:** Sin, Old man and Body (Rom 6).

- God deals with the old man in between, so it's not God's way that men use techniques to suppress themselves for they anticipate that once they overcome the demands of their bodies, they shall be holy.
- The purpose of God is that we no longer serve sin nor to be bound by its power.
- Christ has crucified the old man; believe it and affirm it.
- Faith comes through revelation
- **What to do:** -reckon yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus (Rom 6:11), -yield yourself (members) as godly instruments of righteousness (Rom 6:13)
- A soulish/carnal Christian is although in possession of a Spirit power, he does not draw upon it for his life. He leans upon his self-power.
- Carnal Christians tend to show off their differences and superiorities in clothing, speech or deeds. They are moved easily, over sensitive, driven by lust, short on experience. They condemn others but are not correct themselves, do not depend on God and His power but their ability. Zealous and willing, most active in God's work not by His order.

**-Dangers:** -The spirit being suppressed, -retreating into the body realm, -power of darkness taking advantage

**-Way out:** Matt 10:38-39, 16:24-25, Luk 17:32-33, Jh 12:24-25, Heb 4:12

**-To experience the rightful division of soul and spirit;** -know the need to separate soul and spirit, -ask for it, -yield specifically, -die to sin (Rom 6:11), -pray and study the word, - bear the cross, -live according to the spirit.

**(C) Spirit (Luk 1:47)**

The word Spirit; Greek-*pneuma* means a current of air that is breath or a breeze; by analogy or figuratively a spirit that is (human) the rational soul (by implication) vital principle mental disposition etc, or (superhuman) an angel or God Christ's spirit-the Holy spirit. The Holy Spirit find expression in the Spirit of a man through his constituents; conscience, intuition and communion.

- **Conscience (Rom 8:16, Heb 10:2,9:14, 1 Jh 3:20, 1Cor 5:3, 2Tim 1:7)** -Discerning organ which distinguishes right and wrong (independent and direct), to accuse the wrong and tell the right. Judges according to intuition, condemn all that doesn't follow the directions given by intuition. It cannot lead men to God before they are saved.

**-Conscience and Salvation (1Tim 1:15,19)**

**-Conscience and Communion (2Cor 1:12, 1Pet 3:16,21)**

**-Believers' Conscience (Rom 9:1, Acts 23:1)**

**-Good Conscience (Acts 24:16, 1Jh 3:21-22, 2Tim 1:3)**

**-Conscience and Knowledge (1Jh 1:7, 1Cor 8:4)**

- **Intuition (Matt 26:41, Mrk 2:8, Jh 11:33, Acts 18:5,25, 1Cor 2:11)**- sensing organ to know and affirm aright. The Holy Spirit expresses His thought through this intuition. A believer knows the things of God by intuition of His Spirit.

-Anointing, discernment, revelation, possession of intuition knowledge of God (1Jh 2:20,27, Jh 3:11,17:3)

- **Communion (Jh 4:23, Eph 1:17, James 1:5, Col 1:9-10, Rom 8:15, 1 Cor 2:9,3:2,6:17,14:15)**-worshipping God (communications with God). It is regarded as the heart of man, the spirit of man, spiritual understanding, spirit of wisdom and revelation; where the Holy Spirit expresses the intents of God. It distinguishes soulish(babes) and spiritual believers and fleshly and spiritual believers.

-Leading a life worthy of the Lord fully pleasing to Him

-Bearing fruit in every good work

-Increasing in the knowledge of God.

**-Dangers of spiritual life:** -not walking daily after the Spirit, -unconscious of possessing a spirit, -following the words of spiritual people than the direct leading of the Lord in their Spirit (1Cor 14:29), -making moves according to their feeling/sudden thoughts, -not testing their walk in following the Spirit (1Thess 5:21, 1Cor 2:13), -not aware of Satan's deceptions on being perfect.

**-Ways of the Spirit:** -weights on the Spirit (devil's oppression), -blockage of the Spirit (body and soul), -poisoning of the Spirit, -sinking of the Spirit, -burden of the Spirit (God's-Col 4:12), -ebbing of the Spirit (God's life does not ebb but one might be deceived of it which causes the decline on the things of God-Jh 7:38, Jam 1:17), -irresponsibility of the Spirit (1Thess 5:19), -conditions of the Spirit (\*oppressed and is in decline, \*compulsion and forced into inordinate activity, \*defiled when yielded to sin, \*quiet and firm when it occupies its rightful position).

**-Principle of Spirit and mind aiding the Spirit:** \*spiritual warfare, \*rapture, \*preaching, \*intercession, \*knowing God's will

**-Normalcy of the Spirit:** \*contrite spirit, \*broken spirit, \*afflicted spirit, \*lowly spirit, \*poor in spirit, \*gentle spirit, \*fervent spirit, \*cool spirit, \*joyful spirit, \*newness of spirit, \*quiet spirit, \*spirit of power, \*strong spirit, \*one spirit, \*holy spirit, \*spirit full of grace, \*spirit of rapture

### ➤ **Holy Spirit and Believers Spirit**

**-Spiritual Man:** \*united to the Lord in one spirit (1Cor 6:17,15:45, Rom 1:4,6:5, 1Pet 3:18), \*knowing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1Cor 3:16), \*the strengthening of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14,3:16, Matt 26:41), \*walking according to the spirit (Rom 8:4-6, Eph 2:3)

**-Spiritual Work:** \*Spiritual Power (Gal 3:14, 1Cor 15:45)

**-Prayer and Warfare (1Cor 14:15, Rom 8:26, Eph 6:18)**

**-Spiritual Warfare (Eph 6:12, 2Cor 10:4, 1Jh 4:1)**

### **(D) Body (Rom 12:1)**

The word Body (Greek-*soma*) as a whole which literally or figuratively; slave.

-Believer and His body (Rom 12:1-2, 1Thess 4:3-7)



-Holy Spirit and the body (Rom 8:10)

-Sickness (\*sin, \*the chastisement of God-1Cor 11:30-32, \*self, \*medicine-2Cor 12:10)

-God as the life of the body (1Tim 6:12)

-Overcoming death (Rom 5:17,6:23)

### **Question**

1. If in the case of man, the breadth of life that came in contact with his body, birthed the soul; then what about the Holy spirit that the scriptures described His nature as a person yet a Spirit, does He have a Soul? If yes/no, give scriptural back up.
2. Discuss vividly the comparison of believers when they will be transfigured (rapture) and that of Christ when He resurrected, are we still going to have our soul and our consciousness even though the body (flesh) is done with? If yes/no, give scriptural back up.

### **Conclusion**

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell Matt 10:28.

## THE POWER OF THE WORD

**Aim:** To broaden the understanding of believers on how powerful the word of God is and how they can engage it practically.

**Memory Verse:** *for the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart Heb 4:12.*

**Texts:** Jh 6:63,17, 1Jh 5:7.

### Introduction

The worth of the Word was basically expressed in Jh 1:1-14. It is evident that the Word and God is inseparable. This if related to man, could only be specified to the spoken Word which might either be able to save him or destroy him because he is to be judged by it. If therefore, the Word which was with God and was God was able to bring life out of nothing and light out of darkness; then, the worth of the Word can be viewed by the tremendous power that is indestructible and unmeasurable. According to the definitions of the Word below; we could note that men are differentiable/distinguishable by their words. This is as if to say, the words of men carry their traits/genes/DNA even as they are spoken. As this is to man, it is fully manifested in our creator, so believers are to understand and know fully well what the Word of God says about them even that they might comprehend the nature of God to disgrace the devil who tries to manipulate the Word of God and the personality of the Word (Rev 12:11).

### Lesson Exposition

The Word (*logos-something said including thoughts and rhema-an utterance; a matter/topic*) according to the English Dictionary; *logos-(Judaism)*: The Word of God, which itself has creative power, a hypostasis associated with divine wisdom and (*Christianity*): the creative second person of trinity, which simultaneously is Himself God and also with God the Father.

### (A) BELIEVERS' IDENTITY AND/IN THE WORD

**1. Believers' identity and the Word (Jh 1:12-14, 2Tim 3:16-17, Heb 2:6-13, 1Jh 1:1-3)**

Although the Word of God is multifaceted, it is also applicable to all aspects of life, yet it has been given by God that believers might know their rights in Christ and how they can stand as light to defeat darkness.

If the Word (Old Test. and New Test.) encompasses the entirety of Christ, then the truth about who we are in Him (identity) can only be found in His Word, as well as regarding what He has in store (benefits/rights) for us as believers. Even as the Word and God is inseparable, believers and the Word are also inseparable. So, growing up to stature and building up ourselves as believers for our body and soul to be subjected unto the Spirit is only by feeding on the Word.

**2. Believers' identity in the Word (1Jh 3:1, 2Cor 5:19-21, Eph 2:6-13, 1Pet 2:7-9)**

Right from the Old Testament, after the fall of man, the identity of men and their rights in God became a mystery to themselves, even who they stand to be because of the lost authority and their feeble intimacy with God. Very few of them, either because they are anointed or stand to be God's representative could tap into this ability as their eyes are enlightened by the Spirit of God to engage in some spiritual operations.

Jesus is the expression of our identity in God. Even as He comes to reveal who the Father is to us and He to God, yet our identity and what God has preserved/promised us could only be revealed in Him through the Holy Spirit.

If men who knew who Jesus was just the way they know their fellow men then, yet could not dignify His identity, likewise His disciples but through the Word by the help of the Spirit, we are enlightened on who we are, where we are and will be and what our rights are in Christ Jesus.

**(B) BELIEVERS' FAITH AND/IN THE WORD**

**1. Faith and the Word (Matt 21:21-22, Eph 2:8,3:14-21)**

Christ is the Word and the founder of Faith. And so, to have Faith is to acknowledge the power of the Word in you. Christ gave instances of references to the Old Testament of men who because they believed the Word (even though not visible), but through their faith make power available. And this is the reason why He taught His disciples on knowing the nature of God through His Word (Him) and how to have faith in Him, when it seems as though He is not visible. The Word of God is visible to men (Old Test. And New Test.) by their faith strengthened by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

**2. Believers' faith in the Word and its power (Mrk 11:21-22, Eph 6:16, 2Cor 3:6-18, 1Jh 4:4)**

Having faith in the Word is a proof of the assurance of the power it can produce. Before our faith becomes solid in the Word, that means there has been the conviction on the revelation of what the Word is capable of doing. Faith in the Word is always visible and expressed, it is an act that makes men boast and affirm their identity in Christ and the power of God. Having faith in the Word means taking the Word of God as it is without compromise even when the devil tries to manipulate the Word. If men are to conquer the power of darkness (of which is their right), it is only measured by their faith in the Word. The power in the Word of God only works for those that have faith in it and can make it their life, instead of being bound, you are releasing the potential of God in you.

**(C) Steps to making power available through the Word (1Pet 2:2, 2Tim 2:15).**

- Gaining command
- Accessing the Word
- Engaging the Word
- Revelation/meditation in the Word through studying of the Word
- Power of revelation and hope in the Word

- Virtues in the Word

### Questions

1. Is it necessary/compulsory we say the Word before the power of the Word become effective, yes/no? Discuss with scriptural reference.
2. Some believers affirm that the Word of God (Bible) is not complete, is that true, yes/no? Discuss with scriptural reference.

### Conclusion

To be equipped with the knowledge of the Word and to make the power effective in our lives, there is the need for consistency and diligence in the word. *“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” Ps 119:130.*

## THE ORIGIN AND DIMENSIONS OF PRAYER

**Aim:** is to demystify prayer so that believers can make use of what is rightfully theirs in Christ.

**Memory Verse:** *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

*1John 5:14-15*

**Text:** 1Jh 5:14-15, Luke 18:1, James 5:16, Eph 6:18(Amp), Luke 22:44

### **Introduction**

Prayer is not just an activity, a ritual, nor is it begging God to do what we want Him to do. It is communion and communication with God that touches His heart. When you understand the principles of the art of prayer, you will begin to communicate with God in full power, grace, and confidence. Prayer is meant to be one of the most exciting aspects of a life of faith. It has the power to transform lives, change circumstances, give peace and perseverance in the midst of trial, alter the course of nations, and win the world for Christ. The power of prayer is the inheritance of the believer.

### **Lesson Exposition**

**(A) The act of prayer:** is a part of learning as a believer Luke 3:21-22, 5:15-16, 6:12. JESUS our LORD is a great example of a man of prayer. He withdrew himself to pray always all night. Prayer is not an emergency thing that you do when you are in problem (Luk 22:44, Heb 5:7). God's plan is for man to desire what He desires, to will what He wills, and to ask Him to accomplish His purposes in the world so that goodness and truth may reign on the earth rather than evil and darkness. In this sense, prayer is man giving God the freedom to intervene in earth's affairs i.e Prayer is earthly license for heavenly interference.

**(B) God's will in Prayer:** as a new creature created in the image of God, this dominion, authority is your heritage. God's desire is for you to know His will in prayer (1Tim 2:3-4). His will is meant to be the backbone and center of your prayers, the heart of your intercession, the source of your confidence in supplication, the strength of your fervent and effectual prayers. Praying does not mean convincing God to do your will, but doing His will through your will.

Therefore, the key to effective prayer is understanding God's purpose for your life, His reason for your existence-as a human being in general and as an individual specifically (1Jh 5:14-15 "*According to his will*)-salvation". God's will is the authority of your prayers. Prayer is calling forth what God has already purposed and predestined-continuing His work of creation and the establishment of His plans for the earth. The measure of our appropriation of God's grace is determined by the measure of our prayers.

**(C) The power of the word in prayer:** The power of God's Word is so great that, as Jesus said, if our faith is the size of a mustard seed, mountains can be moved. He says, "*My Word...will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it*" (Isa 55:11). If the church would believe this Scripture, it would shake the world.

**(D) Power of prayer and answers to prayer:** we wonder, "Does God *really* hear me when I pray?" or "Why is prayer so boring and fruitless for me?" There's a strong connection between underdeveloped, defeated, or directionless lives and confusion over prayer. Prayer is meant to be answered-or else God would not ask us to pray. He isn't interested in wasting your time and efforts. He is too practical for that because Prayer has the power to: • **transform lives, • change circumstances, • give peace and perseverance in the midst of trial, • alter the course of nations, • win the world for Christ.** This kinds of prayers must be vehement and fervently prayed either in the secret place or in the gathering of the saint (Col 4:12, Luk 22:44). {*praying always with all prayers and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints EPH 6:18*}, {James 5:16 AMP} lead us to the dynamic nature of prayer, you don't have to worry about having your needs met if you start praying for God's will to be done in other people's lives (1Jh 5:14-15). God will bless you because He will see that you have aligned your will with His will, that you are reaching out to others in love and compassion. A church is only as powerful as its prayer life.....SELAH. Prayer is the greatest opportunity and privilege offered to a person in Christ. It is for the *entire*

body of Christ—not just an elite group of “intercessory prayer warriors.” All of us have the power to bring God’s will on earth so the world can be healed and transformed by His grace. Use the purpose and position God has given you (student, staff, parent, tailor, teacher, workers etc.) to invite heaven to intervene on earth. Prepare your heart, mind, soul, and strength to agree that God’s will be done until *“the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ”* (Rev 11:15).

*“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours”* (Mark 11:24). The answer is so sure that we are instructed to believe it that it has already happened. God’s will and Word do work when they are understood and put into practice in prayer only not in strategy of human ideology. However, it first needs to be understood. We must learn how to pray in a way that embodies the truths and principles of prayer that God has given us in His Word.

- **True prayer will do the following:** \*Build intimacy with God (secret place), \*Bring honor to His nature and character, \*Belief in His Word and pray the Word, \*Affirm His purposes and will, \*For God’s will and righteousness to reign on Earth, \*Appropriate His promises.

## Questions

1. Why did God want us to pray?
2. How often are you engaging God’s Word in the place of prayer?
3. Is it scriptural for a believer to pray all prayers in the spirit?

## Conclusion

Believers must have it in the back of their mind that in every situation God’s Word and will must prevail when prayers are being rendered to our Father. Our God is ever faithful to hear and answer our prayers at all time. *“pray without season” 1Thess 5:17.*



## SUCCESS SYSTEM

**Aim:** To enlighten the believers of how rightful they are to be successful in all aspects of life and the processes involve.

**Memory verse:** *This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shall meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shall make thy way prosperous and then thou shall have good success (Josh 1:8)*

### Introduction

**Success** according to the oxford dictionary is the satisfactory or realization of set goals or objectives. Everyone on earth is destined to be great and successful but it takes the decisions and the choices we make to achieve that.

Success is elastic in nature, it is not stagnant, it is like an adventure, wherever the word “success” applies implies satisfactory progress in a given venture. The seed for success is vision (Proverb 29:18). Vision is God’s purpose for one’s life. Note that the vision will be

irrelevant if there is no information. Information (fact) is a force that drives vision. Success is a multicomponent system which comprises of several of several units (component).

## **Lesson Exposition**

### **(A) Foundation for Success**

God and His word: God must be the foundation for any success that will last long and never fade, because God gave success and grace to it. Unlike world success where at the end of what the world defines as success, destruction will be the end of the day. The word (scripture) is the light that point you to success. The word of God is the light that dispels darkness or failure and guide to the true and lasting success. Success is based on the revelation (secret of God) that we know (case study Daniel and Joseph). It was because Joseph and Daniel knew God and the secret that was revealed to them by God made them successful.

### **(B) How to access the secrets of God (Revelation of God's word)**

1. **Redemption:** redemption i.e deliverance from sin and death brings salvation and reconcile us back to God as his children. As children we then gain access to his secret through his spirit (*Rom 8:16, 1cor2:9-10, mark4:11-12*).
2. **Consecration:** Good detest, hate and cannot withstand iniquity not to talk of him giving access to a sinful man to know his ways. *Rev22:15*
3. **Affection:** love is a deep mystery in the kingdom. It is the main key to real power of God and anointing likewise, it's also an access to revelation (secret of God). *1cor2:9*
4. **Meekness:** *psalm25:9, matt11:28-29*
5. **Function (The holy spirit):** the holy spirit is the only one that has direct access to the heart and the wisdom of the father.
6. **Meditation:** this refers to concentrated, mental pondering on the word of God. The holy spirit helps to unravel the mystery coded in the bible and not the letters (1Tim. 4:15).

7. **Study:** studying other books (spiritual books) by anointed men of God gives access to things that may not be revealed to us but these men of God have been shown the mystery and the result is evident in their life.

### **(C) Imagination System (One of The Fundamental Laws of Success)**

The kingdom of God is a highly principled kingdom. It is a kingdom of law and order

(Rom.8:1-2). Every goal has laws, patterns that guide its fulfillment. **This system has 7**

**kits:**

1. **Imagination:** it is the formation of something that is neither perceived to be real nor present to the senses (Prov.23:7). It is one of the vital keys to success. Attaining success is not just by hard work, diligence or strategy but imagination. Imagination is elastic in nature. In the Babel, the people imagined to build a tower that will reach up to heaven, God saw that nothing could stop them because their imagination was so strong and powerful. God needed to set disunity among them to stop their agenda (Gen.11:6). We need to work on our imagination because it is a designer (shaper) of destiny. If anyone will succeed in life, it is based on the power of what he/she has imagined to be by the revelation of God's word (2Cor.10:5, Prov.4:23). What we see ourselves becoming is based on our imagination.
2. **Revelation:** it backs up imagination and creates a foundation (the ROCK which is Christ and God's word) on which we build our imagination. Revelation is to help you locate instruction from scriptures that will bring the realization of your dreams. Revelation from God is a supernatural reinforcement of dreams.
3. **Inspiration:** it is another key (Heb.16:2). Arch bishop Benson Idahosa said "if you have no one to inspire you, you will expire" John (32:8). Inspiration from people gives new ideas, makes one enthusiastic and encourages and enables you to do something positive. There is nothing new under the heaven. Whatever we imagined to become or

achieve has been achieved by someone else before, gain inspiration from them is like fuel that supplies energy to an aspirator.

4. **Perspiration:** Achievement is a product of perspiration diligence and hard work. Eccl.5:9, Prov.4:23 gives the answer to the question asked in Prov.13:11 and 12:24.
5. **Supplication:** Heb.14:16, it requires the supply of God's power and intervention in our effort in pursuit of success to be really successful.
6. **Realization:** it is the actualization of the imagined ideas or goals. It has to do with resilience and perseverance in the process of your perspiration and supplication.
7. **Preparation:** Matt.3:3

#### **(D) Purpose System**

1. **Purpose:** Purpose ignites motion. Purpose is life. Life without purpose is death in disguise. It is important to discover our purpose as early as possible in life.
2. **Planning:** Thinking and pondering on how to realize your goal and follow the plan which is a product of deep thinking. Prov.24:3-4
3. **Programming:** This refers to the time projection required for the accomplishment of the purpose (Eccl.10:5). The first three are mentally attached to it.
4. **Pursuit:** This is the action taking to accomplish the purpose (Habakuk 2:2, 1Cor.9:24). In the pursuit, we must understand the law of hardness. Everything valuable, glorious are hidden. Therefore, it takes painful supply of effort to get them (1Cor.9:25-27).
5. **Appraisal:** It refers to review. It implies rethinking of the approach and process for the purpose of improvement and enhance output. The prodigal son utilizes this to gain back his sonship (Luke 15:14-24)
6. **Perseverance:** preparation to be resilience irrespective of the disappointment, failure, hardship, derailment paint etc

7. **Praise:** (Psalm 67:5-6) giving praises to god for his help strength and his empowerment which he granted upon you for the accomplishment of the purpose. This will always energize you to move forward

**(E) The task system:** “No substitute for hard work but hard life” says; Dr. Oyedepo. This has to be done with the manner or strategy of making most of life.

### **Seven Kits of the Task System**

1. **Task:** 1Cor.9:16, we only enjoy our best when we see our responsibilities as necessity. After knowing the purpose, we must see attaining it as a great task and until we see our assignment (calling, purpose) as necessity, the best will never come out of it.
2. **Training:** This refers to establishing a development program towards accomplishing our task. Training is of two types: (a) Formal training: Training obtained through education (b) Informal training: Training obtained through personal development. This training refers to personal training or development which is a vital key. Most successful men in the world were not men of high academic qualification but of personal development e.g. Benjamin Franklin, Anthony Robbins.
3. **Target:** It refers to having a well-defined goal. It means certainty of goals. It also means knowing precisely where you are going. It is working towards your goals with precision.
4. **Tools:** This refers to the instrument needed for the accomplishment of your goals. The first thing is to identify your instrument e.g. a person going to ministry, the bible is his or her instrument along with other materials by people that has worked in dimension he or she aspires to work in.
5. **Timing:** Eccl.3:1, John2:24. An understanding of right timing will make you a commander in life like the children of Issachar (1Cor.12:32). We know the right timing by asking God. This requires sensitivity to God and the environment.

6. **Tillage:** This refers to putting your hand to work (Pro 12:11, 13:23).
7. **Tarrying:** this refer to the waiting period after putting all the principle required for success (Hab 2:3, Gal 6:9).

**(F) The Mental System:** The use of your brain determines the level of your gains. It is normal exercise that produces mental excellence and mighty work. So, the place of the mind must be understood. Your overall state in life is the direct function of the state of your mind. Scriptures established God's recognition of the place of mind (Isa 1:18).

Reasoning is the principal function of the mind which make the mind a potential factory where solutions are being birthed.

### **Kits of the Mental System**

1. **Vision:** This refers to the unfolding of divine plan; unveiling of divine purpose. It is vision that set the place for destination.
2. **Information:** Information enlarges the capacities of mind. Information is the food of the mind. The avenue for acquisition of information is reading (1Tim 2:15,4:13,15). Consciously acquired information guarantees obvious transformation. Most of the greatest minds in today's world emerged out of a studious life.
3. **Observation:** Locating the footstep of the great (successful men) and planting your feet there (Heb 6:12, Prov 13:2, Jer 6:16). Study the life of the great mind, to know the secret which made them great.
4. **Rationalization:** This refers to reasoning, thinking. It refers to logical, rational and analytical thinking (Luk 15:1-24).
5. **Meditation:** This refers to concentrated mental attention to scripture from which revelation and solution are being birthed (1Tim 4:15), we can do this with the help of the Holy Spirit.
6. **Research:** Checking through relevant materials to enhance or enlarge your information base on the issue at stake (2Tim 2:15).

7. **Praying:** Enquiring prayer to get secret and depth of revelation (Jer 33:3, Dan 2:27-28,30).

### **(G) Race System (Heb 12:1)**

Life is a race. If you are not in any race and you are dreaming of being a star, then, you are a self-deceiver. Therefore, identify your race and don't toil with it.

1. **Reading:** This refers to purposeful reading to gather the secrets that have made other men champion.
2. **Run:** (1Cor 9:24) Getting set for the action and work (Hab 2:2).
3. **Reset:** (2Tim 2:3) This refers to the demand for enduring (endurance), hardship and challenges in the race.
4. **Receive:** (Phil 3:13-14, Mrk 11:24) Don't stop working the principles until you received and even after receiving.
5. **Retreat:** this refers to the time to refresh, rest and refire (Exo 31:13-17).

### **(H)The Choice System (7 Kit)**

1. **Choice:** Duet 30:19. Not everyone has driven calling but anyone can succeed in any endeavor he/she choose once it's not contrary to Gods word.
2. **Crave:** this refers to having an intense desire for something. It is a natural catalyst for the fulfilment of vision. Matt 5:6, Jh 2:17
3. **Commit:** this refers to practical investment of time, energy and resources in the pursuit of the choice you have made. Commitment is the natural trigger for achievement. Lk 22:23-30
4. **Concentration:** giving your choice undivided attention. See the tragedy of man that lose focus 1Kg 20:39-40.
5. **Communication:** There are 3 levers of communication.
  - Communication in thought: prov23:7, prov4:23
  - Communication in prayer: ps 127:1, prov21:31

- Communication in declaration: Declaring the purpose of God for one's life. Always declare your success and back it up with prayer. Prov 12:14, 13:2
- 6. **Conquer:** this refers to confronting challenges whenever it comes with the mind of overcoming (conquering).

Our choices are powerful and they are great virtue, God respect them. If we've not heard anything from God, then we can choose anything good then God would back it up.

### (I) Fortune System

The mental picture determines the actual picture.

7 kit of the Fortune System

1. **Future:** Jer 29:11; We are not in existence by mistake but by divine predestination (Rom 8:29-30). Therefore, we are all creature (Spirit being) with definite future. To end one's journey is fortune, it must begin with believing in the future.
2. **Faith:** declare the future after realizing or coming to the understanding that there is a bright future ahead. declare it i.e confession, tell it out to those that are happy and those that are not happy with it. Gen 37:5, Rom 10:10. What you don't say, you will never see because words are powerful and they are seed.
3. **Format:** this refer to planning which serves as the platform to be operating after believing in the fortune and continually declaring it. Lk 14:28.
4. **Forfeit:** we must be ready to pay the price to get to the fortune. Some people usually fail in this area. Forfeit is what determines profit. Matt 16:25. Self-denial and self-sacrifice are the price to be paid.
5. **Fight:** Deut 2:24. Paying the price for the future secure fortune. Because fortune can only be gotten after victory. Therefore, there is a place of fight. 1tim 6:12. The fight is a fight of faith 1Jh5:4, 1Sam 17:45



6. **Focus:** never lose focus 1Cor 7:20,24, Matt 6:22. There is a purpose while everyone is created, locate it and stick to it. Focus on it and on God for help for sustenance. Once the 6 kits are in place, then one will end up in fortune.

### **(J) Covenant Success Habit:**

This is the characters and habit that one needs to possess in order to enhance one's success in life.

1. **Decision:** "In Decision is the graveyard of good intention", says someone. Look at the decision of Rueben in Gen 49:3-4. Decision is the great seed of decision. Decisive men don't look back. They are ever moving forward. After knowing your vision make a decision to realize them.
2. **Association:** Right association is a booster of vision. The friend and the relationship determine one's vision. Be surrounded by good association.
3. **Concentration:** this still implies focus Matt 6:22. Once you know where you are going, give it full attention and concentration physically, mentally and spiritually. Abide by Paul's advise on concentration, 1cor 7:20, 24.
4. **Gratitude:** Acknowledging the grace of god as you move towards the fulfillment of your vision. Never neglect God or take Him for granted. Ps 103:1-3. Gratitude grants you the abiding presence of God which makes the difference.
5. **Joyfulness:** Joy is another success booster. It becomes part of you once you're born again. It is also part of the fruit of the Spirit. Gal 5:22. Until you are depressed, you cannot see failure. Joy impact strength Neh 8:10, Isa 12:3

### **Source of the Joy Stimulant are;**

1. **Meekness:** this determines the scope of your enlargement Matt 5:5. 1Pt 5:15.
2. **Mercifulness:** Matt 5:17. It is by the mercy of God that you become anything in life. Get somebody else moving forward if you also want to move forward.
3. **Faithfulness:** this determine promotion Lk 16:10

4. **Uprightness:** Ish 3:10. God provision for man's success has uprightness as its foundation.

**Other unit of Success systems are**

- Premarital system
- Marital system
- Financial system

Putting all these units together, successful life is guaranteed by the power of God.

**Questions**

1. Can the success of believers be compared to that of the world? If yes/no, how can it be measured?

## **DILIGENCE AND COMMITMENT**

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the need to be diligent and committed about the things of God and the affairs of life.

**Memory Verse:** *“He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich” Pro. 10:4 (KJV).*

**Text:** Pro 5:23, 6:6-11, 10:4, 12:24, 16:3, 22:29, Heb. 11:6

### **Introduction**

Diligence and Commitment are two necessary requirements in the journey of a believer (Heb. 11:6). Every believer who is going to “serve” God well and who wants to achieve something in life must be diligent and committed. Diligence means earnest effort, commitment; an act of being faithful to a cause. No man in life (believer or unbeliever) will achieve something great without an earnest effort and effort and faithfulness. In this lesson, we will be exploiting how and reasons for a believer to be diligent and committed in their cause.

### **Lesson Exposition**

#### **(A) Ways of Being Committed and Diligent**

##### **➤ Being committed and diligent to the things of God (Rom 12:11, Heb 11:6)**

For every believer who desires to grow and serve God, it must be known that diligence (zealousness) and commitment (faithfulness) is a pre-requisite. Romans 12:11. A believer is expected to be zealous and committed to the things of God, the same way the Apostles were committed and diligent to the ministry (Act 6:4). No believer can experience growth with a sense of commitment and diligence in the place of studying and praying. A believer must be diligent in:

1. Studying of the word. (Josh 1:8, 1Tim. 4:1-16)
2. Praying (Luke 18:1, Rom 12:12, 1Thess 5:17, Eph 6:18)
3. Preaching the gospel (Mark 16:15, 2Cor 5:18-19)

4. Gifts of the Spirit (1Cor. 12:31, 2Tim 1:6)

➤ **Being diligent and committed to matters of life (Pro 5:23,6:6-11,10:4,12:24, 16:3, 22:29)**

As believers, we must not possess a nonchalant attitude towards the affairs of life. It is expedient for us to take the things of life seriously (Pro 6:6-11). Our success in the affairs of life will be determined by how diligent we are and how much commitment we put into it (Pro 10:4,12:24). We must as believers (Students) be able to put the same energy we put into our spiritual life into our affairs as students. Your health, work, family, education etc. deserves your commitment and diligence, we must not be negligent about these things, a man once said only a healthy man can preach the gospel). How diligent and committed are you towards your spiritual growth? How well do you give yourself to your education as students?

### **Questions**

1. Why are some believers (students) not diligent in their doings? Any way out?

### **Conclusion**

Our commitment and diligence will go a long way in our growth as believers & in our journey of becoming a successful student, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, etc. never take the things of God nor the affairs of your life with levity.

## THE DYNAMICS WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Aim:** To emphasize the eternal presence of the spirit of God in the new creation man (the believer)

**Memory Verses:** *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” Eph 1:13*

### Introduction

God in Christ has reviewed all we might ever need as a believer but to us as a believer we must keep knowing what he has given unto us by faith which is in Christ alone. We are born of God and His spirit dwells in us.

### Lesson Exposition

#### (A) The Spirit Upon

Spirit upon often refer to the activity of the recipient of the spirit. Although the intention of God was an inseparably union with man since the beginning (Tit 1:2), the old testament folk did not receive the fulfillment of this promises, what they had was the spirit upon. *“And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim” Judges 3:9-10. “And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle. And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass,*

*that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease” Num 11:24-25. Judges 6:34; 11:29; 1Sam 16:13; 1Chr 12:18; 2Chr 15:1; 20:14; 24:20; Isa 11:2; 42:1; Eze 11:5; 37:1.*

**Note** that from all of these references, the spirit was described to be upon them, in other words they do not have a permanent resident of the spirit within them.

### **(B) The Indwelling of the Spirit**

God's promise of the indwelling has been from Genesis. Several old testament Prophets prophesy afore hand that the spirit of God will be in the recipient (the new creation man) forever and permanently. *“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” Ezekiel 36:26-27.* Ezekiel, being a prophet spoke concerning the new birth; salvation God's promise of the indwelling of the spirit. The phrase *"I will put my spirit within you"* answers the cry of David in Ps 51:5-11. David made a plea to God, and that plea is fulfilled today. Believers are not meant to request for the indwelling of the spirit anymore, it is received at salvation!

Now we have the fulfillment of this scripture- Rom 8:9; 1Cor 3:16; 6:17; 12:7; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13-14; 1Jh 3:24; 4:13. *“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” John 14:16-20.* He said **"he dwells with you"** initially because Jesus was anointed of the Holy Spirit, He was with them, but at the resurrection and at salvation the spirit now dwells in the believer. The word "forever" implies everlasting. This is the reality of Christianity, the Holy Spirit indwelling a man (1Cor 6:16). *“In*

*whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” Eph 1:13-14.* The word **"sealed"** implies a mark of permanence, a proof of ownership. Every believer therefore has the spirit in him (not temporary or partially, rather eternally) Eph 1:13-14.

The believer can minister deliberately and effectively by the spirit (2 Tim 1:7).

Hence he his supernatural!

### **(C) Supernatural Being**

*“And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” Mark 16:15-18.* Jesus here, taught that one of the signs of anyone who believes in the Gospel is that he would speak in tongues. The believer can speak in tongue, heal the sick, raise the dead and cast out devils.

He has authority in Christ.

In 1Cor 14 Paul spoke in tongue (even more than the church), he also taught and instructed the church in Corinth to do the same. In verse 39, he taught and gave instructions that they should not stop believers from speaking with tongues (Eph 6:18; Jud 20). Praying in tongue is to pray in the spirit (1Cor 14:14).

In 1Cor 14, Paul also taught that prophecy (which is speaking in tongue and interpretation of tongue) is for believers.

*“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power,*

*and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come :And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all” Eph 1:19-23.*  
*“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” Eph 2:5-6.*

Hence Christ’s location is your location, therefore He is at work in you but to will and to his good pleasure. *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” Phil 2:13.*

### **Question**

1. Does God give and take away is spirit in the life of a believer?

### **Conclusion**

Since we are in the spirit and born of the spirit, we have the gift of the spirit.

Light is in you, don't look for light elsewhere. Stay and walk in the dynamics of the spirit that you've receive.



## THE EPISTLES AND THE APOSTLES

**Aim:** To understand believers' realities in the Epistles of the Apostles, thereby walking in such consciousness to the end that we might be effective in our worship to God and found consistent in walking in love with everyone.

**Memory Verses:** *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” 2Timothy 3:15.*

*“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” John 5:39.*

**Texts:** 2Tim 3:15-17, Jh 5:39-46, Rom 1:1-17, 1Pet 1:1-12, Eph 1:1-23.

### Introduction

The Epistles of the Apostles (which means the Letters of the Apostles) is an elaborate subject matter in the books of the Bible, therefore we will be doing a little study of those letters as God is our help. Amen.

The Epistles was written by six authors: \*Pauline Epistles to Churches and Ministers (Romans to Philemon), \*The Epistle to the Hebrews (Unknown Writer), \*The Epistle of James, \*The Epistle of Peter, \*The Epistle of John, \*The Epistle Jude.

So, in this study, we will be investigating the teachings of the Apostles from the Old testament books of the Bible. An insight of 2Tim 3:15-17 will project us into the study properly. Vs:15-17 *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

Notice from verse 15, Apostle Paul was writing to Timothy that he has understand the holy Scripture (Genesis to Malachi) from his Childhood and the end product of him knowing the scripture is that He will be wise into salvation, that is, The scripture is a textbook concerning

Salvation which is found through faith in Christ Jesus, It is quite instructive to understand that Timothy was able to know (Knowledge of Salvation from the Scripture) through learning from Paul.

Vs 14 *“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them”*; **back to verse 15**, *“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”*. Observe the following statement; \* Which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, \*Through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

So, the Holy Scriptures when properly studied the endpoint is to give us an understanding of Salvation, which is found only through faith which is in Christ Jesus (His finished work via his death, resurrection and Ascension). Therefore, the scripture is centered on Christ Jesus. *“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself”* Luke 24:25-27. Moses in verse 27 means Genesis to Deuteronomy, and the Prophets means the Books of the Prophets which includes Isaiah to Malachi, He expounded unto the in all the scriptures (Genesis to Malachi) concerning himself. Verse 44: *“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me”*.

“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” Jh 5:39. “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed, me: for he wrote of me” Jh 5:46. *“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures”* Rom 1:1-2.

*“Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, we have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph”* John 1:45.

So, the Holy scripture is centered on Christ, the prophecies is concerning Jesus. The Apostles has helped to unveil and explain better those prophecies, mysteries that was hidden, all this was unveiled in the Epistles of the Apostles. So, it suffices to say that The Epistles is the explanation of the Old Testament books of the Bible.

### **Lesson Exposition**

Having understood that the Holy Scriptures is centered on Christ, and the Epistles of the Apostles gives us clarity and explanations of the Holy Scriptures, let us therefore diligently check some of their teachings and writings through and from the Old testament books of the Bible.

### **(A) FAITH AS CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SCRIPTURES**

We will be investigating how that Christ is the foundation of the scriptures through the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles.

#### **➤ Jesus unveils himself from the Old testament books of the Bible:**

*“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because, he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” Luke 4:16.* We see here that Jesus was reading concerning himself from the Book of Isaiah: *“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn Isaiah 61:1-2.* Observe that Jesus did

not mention "**the day of vengeance of our God**", in that Luke where we read, Jesus stopped at "**To proclaim the accepted year of the Lord**". So, it is quite instructive here that we are in the days of salvation, we are 1. The days of Grace and Mercy, whosoever that comes to Christ is still accepted because we are in the days of Salvation. So, the day of Vengeance is futuristic, that is the end time after rapture. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" *2Corinthians 6:2*. Other references where Jesus spoke concerning himself from the old testament books of the Bible includes: (Jh 5:46 from Gen 3:15, Luke 24:27 from Deut 18:15, Isa 7:14, Mal 3:1, Dan 9:24, Micha 7:20, Num 21:9).

- **Apostle Paul:** Apostle Paul taught about the fact the Scriptures is concerning Christ and his mission (Death, resurrection and Ascension). "*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures, Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*" *Rom 1:1-4*. "*And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed*" *Gal 3:8,15,16*. Notice here that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ was preached to Abraham through God, and Abraham believes the Gospel. Let's see it from the old testament book of the Bible: "*And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness*" *Gen 15:4*. So, the Gospel was preached to him in verse 5 and he believed in verse 6.

Thus, the heir and the seed that God was talking about is not Isaac, rather it is concerning Christ. Back to *Gal 3:15-16*: “*Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ*”. So, what God was telling Abraham in *Genesis 15:4-6* was concerning Christ not Isaac, But, Abraham received Isaac in a figure of Jesus.

## **(B) HOW THE EPISTLES WERE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE TO THE FAITH IN THE SCRIPTURES**

It is quite instructive that the Apostles taught and preached the same doctrine, most of their Letters always address two things: \*Faith in Christ Jesus and \*Love amidst the brethren i.e Believers conduct.

*“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints” Eph 1:15. “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of, throughout the whole world” Rom 1:8. “Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints” Phil 1:5. “As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ. Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” Col 1:7.*

Let's see how the Apostles patterned their writings and teachings from the old testament books of the Bible through their faith in Christ Jesus.

- **Apostle Peter’s Epistle:** “An apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” *1Pet 1:1-5*. We see here that Apostle Peter is writing to the believers termed as **"God's chosen people"** and the subject of discourse was introduced from verse 3 to verse5, which is salvation through faith in Christ's resurrection. Let's check further his teachings concerning Christ and Believers conduct. *“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” 1Pet 2:4-8*. Peter introduced the subject matter as Christ being the Living Stone in relation to the believers’ realities in Christ.

Verse 4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Peter quoted from *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not” Isa 53:3*. That was a Prophecy about Christ. Verse 5: *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”*. The phrase **"ye also"** means that, based on the reality of Christ, based on the truth that is

revealed in verse 5, that Christ is the living Stone, chosen of God. So, based on this reality, Believers also are lively stones, the believers are built up as a spiritual house, the believers are holy priest good. Notice that those phrases are the believers' inheritance in Christ. So, based on this truth, the believers can now offer up spiritual sacrifices (which is giving ourselves to the service of God) unto God.

Apostle Peter was quoting from Exodus 19:5-6; *"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel"*. He also quoted the Epistle of Paul from Romans: *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"* Romans 12:1. It's in Apostle Peter's custom to always quote from Apostle Paul's writing, this shows that the Bible does not contradict itself. Another reference where Peter quoted Paul is in 2Peter3:15: *"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you"*. Back to 1Peter 2:6 *"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded"*.

Apostle Peter was quoting from Isaiah 28:16: *"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste"*. Notice that, Christ was referred to as a Stone, a tried Stone, Precious corner Stone and a sure foundation. Don't forget that Apostle Paul also referred Christ as a rock: *"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ"* 1Cor 10:4. Notice the word **"was"** it means it's a past tense; Paul

quoted from Exo 17:6: *“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel”*. So, Paul referred the rock in this event as Christ, so, it is quite instructive that the message of Gospel was also preached to Moses by God as it was preached also to Abraham. Jesus also talked about this rock: *“And I say also, unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* Matt 16:18.

Upon Christ's resurrection was the church (Believers) built. The gate of hell means that he'll will not be able to hold him(Christ) captive, he will surely rise. That's why Peter said 1Peter1:5...are built up a spiritual house... Back to 1Pet 2:4-8: Vs 7- *“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner”*. The keywords in this verse is *Believe* and *Disobedient*. Disobedient in this context us used in place of "Unbelief" or "believes not". Peter quoted from Ps 118:21-24: *“I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it”*. Verse 8 of 1Pet 2 says; *“And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed”*. Those who stumble at the word are those who were Disobedient (believes not) in Christ.

Therefore, the rock became rock of offence and a stumbling stone to them because they believe not in him. But for as many who believes in Christ verse 9 became their realities in Christ. *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are*



*now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” 1Peter 2:9-10.* This happens immediately when we believe the Gospel of our salvation, we became, royal priesthood, holy(consecrated) people, chosen etc., but anyone who has not or does not believes the Gospel of salvation, he is stumbled, and has no part in Christ's kingdom. This same scenario is what Paul also wrote to the church in Corinthians.

*“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” 1Cor 1:18.* We see here that, the message of the Gospel was preached, to some set of people it is foolishness that's why they perished, and to some other people, it is the Power of God that's why they were saved. What causes that? Verse 21 will help us out: *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” 1Cor 1:21.* So, the difference is that some Believes and some Believes not.

Back to 1Pet 2:11: *“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation”.* So Apostle Peter has declared and unveiled the realities of the believers in Christ from the scripture, having let them to see who they are, what they have , and what they can do in Christ Jesus. Based on those things, he now Admonished them concerning their conduct towards the believers and the unbelievers , having made them to know that their conduct is a product of their realities in Christ Jesus.

➤ **Lastly, let's examine the Epistle to the Hebrews too.**

The writer of Hebrews encourages the believers by showing that Jesus is the true and final revelation of God. In doing this he majorly emphasizes some truths; **Firstly,**

Jesus is the eternal son of God, Jesus is Superior to the Prophets of the old testament, to the Angels and to Moses himself. **Secondly**, Jesus has been declared by God to be an eternal priest, Superior to the priests of the old testament, and lastly, Through Jesus the believers is saved from sin, fear and death, and Jesus provides the true salvation, which was only foreshadowed by the rituals and animal sacrifices of the Hebrew religion.

Let's check few things the writer explained in his epistle from the old testament books of the Bible. *"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased, to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more, conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year., For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" Heb 10:1-4.*

The writer of Hebrews explains that those sacrifices which the people offered in those days (old testament) can never take away sins, those sacrifices were offered by the high priest then; *"Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people".* The writer quoted from Lev 16:1-34: *..vs3 "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering ...vs11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself ...vs21 And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon*

*the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness ..vs22 And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness...”*

There are two facts in that **Hebrews 10:1-4** we read; \*The sacrifices which they make then was a shadow and not the reality, \*Those sacrifices can never take away or wash away sinful heart or conscience. The question is WHY and What was the effect of those sacrifices then in their life? The effect of those sacrifices then was only limited to their physical body or flesh, the atonement was done on their flesh. *“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh” Heb 9:13*. So, those sacrifices was not a reality, God never required it from them, Let's read further; *“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure., Then said k2I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law (Heb 10:5-8)*. So, we see here that God has not required those sacrifices neither did he has any pleasure in taking the blood of bulls and goats for the remission of sin, rather HE HAS PREPARED A BODY which is JESUS for the offering for sin of the whole world.

The writer of Hebrews quoted from Ps 40:5-8: *“Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will,*

*O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart". Isaiah spoke concerning this too: "Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land (Isa 1:10-13,18-19). So, what was the Father's will concerning man's sinful heart? "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all Heb 10:9-10.*

The Father's will is to give Jesus for the ransom of man's sin once forever. Not coming yearly for sin atonement as the people of the old did. But that Christ should come once and did the atonement once, and that man's sin may be forgiven once and for all. *"But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" Heb 9:11-12.* He entered once and accomplished the task once and for all for us. *"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the*

*living God? 15...they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance ...but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away, sin by the sacrifice of himself Heb 9:13-15,26. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; For by one offering he hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified" (Heb 10:12,14). Notice some keywords like: Once, Eternal, forever, and for us. This four words appear mostly in this verses, this gives us the insight that; What Christ did in his death and resurrection is once, and he will never need to re-do it or undo it.*

Jesus became author of Eternal salvation; *"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; that obey him" here means "that believes him" (Heb 5:9).* He's the Author, beginner, and orchestrator of Eternal salvation, which implies that the salvation, redemption, sanctification, inheritance, Spirit he gave to man is ETERNAL and forever. And what Christ did in his death and resurrection is for human race, he did everything FOR US.

Thus, the writer of Hebrews explained from the old testament books of the Bible that the sacrifice of the body of Christ which is the atonement for sin will be done once and given to human race (as much that believes) once and eternally. Now, after the Writer has shown us this, after his explanations of the believers' realities in The faith in finished work of Christ, He now then taught on the Believers conduct; **How should a believers behave?**

*Heb 10:19-26: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into, the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having a high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised; And let us*

*consider one another to provoke unto, love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins".* So, these are the Believers conducts, the writer admonishes the Believers not to forsake the gathering of the saints and to provoke one another to love and good works. **"Provoke"** in this context means **"to stir up"** i.e to stir up one another to love and good works. And in verse 26 the writer explained that, if anyone sinned, after he/she has received the knowledge of truth, there is no more sacrifice for sin, except from the one Christ has done, so, such person is forgiven through the finished work of Christ, the only sacrifice that validate the forgiveness of sin is the sacrifice of Jesus. The writer then concludes with some other admonition. *"Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful, to entertain strangers: for thereby, some have entertained angels unawares Heb 13:1.* The writer from verse 1 summarizes the commandments given to Israelites I one statement as **"Brotherly Love"**.

Exo 20:12-16: *"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

Jesus himself taught on this in The Gospel of Matthew: *"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" Matt 22:36-40.*

And in verse 2 of that Hebrews 13, The writer makes reference to how that Abraham entertained Angels unaware. *Gen 18:1-33: "And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his*

*eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, so do, as thou hast said”.*

Other Apostles teach the same realities of the Believers in Christ and Believers conduct from the old Testament books of the Bible which is the summary of all their Epistles with no Contradiction.

### **(C) EXPRESSION AND UNVEILING MYSTERY AND TRUTH ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE BY THE FAITH IN THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST.**

In this section, we shall be looking at how mystery was unveiled to the Apostles, and how that they got their revelation through the Spirit and from the old testament books of the Bible.

Firstly, the word "mystery" simply means something that needs to be explained or something that needs to be unveiled let's check the Apostles writing concerning mystery. *“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph 3:1-5).* From this passage above, let's note some points there: \*In other ages, it was not made known unto the sons of men, \*It is now revealed unto the Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit, \*By revelation he made known unto me the mystery, \*As I wrote afore in few words, \*When ye read, ye may understand.

Now, it is quite instructive from Paul's writing here that, there was a mystery about God that was hiding the old ages which men in those days did not understand, but he claimed that the mystery has now been revealed to him and other Apostles or Prophets, and that the mystery was

revealed to them by the Spirit. And that he has been able to document the mystery (revealed mystery) for the Believers, so that when we read it we should be able to understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

The question now is that, what was the Mystery and how was it revealed to Him? To answer this, let's check some of his Epistles to other churches concerning mystery. *"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Col 1:24-28).* So, verse 26 has explained that the mystery has being revealed to the saints (The Apostles). While in verse 27, The mystery was known to be **"Christ in you the hope of glory"**. So, we could easily see here that the mystery has to do with Christ and his indwelling in the believers. Let's check more: *"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1Cor 2:6-10).* So, Paul here explained that, they speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. What is the Wisdom of God? Let's see in the previous chapter: *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (1Cor 1:21-24).* So, the wisdom of God that was



preached in Chapter 2 is all about Christ Crucifixion and resurrection. Hence, the mystery is all about Christ's death, resurrection and Ascension. *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1Cor 2:7).* So, it is safe to understand that, the Mystery that was revealed to the Apostles by the Spirit is concerning Jesus Incarnation, Death, resurrection and Ascension. This is what was hid (i.e it was not fully revealed and manifest) to the sons of men, the message was communicated in divers' manners and in different ways (Heb 1:1-3) through the Prophets of the old age, yet, they could not be able to understand it. Let's check more: *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1Tim 3:16).* We can see clearly that the Mystery of God which was revealed to the Apostles by the Spirit is: \*God manifest in the flesh (Jesus Incarnation) (Jh 1:14), \*Justified in the Spirit. (Jh 1:32), \*Seen of Angels, \*Believed on in the World (Death and resurrection), \*Received up into glory (Ascension).

Thus, the mystery is Christ's Incarnation, His death, resurrection and Ascension.

This was what the prince of this world did not know, if they knew what the death and resurrection of Jesus will do to human race they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

This was a mystery to the son of men in the old age, but it has now been revealed to the Apostles by the Spirit, thus; to we (the believers now) it is no more a mystery to us. It has been revealed, and explained and has been given to us to read and understand by the Epistles of the Apostles.

*"How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph 3:3).* Apostle Paul said, the Mystery has been revealed to him and he has written them down, then he gave believers responsibility of sitting down to read, and by doing that the Believers too will

understand. How was the Mystery revealed to the Apostles by the Spirit? *“Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen”* (Rom 16:25-27). The **"and"** in verse 25 is expressing what the Gospel means, the **"and"** in that context is not used as a conjunction, it is used as an expression or explanation, it can be written as **"which is"** or **"that is"**, now, we can understand better when we read; *Vs 25 “Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, which is the preaching of Jesus Christ”*. So, the Gospel is the preaching of Jesus Christ.

Also in verse 26 the same thing is applicable, pertaining to the **"and"** verse 26 can be better understood as *“...But now is made manifest which is by the scriptures of the Prophets”* (Genesis to Malachi). So, the mystery was revealed to the Apostles by the Spirit through their faith in the old testament books of the Bible which is the Scripture.

**Note:** The knowledge of Jesus Christ in the old testament of the Bible was a mystery, but it was revealed by the Spirit of God to the Apostles by the same old testament books of the Bible.

What makes the difference between the Old Prophets and the new testament Apostles is the SPIRIT. I.e the indwelling of the Spirit in the life of the Apostles gives them access to the understanding of the mystery hidden in the Holy Scripture (Genesis to Malachi).

#### **(D) OUR FAITH IN THE EXEMPLARY FAITH EXPRESSED BY THE APOSTLES**

As believers we have to exercise our faith in Christ as we've seen the Apostles did. We have to give ourselves to a diligent study of the Bible to know and to see who we are, what we have and what we can do in the finished work Christ and to be able to set our conduct right before men. *“That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every*

*good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus” Phil 1:6.* We can see how the early Apostles lived their life.

- **Prayer and Word:** *“And they continued steadfastly, in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And they, continuing daily, with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:42,46). “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).*
- **Their Conducts:** *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither, said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed, was his own; but they had all things common” (Acts 4:32).* No peer pressure amidst them, no vain glory of material procession, they were all believers and had all things in common, there was no lack amidst them. One of the most significant thing we should learn from the Apostles is their relentless attitude of preaching Jesus Christ at all times with boldness and power. They never ceased to preach the same thing, which is Christ Crucified, his resurrection and Ascension which is the Message of the Gospel which has power unto Salvation. *“And daily, in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ (Acts 5:42).*

## **Conclusion**

As we have diligently studied the lives of the Apostles in ministry, their Epistles and their admonitions concerning Believers conduct, let us as well do the same, let's give ourselves to serious and polite Bible study, Ceaseless Prayer (Prayer is our life), to walk in love by having forgiving attitude, Showing the unbelievers the graciousness of God by preaching the Gospel to them, and lastly that we may be found active and fervent for the work of Ministry.

## THE MYSTERY OF GRACE AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the truth of grace and how related it is to the Gospel.

**Memory verse:** *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (2Cor 5:18-19)*

### Introduction:

Expressing the word GRACE alphabetically; God's Riches At Christ's Expense. The Riches of God are only embedded in His Grace through the sacrifice of Christ. The only medium to enjoying these riches/gifts of Grace is accepting the Gospel without cutting corners, it's the only way to having eternal life, hence the need for witnesses or ambassadors of the Gospel i.e. the believers. (2Cor 5:20-21)

### Lesson Exposition

**(A) Christ; The Gospel & Entirety of Grace (Jh 17:1-17, Rom 3:21-28&5, Eph 2:1-10)**

What does the Grace of God entail? Grace (*Greek-Charis and Hebrew-Chen*; is especially the divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life; including gratitude) is an undeserved gift of God or unlimited favour that portrays Salvation and Redemption of man from sin, its consequences and eternal damnation. It is one of the 2 constituents (grace and mercy) that describes visibly and practically the divine love of God (**Agape**). Grace was made available to man by God through the sacrifice of the Lamb (Jesus) for the remission of sin. Saving man from the irreparable judgement meant for Satan and his agents requires the

crucifixion of the nature of sin (founded by Satan that debars man from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost and the righteousness of God, also depraving man of eternal life in and with God). Therefore, Grace was made available to all for as many that are ready to receive the gift encompassed in it through Jesus by faith (Jh 1:12-17).

Even as God as offered all unto man by playing His part in the redemptive plan, He through Christ made a power available through an unimaginable strategy (that seems foolish to man and his adversary), to draw men into Grace for them to be saved, this is called the Gospel of Salvation (a likeness of Noah's message to the world before the flood in the Old Testament- Matt 24:36-39).

The Gospel (*Euaggelion-Greek* which means good news) is all about the birth, ministry, death and resurrection, ascension and the second coming of Jesus Christ). (Luk 20:1-8, Matt 4:23, 9:35) This simplifies that Jesus is the entirety of Grace and the Gospel, further explaining the love the father had for the Son (that they may be glorified) and the love of the Son for mankind (that men might be saved). God has revealed His covenant with the Gospel (Jesus' life) that it would saturate the world and that many would give themselves for it (either men and his adversary are in support or not) before the end of the world because of the divine love (**Agape**) and passion that He would make abundant in their heart toward both the Gospel and the lives of men (Matt 24:14).

The Grace and the Gospel had only been possible through the submission of Jesus Christ to the will of the Father that it might be fulfilled. This therefore, illustrates the need for believers to give themselves (lives) wholly to the Gospel so as to be partakers of the glorification God has preserved and reserved.

**(B) Accepting The Gospel by Faith and Through the Knowledge of Grace (Tit 2:11-15, 1Tim 2:3-6, Rom 10:8-10&6, Eph 1:1-14, Gal 2:16-21, Jh 17:18-23)**

There have been some misconceptions about the Grace of God today because of the ignorance of the truth of the word of God about it and of course, some have decided not to live

that by that truth even though they know it because they are not genuinely born again and some for their personal/fleshly benefits of which they are not ready to let go.

Is the Grace of God still a mystery that it has become hard or impossible for man to know, grasp and embrace? How do men abuse or frustrate the Grace of God? Is the Grace of God meant for some and not for others, i.e. are some doomed for destruction/eternal damnation while others have been elected and predestinated already for eternal salvation?

The Grace of God had once been a mystery to men in the Old Testament as they only had a glimpse (revelation) of what was to come because the time for its appearing has not been fulfilled by Christ but nevertheless, they were able to tap into it by faith (Jh 5:45-47, 8:56). But after that Christ died and resurrected, He made Grace appear to all men that they may embrace. To the hardened heart/sinners that are yet to accept the salvation offered by Christ, Grace seems to be mystery until when they embrace it before their eyes get open to the truth that they are been saved/died for already only to accept by faith.

Abuse (*Greek-Katachraomai*) means to overuse i.e. misuse. When something/someone is abused, it illustrates improper treatment or usage; application to wrong or bad purpose; misuse; perversion of such thing/one. Men abuse the Grace of God by rejecting or not embracing it even though it has been made available to them. The availability of Grace is by God; we were only made partakers of it because we tap into it by faith which gave us the abundance of its gifts, through the offering of Christ, it isn't what we merit or that's in our jurisdiction or possession to abuse by continuing in sin, No. To be under Grace and expecting it to abound as one keep sinning means the frustration of the Grace of God (1Cor 9:14-18).

Frustrate (*Greek-Atheteo*) means to disesteem, neutralize or violate; castoff, despise, reject. Therefore, to frustrate the Grace of God is to reject the truth in and of the Gospel because it's the opposite of wallowing in sin, it is a call into Holiness/Righteousness. Although when a man is born of the Spirit, the gifts of Grace (Salvation, Sanctification, Justification, Righteousness etc) is imparted into him as he attains stature till the moment of transfiguration

(rapture), there is yet the need for good works and holiness (Eph 2:10, 2Tim 3:17, Tit 2:7-8, 3:8-14, 1Pet 2:12).

If the Grace of God is meant for some, why will Christ die for the world but as for those that are in Christ and are saved, they are the ones referred to the elected and predestinated, yet they've been tasked to go fishing for others to partake in the election and predestination of the saints.

Processes to accepting the gospel by faith: acknowledge, repent, confess and forsake your sins, believe and receive Christ, be baptized in the Holy Ghost (water and Spirit).

**(C) Faith in the Gospel and the power of the Gospel. (Rom 1:1-17, Acts 2:37,4:19-33,10:34-48,28:1-9,7:55, Matt 24:3,9,14, Jh 17:24-26)**

The Gospel (Jesus' life) is power on its own. It is a work committed into the hands of the believers either when permitted or not. It is always referred to as The Ministry of Reconciliation or The Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20, Mrk 16:15-20, Jh 17:18, Acts 1:8,28:31). To engage in this act; 2 immutable things are mostly essential. They are love and faith; love towards the sinners and faith in the Gospel (Christ and His power).

So many manifestations occur at the course of this act even at the instant of preaching the Gospel, these are as the result of the power Jesus has given to the witnesses or ambassadors and Jesus who has made power available in this act. Therefore, the need to have faith in the Gospel cannot be neglected.

**Through the scriptures, by the enablement of the Holy Ghost, let us consider the outcomes of:**

- **Faith of men in the Gospel:** \*Hunger and zeal for the Gospel through consistency, commitment, persistence and diligence, \*Increase in the love of God in their heart towards sinners, shunning condemnation, \*Constant consciousness of the glorification of the saints, thereby overcoming the fear of tribulation and persecution, \*The joy of the reward of the Gospel and the Crown of life.

- **Demonstration of the power of the Gospel:** \*Enabling men to engage in the Gospel (courage/boldness), \*To draw the heart of men imploring diverse strategies, \*Deliverance and all sorts of manifestations/operations at the point of encounter, \*Dominating hearts and lands that persecute or have a hand in the death of believers/saints in respect to the death of Christ.

### **Questions**

1. What are those things that could restrict men from preaching the Gospel?

### **Conclusion**

No matter how great some people choose to frustrate the Grace of God, it cannot prompt God to withdraw the Grace He's once offered or crucify Christ once again, instead the more they move farther from the truth, the closer they are to and will always be. That's the power of the Gospel, therefore, choose wisely that you may grow in Grace.



## POWER OF VISION AND PURPOSE

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the need to live a purpose driven life even at the pursuit of their Vision

**Memory Verse:** .....*Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice Jh 18:37b.*

### Introduction

The greatest gift ever given to mankind is not the gift of sight, but the gift of Vision. Vision is seeing the future before it comes into being. It's a mental picture of your destiny. Throughout history, progress has been made only by people who have "seen" things that were not yet here. *"At age thirteen, I wrote down my Vision for my life. I carried it with me all through junior high and high school. Much of what I'm doing right now was on paper when I was a young teenager" – Dr. Myles Munroe.*

### Lesson Exposition

#### (A) What is Vision?

The word Vision (**Greek** *horama*-something gazed at that is a spectacle, **Hebrew** *chazon*-a sight (mentally) that is a dream/revelation.

*\*Vision is the key to fulfilling your life's purpose. \*God has placed within each person a vision that is designed to give purpose and meaning to life (Jer 29:11, Heb 11:1).*

- **Dream** - *\*The poorest person in the world is the one without dream, likewise the most frustrated person in the world is the one who has a dream but doesn't know how to bring it to pass. \*Fulfilling dream gives purpose and meaning to life.*
- **Born to be distinct not ordinary** - *\*you were designed by God not to blend in but stand out e.g trees/flowers*
- **Born with unique vision** (Jh 18:37,19:30, Acts 17:6) –*\* you're born to be known for something. \* every human being was created to accomplish something no one else can*

*accomplish (Josh 2:6, Mrk 14:6-9). \*no matter how small the act may be, if you put your whole life into it, it won't be forgotten.*

- **What your vision will give you – (3 kinds of people-(1) those not aware of things happening around them, (2) those who ask ‘what just happened?’, (3) those who make things happen).** (a) hope and purpose (b) reason for living (c) passion and strive to succeed (d)energy
- **Your gift/talent will make way (Pro 18:16) – (a) not education (secure and happy)** *\*stir up your gift, don't be jealous of others (develop, refine, enhance, use it).  
\*whenever you exercise your gift, however, the world will not only make room for you but it will also pay for it. \*do what you were born to do because that's where you will make your money.*
- **Stir up your gift (Education) Pro 17:8**
- **Realizing your vision (Gal 1:11-16) – (a) understand vision and why it is essential (b) discover and live out your purpose in life (c) identify your vision's goals and stay on course (d) overcome obstacles (e) key principles to fulfill it (f) develop specific plans to achieve it (g) live the life you are meant to live.**

#### **(B) Source of Vision (Ps 33:11, Isa 14:24, Eph 1:4-5)**

- **Vision comes from purpose**
- **God created you with a purpose and a sense of it -** *\*you were born at the right time (Ecc 3:1-11). \*God placed His eternal purpose in your heart (Ps 42:7).*
- **Your purpose is already completed in God (Isa 46:9-10) -** *\*Vision is foresight with insight based on hindsight. \*your beginning is the proof of your completion (God wants to “see” the completion of your vision by knowing that He already planned and established it before you were born). \*The fact that you were started is proof that you are already completed because God always finishes before He starts and accomplish His purposes. Instead of striving to fulfill what God has given yo to do, rely on Him to*

*finish it as you allow Him to guide you in the specifics of carrying it out. \*Purpose is when you know and understand what you were born to accomplish. \*Vision is when you can see it in your mind by faith and begin to imagine it. \*you were designed perfectly to complete your purpose. \*Vision is about God (Pro 19:21,1:23, Jer 31:33, Ps 37:4, Rom 11:29, Eph 2:10). \*Purpose, therefore is the source of your Vision*

- **You already know your Vision; it's as close as your deepest desires (Rom 11:29) -**  
*\*A prophet can confirm your Vision, but he/she will not give you your Vision. \*Vision is much more than mere "Interest". \*Vision will persist against the odds. \*Vision is unselfish. \*A Vision should always focus on helping humanity or building up others in some way. \*Vision is the only thing that will bring you fulfilment (Ecc 3:13, Pro 19:21). \*Going against your purpose may be personal issue but never a private one, you can mess up others' life if you aren't where you're supposed to be or where you refuse to go. \*Vision requires a vital connection with God (2Cor10:5). **We are not saved by doing good works but for the purpose of doing good works.***
- **Cooperate Vision and Personal Vision -** *\*Personal Vision will always be found within a larger Cooperate Vision. \*It isn't God's method to give a Vision to a group, He gives the Vision to an individual who shares his Vision with the group and transfers it to them, the members of the group then run with the Vision because they find in it a place for their own personal Vision to be fulfilled (Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, David etc). \*Working together to fulfill Vision (No group work was ever done by just one person; many people are needed to fulfill a Vision). \*God will bring together private Purposes and Visions in order to facilitate Cooperate success (Exo 18:13-26). \*A sense of personal Vision is birthed within a broader Vision and it will also be fulfilled in the context of a larger purpose. God brings personal gifts and unique Visions connected to a larger Vision or Cooperate purpose to become accomplished. \*If members of the group think they're inferior to the person with the*

*original Vision or the leader starts to think he is more important than the members or if one or more of the members wants to supplant the person who has the larger Vision, trouble begins. \*When a person starts to sense his purpose and sight, he often interprets this as a call to autonomy and separation.*

- **Drawing out the Vision** - *\*You don't receive your Vision from other people but you're enabled to fulfill it through others. \*The joy of God's plan for personal and Cooperate is that nothing we are born to do is to be done by ourselves. \*Cooperate Vision is not meant to give you Vision but to stir up your Personal Vision.*

### **(C) Overcoming obstacles to Vision**

*\*Mediocrity is a region bordered on the north by compromise, on the south by indecision, on the east by past thinking and on the west by a lack of Vision.*

#### **3 major obstacles:**

- **Not understanding the nature of Vision** - *\*the main thing about Vision is that it is specific, not general. \*Mission is a general statement of purpose that declares the overall idea of what you want to accomplish while Vision is a distinctive direction or approach for accomplishing a mission. \*engaging in wishful thinking (not wills) \*living with indecision (James 1:18, luk 9:51, Isa 50:7) \*making excuses \*seeking "balance" \*trying to do everything \*being perplexed over multiple talents (jack of all trade, master of none).*
- **Not recognizing the cost of Vision (Diligence)** - *\*blaming bad luck \*blaming outside forces (others or stages in life) \*are you committed to a Vision bigger than your life? Your purpose is greater than your failure and mistakes*
- **Not knowing the principles for fulfilling Vision** - *\*let your life be fueled by Vision.*

### **(D) Principles for fulfilling Personal Vision (Hab 2:1-4)**

**\* To fulfill your Vision, you must have a clear guiding purpose for your life.**

- **Be directed by a clear Vision (Pro 6:10-11, Neh 1&2, Luk 2:49,12:15)** - *\*your Vision should be something that lives after you're gone (exist), that has greater lasting power than possessions.*
- **Know your potential for fulfilling Vision** – *\*whatever you're born to do, you're equipped to do (Eph 3:20, Jer 1:59, Neh 2:4,7-10,5:14). \*when you discover your dream, you will also discover your ability to fulfill it. \*your present job may contain hidden potential for your true life's work. \*plant the seed of your vision by beginning to act on it and then nurture it by faith.*
- **Develop concrete plan for your Vision (Pro 16:1, Neh 2:11-13,15-16, luk 14:28-30, Eph 1:11)** – *\*when ideas are cultivated, they become imagination. Imagination, if it's watered and developed becomes a plan. Plan, if followed becomes a reality. \*who am I \*where am I going \*write down your dream \*start with what you have \*acknowledge God's work in your life \*your plan is material for your prayers*
- **Possess the passion of Vision (Neh 4:6, Matt 16:25, Acts 26:15-18, 1Tim 2:7)** - *\*how badly do you want your Vision \*it's easy to get excited about a Vision but it's harder to be faithful to it \*you need passion to feed your persistence to move forward \*pay the price (Acts 12:25,13:13,15:36-40) \*defy the odds*
- **Develop the faith of Vision (Pro 23:7, 2Cor 5:7, Heb 11:6)** - *\*faith is Vision in heart \*see by faith*
- **Understand the process/training of Vision (Pro 16:9, Gen 37:9-10, Acts 9:15, Matt 26:36-44)** - *\*God's desire is to fashion people with character and battle scars, who can say "God didn't just hand me this Vision, I qualified for it". \*God's working on us, preparing us for our purposes through the process (Hab 1:2,2:2-4, Lam 3:26) \*live by faith as you move through the process of Vision.*
- **Set the priorities of Vision (1Cor 6:12, Mrk 12:30, Luk 9:62,10:38-40)** - *\*Your life is the sum total of the decisions you make every day. \*be disciplined in*

*relation to your dream (Matt 11:30, Pro 29:18, Phil 4:8, Neh 6:2). \*Vision disciplines your choices \*Questions: energy, money, movies and programs, books, hobbies, food/health, risk, attitude etc.*

- **Recognize people's influence on Vision (Neh 2:7,4:1, Gen 2:18,12:1, Pro 13:20, Luk 1:26-56) - \*when you begin to act on your Vision, it will stir up both helpers and hinderers. \*choose friends going in the same direction as you. \*checkmate: independence, peer pressure, association and disassociation, fear, positive and negative influence, limited and expanded association**
- **Employ the provision of Vision (Pro 16:1, Eph 1:3, Luk 12:16-21, James 5:1-5, Matt 6:25,31-33,2Pet 1:3) – \*God designed every purpose with its own prosperity. \*misconceptions (prosperity as excess, as future needs met today. \*God has called other people to provide for us. \*5 Specific ways God provides for Vision – land and its resources, ability to work, ability to cultivate, ability to preserve and reserve for future, ability to pass along wealth.**
- **Use persistence in achieving the Vision - \*every true Vision will be tested for authenticity (Matt 19:26, Rom 8:35) \*let opposition strengthen you than stop you. \*overcoming challenges; family, background, expectations from people, others. \*be diligent, stay in the fight, accept cost, bear up under pressure, face opposition.**
- **Be patient in the fulfillment of Vision (Heb 6:12,10:35,12:1-2, Pro 16:32, James 1:4) - \*patience brings; success, peace, victory over adversity, race winning. \*when there's hope, there's life (Isa 40:31)**
- **Stay connected to the source of Vision - \*prayer (Jh 15:5, Rev 1:8, Phil 1:6, Ps 27:1,37:23-24, Matt 28:20, Neh 6:14)**

**(E) How to write your personal Vision plan - \*eliminate distractions \*find your true self  
\*find your true Vision \*discover your true motivations \*identify your principles \*choose your**

*goals and objectives \*identify your resources (needs, strength, weakness) \*connect to your Vision*

### **Conclusion**

“Once you know what you really want and can “see” it, then no matter what comes against you, you never give up. Persistence in fulfilling one’s life purpose comes from Vision”. “When you can see what is possible and believe that it can come to pass, it makes you capable of doing the impossible”.

## **WALKING AND OPERATING IN THE SUPERNATURAL**

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on their rights to walking in the supernatural.

**Memory Verse:** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my father. Jh 14:12*

**Texts:** Exo 17:5-6, 1King 18:44-46, 2king 2:11, Dan 6:20-22, Jh 6:9-13, Acts 1:9

### **Introduction**

Walking in the supernatural is of two ways; it could be of light (God) and of darkness (Devil). As believers, even as we hunger and desire to walk in the supernatural, we should be able to discern the operations of darkness and that of light. The supernatural dimensions in/of God are on the basis of His word and not contradicting it. Evil/false supernatural workings are fortune telling, divinations etc (1Sam 28:7-9).

### **Lesson Exposition**

The word Supernatural (*Greek-yperfysikos; teras-a wonder/marvel; optasia-an appearing; iaomai-to heal, Latin-Supernaturalis meaning above/beyond nature*); is not the same as magical but could be regarded as miracles or that which is beyond the laws of nature. Another word closer to this is Supernormal. Your discovery of what it means to walk in the supernatural could lead you to the mystery of living in Heaven on Earth.

Men have never been forced to walk in the supernatural, it is by their choice (Deut 30:15, Josh 24:15, Mrk 10:21, Matt 16:24).

God's part (Joel 2:28-29, Zech 12:10, Isa 32:15, Mrk 16:17-18, Luk 24:29, Jh 14:12&17, Acts 2:1-4) and Men's part (Jh 1:11-13, 3:3-4, 18&36, 5:24, Acts 4:12, 2Cor5:17, Tit 3:5)

#### **(A) Why some are not working in the supernatural today?**

- Ignorance of their right or identity in Christ (Pro 11:9, Hosea 4:6&14, Jer 5:4, Eph 4:18, Matt 22:29)
- Lack of faith (Heb 11:6)
- Hardness of heart and believing of wrong doctrines/heresies (2Tim 3:16-17)
- Carnality (1King 18:20-21)

#### **(B) Steps to walking in the supernatural**

- Having the understanding that God's supernatural workings are unpredictable (Acts 2:1-4, 4:8&31, 10:44-46, 13:9-11&52, 19:5-6). Stop comparing the manifestations of the old testament to the diverse expressions of the Holy Ghost in this era.



- Power of the word (the basis of our supernatural walk) – (Ecc 8:4, Num 23:19, Ps 89:34, 138:2, Isa 54:10-11, Jer 1:12, Matt 5:18,24:35, luk 5:4-6, Mrk 16:17-18, Jh 14:12)
- Faith makes the power of the word effective (Matt 18:18, Rom 10:17)

### **(C) Result of Supernatural walk (the Lord's expectation of you)**

- To walk in the Spirit Supernaturally (Rom 6:4, 2Cor 5:7, Gal 5:16, Eph 5:2)
- To speak in the spirit supernaturally (Acts 2:4,10:46,19:6, 1Cor 12:10, 14:39, Jude 1:20, Rom 8:26-27, Eph 6:18)
- To see supernaturally (Eph 1:17-18, Ps 18:28, Isa 29:19)
- To sing supernaturally (1Cor 14:15, Isa 30:29, Eph 5:19)
- To worship supernaturally (Ps 96:9,99:5, Jh 4:24)

### **(D) Climax of supernatural walk** (Ps 44:4, Luk 10:19, Jh 14:12, Eph 6:12-18, Rom 8:37, 1Jh 5:4, Rev 1:12,12:11 **Mrk 16:17-18**)

- Casting out demons (Mrk 16:17, Jh 14:12, Mrk 1:22-26)
- Speak with new tongue (1Cor 14)
- Take up serpents (Rev 12:11, Acts 28:3-6, Ps 34:7,91:4, Zech 2:5, Luk 21:18)
- Drink any deadly thing and not hurt (2Cor 10:3-4, Eph 6:12)
- Healing the sick (1Cor 1:30, Col 1:14)

### **Questions/Discussion**

- 1) Any limit to believers' walking in the supernatural? Discuss.

### **Conclusion**

After overcoming the barriers to walking in the Supernatural and you've gained the knowledge on the entirety of walking in the Supernatural, the only thing needed to for you to do is to take a step of faith. Walking with God is always supernatural. (Rom 10:12)

## **BREAKING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP**

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the breakthrough of finances embedded in the scriptures and that believers are not meant to live in poverty (wretchedness).

**Memory Verse:** *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor that through his poverty might be rich 2Cor 8:9.*

### **Introduction**

When you are blessed of God, you are sustained by him. It is not enough to acquire money, it must be with rest, (*Pro 10:22, The blessing of the Lord maketh riches and add no sorrow onto it*).

As sons and daughters of God we need to come to realization and understanding that it is not the will of God to lack (Ps 119:144... give me understanding and I shall live). God is not benefiting from your poverty, and it is not giving him glory. You didn't resemble God by being poor. He built mansions up in heaven, the streets are paved with gold. If you are his image, you have access to his riches.

Supernatural providence is one of God's instrument to keep his people clean, he says he will make sure his people have provision of what makes for life in its fullness, so they will be able to make the right choices when tempted. (*2 Corinthians 8:9..... Yet for your sake he become poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich*).

Thus worth acquiring both of the spirit and of the world are subjected to principles pattern not being excluded.

- **The two secret to breaking financial Hardship:** \*You must be born again, \*You must have a working knowledge of the covenant.

The covenant is God's hammer for breaking financial hardship. It has the ability to distinguish you, no matter the degree of hardship that is preventing on earth. The will of God is for us to be prosperous, be in good health even as our soul prospereth. (3 Jh 2, Deut 8:18)

Power for wealth or ability for divine abundance or God's providence isn't a promise you claim in prayer, it's not a desire you enforce by fasting, it is an agreement you enter into with God which get him committed to your needs.

## **Lesson Exposition**

### **(A) Seedtime and Harvest**

In the book of (Gen. 3:17-19) man was cursed to labor as a result of disobedience but in (Gen. 8:20) due to Noah's offering and sacrifice he said that he no longer curse the earth anymore, instead he blessed in verse 22 that the seed time and harvest time shall not cease.

This is a law that response to only seed not prayer. This is being understood by Abraham and he was prosperous. It affirms the fact that there is what man must do for God to act. God isn't permitted to increase until man is committed.

### **(B) Service**

From Job 1:9, we can see that whatever Job was, was found in service. In service Job recorded to be the greatest man in all east. Your commitment to God will provoke heaven's commitment to you. During service be conscious because the devil will negotiate your commitment and also get ready to serve God with your treasures which include your time, self, and substances.

Anyone that cannot give his money, cannot give his body. Anybody can dream in the night and say God called him, but if you cannot give your means, you are not a candidate for giving your life (Job 36:11).

### **(C) Kingdom Addiction**

(1Chr 29:2), *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you”* Matt.6:33. David is a person to be referenced to when it comes to kingdom addiction, he gave all for the things of God (1Chr 29:2-5).

### **(D) Sacrifice**

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him (Psalm 126:5-6). The secret to sacrifice is “sowing in tears” and no devil can stop you from reaping in joy. David worked in this principle (1chr 21:24).

### **(E) Obedience to His Word**

(Jh 6:63 – *“...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life”*). The word of God is a living force. They are the most powerful living forces at work today, and will soon become the only proven force at work on earth. Responding to the living word is the only way you can enjoy the blessing of God.

### **(F) You Need an Understanding Hear**

The bible says *“Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of the transgressors is hard”* (Prov.13:15). This implies that the way of those who lack good understanding will be hard, so hardship is a function of ignorance or inadequate understanding. Those who don’t understand will suffer hardship, it takes understanding to evade hardship (Psalm 25:14).

### **(G) Covenant Understanding of Money**

In this world, money represents power. The bible recorded that *“for wisdom is defense, and money is a defense...”* (Eccl.7:12). To an average man outside of God money is the target and life dream for them. They would at any means even take advantage of others to get. Jesus called money the unrighteous “mammon” in Luke 16:11.

### **(H) It Is Not the Root of All Evil**

Many says that money is the root of all evil and think they are quoting the bible. According to 1Timothy 6:10 it is stated the LOVE OF MONEY is the root of all evil not money. You serve the one you love, if you love money, you will serve money and do everything to acquire it. Money becomes your master. Unknowingly, you begin to worship it. It then becomes the deciding factor in any step you want to take in life (Matt.6:24, 6:32).

### **(I) Don't Deny Your Need for Money**

The subject of money is an all-important subject, except to hypocrites in zion. You can't do without money daily even the bible recorded that money answereth all things (Eccl.10:19). All transactions on earth are programmed around money. Stop pretending that you do not need money, admit your need for it and you will have it cause only God can supply your need.

### **(J) Money Is a Defense**

(Eccl.7:12) money is defense, it keeps one from harassment of life. No matter how spiritual you are, you can't stay in a house without paying rent. A poor man in any society is not treated the same way as a rich man, without money you are socially defenseless.

### **(K) Money Gives You a Voice (Eccl.9:14-16)**

### **(L) How to Get Money**

The only way to get money is by giving what you have. For you to have money, you must make giving your way of life. Give to God and give to people in need (Prov.11:24). When you are giving to the work of God, it is for your own good. God does not need our money or depend us for anything. Silver and gold are all His (Haggi 2:8).

### **(M) Poverty Is Not a Sign of Righteousness**

The bible says that Jesus is the righteousness of God, came down to earth in the form of human flesh. By record of His ministry, He was not poor. He had so much that he needed a treasurer to keep His money. So if you walk in poverty, you don't look like Jesus.

### **(N) Lack of Any Kind Is a Curse**

A good look at the curses of the law in Deuteronomy 28 shows that the most prominent among them is the curse of poverty. Lack is embedded in almost every curse enumerated. The curse of the law is a reverse of man's welfare. Poverty is a curse, not an influence of the economic situation of the world. The day you start to see it that way and acknowledge that you've been redeemed from the curse, you will be free from it (Gal.3:13-14).

### **(O) Tithing**

You can maintain the flow of God's blessing and remain permanently established in wealth. The man Abraham was, was a man greatly blessed by God, rich in gold, silver and in cattle but Abraham was not permanently entrenched in his blessings until he gave a tithe from his spoil of war and gave to Melchizedek (we are told that Melchizedek was Jesus, our high priest, it was one of the old testament appearance of Jesus) and he was blessed (Gen.14:19). Remember the Lord had only promised to bless Abraham when he was called in Genesis but was pronounced blessed after he paid the tithe.

### **(P) Giving**

*Deut.28:1-2* - "...except you do the work of giving, you cannot the grace for addition. Giving is not for fun, it is work and will produce anywhere, anytime and forever. It is not just doing the work that makes it work, it is doing it with the right motion or reason.

### **(Q) Sow Willingly**

Your offering must flow out of a willing heart. You must not be coerced into giving, if you are obedient without being willing, you will not eat the good of the land, the two necessary go together (Exodus 35:5) (1 Corinth 9:17-18)

A quality offering flowing from a willing heart has a reward.

### **(R) Do It Cheerfully**

Your lack of cheerfulness in giving can turn your blessings into curses. (Deut 28:47-48) your offering must be given cheerfully. We have a stern warning from word in the above scripture.

### **(S) Locate a Good Ground**

The parable of the sower clearly tells us that not every ground is a good ground. There is the ground by the wayside, open to be vandalized by passerby. There is the stony ground and the ground of thorns. All this are not profitable for quality harvest. Ask the Lord to direct you. He will lead you to a good ground. A place where the Lord stamped His name.

**(T) When Your Blessing Come; Give God the Glory**

(See Malachi. 2:1-2) you must lay it to heart to glorify God each time your harvest comes in.

**Questions**

1. Since the scriptures has enlightened us not to be in financial bondage anymore, any reason why we should learn about finance?

**SACRIFICES AND RESULTS**

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on how results cannot be obtained without paying of sacrifices and that diligence is essential on the ladder of greatness.

**Memory Verse:** *yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things; and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ...Phil 3:8*

**Texts:** 1Sam 1:7-11, Dan 1:8-20, Esth 4:16-17,7:5-10, Matt 4:1-11,17:14-21, 1Cor 4:10-13,15:9-10

### **Introduction**

Sacrifice is derived from the Latin word **SACRIFICARE**. Sacrifice is to make an offering of, to consecrate or present to a divinity by way of expiation or propitiation. Hence, to destroy, surrender or suffer to be lost, for the sake of obtaining something, to give up in favour of a higher or more imperative object or duty, to devote with loss or suffering. While Results on the other hand are things achieved successfully; that which is caused or produced because of something else.

To pay is to put aside everything that is apart from God in order to receive the second part of God's salvation. The Lord said that we need to forsake all our possessions to follow Him (Luk 14:33) and Paul says that we need to suffer loss of things to gain Christ (Phil 3:8). We must do this because God intends to work Himself into us that we may be united and joined with Him. Sacrifices we must offer or prices we must pay has many aspects, such as the price required in Matt 5:7,24-25; the price in Phil 3 and that of Rev 3:18 and all these prices/sacrifices involves one principle-the price that we must pay is the loss of everything outside of God. Do not think to offer sacrifices is too difficult. The Lord and the Apostles said these in order to experience and obtain God (to get result), we must forsake all that is other than God. If we desire to live Christ, we must not care for where we live or die. Esther did not care if she will die..."and if I perish, I perish".

### **Lesson Exposition**



Sacrifice can be defined in two ways:

- Sacrifice as an act of denying oneself
- Sacrifice as an act of offering

**(A) Sacrifice as a prerequisite for result.**

In the kingdom, nothing just happens. Though Christ has paid it all (sacrificing Himself) on the cross; it still requires our constant effort of knowing and establishing this victory in our life.

According to Apostle Joshua Selman, he said “nothing just happens, if you don’t learn how to get money from the mouth of the fish, you will stand before Caesar in shame”. There has been a lot of argument on Sacrifice to get result in the kingdom. People said Christ Himself, the living sacrifice who denied Himself of His heavenly glory, became man and learn the ways of men for 30 years so as to accomplish His mission of saving humanity, has paid it all on the cross. People said getting result is by grace that has been made available by Christ. Christ has paid for it. Although, this is true that the grace to access this result has been available for all, but it still takes our conscious effort of denying our will and yielding to the Holy Spirit who guide and lead us to getting the result.

Sacrifice is like a speaker; going by the Old testament, anytime answer is needed or direction is needed from God. The priest will have to make sacrifice on altars. The sacrifice on the altar if it is well done well keep crying on the compendium (altar) between the realm of the Spirit and the physical realm until it commends God’s attention. The self-deny of the good pleasure in time is needed to get certain result Dan 1:8-20. Nothing just happen in the kingdom, undeniable sacrifice must be paid to get things like anointing, power even though Christ has made it available but the scar we get in the process of sacrifice will make us know its value.

**(B) Faith and Diligence in sacrifices that produce multiple results.**

Seeing multiples of results which keep on repeating itself in a life of a believer is a sign that a price (sacrifice) has been diligently paid with faith.

- Solomon offered thousand burnt offering (sacrifice) which has never been done and this moved God to appear to him. The amazing thing about his offering is the number (thousand) which touch God. It is clear that Solomon did that with the heart of faith; his sacrifice does not end there; God gave him a chance to ask for anything. He diligently sacrifices his desire like wealth, long-life etc to ask for something that pleases God (understanding heart in judgement) and this touched God greatly to open other doors for him. His sacrifice is the type that is by faith and diligence and that make him so different that God gave him or make him to operate in dimensions of wisdom, knowledge and understanding that nobody has never operated in 2 Sam 3:1-12.
- Seeking God as a believer (not a nominal Christian) is a sacrifice that must be diligently paid with faith before such believers can find God (Heb 11:6). God rewards anyone who pays the sacrifice to diligently serve and seek Him.
- Prayer and fasting is a sacrifice in seeking God because it aligns and consecrate you in the presence of God.
- As a student that desires to be excellent, you have the price of diligence to pay as sacrifice, such student have to deny himself of slumbering and every act of sluggishness that could cause failure, instead put himself into studying and praying.

### **(C) Needs for paying sacrifices**

The need for this, is to afford God the opportunity to perfect in us that which He intends to do. The significance is; we allow God to have a place in us so that He may be fully expressed without any hindrance.

- You want to walk in dimension of power; you need to sacrifice yourself to undergo God's dealing.
- You want to live; you must first sacrifice your life; you need to die before you live. It is kingdom principle; we live by dying (Matt 16:24-25).

- There is always pain in sacrifice. But when the result comes, it is always valuable and glorious.
- Sacrifice is denying oneself, death to self in order to achieve God's own result. For man to be able to pay God's sacrifice, he must die to himself like and deny himself of self (Esth 4:16-17, 7:5-10).
- By man strength, it looks impossible to sacrifice some things for God but with God, it becomes possible (Phil 4:13).
- For believers to shine as light, we have to deny our will to give Holy spirit space to reign in our heart and make us function as light.
- God does not despise a track record of pain in faith with a level of undeniable sacrifice.
- Anointing which is a measure of God's ability in us will only work if we activate it by sacrifice of faith and prayer. Faith is a risk that is why it is a sacrifice, but faith never fails.

#### **(D) Biblical Icons that paid sacrifices by faith and got yielding results**

- Daniel (Dan 1:8-20), Esther (Esth 4:16), Hannah (1Sam 7:5-10), Paul (1Cor 4:10-13), Jesus (Eph 1:14-18)

#### **(E) Studying Icons of faith in Nigeria**

- Dr. Paul Enenche – He denied his ambition and doors that open for him when he received the call into ministry. He has been diligent in seeking God during his days on campus, when he ought to enjoy the pleasures of his career and ambition, he and his wife sacrificed the open doors of earthly riches for the ministry the Lord called them into; hence the elevation he and his wife has attained today.
- Apostle Joshua Selman – He has been longing after God since when he was young. His father once told him that he was chosen to fail in life and he should fail alone. Others are running after carriers but he paid the sacrifice of longing after God. He was

not anointed from the start but in 2002, he had an encounter that made him to walk in unusual dimension of result today.

- Papa Oyedepo – Almost the same story like that of Dr. Paul Enenche.
- Papa E.A Adeboye – His personality portrays the sacrifice he has paid that turned his life into the pursuit of the souls of men.

These and many more (including foreign men) that are not mentioned, for the pages of books would not occupy, are men of sacrifices that produced tremendous results.

### **Questions**

1. Explain with biblical references if calling or ministry is by the measure of sacrifice.

### **Conclusion**

If you don't pay a price, you cannot get a result. Comparing all these to academics, if one doesn't study hard, a brilliant result cannot show forth. If we hand over more to God, we will receive more; If we hand over nothing, we will receive nothing, if we hand over less, we will receive less, and if we hand over everything, we will receive the fullness of God's blessings. Offer sacrifices, pay the price and have the result. Offer sacrifices, pay the price and have God. You can't get any other result other than God. When you pay the price(s), you have result(s)-multiple results. The result is God and in God, we have all things we can ever desire for.

## BALANCING RISKS AND ECONOMY

**Aim:** To understand economy, finances and its principles and entrepreneurship

**Text:** Pro 10:5, 18:16, 24:33, Psalm78:72, Acts 18:2-3, Deut 8:18, Hagg 1:8, John 6:1-14, Pro 6:6-8

**Memory Verse:** *Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise, which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provide her meat in the summer and gather her food in the harvest.*  
Pro 6:6-8

### Introduction

Economy is the effective management of resources and avoidance of waste. As Christians we need to learn the art of being able to manage what we have. God has deposited a lot of gifts into our hands and these gifts are to be used judiciously because through these resources lies all that we would need to do on earth Pro 18 vs 16.

### Lesson Exposition

#### (A) Finances and its principles

Christians by design are meant to be the financial backbone of their economy, why? Because we have been given the power to have wealth Deut 8:18. God has placed in our hands the resources which are needed to get wealth. For God is all sufficient in His nature and He freely gives to whosoever that asks Matt 7:7, No wonder He said gold and silver are mine Hagg 1:8, and He will give freely to whosoever that asks Him. In God's agenda on earth, wealth cannot be neglected, for we also need finance for the propagation of the gospel.

- **Tapping into the blessings of God:** \*Tithes and offerings with the right motive (Pro 11:24-25): If our giving will provoke God's blessing, we need to give with the right motive. God must first accept you before your offering can be accepted by Him. Giving without the right motive is just like a farmer planting on the rocky ground, nothing good can come from it.

## **(B) Creativity and innovation**

God has deposited in our hand one gift or the other to make a way for us on earth Pro 18:16. We need to understand that God will only bless what we have and what we've been able to produce with our hands. The case of Jesus' disciples (Acts 6:5-13). Jesus only bless what they have at hand. As a believer we are not meant to be lazy (Pro 10:4-5). For an idle man is the devil's workshop. Apostle Paul, Aquila and Priscilla are tent makers by profession, even some of the disciples are fishermen. Whatsoever our hand finds doing, let us bear in mind that it has to be done with integrity of heart (Psalm 78:72), only then we can really incur God's blessing.

### **Questions**

1. Mention other ways in which God's blessing is been provoked.
2. Mention other icons in the bible who has their own vocational skills.

### **Conclusion**

Whatever your hand finds doing, do it well. God is going to hold us responsible for whatsoever way we use the gift He has deposited in us (Rom 14:12). Therefore, don't waste that which has been placed in your hands.

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit (Manifestations).

**Memory Verse:** *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant...but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. Eph 4:1,7*

**Texts:** Eph 4:8-16, Rom 1:11-12, 1Cor 12:1-3,14:5,15,24-31, 1Tim 4:14, 2Tim 1:6

### Introduction

**The anointing:** For years we have sung with *Ps 23* 'My head thou dost with oil anoint', which actually refers to the practice of oiling the head of sheep for their protection; but the anointing of the spirit, or the baptism with the Spirit, is more than merely a protective health measure.

**In the old testament all who served God had to be anointed. This is replaced in the New Testament by the Holy Spirit for all believers.**

**Before the day of Pentecost, priests were anointed, and carried the fragrance with them, but after Pentecost believers carried the spirit of Christ.**

The true anointing is always by the Lord. Oils and precious ointments were emptied upon priest and kings as mere symbols or acknowledgement that God Spirit had chosen to rest upon them.

God was the originator, and such men were therefore called the anointed of the Lord or the anointed of God. Especially Christ (Hebrew *Mashiyach* – 'anointed or messiah') who is the Christ (anointed) of God. Today among believers the anointing is a sovereign act of God.

Disciple and apostles were never anointed with oil. In the New Testament, Christians received the spirit for their work of service. Oil was never poured upon Jesus, except by a woman for his burial. They realized that they had been with Jesus (Act 4:13).

Our anointing flows out of Christ's anointing and we receive it only from Him. '*Of His fullness we have all received*' (Jh 1:16). To John the Baptist, it was revealed that *upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit* (Jh 1:33). John identified the source, Jesus Christ, the giver and the authority of the giving.

We may pray and lay hands on people to be baptized in the Spirit as the apostles did (Act 8:17), but we must realize that a man cannot, and need not, give his anointing to someone else. The anointing comes out of Christ's fullness, not somebody else's fullness. I want my own anointing from God, not a second hand anointing. To bestow an anointing even as a temporary effect is foreign to bible thought.

It comes out of the fullness as a constant out flow. He alone is the baptizer. The blessings of God may flow in many ways through our lives as rivers of living water from Christ; but that is a very different thing from doing what only Jesus can do- impart the Spirit. The virgins refuse to share their oil and were counted wise.

Anointing and appointing go together. The only people anointed were those selected for a particular task, especially that of a priest or king. It was not a mere experience for emotional enjoyment. Nor did it specify that a special level of holiness had been attained. The anointing was given solely to equip and condition ordinary people to serve the Lord. The anointing was not available apart from service. Today, the anointing is for all believers, for all to serve. We are 'a royal priesthood'. **Note** carefully that anointing is not a kind of emotional pleasure, but comes into activity when we serve. David did not feel anointed in any particular sense, but when he faced Goliath he knew it. Samson became strong only when he went into action for God and then the Spirit of God came upon him (Judg 14:6).

A strong man does not feel his strength when sitting down but only when he exerts himself. It is absolutely necessary to understand that the Holy Spirit is He not It. The Spirit is not an impersonal force, a sort of Spiritual electricity. The anointing of God is not just power or gift but the Holy Spirit Himself.

**How the gifts came:** The finger of God was the Holy spirit as peter tells us; '*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about ...healing all who were oppressed by the devil*' (Acts 10:38). There is no power greater than that of the Holy Spirit. That is kingdom power. By the Spirit, He distribute His ministries to whom He chooses.



**Power by baptism in the Spirit:** Now if the power of the kingdom is the Holy Spirit, then kingdom power was given to the church on the day of Pentecost. It is more than authority and power. The kingdom power which rested on Christ Jesus, was there in order to work signs and wonders. The same Spirit is given to those within the kingdom of God *for the same kingdom purposes*. The Spirit, who endowed Jesus, now endows His people with the same power. There is a difference between Christ and His followers and it is rather noticeable! The difference is first Himself – who He is. Those who say, ‘the words of Christ on our lips are the same as those on Christ’s lips’ must remember this: it is not the words which matter, but who says them. We may be adopted sons of God but He is eternal and only begotten son of God. The second difference is that the Spirit comes from Him. He is the source. We are not sources, but channels, riverbeds through which the waters of His fullness flow.

The Holy Spirit’s relationship with blood-washed, born-again believers is new. Jh 14:17 says that *‘the Spirit dwells with you and will be in you’*. That is why a new expression is used. It is to express a new kind of experience.

**Parakletos:** The old covenant people knew nothing of speaking with tongues, casting out demons, and healing by the laying on of hands (Mk 16:17). These signs were reserved for the age of the Spirit. A new kingdom, a new covenant, new features, and a new gospel for spirit and body describe the Christian age. Jesus used a new word for the Holy Spirit, *parakletos*, used **five** times in John's Gospel. It is translated **Comforter', Helper'**. It belongs to the Greek word *parakaleo*, to call for somebody, to enlist their sympathy.

Think about the promise of another Helper. To understand we need only emphasize the word *another*. Jesus had been the *parakletos* to His disciples, and had said to them I will not leave you orphans (Jn 14:18). Jesus regularly used only one word for God-Father. For those who are in Christ Jesus, that one word also describes their relationship to Almighty God.

So when Jesus gave His last assurances to His Disciples He said in *Acts 1:4-5*, “*wait for the Promise of the Father... you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit*”. Also, He related the gift of

the Spirit to the Father in *Luk 11:13*, “*How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those- who ask Him!*” If we were orphans, we would not receive the Spirit.

A quite breathtaking view of the kingdom is shown to us in *Jh 14:12*: “*He who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater (works) than these he will do, because I go to My Father*”. (The word for 'greater *meizona*, does not specify what order of greatness, whether in number, quality or magnitude). This has been a problem to many Bible students. Surely nothing could outclass the miracles of Jesus in intrinsic omnipotence, such as the raising of Lazarus?

There are two senses in which someone can do 'greater things than Christ. Obviously, there are some works of His that we could never do, since He is the Son of God. He is the Redeemer. Only He could die for the sins of the whole world. The works to which He referred were works of mercy, deliverance, healing, and aid. First there could be more numerous instances and second, these could be spread over a wider area. Both took place, as the disciples moved out in missionary travel.

This could only be through the power of the Spirit. Jesus emphatically repeated this: “*most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also, and greater (works) than these he will do, because I go to My Father*”... It is to your advantage. [Greek *sympherei*, be expedient, be advantageous] that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you (*Jh 14:12; 16:17*). This is our basis for the gifts of the Spirit.

**The world bursts into view:** Reading the Bible from the beginning we find ourselves concerned only about Israel - book after book, as if God was only the God of the Jews, and had limited His interests to that tiny land and small nation. But as soon as we open the New Testament the borders melt away, and the wide

World comes into view. True Jesus did say (for His own ministry) I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (*Mt 15:24*), yet on that very occasion he restored a girl who did not belong to Israel but a foreign nation. When He was in the people by restart restored a girl

who did not belong to Israel, but to a foreign nation. When He was in the synagogue at Nazareth, He also spoke of Elijah's dealings with the widow of Zarephath (Lk 4:25-27). His statement against racial discrimination infuriated the congregation, but He went to that non-Israel area later.

The Gospel that the Disciples preached as they went out was the gospel of the kingdom of God—the ‘good news’ that the kingdom was close at hand. But they preached it in terms not used by John the Baptist and only sometimes by Jesus Himself. Their kingdom gospel was in the language of Christ crucified. It was not a different gospel but it contained a tremendous new, vital fact about the kingdom—the cross.

Without having been to Calvary, everybody lives a second-class existence as illegal immigrants. Passport and entry permits are repentance and faith in Christ Jesus. Then we may enter the kingdom with the full privileges of citizens, ‘no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God’ (Eph 2:19).

### **Lesson Exposition**

#### **➤ Golden rules of the gifts**

The purpose in writing this topic, is not a wish to intrigue readers, but to emphasize that the gifts have a vital part to play in world evangelism. They are the weapons of war, not toys to be played with. Mark 16 firmly anchors miracles to the Great Commission.

From the outset, the church looked doomed, still-born. To bring His message to the nations, Jesus had only a few ordinary men from Galilee. None of them showed any brilliance, or personal qualities that would make for success, and they displayed a share of human failings. They were as unqualified as world conquerors as men ever could be. The Jewish leaders wrote them off as ignorant and unlearned.

Their message should have appealed to nobody. It had no element of intellectual wisdom, nor of political promise, nor of immediate social benefit. Its worst disqualification for popular

acceptance was that it was centered on a leader from a seedy Galilean backwater who had been executed as a common criminal.

Mission impossible? Against all expectations it became 'mission accomplished.' How? These nobodies advanced with a new secret. God personally worked with them with signs and wonders. More than that, He barbed their simple words with conviction, and guided them to the hearts of hearers as unerringly and powerfully as David's stone to the head of Goliath. Without personal charisma, the charisma of the Spirit of God endued them. Their 'secret' -the Holy Spirit.

Let us take it from there. If Christianity is to progress, this is the divine way. Christ knew that the world would expand. There are now 60 times more people alive than when He was here. He expects that all the world would hear His quiet word spoken so long ago in an obscure Roman province- not by normal propaganda method, but by His power.

Because the world hovers between spiritual life and death, the utmost consideration must be given to whatever can secure the destinies of precious people. What follows are principles of real importance. They may even be stressed by repeated mention throughout the sub-topics.

**Just as in the wilderness Jesus was tempted to misuse divine powers when He had been filled with the Holy Spirit, so are others likely to be.**

The core of the test is our pride, which corrupts our sincere motives for the power-gifts, and produces flamboyant behavior and egotistic display. Jesus was tempted by the devil to throw Himself off the Temple pinnacle. One thing to be taken to heart is that the supernatural is not always sensational. We can attract personal admiration by our gifts, but our job is to set people's eyes on Jesus. When Paul and Barnabas were offered worship at Lystra, they were horrified, running among the people to assert they were not divinities (Acts 14:8-18).

'This generation seeks a sign', said Jesus. Sensation always has a market. We can exploit that situation, and turn the gifts of God to self-advantage. Simon Magus wanted the Holy Spirit, but only to bolster his prestige (Acts 8:9). Uzza died for his presumption in putting his hand upon

the Ark of Testimony (1Chr 13:10). If anyone says 'I would like the gift of healing', or any gift, the proper reply is 'Why?' Motive is Vital. **The gifts of the Spirit do not confirm anybody's methods or theology.**

However, where there is faith and true desire in our heart, a true gift may be bestowed by the Spirit at any time, so it may happen, not surprisingly, where people are listening eagerly to explanations about the *charismata*. But it is by the will of the Holy Spirit, not man's will. Be assured that, while the Spirit completely ignores the pretentious 'giftings' of the will of men, He does not ignore true openness and prayer. We can pray humbly for one another that we may be equipped for the work. Paul himself asked for prayer that he might open his mouth boldly because the door of opportunity was there (Eph 6:19; 1Cor 16:9; Col 4:3). The point to learn in those verses is that when the opportunity arose, Paul sought prayer help from everybody. Perhaps we should take a few minutes to examine Scriptures, which have been offered as grounds for 'giftings'. As a preliminary, we mention the fact that no Scripture is ever claimed to exist, which gives instructions or commands for the practice. There are at best no more than oblique inferences.

Romans 1:11 says, 'I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift [*charisma*] so that you may be established. What is that charisma? He tells us -'that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me' (v 12).

However, it is quite clear that Paul in Rom 1:11 is not thinking of giving an individual a 'gift, for he is addressing the whole body of believers at Rome. He was not traveling all the way to Rome to bestow a gift of Wisdom, or discernment upon one man or woman, but, as he says, to 'establish' the whole church.

Other Scriptures are 1Tim 4:14 and 2Tim 1:6. Paul told Timothy 'do not neglect, and 'to stir up' the gift (*charisma*) given him by the laying on of Paul's hands and that of the eldership. Was this a 'gift' as in 1Cor 12:8-10? If so, how could he 'stir it up?" However, we are actually told

what this gifting was, namely 'a spirit of power, not timidity, and of love and self-discipline'.

The 'gifting' by the elders was for his general ministry as a young Christian worker.

The Holy Spirit is not directed by Christians. He directs Christians. We must not usurp the sovereign prerogatives of almighty God. The definitive New chapters concerning spiritual gifts -1Cor 12 to 14- tells us to desire gifts, especially to prophesy but they never suggest that gifts can be conferred by one person upon another, as we would expect if that was how God meant it to be.

Instead the stress is laid on people 'desiring' (14:1) 'seeking' (14:12) and 'praying' (14:13), but never that one should pray for another to receive. What is stated chapter 12:11 is that the Spirit apportions 'to each one individually as He wills'.

However, Scripture has better advice -beyond finding one's gift. Paul said 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' (Phil 4:13). 'Find your gift' can be an excuse for doing nothing. Many say 'I have no gift'. The truly gifted are those with no natural abilities, but who are prepared to 'get up and go'. The soldier brothers of David mocked him, suggesting that he was no figure for the battlefield -keeping sheep was his lot. But his faith and anointing overcame all inexperience and deficiencies. God teaches a man to fight who does fight.

The gifts are not exclusively for the perfect, despite what is said in the previous section. Who is the perfect Christian? Life is a Continuing demonstration of our inconsistent efforts to reach perfection. But the gifts are *charismata* -the favors of grace, not certificates of merit. The book of Numbers is perhaps the prime Bible lesson in that subject, in which Israel is exhibited for its failures. They all failed, sometimes grossly, including the noble triad of Moses, Aaron and Miriam, as well as Aaron's sons. Then turn to the strange episode of Balaam. When he tried to curse Israel, he could not. He found out why when God allowed him to see Israel as He saw them. Balaam then declared, He has not observed iniquity in Jacob, nor has He seen wickedness in Israel' (Num 23:21).

Is there a price to pay for the gifts? If there is, they would not be gifts, but purchases. Nevertheless, there well may be a price to pay in their use. Those not prepared to risk their leisure, their comfort, their reputation, and perhaps much more, may be little used by God - even if He does bestow His power-gifts upon them. A complete tool kit may be marvelous gift for a carpenter, but it would be useless without the sweat of his brow. Gifts call for commitment; as Romans 12:7 puts it, 'Let us use it in our ministering.' His life is poured out with ours. Gifts are for givers. To get, give!

The gift lists do not mention every gift. Some, mentioned elsewhere, are omitted. For example, the casting out of demons is not mentioned in these lists. This suggests that there are other possibilities in the Holy Spirit. The idea that we must have a prior scriptural instance for every manifestation is itself not a biblical principle. No such idea is mentioned, otherwise what is the purpose of the instruction test the spirits?" (1Jh 4:1). There is a vast range of supernatural phenomena, and God does not tie Himself down to precedent.

### ➤ **Words of the word**

#### **-Spiritual Gifts**

It was Paul's idea to talk about spiritual gifts. The Corinthians had not asked Paul, because they thought that they knew all that was to be known, but it did not leave Paul very happy. He said: *'Concerning spiritual gifts I would not have you Ignorant'*, which he judged they were. In 1Cor 14:38 he says, *'If anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant'*. He meant that if they still thought that they knew it all, and did not accept correction of their ideas, then they would stay ignorant. They had been 'carried away' with their previous knowledge, which was similar, but belonged to 'dumb idols (12:2). The Greeks were famous for worldly learning, but the things of the Spirit are different. A university doctorate in social sciences or physics does not make us wise in the things of God. These latter are learned by getting fire into one's soul, not just cold facts into one's head.

This is our major subject, so we will have a closer look at what they are called. First, we should know that chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians is really about the church. The teaching on spiritual gifts is incidental.

The Corinthians had written to Paul asking for help, and he had dealt with several matters that worried them. Sadly, some things, which they should have worried about, did not trouble them. They had allowed factions to divide the fellowship in Corinth, and that to Paul was already very alarming situation. Then also, they had misused the gifts. Paul now points out these matters, and relates both problems together. The result is this truly marvelous exposition, which he has left us.

Our English versions use the phrase 'spiritual gifts.' Now, the original word in Greek really has nothing to do with gift. It is *pneumatika* (from *pneuma*- spirit), found twenty-six times in the New testament, and is an adjective meaning spiritual. In this specific context it is best understood as: concerning 'spiritual matters. This special word is translated 'spiritual gift(s)' only three times, but mostly spiritual men, a spiritual law, meat, rock, body, songs, a house and so on. In Rom 1:11 Paul wanted to impart a *pneumatikon* to the Romans, meaning 'something spiritual', a benefit.

The proper word in Greek for 'gift' is actually not used in 1Cor 12-14, except twice incidentally. The Corinthians liked the word *pneumatika* -it was their word, but Paul coined a special word, which he preferred - charisma. Once again he avoids the normal word for gift (*doron*) and chooses the word *charisma*, which is so well known today. It means a favor." It is surprising that Paul does not use a straightforward 'gift' word, but we shall see why.

Paul, the apostle of grace (*charis*), introduced this word into the Christian vocabulary. Grace is the free and unmerited favor of God, and exemplifies God's benevolent attitude. The Old Testament talks about God turning His face towards us, showing light of a favorable countenance. That is what grace really is -a kindly attitude, not a power, or force, or substance. For long centuries the old theologians spoke as if grace were something measurable. Later



others thought of grace as a strange power that came upon people in an unpredictable way. They confused grace with the Holy Spirit. Even now, many believe that there are saints who have accumulated large quantities of grace by their virtue -enough for themselves and for others, as a kind spiritual coinage. The 'means of grace' were the sacraments by which people could gather grace to their credit account but an abstract quality cannot be saved up. However, the wonderful thing is, that although God's grace refers to His attitude, it is never abstract in Scripture. It always has a concrete form. Grace is His deeds and gifts. The only way we know His grace is by His practical demonstration of it. So 'grace has come to signify something tangible, good, and real. The greatest *charis* of all is Jesus Christ, 'the indescribable gift. He is grace personified.

The sunshine and rain are acts of grace, for as Jesus said, '*He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust*' (Mt 5:45). God is the God of grace - that is His character, and that is the God with whom we have to do. Only on the grounds of His grace can we approach Him. We earn nothing that He gives us-certainly not the spiritual gifts. Everything we have is a demonstration of His smiling goodness of heart towards us food, sunshine, breath, and so on. Do not grumble about wet weather - the rain is a gift of God. It is wonderful to know that grace itself is completely free. We do not have to seek favor with God by any kind of behavior that might impress Him. He loves us anyhow. Grace is there all the time, like the air we breathe. Another lovely example of a real gift by grace is in *Rom 5:15* '*the gift by the grace*', which means that grace is a real and permanent gift to us.

Nowadays of course everybody uses the word charisma. They talk about a 'charismatic leader', or somebody with "charisma- that is, with personality. It was introduced into modern language by Max Weber, a German professor, one of the founders of sociology in the last century. He turned it into his jargon word for leadership qualities. Leadership, however, is not what Paul was talking about.

There is still something else that we might be confused about. The gifts of the Spirit never designate natural talents, such as a gift for music, or art. They are our own abilities, to use as we like, for good or evil. The gifts in Corinthians 12 are supernatural, manifestations of the Spirit. They only operate according to God's will, as the Spirit gives them utterance. Our will to use them depends on His will and His timing.

Before we go any further, I must explain why the gifts differ from person to person. Paul shows that there are all kinds of members with different gifts. He mentions a few of those gifts in the first list: miracles, healings, tongues, interpretation and then later brings in another order of gifts- people: apostles, prophets, teachers, helps, governments. These various classes of gifts are all *charismata*, but different. Not everybody has the same part to play; yet all are equally important. He speaks about the body having '*less honorable' members (12:23)*, which receive less admiration. He does not specify our 'less honorable members' physically, but he does list some members of Christ who get little mention, particularly helps and governments. Feet do not get the same attention as faces. Paul adjusts that, and places 'helps' alongside the most eminent appointments, such as apostles, and on the same level as the mighty manifestations and gifts most highly valued by the Corinthians, i.e., tongues, interpretation and miracles.

There are no such thing as greater and lesser gifts. A *charisma* is from God, and therefore cannot be trivial. So many want to belittle tongues, or despise them as no more than a peculiar psychological phenomenon, or something arising from a deeper part of the mind that we cannot control. Those experiencing the tongues know that it is nothing of the kind, and they are the only ones who can judge. "He who is spiritual judges all things" (1Cor 2:15). Those-like the Corinthians-seeking the 'best gifts' would do well to remember that we are never told to seek the best gifts. That is misreading the Word of God. All the *charismata* are favors of God, and to be equally valued.

**-Manifestation:** *'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one*

*for the profit of all'* (1Cor 12:7). The Greek word for 'manifestation' comes from *phaneroo*, which means to show openly to be or to make manifest. The Holy Spirit shows Himself openly. You will notice that in 1Cor 12, Paul speaks mainly about the Holy Spirit Himself, and the body of Christ. He is emphasizing who the Spirit really is, and how we should distinguish the Holy Spirit from false spirits. He lists the gifts in order to show who is behind them-the 'same Spirit.' Whether it is tongues, interpretation, discernment, or anything else, it is the Holy Spirit showing Himself. God in action. Towards discernment, he gives much more attention to the gifts. So, 'a word of knowledge' is a manifestation of the Spirit. That is what is given-a manifestation and not a permanent ability.

Speaking by the Spirit or God nobody calls Jesus accursed.' Outside Christianity, ecstatic speech is demonic and demons never glorify Jesus. There are different sources of supernatural phenomena. spirits may manifest themselves, and imitate the works and gifts of God.

Some have suggested that because speaking with tongues is heard among non-Christians, such as Spiritualists and Buddhists, all who speak with tongues are of the devil. It does not follow that if a spiritualist speaks with tongues, then everybody who speaks with tongues is a Spiritualist. We may as well say that because burglars use a steel jemmy, everybody who uses a steel jemmy is a burglar.

The fact that there is a counterfeit should not lead us to reject the genuine.

Wisdom, knowledge, healings, tongues and so on are manifestations, not gifts. They are actions of the Spirit, and an action cannot be a gift. The gift of music is not an action, but an independent ability. The 'gift', as we call it, simply means that a certain individual is often used by the Holy Spirit in a particular manner, such as prophecy or miracles. This will be clear when we look at each gift in turn.

- **'Holy Spirit' And 'The Holy Spirit':** The Spirit behind these gifts is the same Spirit as in *Gen 1:2, who hovered Over the face of the waters*. Sometimes

in the original texts we read of 'the Holy Spirit, and sometimes just "Holy Spirit' without the definite article. Does this matter? Do we not sometimes speak of "the Holy Spirit' and sometimes of a 'Holy Spirit meeting', or a 'Holy Spirit gift?" There is a difference, which it is really a blessing to understand. Whenever we read 'the Holy Spirit', the Spirit Himself is referred to. It names Him as a Person. When it is just Holy Spirit' it is something He does, out of Himself, a manifestation. In Acts 2:17, we read that God will '*pour out of His Spirit*'-out of Him, some of Him. However, the wonderful thing to note is this, that what the Holy Spirit does, is of Himself - He pours Himself out, and each gift is a manifestation of Himself. The power of the Spirit is the Spirit. We human beings cannot pour ourselves out. we can give our time or effort, but the Spirit Himself fills us. He is 'given', an abiding gift, His presence within us. Jesus said, '*You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you* (Acts 1:8). See also 1Jh 3:24 and 4:13.

1Cor 12:4 says There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. The word 'diversities' is used for things widely different. Paul is drawing a sharp contrast between the variety of gifts and workings, and the absolute single identity of the Holy Spirit. In the pagan temples and oracles of Paul's day, each separate god, such as Diana of the Ephesians, had his or her temple, and the spirit of that god was supposed to operate there.

**-Unity:** Spiritual gifts are supplemented by the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists. pastors, and teachers (Eph 4:11), as different as chalk and cheese and yet brought together by divine chemistry creating together an indissoluble bond.

The whole book of 1 Corinthians is really about this unity. The Corinthians recognized differences, as between Paul, Peter, and Apollos. They attached themselves to one name or another, making them into cult figures. These groups vied with each other to be the main church party, so that other members would

join their cult figure faction. This attempt at sameness led to division. It was an ecumenical effort and it failed. Churches are supposed to be different, like the people in them, but all are one in Christ.

**-The threefold work of the trinity:** Having made ourselves familiar with some of the language about the Holy Spirit and the gifts, we will end this section with the words in *1Cor 12:4-6*: *'there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works in all.'*

**Spiritual gifts could be classified into 3 groups, which are: Revelation (word of wisdom, word of knowledge & faith), Vocal (prophecy, divers kinds of tongues & interpretation) and Power (Healing, miracles & discerning of spirit).**

**(A) A Word of Wisdom** (*wisdom and love are twins upon whose arms all the gifts should learn*)

The golden rule in Bible interpretation is that which Paul himself laid down in this epistle, *2:12, 13*. *'That we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual'*. The word 'spiritual things' here is the same word translated 'spiritual gifts' in chapter 12:1-*pneumatika*. Understanding the Bible is not a matter of guesswork. The Bible is its own interpreter.

First we must observe exactly what is said in *1Cor 12:8*. Several translations, render the phrase as "the word of wisdom". In Greek it is not 'the word', but 'a word', that is, one of many words. It is not the word pointing to a word already in view, but a word as yet not known. A car is any car, but the car is the one being used. A word of wisdom is a new shaft of light thrown on a situation.

Solomon has often been quoted as an example of the gift of the word of wisdom, but that is not the same thing. Solomon's gift from God was general wisdom, which God's people can ask for, according to James 1:5.

We are looking here, however at one of the supernatural gifts, which brings from time to time 'a word of wisdom'. It does not turn anybody into an oracle, pearls of wisdom falling from their lips every time they open them. How long

a word of wisdom may be in words is not stated, but wise idea or truth could need anything from a sentence to a thesis for its expression. Whatever its form, we are to see it as of the Holy Spirit, that is, supernatural -a manifestation,

as this chapter explains. Examples of it abound in Scripture. Jesus, for instance, promised persecuted believers such Words of wisdom. He told them not to think beforehand what to say when brought before the courts, for the Father would give them the words at that moment.

The book of Proverbs is a book of wisdom, but it also describes it in personal terms in word of knowledge and faith. *'I am understanding' (8:14)*. Wisdom is thought of not merely as common sense, experience, good advice, keen insight, or skill, for that is human thinking. It moves into another dimension. God comes into the picture. *'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Pro 9:10)*. Lack of wisdom is the opposite thing. *'The fool has said in his heart there is no God' (Ps 14:1)*. The wisdom Paul preached was the same personal, practical, down-to-earth understanding. He drew his wisdom from the character of the living God of Israel. Of course, for Paul, the wisdom of God was summed up in the revelation of God's Son incarnate, Jesus Christ. His 'gift of wisdom' relates to that kind of understanding, as we shall see.

The man who knows God, in Christ, has found wisdom. He no longer chases the unknown, like the godless; nor does he seek without purpose and direction. Secular progress has not yet decided what its goal is, and therefore cannot know

whether it is advancing or not. Christian onlookers see the present progress of the world as a step back into darkness. *'The wisdom of their wise men shall perish'* (Is 29:14). Daniel said *'wisdom belongs to God, and God gives wisdom to the wise'* (Dan 2:20-21). For Christians, Jesus is the 'wisdom of God', and the Way, the Truth and the Life.

**-Edification Wisdom:** This gift relating to the eternal business of God is not optional, but indispensable for the building of the church. The church is not a secular and temporary organization, but is a creation of God, planned from eternity (Rev 21 and 22). All that goes on in the church Christ established must be related to the purposes of God for redemption, and every gift will operate towards the same goal. Christ established the present Christian age to be dominated by the Holy Spirit in world evangelism. The gift of the word of wisdom is God at the wheel keeping us heading in the right direction even when we are busy in matters that seem remote.

**-Wisdom's Secret Heart:** However, here is a mystery revelation. Christ is the final meaning of wisdom. In him are *'hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'* (Col 2:3). In 1Cor 1:23-24 Christ is described as the wisdom of God, particularly 'Christ crucified'. If a 'word of wisdom' is genuine, it has a Calvary background, for Christ *'made unto us wisdom'* (1Cor 1:30; Eph 1:8, 17). When we are pushed and pulled this way and that by stress, tempted perhaps by material or personal advantage, a word of wisdom will have the Calvary background with its reminder of other values.

James 3:15-17 declares that there is a wisdom which is 'earthly, sensual, demonic' instead of that from above which is 'pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. It was worldly wisdom that crucified Christ. A true word of wisdom enables us to take up the Cross, and discover the eternal dimensions of living by faith in God. That does not mean we shall be given a precise plan, but the principle of action.

**-Wisdom, Not Bit and Bridle:** A word of wisdom will be practical. This is not a 'gift' of wisdom, but a word of wisdom. General wisdom is a quality available to us all, as James 1:5 says. The Lord has no intention of telling us when to sharpen our pencil, or what to have for tea. Jesus never used bit and bridle to steer His disciples at every turn in the road. Freedom in Christ delivers His followers from a life under law, and God leaves large areas of our lives to our own choice and decision. Whatever we find to do in His name, He will bless.

Nevertheless, there are accounts in Scripture of directives coming from God. A word of wisdom may lead us to do something, which normally would not occur to us. Samuel told Saul what he should do when looking for his father's donkeys. Throughout the book of Acts are instances of a word of wisdom. Paul warned the captain of a ship not to let the crew abandon the vessel. Ananias was sent to heal Saul, and to give him insight into his future. James was given a wise word, as the chairman of the important conference in Jerusalem, when the relationship of Gentiles with the Jewish institutions was proving a difficult question. Paul had a word of wisdom directive to stay in Corinth, because God had many people there.

I have heard very earnest preachers bringing people to make a vow at the altar to wait for God to speak each day. Many say, 'I am waiting for a word of wisdom from the Lord'. What they really want is for God to make up their minds for them and relieve them of responsibilities. God does speak, and spoke to men of old, but on no occasion did He speak when or because anybody was waiting or asking Him to speak. God does not talk to order. The men and women God spoke to in Bible days were people getting on whatever they had to do. Whoever tells us to do anything, we are personally responsible. Those who act only when they hear directions from God are living under law, and not 'the perfect law of liberty'. God wants us to grow up in Him, to be adults, not puppets moved by strings from heaven.

Believers are so often stressed and anxious, looking over their shoulder wondering if they have done God's will, as if God quietly had a blueprint every morning, which it was their first duty to



find. This puts believers under a heavier burden than even the scribes imposed, for at least they could pinpoint a Scripture for what they thought God ordered. A wisdom greater than ours comes to us as free agents, not as a law of Sinai.

**-How The Gift Operates:** A word of wisdom may come by the Scriptures, the book of all wisdom. There is no doubt that Scripture is the most common means used by the Holy Spirit. Understanding frequently comes from hearing the Word to direct our footsteps. That is one reason why the ministry of the Word is so vital to us all. The Bible has the peculiar habit of addressing us, even in the most unexpected phrase, in everyday situations.

Ministry, which is experience-related, or which offers specialist skills, needs to be Word-related. Hundreds of seminars everywhere give the benefit of business and other secular expertise for the work of God. Good as they may be without the Word they will be wanting. The wisdom of the business world should not make redundant the wisdom of the Word and the word of wisdom, or being led of God. A word, of wisdom is beyond human experience. It is revelation.

Wisdom may come through a chance remark, or a throw-away comment. To the person speaking, it may seem nothing, but it is sped by the Spirit like an arrow straight to the heart of a problem or need. It will, like all gifts, be 'for the profit of all' enabling us to 'walk in wisdom' especially toward those who are outside' (Col 4:5). Wisdom is described as treasure (Col 2:3; Mt 13:52; Rom 11:33). The gift or manifestation is that treasure. It has a practical purpose. It may come in a manner, which does not seem miraculous at all. God makes little fuss about anything He works very quietly, almost secretly, and never tries to amaze us for the sake of it. It does not need to come in spectacular form. It is not only a wonder; it also touches the heart of the problem.

A word of wisdom may come to us for ourselves, or for somebody else, or for a whole Christian group. For Paul, It came personally, and for Saul it came through Samuel.

A word of caution about seeking a word of wisdom. One of the major purposes of this gift is to direct us. Some ask God to counsel them, to show them in what way they should go, but how do they know that He wishes them to go at all? It

is dangerous to ask God to show you a new direction unless He has first given a word of wisdom indicating that He has a new direction for you. Perhaps there is no new direction. He simply wants you to carry on as you are. Then again, if He wants you to change direction, He would tell you anyway, and not conceal it until you are in a mood to fast and pray to find out what it is. If He does not speak, it is because He has nothing to say, and is satisfied with what we are doing. God is not a radio to be turned on at will. The Lord will let us know quickly enough if we are running in the wrong direction.

### **(B) A Word of Knowledge**

Right at the start we read, *'Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat' (Gen 2:17)*. Well, we know they did, and the first sin brought knowledge, but the knowledge of evil. It was not scientific knowledge either, but experience. They knew pain, fear, guilt, shame. They also knew goodness, but only as a contrast to their wretched condition.

However, we are concerned with divine not temporal knowledge. To be wise, we have to know, and so the gift of a word of knowledge complements the gift of a word of wisdom. If a special word brings to light a particular circumstance, a word of wisdom may well be needed also to do what should be done.

Whatever we find is meant by a word of knowledge, we cannot leave out of our study the fact that Scripture so often talks of it, and usually in a special sense. We know, in any case, that the Word of God remains the divine source of spiritual wisdom and knowledge. *'Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God' (Rom 11:33)*. The written Word of God reveals the Living Word, *'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col 2:3)*.

The manifestation gifts are too valuable to neglect: *'Cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding ... seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasure ... for wisdom is better than rubies'* (Pro 2:3, 8:11). Jesus describes knowledge as 'treasure' (Mt 13:52). The alternative is *'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge', they wither away for lack of moisture'* (Hos 4:6; Lk 8:6).

**-What knowledge:** In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, *"I thank You Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one whom the Son wills to reveal Him"* (Lk 10:21-22). In pursuit of our goal, here is a useful fact: The Gospel of John never uses the word 'knowledge' but always knowing.' To John, true knowledge is not something memorized, it is something going on, dynamic. The participle 'knowing'. is not a static noun, it goes with living, loving, seeing, believing. That puts us on the right track-true knowledge is 'going on knowing', like knowing a family member. A word of knowledge will relate to that.

**-Knowledge and Power:** We pick up another clue from Matt 22:29: *'You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God'*. This would have staggered the Rabbis. The scribes and others worked constantly on the Torah (the Law, or Scripture). They knew much of it by heart, and thereby expected to earn eternal life. What Jesus said about them was what they said about the common people, whom they considered cursed for not knowing the law. He showed them the secret principle of knowledge: *'If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine'* (Jn 7:17). Today, many church leaders deny both the Scriptures, and the power of God, something that even the Pharisees did not do. They treat the supernatural gifts as natural talents, tongues as linguistic ability, knowledge as education, and wisdom as psychology. Those who study a miracle book without belief in miracles

are foredoomed to failure.

**-The Lamp That Never Flickers:** Opening up our knowledge of knowledge still further, we turn to Matt 11:25-27. First note that His Father was the 'Lord of heaven and earth', but had revealed things to 'babes'. In Luk 10:23, He also said, *'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see'*. **Note** Christ's description of the Father- 'The Lord of heaven and earth'. He knew all that went on, and could We reveal it to whom He pleased. the ultimate knowledge. There is special knowledge. *'No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him' (Lk 10:22)*. Jesus thanked the Father

that certain things were 'hidden from the wise and the prudent and revealed to babes'.

The supreme knowledge is the knowledge of God. To know Him, however, is not all knowledge, which Paul says would enable us to understand all mysteries (1Cor 13:2). There is God's knowledge, as the Lord of heaven and earth, and it includes 'the secrets of his heart' which 1Cor 14:25 says can be revealed through the prophetic gifts.

Now, let us put all these clues together and see if we can define what knowledge is in 'a word of knowledge'. These clues indicate quite a comprehensive knowledge. First, the basic knowledge, to know God, which is only by revelation through His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible calls it 'understanding', which means a living acquaintance with God. Secondly, a deeper heart-grasp of His Word. Thirdly, a divinely inspired sense of what is right and wrong, or wise and foolish in life. Fourthly, the Father knows all things, and they that know Him may have His confidence and share a little of what He sees.

**-Knowledge and The Church:** However, we have spent the first part of this sub-topic showing that this gift is much more than these prophetic flashes of knowledge about what is happening.

The gift comes to people among people, not as a dark saying in secret. Having the knowledge of God is not for personal gratification or even egotism, but for 'the profit of all.'

**-Gifts in Practice:** Finally, there are two questions. First, how does a person know he or she has 'a word of knowledge?' We shall look more closely at the mechanics of the prophetic gifts later, but we can note here that the promptings of God may be experienced in our spirit, our mind, or our body. Sometimes we may have no 'experience' as such - that is, we may speak a word of knowledge, or of wisdom, without realizing it, just as Caiaphas was said to prophesy without knowing it (Jn 11:49-51). God may use a throw-away remark to somebody who needs it. During a conversation one pastor laughed and said to another, 'We know ever so many ways to do without the Holy Spirit'. It affected the whole outlook of his friend.

Secondly, can this gift be taught? Nobody can learn a gift. However, instruction can be useful. Teaching about gifts is necessary to recover and to encourage reticent people who have held back the gift that God has given them-in particular speech gifts. Some need to value their gift, and understand how it operates. It is not impossible for those being 'taught a gift' to receive the real thing, but only by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit responds to seeking and willing souls.

Otherwise, any learned technique remains what it is, a work of the flesh, not a manifestation of God's Spirit. Nobody can teach a manifestation, though we may all *learn about it*.

**-Knowledge and Public Ministry:** However, if we are trusted with the secrets of human lives is it for public knowledge? If God trusts us with a secret, should it not be for personal counsel to that individual alone? To acquaint a whole congregation that somebody's Christian marriage is breaking up, or that a person has this or that weakness, or even that they are good in some way, brings nobody any benefit. It might give material for gossips, or even leave someone standing in bad grace.

If ever a revelation describes a person's fault, then the Scriptures tell us what to do. *'If any man be overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted'* (Gal 6:1). We are not to tell the whole church -

nothing could be better guaranteed to do the devil's work as the accuser of the brethren and so split a church. Christian procedures are strictly laid down, both by Christ, and by apostolic command. Love covers a multitude of sins. The real purpose of such a personal revelation would be 1Jh 5:16 says, to pray about their sin, or as Gal 6:2 exhorts us, to bear one another's burdens. The possibility is, that in trying to come up congregational expectations, a person may bring revelation that originate from the imagination rather than the Spirit. We wish it were never so, but many have been disenchanted after exciting statements from the Lord-some on very prominent and noted occasions. But let this not detract from the fact that God's servants do have revelations by the Spirit.

I do not want to pronounce judgment, but to put forth thoughts that perhaps need time and study to settle. Unfortunately, words of knowledge have been heard that are so personal, and related to so little in the church, or the Word, or even the work of God, that it has all become dubbed, with some justification, as 'charismatic fortune telling.' Yet rightly operated it could be invaluable.

Again, as to failed prophecies, and failed words of knowledge, human fallibility will occur. That does not invalidate a ministry, unless it becomes frequent. Only the Word of God is inerrant. Even Agabus, named in Scripture as a Christian prophet, was not completely accurate in his utterances. He said the Jews would bind Paul at Jerusalem, and hand him over to the Gentiles. They did neither of those things (Acts 21:10). Other prophets in Acts were likewise limited. To be mistaken is possible, but wild and total inaccuracies, and great pronouncements made half way the world that have proven nonsense, have brought the gift into disrepute as mere verbosity, and bring into question whether the people concerned are prophets or not. We learned, a few pages back, that wisdom and knowledge are complementary. A word of knowledge needs, sometimes at least, to be complemented by a word

of wisdom. It can be salutary when a church's spiritual condition is described in the Spirit, but those exercising that type of ministry should consider how Christ judged the seven churches of Asia in Revelation. He always included a positive note of spiritual counsel and wisdom.

**-Knowledge and The Third Party:** It may be that *confirmation* may come through a word of knowledge, but it is no more than that. Guidance is direct. God told Cornelius to send for Peter, but He told Peter also, or Peter would have had nothing to do with it. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him'.

No third party, no prophet or priest, or pastor, or even apostle, need stand between God and believers. Nobody has the right to lord it over believers in the name of the Lord, as if they had a private communication from God about other people. Certainly, others may be shown what God's will is for us, as was shown to the men in Antioch about Paul and Silas, but it is never without the Lord showing us also as He had shown Paul and Silas (Acts 13:1-2). What each of us does is our own choice. Responsibility does not rest on other shoulders.

Paul, for example, always kept his Own counsel with God, whatever others said, instanced especially before he was arrested. They told him not only what would happen, which was more or less correct, but what he should do, which was their interpretation of their own prophecy, and incorrect. God gives us wisdom, not instruction for action. To do what we feel is right before God is our glorious privilege and standing in Christ, of which no man must subtly rob us. We must discern - the gift of discernment is often needed in the operation of other gifts.

### **(C) Faith**

What Jesus said is perhaps the first thing people quote, that with enough faith we could move a mountain (Mt 17:20, 21:21). However, nobody has ever done it. No doubt many have experimented - usually with no brilliant hope of success

and perhaps with no idea where to move a mountain to.

No apostle did it, nor did Jesus Himself. God planned the landscape at creation, and I do not think that He would want us shuffling the scenery about. The most frequent illustrations of faith in the New Testament are healings, but that need not be taken as the major use of the gift of faith. Why then did Jesus talk of moving mountains by faith?

For those who want to understand the Bible, here is something very important. Always read a whole passage, and never just one verse. Do not pull texts out of the texture of Scripture, like this one about moving mountains. Matt 17:20 concerns prayer against demons, and Matt 21:21 relates to opposition and enemies. Mountain moving has to be understood in these connections. Now, about doing the impossible - awful mistakes have been made. To get to the heart of the matter, we will enter the Garden of Gethsemane with humble awe. The Son of God is praying about what is possible, and what He says penetrates to the very heart of the matter. Jesus said *'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will' (Mt 26:39)*. We understand from this, that only that which is God's will is possible. A disciple who heard Jesus in the Garden later wrote, *'If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us' (1Jn 5:14)*. Christ's prayer shows that what is possible is limited by the very evils Jesus came to overcome. It was

not possible, for example, for God to save us from evil, and also save His Son. Similarly, our fight against evil often presents us with such a situation. In order to be what God sends us to be, His children witnessing in an alien world, means that we are faced by evils.

**-From Faith to Faith:** At least four forms of faith are mentioned in Scripture:

- God has dealt to each one a measure of faith (Rom 12:3).
- By grace you have been saved through faith... the gift of God (Eph 2:8).
- The fruit of the Spirit ... faithfulness (Gal 5:22)
- 'Lord increase our faith' (Lk 17:5). There is given. another faith by the same Spirit (1Cor 12:9).



We can describe these four kinds as follows: -Common faith, which all men have. -Saving faith. -Faith, the fruit of the Spirit (ever-increasing faith). -Faith, which is the gift.

This may over-simplify matters for the scholarly, but our analysis will help us to grasp what we mean by the gift of faith.

**-The Paradox:** Many books are on the market to exemplify and build up faith. Nevertheless, the greatest is the Bible -the book of faith. It is the handbook showing us how faith operates, and also it gives us the faith we need to operate. *'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God' (Rom 10:17).*

Now comes the paradox. We also read that *'The word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it' (Heb 4:2).* We need faith to read the Word, but we need the Word to get faith. However, that

little problem is not insoluble. Faith flows into the hearts of any who are open to it. Let the cynic remain a cynic, but the spiritual law is that faith brings faith, as

Romans 1:17 says *'from faith to faith'*.

This is the principle which Jesus explained: *'Whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him' (Mt 13:12).* The spirit of unbelief sours the soil, and kills the seed of the Word.

We can take that a step further. Although faith is a gift, we are responsible if we do not possess it. It rests with us to believe, or not believe. It is our choice. Unbelief is not intellectual but emotional, a matter of attitude of heart. Nothing can possibly disprove God, or show that to trust Him is wrong, but 'all men have not faith'. That is, they have willed themselves not to believe, and are *'unreasonable and wicked' (2Thess 3:2)*, because they can believe, for God has *'dealt to each one a measure of faith' (Rom 12:3).* It is a test of character, not of reasoning ability. Unbelief is sin, which is why he who does not believe is condemned already. Faith

saves sinners, although the nature of sinners is to rebel against faith. "Have faith!" Jesus commanded, and He commends those who do.

Faith is from God, His gift to us at birth, like sight or hearing. It is a faculty or a hand, by which we reach out, and take what God has for us. If we destroy the faculty, or let that hand wither, then we can take nothing. We are guilty losers. The world conditions us. We go out in the morning, work all day, and come in at night, read the newspaper, watch television, and in all that time, how much have we been exposed to what will encourage faith in God? Usually nothing whatsoever -not a single word. On the contrary, we have been almost immersed in a sea of doubt and sin. The world is a vast brainwashing establishment to destroy faith in God. It maims us spiritually; it amputates our hand of faith. We are 'civilized' out of the simple nature God gave us.

**-Increasing Faith:** What is faith? It cannot be quantified. There is no half-faith, 90 per cent faith, or anything like that. The poet Wordsworth described it as a 'passionate intuition', persuasion and belief ripened into faith. That is what Jesus meant when He said 'If you have faith as a mustard seed' it could move mountains. Nevertheless, we read about the '*proportion of faith*' (*Rom 12:6*) that is, proportionate to the demand made upon it. Jesus talked about little faith and great faith, and asked, 'How is it you have no faith? Having no faith was the only thing that ever surprised Jesus (Mt 8:10; Mk 4:40). The vital thing to realize is that we can increase in faith. One form of that increase comes with the faith gift.

All increase of faith, such as the disciples asked for in Luk 17:5, is given by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. It is impossible for faith to grow by prayer or worship alone. We may pray for faith, but we must also take the proper steps for our prayer to be answered, namely by hearing or reading the Word. The less our understanding of the Word, the less our faith. We can have so little of the Word under our feet that we do not stand on faith, but only

balance on one toe. We may as well try to grow an apple tree on a damp cloth, as cultivate faith by a paperback book of somebody else's experience.

The teaching of the Word is the only true way. This way a church can be strong, and its members can avoid doubts, and not fall under the displeasure of the Lord. *"Without faith it is impossible to please God"*. It is the only likely means

by which there can be any genuine manifestation of the Spirit. Hearing about people's wonderful answers to prayer, or healings, or experiences is necessary and good, for God commands us to tell and testify; but often our doubts tell us

that other people's miracles were only for them, and not for us. They do not really create the kind of faith Christ wants. We see that in Jh 2:23-24, where faith based on miracles is not the best faith. It is only faith in miracles, not faith in God. When miracles do not happen, faith can evaporate.

**-Faith Denied:** Make a note of this - *true faith is not in things happening, but is personal confidence in God*. Faith means we leave things to Him, and step out in trust. Here are some valuable pointers to true faith:

- Faith is not merely being orthodox, or being positive about doctrine, for we can be ultra-correct, but with not a scrap of real trust in God.
- To try to do a deal with God, and say, 'I will believe in you God, if you answer this prayer', is gross ignorance of the whole matter. That is not trust.
- God does not always do what we think He should do. In fact, that is why we have to trust Him. If He always answered every prayer, faith would not be needed.
- We ask 'Why?' but who are we to demand to know why God does, or does not, do something as a condition for our trust? What sort of trust is that? It is so conditional that it fails to be faith altogether.
- God accepts no terms for trust. Must God conform to the reasonings of our puny minds on pain of being disbelieved?

- If we do not believe, it is our loss, not His.
- Faith cannot be assured, except by the task undertaken in faith.

**-The Gift of Faith Defined:** All faith is a gift, the work of God (Jn 6:29). Paul alludes to what Jesus said about faith moving mountains, and links it with the gift of the Spirit in 1Cor 13:2.

*‘Though ... I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains’.* Earlier, we said that not even Jesus moved mountains by the power of faith, but we do read, *‘by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible’* (Heb 11:3). Faith is the invisible reality.

That kind of faith power is treated in Scripture as extraordinary. The gift is a manifestation of the Spirit, as we saw, and this kind of faith has all the marks of the supernatural might of God. That is the gift. Faith given by an act of the Spirit. It is useless to exhort congregations to exercise faith on that level. They

cannot have mountain-moving faith just by trying. Like the Welsh old lady who tried it on the mountain, which blocked the view from her window. She got up the next morning, saw it was still there, and commented, ‘I thought as much!’

Faith is not the product of striving, straining, and concentrating. It is rest, not labor.

**-The Gift of Faith in The Local Church:** Viewing the exploits of men and women like Moses and Elijah, or George Müller and Smith Wigglesworth we may feel very small.

Yet they, in themselves, were not special. *‘Elijah was a man with a nature like ours’* (Greek *homoioopathes*- ‘same man with feeling’) (Jas 5:17). They were simply raised up in their times for enterprises, which obviously called for the courageous faith gift, which God granted them. Their boldness in God challenged the world.

We now come to the heart of the question. What is the gift of faith? So far as is practical we will start with a definition. *The gift of faith is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit imparting that special faith needed for a special work, which God puts before us. The work may be large or*

*small, but faith is a gift to all those to whom it is necessary, in order for them to do what they have to do.*

The illustrious names of certain nation-moving and world-shaking people of faith are constantly given us. But why just these? Are they really the privileged few? The truth is, whoever does the will of God, whether in a sphere large or limited, will enjoy this same resource. If tongues and prophecy are available to us in our town or village church, why are we afflicted with a sense of inferiority that supposes other gifts are only for eminent leaders? If one gift, then all gifts are available, according to God's will.

**-Where The Church Is:** All gifts, including the manifestation of faith, are for the local church. The Corinthian church, Paul testified, '*came short in no gift*' (1Cor 1:7). True, nobody in Corinth ever moved mountains, or, by faith, plucked up trees, and planted them in the sea, but the gift of faith was theirs according to their opportunities and local problems. Spiritual gifts are not the exclusive equipment of world leaders, or those prominent in what we call the 'wider church.'

At this point, we shall have to make a digression and look at two facts. First, the word 'church' simply means a gathering or congregation (**Greek *ekklesia***), and is so used both in Old and New (Greek) Testament. It does not signify an organized, official membership, for such a thing was unknown in the New Testament. Secondly, there is no such thing in the New Testament as the church catholic, or universal. *The body of Christ is always local.*

God blesses us in all kinds of situations. When our gospel crusades are backed by all the Christian churches in a city, those congregations are the church. One day, when all believers are caught up to be with Christ for ever, then that gathering to Christ will be the universal church, all one in Christ.

**-According to The Task:** According to our call and sphere of service God gives us faith. We have faith for every task, whatever God wants

us to undertake. We do not read that Smith Wigglesworth parted the sea like Moses, or that Moses healed the sick like Wigglesworth. We do not read that Müller brought down fire from heaven, or challenged the monarch on his throne like Elijah, but Elijah did not feed 2,000 orphans by faith. Each according to his place. If mountains must be moved, there will be Faith to do it, and not until then. There are leaders exercising ministries literally affecting nations. They are doing just what they are called to do and they exercise faith for that. Not all see mighty healings - that is not their gift, but they head evangelism into half the world. Their faith-gift is conspicuous. Nevertheless, when we labor out of Sight in some remote corner the same gift will operate.

**-Faith and Obedience:** The faith-gift makes all things possible. Even ordinary faith produces outstanding people, though not all church members are notable examples of its galvanizing power. Some are still at the growth stage, where they declare they would go through fire and water for God but only if it does not rain. Paul and Silas in Philippi, sick with horribly mutilated backs, had a celebration meeting in the pitch dark prison, and then conducted a baptismal service before they had recovered from their terrible mauling. That is not all, for we read that when they left, 'they [that is Paul and Silas] encouraged them.' Paul and Silas, battered and wounded, encouraged the brethren they left there (Acts 16:40). That is the kind of possibility, which the gift of faith opens up. This is rather different from staying away from worship on Sunday, in case the cold, caught in the rain at the football match on Saturday gets worse; or to catch up with work that we did not do during the week when we were watching interesting nonsense on television; or because we feel tired. 'They that honor Me I will honor' says the Lord'. Believe it and our habits will change and our health! Now we can learn something from the two words faith and obedience. The Greek word for unbelief (*apistia*) and to be disobedient (*apeitheo*), belong to the same root. To obey God, you need faith; but faith is given when you obey. Obedience is faith, and faith means doing what God says. Not being able to do it is no excuse, for we are able to do it, by faith. God

offers us the resource of the gift of faith. Prodiges are possible. Ordinary people can expand their potential, and to that, history is witness. Jesus challenged His hearers, *'What do you do more than the others?' (Mt 5:47)*. If we are 'faithed' by the Spirit, we can tackle the impossible. That is the characteristic of Christianity. The hallmark of God's work in us is that He dispatches us into worlds that nobody else has ever conquered. Study the story of Peter walking on the water. Three miles out on the sea of Galilee the disciples saw Jesus gliding towards them on the water. They shrieked themselves hoarse with superstitious terror, thinking that He was a ghost. Jesus called to them, 'It is I'. Now Peter knew Jesus. He knew the only Person in the whole universe who would tell him to do the impossible.

That was the acid test of His identity. He challenged the apparition, saying, *'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water (Mt 14:28)*. Jesus did challenge him. Peter walked on the waves to Christ. That was a manifestation of the gift of faith. Jesus is the one who calls men and women to be greater than they thought themselves to be. If you are thinking of following Jesus, you should know He is like that. He does not call you just to hold a lily or pick buttercups. The tongue-tied preach. Fishermen become fishers of men. Harlots become lovers of God. Cripples walk. That shows it is Jesus, the true God, who sends you to undertake what you would normally never consider.

Of course, doing what He commands also identifies the true believer, and reveals the gift of faith. 'By my God I can run through a troop'. *'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'*. Nobody has faith to move mountains until mountains need to be moved. But there is faith to do whatever God bids us do when we do it. The size of faith is not the right language. The necessary size of the tool of faith will be handed out to us according to the size of the job.

**-Formula Faith:** To speak and make a positive 'confession' in faith is obviously an excellent practice. Positive language helps positive attitudes. However, we must not turn this into a doctrine, for it is not in the Bible. The secret of getting God to do things does not lie merely in

saying the right thing, getting the formula right, or in positive talk. It is alarming to suggest that God can be made to act if we only speak with the proper technique; that saying it makes God do it. If it seemed so -and there are always testimonies to anything - then those concerned also had faith in their hearts, which was the actual cause. Faith activates the miraculous. That is the dynamic. David's challenge to Goliath has been used as an example illustrating how Victory comes through positive confession. What is not mentioned is that Goliath also spoke a positive confession and lost! No amount of positive shouting will deceive God if we are not acting in obedience and trust in Him, and do not believe 'in our heart', as Jesus said.

There are ample Bible instances that do not fit this 'miracle in your mouth' formula. David in fact confessed negatively- 'I will yet die by the hand of Saul'- but he did not, as you know! However, our object is not merely to comment on formula faith, but to show that it is faith that operates, whatever shape it comes in. Those proclaiming their discoveries and innovations back them up with many testimonies. No doubt, but it is not the techniques and teachings which succeed, but the underlying faith in

God. God cannot be made to jump when we press the right button and say the right thing, but God does honor faith, even when it comes larded over with peculiar ideas. As articulate beings we must articulate our faith, but whatever the words in our mouth, or the nonsense in our head, God sees only what is in our heart.

#### **(D) Healing**

The gift of healing draws the greatest interest, and so we must give it very careful attention. It embraces so many divergent views many non-scriptural. Some want to disprove it, and others have extreme views saying we need never be sick, or even die. The subject is a minefield, but we will plot a course by the Word of God, first about healing in general, and then about gifts of healings.

**-Why God Heals:** Healing, as we shall explain it here, began with Jesus. There



had always been superstitions of course, prayers to the gods, healing waters such as we read of in John chapter 5, and so on, just as in the world today. Those bitten by snakes were healed, as they believed, and looked on the serpent of brass made by Moses, which Jesus Himself referred to in Jh 3:14. However, the healing ministry of Christ was totally new and startling and, for that matter, so is the ministry of Christ today through His believing churches. What Jesus did gives us some fundamental truths.

*Jesus healed without any condition*, or pressing people to be converted. Of course He did seek the lost people of His day, as He does those of our day, but whether they believed that He was the Son of God or not, He healed them. His compassion was unhesitating and universal. when a foreign soldier said his servant was sick, Jesus immediately said, 'I will come and heal him.' His work among the sick was a demonstration of the truth of divine grace.

*Jesus acted in the name of God the Father*, and so demonstrated the truth that health is the normal blessing of God, like the sun and the rain for the just and unjust. He healed without obligation, for love, not for effect, because the sick were sick.

*Christ did not just love souls, but people*. He had concern for their physical needs. God loved the world (Greek ***kosmos***, the inhabited globe), all His creatures, so that, not a sparrow falls from the house top without the Father knowing, Jesus said. By healing the afflicted, Jesus asserted that He was doing the Father's work, and showing what God's attitude really is towards everything that breathes.

*Jesus' whole ministry was more than physical cures*. He said, in every way possible that the whole man needed help, physical, psychological, and spiritual. He wanted to do far more than heal, saying that it was not useful for a man to be sound in body if he went into hell fire. He was disappointed when they went away too easily content. '*You only come to me for bread that perishes, not for the bread of heaven that gives you everlasting life*', He sadly told them. He wanted them to read His wonders as signs, spelling out the tremendous truth of a vast heart of

love that was beating for them – that they needed God. Often people accepted the hand-out of a cure, but turned away, and stayed outside the comprehensive benefits of the kingdom of God. *Jesus was not a mere social reformer.* His method was intensely personal and concerned with the entire personality. The point of the healing of the woman with a hemorrhage is not so much the healing itself, as His personal concern for her. Ringed by a peering crowd, He calmed her fears and assured her of salvation. She had taken healing from His robe, but He could not just let it go at that. He wanted it to be personal, so everybody would know that it was a love gift from Him to her.

*Christ sought to create a relationship of praise, thankfulness and worship between the sick and His Father.* When He healed the blind man (Jh 9), Jesus went to find him afterwards and asked him, ‘*do you believe in the son of God?*’ the episode ends when the man said, “*Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him*’. He instructed the disciples to heal the sick, then, beyond that, they must proclaim the real good news, the Gospel, that ‘*the kingdom of god has come near to you*’. He healed the leper (Mrk 1:41-45), and sent him to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving as a testimony. He also healed ten lepers (Lk 17:12-19), but only one, a Samaritan, came back to thank Him. Jesus remarked, ‘*were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? Where are the nine?*’ He wanted those healed to have more, to establish a relationship of worship with God.

*Jesus gave people deliverance often before they turned to God,* even if they failed to do so nine times out of ten – a fair average perhaps in our Gospel meetings. Healing may be an end in itself- if that is all we want. But from God's angle, it is to open our hearts to more love.

Here is an all-important summary to be well learned. *To know and love God is more important than healing.* Many go unhealed despite prayer and faith, but healing is not everything. Sickness is not the ultimate evil, nor are cures the ultimate good.

It is absurd to lose faith when healing does not come. God does far more than heal, and He does not fail. There are infinitely higher benefits for which Christ labored and died. Healing, in fact, only takes on meaning, significance, and value when it opens a soul to the love of God. Then it becomes a sign they have read.

**-Healers Who Suffer:** There is a strange background to healing. *'By His stripe we are healed'* - that Scripture we know well enough, but it has a neglected dimension. Those who go with Christ to heal will know something of His stripes. He sends out those who are ready to suffer. Jesus sent out His disciples

to heal the sick and, at the same time, warned them, they were called upon to suffer and be persecuted. Healing and cross-bearing go together. They may even suffer sickness, as Paul apparently did, as he told the Corinthians. At least any first-hand experience generates sympathy with the afflicted. Healing and suffering are destined to go hand in hand. Somebody suffers, whoever is healed.

Perhaps you want a healing ministry? Then, alongside the glory, be prepared for tears, heartache, disappointment, frustration, and persecution. The price for others wholeness was Christ's brokenness. Those who minister His grace best will share something of Christ's inner heart. There is also the completely irrational attitude of the world. Those who pray for the sick will be attacked. The world will make those suffer who bring divine relief for suffering. There are men who write clever books against divine healing, and who never lift a finger to bring relief to any sufferer.

**-The Problem of the Unhealed:** If you want the gift of healing, you will certainly come up against the question of suffering. What do you say when prayer for the sick seems unanswered? In fact, this question is bound up with what we have been saying: that Jesus heals because He suffered. I need to explain that. Remember that what Jesus was He is - the same yesterday, today, and for ever. What Jesus was on the Cross, He is on the throne, the Lamb slain from the

foundation of the earth. He never changes, and is the eternal God. God heals because He suffers.

However, no Christian should sit down and fatalistically accept sickness, either his own, or anybody else's, as the incomprehensible will of God. Our God is not incomprehensible. We wage war against sickness, since it is a mark of evil, and although we cannot make a wholesale end of it, and cure everybody in sight, that is no reason why people should not be healed.

**-Healings Belong to The Kingdom:** Next, there is an issue upon which we must make the most careful distinction. Miracles do authenticate the Gospel, but that is not the reason for miracles. It is a gross error, in fact, suppose that God heals the sick Just to prove something or establish something. If that was the object, then lack of healing would have the opposite effect, and disprove Christianity. But in fact when the sick stay sick it disproves nothing.

One form of this error comes from the school of thought that says healings were only temporary, for the beginning of the church, in order to establish it. It really is a shocking and scandalous suggestion. Is God like that? Healing the sick not for their sake, but for His private interests? Did God really use afflicted people just as a convenient opportunity to work a few miracles until Christianity was well established, just as firefighters, and then show no practical interest in them any longer? Is that love? Or heartlessness?

We have said elsewhere that Paul's reference to the *charismata* in 1Cor 12 is part of His doctrine of the church. That is, the gifts are a basic feature of the church. Nowhere is there the slightest suggestion that what was built into the church has now been taken out.

It was certainly part of the original truth. They preached a Christ who healed, and that is how the evangelists proclaimed Him in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. What right has anybody to preach a Christ who does not heal, if they preach the Christ of the four gospels?

If God did not intend this mercy to be extended to times, we certainly do not get that impression by reading Scripture. At least there is no statement that makes it at all clear. On the contrary, every statement assumes that Christ never changes, and continues the work He began.

Jesus sent the disciples to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Miracles of healing were the evidences of the power of that Kingdom. Where is the Kingdom without that evidence? For centuries, the church lacked such genuine power-signs. Instead, it transferred the whole idea of the Kingdom into the temporal authority of the church turning the Kingdom into an empire, which limited kings

and kingdoms through the Pope of Rome. This followed Augustine's book, *The City of God*. If we deny miracles, as many did and do, whether liberals or even evangelicals, they change the character of the Gospel they preach. A non-miracle Gospel is reduced to a purely spiritual religion, ineffective on earth. If we do that, then somehow, we are left with the necessity of making such a heavenly teaching relevant, for it pretty well ceases to be so for people walking around in shoes on earth. The real Gospel needs nobody to show it to be relevant it just is. The baker never yet had to argue that his shop is 'relevant.' The Gospel is the bread of life, bringing life and healing to mind, body, and soul - preach it, and all the world sees that it matters.

The Kingdom of God has been introduced on earth, and healing shows it and, unless it continues that way, how do we know it is the same Gospel? The Gospel witnesses to itself by signs following. Without healing it is stripped of a powerful element of its self-authentication. Healing is not detachable, a mere bit of gadgetry or an accessory. It is integral to the Gospel.

Do we really preach Christ? Yes? Then Matthew shows that wherever Jesus went, when He moved from one place to another, He always healed. It was a consistent habit of Christ. Peter also said that healing is what He went about

doing. That is Jesus!

**-The Gift:** Now we come to the gifts of healings. The gift of healing is not mentioned in the Bible. It is a useful term but unfortunately has been appropriated by spiritualist healers, psychics, New Agers, and others. Christians were using it, however, long before the modern 'healing epidemic' (as somebody called it) began.

Paul always uses the plural expression 'gifts of healings'. It comes three times in 1Cor 12:9,28,30. These plural gifts are from one person to another, that is, many healings through one individual, acting as a steward, for healings to be given to the needy and afflicted. If we put the context of this gift together with it we would read, *'To another is given the manifestation of the gifts of healings'*, or in more common terms *'the gift of the gifts of healings'*. This is not a commission to heal all and sundry, but only such as the Holy Spirit gives a manifestation for.

**-More Light:** Jesus shows particular concern for the victims of other people's wickedness the struggle of fathers and mothers, the distress of children, the bereaved, the frightened, the demon-driven, the unwanted and outcasts, the hungry, the untouchables, refugees all those who had done nothing to deserve such miseries. The sick came to Him like an endless river. They touched His heart, and over them He shed tears, and finally, His blood. He championed the cause of all sufferers. To offend one of His little ones (we are all His little ones incidentally), He said, would bring such woe upon the offenders own heads that to be dropped in the sea with a millstone around their necks would be more pleasant.

To understand sickness, we have to learn that there is a universal disturbance of the order of God to which we all contribute. Personal sin makes us more vulnerable to the prevailing conditions of evil, so that a sickness could well be linked with our own failure. In Christ's day the sad masses believed afflictions branded them as sinful. This added to their distress. Jesus showed them that He was forgiving and caring. Guilt could be lifted from their consciences to give

them the peace of heaven in their soul.

When He said, *'I have come that (you) may have life'*, they understood it, better than many today, as meaning life for body and soul. He told a paralyzed man he was forgiven, and told the disciples, 'Peace [shalom] I leave with you', that is, wellbeing and prosperity. The congregation in the Nazareth synagogue (Lk 4) would clearly understand that healing was intended when Jesus spoke from Isaiah 61:1-2, especially when He used the specific illustration of the healing of Naaman the leper.

Sometimes mistaken theology produces a mistaken translation of the Bible. One we ought to correct is Jh 9. Seeing a blind man, the disciples began to philosophize, asking who had sinned - his parents or himself - before he was born (as if he could!). Jesus said, 'Neither!' Wrong punctuation of verse 3 has disguised what Jesus did. Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.' That surely amounts to a slander upon God. Jesus used the imperative: *"Let the work of God be done!"* The Greek uses no causal term. It does not suggest that the man was born blind in order to be healed. Correctly it should read: *'This man has not sinned nor his parents, but let the work of God be done in him I must work the work of God while I am in the world'*.

In other words the work of God was not to make people blind, but to give them sight. God made eyes from clay at creation, and Jesus repeated the process for this blind man. *'I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day'*, Christ said. Jesus was doing what the Father did, and added, *'As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world... For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see'*. Jh 9 is put there to show that God does not inflict people, or cure them just to make a point.

**-Specific Healing Gifts:** Now we are ready to tackle the phrase **'gifts of healings'**, that is, multiple gifts for multiple sicknesses. So many guesses have been applied to it, particularly that it means one person can heal one thing, and another person heal something else - one the blind, another the deaf, and so on.

Some have interpreted the gift by their experience, which is always an unsafe procedure. They have found one particular affliction being cured, or cured more than other troubles, and they have taken that to mean that they have found their gift, as they say. One spoke of himself as an 'arthritis specialist.' Leg-lengthening, plus perhaps the claim of a 'discernment' to detect sufferers from a short limb, is another specialist healing claim. God does adjust limbs, of course,

but this gift is, incidentally, open to question. Measuring a leg is notoriously difficult, even for hospitals. An imperceptible movement of the hip, made even involuntarily, can produce the impression of a limb or growing. This kind of healing is suspiciously like a technique rather than a miracle. Onlookers sometimes wonder whose leg is being pulled!

In Scripture nobody specializes in one affliction. Like salvation, healing is to the 'whosoever'. A single-affliction gift, for deafness say, but not for heart trouble, would be discrimination. An evangelist would never offer God's forgiveness for theft, but not for adultery. Our faith should rest on God, not healing: nor should it be limited to what we have *seen* God heal. If we only see one sickness cured, and only believe for that, it is all we will ever see. It is time to get back to the Word.

Jesus healed *'all kinds of sickness, and all kinds of disease among the people'* (Mt 4:23), and Peter similarly. People brought to him *'sick people those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed'* (Acts 5:16). Through the apostles' hands there were *'many signs and wonders done among the people'* (Acts 5:12). We read how, when Paul was on the isle of Malta, *'the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed'* (Acts 28:8-9). A gift of healing for one specific affliction only has no Bible precedent.

**-Building Up Hopes:** If anybody thinks that we ought not to build up people's hopes in case they are not healed; they had better advise the afflicted never to open their Bibles. The Word of God is, without doubt, the worst offender in building up expectations! In fact, I, like most of



my colleagues, would never have laid hands on anybody without Bible warrant, and mainly we have been inspired directly by the Word of God to do so.

Of course, some deny that the Bible teaches healing, just as some deny that it says that Jesus is the Son of God. There is no Christian doctrine taught in the Scriptures, which is not denied by some group. I find however that it needs a good deal of sophisticated and complicated exposition of the Word not to preach divine healing. It is such a straightforward truth. The golden rule of Bible interpretation is that usually the simple explanation is the most likely one, even in difficult passages. On the very surface, healing is a Bible truth. Healing passages are not even difficult, except when turned into controversy the common strategy of those who do not believe what the Bible really says.

**-Criticism of Christ:** It is disobedience to Christ not to minister healing. To raise the objection that not all are healed, is a criticism of Jesus who commanded us to heal. He Himself delivered some but passed by others and He does the same now through His church. Critics overlook something. Healing is only a part or aspect of the responsibility to bring our petitions to God. Not all prayer is answered. There is no difference between asking for one thing, and asking for another. If people do not pray for the sick because they may not be healed, are they going to be consistent and pray for nobody in any kind of trouble in case nothing happens? Should we never ask God for anything so that nobody's hopes will be dashed? Believe nothing, then you will not be disappointed.

**-The Gift and The Gifts:** Now, we must go back to the phrase 'gifts of healings'. We will ask a question first, and that will lead us to a full explanation of the gift. Does it mean there are just so healings ear-marked for patients? No. First, we remember that God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34). James, brought up with Jesus as part of the family, was particularly impressed with Christ's indiscriminating concern and he says, *'Do not hold faith... with partiality...for if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors'* (Jas 2:1,9). This was part of the 'royal law' of the Kingdom (v 5,8), that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

It is called the 'royal law because the King Himself acts on that principle. Who then will receive their healing? James helps us. *'Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom'* Christ stressed the fact to John the Baptist that *'the poor have the Gospel preached to them'*. In Acts 3:1-8 Peter gave a gift of healing, saying to a cripple, *'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk'*.

**-The Disenfranchised:** Jesus had a profound feeling for the poor, but they were not the only deprived ones. Certainly Zacchaeus and other tax gatherers were rich. When Jesus preached in the synagogue at Nazareth, He built up a picture of physical deliverance for people who were deprived because they were foreigners. He referred to a non-Jewish widow outside Israel territory to whom God sent the prophet Elijah. Jesus then went to the same Gentile area, Sidon, to

another non-Jewish woman, and brought healing into her home. Sidon had its own patron god of healing, Eshmon and his temple, but he could do nothing for this woman whose daughter had a devil (Mk 7:24-31). She heard that Jesus was there, and she determined to see Him. The disciples tried to get rid of her, and even Jesus tested her, but she persisted until He eventually responded.

Christ's remark is famous: *'Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread, and throw it to the little dogs'* (Mk 7:27). He describes people with rights, and those without. The children were Israel who had 'rights'. To them belonged the promises and the covenant of God. The 'dogs' were those outside commonwealth of Israel.

To the children of the household, bread is a right, their birthright. To those outside the household it is a gift, 'tossed' to them as a favor. Jesus said that healing is a bread of the children of Israel. The woman quickly realized that what was not hers by right she could have as a gift and wittily summed it up: *'Then let some crumbs of Israel's healing bread be tossed to those of us whom they call dogs'*. For her background and semi-heathenism, she displayed a

grasp of God's universal goodness, which is comparatively rare even 2,000 years later. Early evangelists used to hammer at their hearers saying that if they wished to be healed they must first be saved from sin. They were both right and wrong. If people wished to come under the promises of healing, then they must be saved. But they could be healed through the gifts of healings if they were not born-again children of God - if God willed it, and if they could take the healing by the hand of faith. It rested on the graciousness of God.

It has seemed sometimes that the unsaved are healed when believers are not. This could be, and Jesus commented on this. He declared that people would come from the east and west and sit down with Father Abraham, while the children of the kingdom would be cast out. Believers can be unbelieving. Pastors explain the lack of healings under their ministry in terms that build up no expectation. A sermon on 'six reasons why the sick are not healed' will not bring a queue of expectant sick folk to the front.

Negative teaching, or sin, or rank disobedience to the will of God, calls for repentance first.

Meanwhile, non-Christians with a simple outlook benefit by the gifts of healings. One thing is possible, namely that God in His goodness initiates miracles to encourage faith- that is Bible teaching. So He may use the gifts of healings to help believers who may somehow have become bogged down in a non-faith situation.

**-The Word and Healing:** Now look at the relation of the Word to healing. While Jesus did speak of healing as bread, He also spoke of the Word of God as bread. Healing is the Word of God in action! He taught us to pray '*Give us this day our daily bread*'. He also said '*Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life*'-that is the Word of God. We need that bread daily. It is the life-giving, healthful and healing Word of life. '*Your word has given me life*' (Ps 119:50). '*He sent His word and healed them*' (Ps 107:20). To those living daily by the bread of life, the bread of healing is no gift, but is health imparted daily through their spiritual nutriment.

In Reinhard Bonnke's campaigns, he doesn't preach healing, but he preaches the Word of God, and it releases living faith. It is easy then for the Holy Spirit to move through a crowd and touch people with open hearts. *'Seek first the Kingdom of God and these things will be added'*. If we live by the Word, we shall find life in it. God said, *'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'* (Mt 4:4). Withdrawal of life is reversed by the Word of life. 'Every word' is not daily, but a good meal. The multitudes that Christ fed did not pay a penny-no offering baskets went round. Jesus has said 'You give them something to eat', and that is exactly what they did. The bread multiplied miraculously in their hands as they moved around supplying the people. The Church is commanded 'You give them something to eat' the Word of God, for in that Word is health and life.

A believer may be sick through sin, as we read in 1Cor 11. Sin blocks the life-flow, appetite for the Bread of life declines, and some suffer from spiritual anorexia – *'He sent leanness into their soul'* (Ps 106:15). If the elders of the church attend upon such a person, their prayer of faith saves the sick (Jas 5:14-16). Those who have sinned and languish, as if cut off from the rights of the Kingdom of God, can be healed and forgiven. That healing is a gift to them, to restore them to full Kingdom privileges.

**-The Attack On Healing:** All those who pray for the sick, either privately or publicly, will be offered as much discouragement as help. Unbelievers try to explain away healings. They have a few glib ways round them, and the same arguments pop up time and time again. Either the patients were not sick, or were wrongly diagnosed, or else suffered only from a Psychosomatic ailment.

Let us face the fact that in a universe like ours, it is ridiculous to say that God cannot heal the sick. How does anybody know He cannot? Our knowledge is so limited. We would have to know everything about it, to know what cannot happen. We cannot adopt a pose of infallibility, but there are individuals who make it their duty to inform mankind of their dogmas. However, God does know everything, and He finds miracles quite possible.

There is a curious state of mind among unbelievers. When a miracle healing takes place they say God could not have done it, because it breaks the scientific laws. They believe in 'mind over matter', and psychological processes. Can mind over matter break scientific laws, and God cannot? Can we believe in psychological omnipotence, but not in divine omnipotence? God can do anything I believe, except fail.

Some of the healings commonly being seen as a result of prayer are very hard to parallel by other means, including psychiatric and hypnotic cures, which are notoriously unstable anyway. Nothing known in medical history equals some of the amazing happenings in the crusades of Reinhard Bonnke, and in churches worldwide, including the healing of congenital disorders, those born blind, crippled, deaf, the diseased and those cruelly affected by accidents.

### **(E) Miracles**

We must not assume that the working of miracles' is more miraculous than the other eight gifts in 1Cor 12. They are all the manifestation of the Spirit. Of course, the rationalizing critics dismiss the idea that any of them are supernatural, and they regard them as natural talents. What 'talent' the working of miracles represents calls for an awful lot of juggling. If the miraculous is rejected, this sub-topic becomes an impenetrable mystery. The efforts of rationalistic scholars to produce a non-supernatural Christianity have produced something that bears no more resemblance than a rag doll to the palpitating energy and life of the Gospel that carried the apostles into the pagan world 2,000 years ago.

To get into this subject, I feel it would help greatly to think first about the challenging, and thrilling references to the miracle power of God at work everywhere the Gospel went. The New Testament is a miracle book, and Christianity is a miracle faith. The 'working of miracles' is mentioned three times in 1Cor 12:10,28,29.

Jesus is the 'captain of our faith'. He lamented over Capernaum, which had not repented, despite His 'mighty works', using the term three times (Mt 11:20-23). Matt 7:22 refers to

'wonders'. Reports of His 'mighty works' astonished the people of Nazareth. Peter could remind the Jews that Christ had been 'attested by God to you by miracles (*dunamis*), wonders (*teras*) and signs (*semeion*)' (Acts 2:22). The 'miraculous signs' under the hand of Philip amazed Simon the sorcerer in Samaria (Acts 8:6). It happened everywhere, such as in Galatia where there was the 'working of miracles', and the scattered Hebrew Christians had 'tasted the powers [miracles] of the age to come', 'God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, and with various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit'.

The Old Testament congregation of Israel, the 'church in the wilderness', came into existence by prophetic miracle, and was maintained supernaturally. Even then, with all the wonders of Exodus, it is only a picture of the church of Christ Jesus, created, as it were, from the wounded side of the Redeemer, and born of God, to be endowed with the Spirit of the ancient prophets. As Israel was led by the pillar of fire and cloud, the church moves in the Spirit.

**-What are miracles?** Whatever miracles may be; we must first understand the word miracle itself. The Bible word is more correctly 'powerful deeds' (*energemata dunameon*). It is a key word, occurring some 120 times or so in the New Testament. The Christian faith is all miracle, and any representation of it without the power of the Holy Spirit is a corpse.

In many cases we read of 'mighty deeds' without any more details. The disciples were never sent out without adequate divine power, not even when Jesus was on earth (Mt 10:1-3). Before He left them to ascend to glory, He told them not to leave Jerusalem until they were endued with power (*dunamis*) from on high (Lk 24:49), which they were (2:4) From that hour they always went with perfect assurance that they moved in the might of God. Paul said, *'I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ'*. Generally, 'mighty deeds' were healings and deliverance. 'The multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed, and many who were

paralyzed and lame were healed... (Simon) was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done' (Acts 8:6-7,13).

Two other Bible words to consider are authority (*exousia*) and power (*dunamis*). Christian authority rests on power. The authority of the police, for example, would mean nothing unless backed by all the power of the state. Christ showed that He had the authority (*exousia*) on earth to forgive sins, but behind it was the power of redemption, and His work on the Cross. This we shall see has a very important link with the gift of the working of miracles.

The phrase in 1Cor 12:10 'the working of miracles' is literally the 'operations of powers' (*energemato dunameon*). It covers all varieties of signs and wonders; is

plural for multiple miracles, and does not specify one particular type of miracle. In the Old Testament, miracles are mainly nature miracles, such as the plagues of Egypt, and the crossing of the Red Sea, the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, and the moving of the sundial shadow in Isaiah. In the New Testament, Jesus alone did such things, turning water to wine, feeding thousands with a boy's luncheon, quelling the threat of the storm, and so on. We are not told that the apostles themselves did any of these things. Healings of the sick, and exorcisms were the main signs referred to as 'mighty wonders'.

We will dig a bit deeper. The English word 'miracle' seems to convey more to the average person than what the Bible says. Many take 'miracle' to mean sheer fairy tale magic, squaring the circle, or making two plus equal five-nonsense events. It is from the Latin word *miraculum*, meaning to wonder at, that we get the English word miracle. It relates more to the magic of mythology than Christianity. Too often English speaking people think of a miracle as that kind of thing, putting the Bible on the same level as mythology.

Whatever God has done in creation, or may do in His sovereign omnipotence, the promise of the baptism with the Spirit does not copy myths, but what Scriptures portrays.

H.G. Wells' famous story, 'The Man who could work miracles', describe how he first made a candle float upside down, and the flame burn downwards, and then went on to destroy the earth

with his 'faith'. Christianity has nothing in common with fairy-tale fantasy. Everything that Christ did, and everything that the gifts enable us to do, are all in line with divine and moral purpose, reflecting God's wisdom.

There were 'signs and wonders produced by the 'working of powers', prodigies beyond human ability expressed in Rom 15:18 as *"mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God."*

**-Greater Works:** Now this gift of the 'workings of power' has to be linked with Christ's promise in Jh 14:12-16 – *'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater (works) than these will he do, because I go to My Father ...And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper'.*

Jesus promised these greater works, yet so far as we know the disciples only performed normal healings, and not one of them exceeded Christ's healing ministry. None of them performed a stupendous wonder like the raising of Lazarus four days after his death. What were the greater works?" To answer that that we shall have to make a small detour.

Greater things', and mighty deeds of power certainly included healings. The healings of Jesus were called 'works'.

However, Paul classes 'gifts of healings' separately. The list of gifts was not meant to be a strict separation of different operations as they overlap, but he clearly had some difference in mind between miraculous healings and 'miracles'.

Could it be raising the dead? Possibly, as that is not healing. However, it must be something else too, as the Corinthians are not said to have raised the dead, though they 'came behind in no gift', and many of them had died (1Cor 11:30).

It would include creative wonders like making new eyes, ear drums or the repair of bones damaged by accident, or osteoarthritis. The gifts overlap, and what we might call a healing on one occasion, could be classed as a miracle on another. There are some curious occurrences,



miraculous in the scientifically impossible sense. Cures take place where there seems to be no physical change, but function is inexplicably restored. An eye, perhaps, still appears to be damaged yet has clear vision; hands that appear twisted with arthritis can be flexed and are pain free; people walk who ought not to be able to walk.

For further help, we turn to what Jesus promised about 'greater works'. He Himself performed the greatest possible cures. Their magnitude was never the apostles. Yet it was Christ Himself who spoke of His own disciples exceeding the greatness of His works, doing 'greater works'. It is quite obvious that it would have to be a different kind of divine wonder beyond what was ever seen in His ministry. Jesus promise showed that these greater works would be by the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:12-17).

Now, notice that He repeated the same promise in Acts 1:4,5,8. On that occasion, He spoke of other works, which are not healings. Jesus promised the disciples power (Acts 1:8) the same word (*dunamis*) as is in 1Cor 12. But power for what? It was far more than healing. It was for one special duty, that of world evangelism. *'You will be witnesses to Me ... to the end of the earth'*.

There was another display of divine power, which was never really seen before Christ, and which was to be a prophetic sign of the end times to *'turn many to righteousness'* (Dan 12:3). There were no revivals in the Old Testament, as the Holy Spirit was not given. At best only reformatations took place by royal command.

That work of world witness called for the comprehensive working of God through His disciples, sufficient to meet every demand, and to battle through the entire world in opposition. It was a work that Jesus did not carry out, but left to those who follow Him. To bring deliverance to millions, helpless in every bond of sin, and to change the thinking of the entire world is something greater than was seen in the earthly ministry of Christ. Christian conversion is greater than any healing. Salvation is God's greatest work, the perfection of His power.

When Paul first came to Corinth, carrying out the witness task, he said he came 'in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling'. Some believe that he was suffering from a recurrent infection such as malaria, or a weakness picked up on his travels, or from beatings and hardship. Yet he described his preaching as being 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of power'. The effect was that a Christian church of blood-washed believers existed amid the spiritual poverty of an idolatrous city.

God's power enabled Paul to carry on despite his bodily weakness. He admitted to a 'thorn in the flesh' (2Cor 12:7), but triumphed over it by the mighty grace that God had given to him - *'strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy'*. He sees Himself as an example of the power of God working in him in that way, 'as dying and behold we live the Lord saying, *'My strength (**dunamis**) is made perfect in weakness'* (2Cor 6:9,12:9).

Here is that perfection of power indicated by Jesus as 'greater'. Paul calls it *'the exceeding greatness of His power'* (Eph 1:19), divine power, manifested in the most perfect and superlative sense. He speaks of it being in 'earthen vessels', in fragile flesh, those men and women mocked and persecuted by a harsh and cruel age. The Corinthians obliged him to boast of the great things and 'signs of an apostle' (which Paul said was a foolish thing). He spoke of the power of God sustaining him under the most overwhelming pressures, and enabling him to carry the Gospel everywhere (2Cor 11). *'If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity ... For when I am weak, then I am strong'* (2Cor 11:30,12:10).

The power in evidence in one man, the apostle Paul, has since been seen on a world scale. The persistence of faith, and the amazing endurance of Jesus' followers have come to be accepted as commonplace. Looking at Christian beginnings, and then at the subsequent opposition against the unarmed and defenseless followers of Jesus, century after century even to this day, some extraordinary power has to be admitted. We also have the miracle of the church

a compound of every kind of miracle. The 'exceeding greatness' of divine power was seen more in the heroic endurance of believers, and in the expansion of the church against all resistance, than in any physical healing.

Jesus did speak of 'he who believes in Me' doing greater works. But there was a greater work done by the whole church. First, it carried the Kingdom of God outside the borders of Israel, and then to vastly more people worldwide than Christ, in the flesh, ever could address in the small land of Israel. Jesus spoke of His own anointing by the Spirit, which He constantly referred to as the Father's works, but He particularly related it to Isaiah 61:1, to *'preach the Gospel to the poor.'* That work is being done on a scale physically impossible to Christ. For what purpose did the Father send the Holy Spirit? Without any question, it was to make it possible to preach the Gospel to every creature on earth. Paul describes it as 'to bring the nations into the obedience of the Gospel'. The consuming passion and work of Christ was 'to seek and to save that which was lost'. Jesus was never just a wonder worker. First and foremost, He was, and is, a Saviour. It was that work which took Him to the Cross. That was the ultimate purpose of His earthly life. It was not for some social good -just to feed multitudes- but for the redemption of mankind. That was uppermost in His mind. Any talk of 'greater works' has to be in line with His own 'great work', to save the lost. Salvation is the greatest labor, and the greatest marvel God ever undertook.

Paul spoke far more of the saving power of God, than of any physical miracle. He saw the Cross producing the greatest wonders of all, men and women being 'made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins'. *'My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit of power'*. For what purpose? *'... that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God'*. A miracle healing only confirmed the greater wonder, the Gospel. Writing to the Thessalonians, he makes this comment: 'Our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance' (1Thess 1:5). He then goes on to say *'And you became followers*

*of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with the joy in the Holy Spirit' (1:6).*

We have already remarked the fact that the mightiest of the inspired prophets all failed to procure anything very much in the preaching of the way of national repentance. The only success was perhaps that of Jonah in Nineveh, a non-Jewish city. His words frightened them into change of course. But Isaiah

was sent to *'make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes'*. The only thing that the prophets spoke of was Judgment, with only the most distant rays of hope. They were sent to *'overturn, overturn.'* *'I have sent you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending them... but they did not listen or incline their ear to turn from their wickedness' (Jer 44:4,5).*

But as soon as Peter, the first preacher of the age of the long-promised outpoured Spirit, opened his lips, the impact was like nobody had ever seen on earth before. Jesus' preaching had no such result. In fact, He spoke of Capernaum's unrepentance despite the miracles He had performed there. But to those that believed on Him, to them He opened up a new prospect of greater things. He gave to Peter the keys of the Kingdom. That is, Peter would be the first one to unlock the door of the Kingdom by the keys, and those keys were the Word of the Cross, and the power of the Spirit. The glorious 'opening day' of the age of the Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. Immediately 3,000 came into the Kingdom of God, pushing aside the old religious inhibitions.

There are several repetitions, in some form or other, of the Great Commission (see for example, Matt 28:16-20, Mrk 16:15-20, Luk 24:48-49, Acts 1:8). In all of them, the idea of a supernatural power is spoken of, primarily, for the work of evangelism. There was never any thought in the New Testament but of a revival force attending the preaching of the Gospel - if the unconverted were present to hear it, of course. The great work of God is salvation - nothing in all

the Scriptures exceeds the value placed upon it, and they refer to it constantly. God's Salvation is great because He is great.

The words 'workings of powers' are plural. This suggests a variety of operations. Evangelism included healings, as we read: *'The Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs'*. The work of world redemption called for many gifts, and the gift of miracles included healings,

endurance, and the power of God to change the hearts of men and women. Every conversion is a work of power -a miracle of all miracles. The work of Jesus touched some lives, but those He sends reach multiplied masses, and they see miracle after miracle among the most remote and depraved in the world. The lost are found and saved.

-The Inexplicable Miracle: Unbelief can be ingenious in its arguments, but this type of miracle because, in the disposes of some of the so-called explanations invented to avoid giving glory to God.

The gifts operating in such a remarkable cure would be discernment, faith, and miracles, as well as authority, which is another gift not listed by Paul.

There is one other issue relating to the 'working of mighty deeds'. Here and there comes a suggestion of the Spirit of God as a vast complex of power. *'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom, and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord'* (Isa 11:2). The Holy Spirit is all those Spirits in one Spirit.

Paul uses similar language in 1Cor 12 – many operations, one Spirit. Then Rev 5:6 speaks of the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth' - seven being the number of divine perfection.

We must always keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is God working on earth in human lives. His manifestations are diverse, because, in the work of salvation, all manners of wonders are needed. Jesus spoke of the Spirit anointing Him with a five-fold task of deliverance (Lk 4:18).

In short, there is not a single situation among sinners, in which the Spirit of God cannot manifest Himself in some appropriate form. His sufficiency meets His servants at the frontier of every new situation and task.

**Reinhard Bonnke said;** ‘In Africa, we in the Christ for all Nations team have seen sights, which only the greatest power in heaven or earth could produce, perhaps greater than have ever been seen, but not so great as will be seen. Acres upon acres of people massed together, Muslim, animist, nominal Christian, touched by the Lord surrendering to Him by thousands upon thousands, being healed, being baptized in the Spirit, giving up their fetishes, idols, stolen goods, witchcraft, emblems, and becoming vigorous witnesses to Christ. State Presidents are converted, and Parliaments echo the cry, ‘Jesus saves!’ The whole thing is a miracle- ‘the working of miracles’, not of one kind, but whatever miracle is needed to meet the crisis of man without God. The miracle of souls redeemed by the preaching of the Word.

Compared to such tremendous scenes, what are such wonders as an axe head floating in water, fire from heaven, or walking on the water? God is not a sensationalist. He has one primary concern: people- their welfare and destiny. That interest has to be the measure of all greatness and power.

### **(F) Prophecy**

Prophecy is today taking a premier place in the charismatic scene, beyond any other endowment of the Spirit. Therefore, we need to hold it up to the mirror of the Word. We are in good company- prophecy was the gift Paul wanted them all to enjoy in Corinth. ‘Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. For you can all prophesy one by one’ (1Cor 14:1,31).

In this wish, he was especially thinking of gifts operating in services of worship. Obviously, prophecy, tongues, interpretation, will be ‘for the profit of all’ mainly when a congregation is in session.

The whole of 1Cor 14 assumes that Paul is thinking of gifts when the people congregate. Some verses state it, for example vs 24, *'If an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in ...'*; vs 26, *'whenever you come together'*; vs 28, *'in church'*; vs 30 *'another who sits by'*; vs 33 *'In all the churches of the saints'*. His great thought is the edifying of the church, especially by speech gifts. He throws gifts together in several lists, in no special order, but he always includes the gift of tongues which, together with interpretation, takes on the character of prophecy.

Again, we should note exactly what it says: *'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all- to one is given by the Spirit a word of wisdom... to another prophecy'*. We would not distort what Paul meant if we called it 'a word of prophecy'.

A prophecy is a manifestation, but again we have to be careful to distinguish between prophecy in its varied forms. If we refer to 'the gift of prophecy' we ought to know precisely what it means. This Corinthian chapter simply says *'to another [is given] prophecy'* and the noun is singular. It is a manifestation of the Spirit of prophecy. Now that does not constitute a gift in the outright sense, that is, the ability to prophesy anytime a subject want - to make prophecies at will. No such power is handed over. It is not a personal presentation to anybody. All the *charismata* are still in the Spirit's control. However, we shall see in what sense there is a gift of prophecy.

We are given this useful information: *'The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets'*, but of course we can only prophesy by, and in subjection to, the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, something is given, and the Greek word *didotai* is used here to show that, in a real sense, it is something given, that is each utterance. That giving however, must be understood in the sense of the whole context of 1 Corinthians, and not as a complete gift in our common modern sense. We can put it this way, that with all vocal gifts, the will of God, and the will of man come together in harmony. While prophecy is not to utter glibly whatever

ds any time we fancy, and preface it with 'I', the Lord, do say unto thee, it is also true that the Lord encourages the bold prophet who steps out in faith is that the prophet is the servant of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not the servant of a prophet, but the Spirit works *with* the prophet. The Spirit does so, because people are tied time and circumstance.

Paul, in these Scriptures, makes much of prophecy. He says we should all pray that we may prophesy and adds, *'I wish that you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied'* (1Cor 14:5). The churches of Jesus are prophetic institutions. They exist because of the work of the Holy Spirit, who is 'the spirit of the prophets'. All church activity should be by the Spirit, and in the Spirit. The Spirit of prophecy should characterize every church and its gatherings. That does not mean there must be constant spectacular display, but the prophetic Spirit should charge the hearts of all concerned. The scholar James Dunn puts it starkly- 'without prophecy the community cannot exist as the body of Christ; it has been abandoned by the Lord'.

**-The False:** The subject of prophecy is ancient and vast. It calls for discrimination and judgment. The true and the false are not always easy to discern. That was so, long before the Christian age. It was certainly so in apostolic times, and has been so ever since. A great deal of prophesying has always tended to make it common place, and some have always despised it. The people listened to Ezekiel with no better impression than listening to a pleasant song, he complained. Even the apostles showed some hesitations, insisting on proof that they were genuine. *'Don't quench the Spirit, don't despise prophecies, but prove all things, hold fast the good, from every form of evil abstain'* (literal translation (1Thess 5:19-21).

It is a tremendous claim to say one speaks in the name of the Lord. We should not believe it just because somebody claims it. We should check the credentials of all who profess to be prophets, and even then, check their prophecies. Uncritical hearing is disapproved of in Scripture. Jesus said, *'Take heed how you hear'* (Lk 8:18).

Human nature approves what it likes to hear – 'smooth sayings', as in the last days of the Judean kings, whose household prophets always gave optimistic (but wrong) predictions.



Christian bodies have sometimes accepted prophecies, simply because they confirmed their theological, or organizational dogmas, and thus prophecies are pre-judged, rather than judged. An honest search of Scripture is the only way. We must not ignore the simply rule *'By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established'* (Mt 18:16). Prophecy has been misused to stifle dissident opinion, as when Jeremiah was put in a pit for disagreeing with the rest of the so-called prophets. We cannot test prophecy by ballot, or majority opinion. The long history of disaster exemplifies and confirms warnings by Christ and the apostles to treat prophetic utterances with caution. We must always check them against the Word of God. We are always responsible for what we do, even if we are obeying somebody else's prophecy. Eve found that being deceived did not make wrong right. The results of false prophesying boomerang on the deceiver.

Prophesiers moved around the early churches. Many believers were illiterate, the churches were young, and there was little Christian writing or experience to guide them. Teaching was needed, and prophets were therefore welcomed. They arrived announcing their own inspiration, and it is not surprising that they were given great credence. for those scattered groups of early believers needing teaching, beggars could not be choosers.

All the apostolic leaders faced this problem. John, for example, laid down one test- unless prophets taught that Christ had come in the flesh, they were not to be entertained, or given hospitality. This particular rule was needed locally, because the idea was becoming prevalent that God could never submit to crucifixion, and that it was only a phantom Christ that could be crucified, never God. He only seemed to be real (called Docetism).

That was one error drifting in on the prevailing religious winds. There are signs that this teaching affected the Corinthians, whose claims to be 'spiritual' meant that they were familiar with deeper levels of life. The believed that now even their flesh was different, and that they had already passed through resurrection. Paul met this dangerous nonsense in chapter 15 by

speaking of the resurrection of the body. Teachings like this, spread by prophetic claims, gave apostolic leaders much anxiety.

Even in Moses' time tests had to be laid down (Deut 13), and Jeremiah also challenged false prophets. It is true that Israel's prophets were unique, but all the nations had 'prophets', or those considered inspired, especially in the oracles, such as at Delphos, Dodona, Delosi, and the guardians of the Sibylline Books. In the temples of this or that god, there were women sitting on tripods to give forth their oracles, who often jabbered in an occult trance or ecstasy. Priests claimed to be able to interpret the usually ambiguous prophecies.

There is an instance of this in 1 Kings 22:15. Micaiah was asked by the King to prophesy about the proposal to attack Syria. He gave the King, at first, what the King wanted to hear, but it was ambiguous: *'Go and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the King.'* King Ahab thought it would fall into his hands, but, in fact, it fell into the hand of the King of Syria.

Prophets were common enough. The schools of the prophets were a vital element in Israel and, no doubt to them, we owe much that was preserved, and written down as Scripture. But after the Babylonian exile, the role of prophet became less evident, and even suspect 'speaking comfortable things' had let Israel down, and absolute national catastrophe was the result.

Nobody was anxious 'to wear a robe of coarse hair to deceive', as Zechariah said, after the Jewish exile (13:4). They were 'ashamed' to assume the prophetic mantle. John the Baptist's call was so real that he did wear typical prophetic garb.

Abuse of spiritual gifts has been a major calamity in the church. If what we read about the Montanists of the second century is true (though we only have writings from their enemies), they made irresponsible, extravagant claims of the Holy Spirit speaking, and false predictions of the Kingdom of God being set up in Phrygia. This led to a tradition in the church that frowned on spiritual manifestations and excitement. It was considered fanatical 'enthusiasm'. This was perhaps one of the saddest and most damaging church decisions of all time. The bishops, of course, feared that if the Spirit spoke through lay men and women, their authority

could be undermined, and the possible excesses of the Montanists gave them the excuse they needed to suppress what was going on.

History parades before us a heart-breaking series of pseudo-prophets, or even demon-inspired teachings, which have damaged the church beyond all telling. It would be impossible to think of anything that needs to be treated with greater caution. False prophecy has filled the world with error, unorthodox sects, and has even created world religions. Strong as is the prophetic fashion in the church at present, to build on it without constantly checking by the plumb-line of the Word of God would leave an unstable edifice. A church led by prophets will sooner or later be misled. The maxim is *'Should not a people seek of their God?'* The answer is yes, but... *'To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them'* (Is 8:19-20).

*'When they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter, 'should not a people seek their God?'* People 'seek the dead on behalf of the living' -why should they not consult God? The long history of imposters, charlatans, occultists, cult leaders, false and self-deceived ecstasies, does not mean there is no true divine inspiration. On the contrary, it proves there must be the real; counterfeit coins can only copy the genuine. The devil would not neglect such a strategy. He made it his work, even from the beginning in Eden, to offer a counterfeit prophecy, leaving the pair uncertain of voice of God. He will deploy his Own inspired agents to unsettle those who hear the Word of God. These are the birds devour the seed of the sower (Mt 13:4).

**-The Real:** The Bible cuts a path through the tangle of prophetic claims, and shows us the real. The whole Bible is a prophecy. It moves onwards to a climax. The Old Testament consists of three sections called the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Prophets included historical books. They are part of the unfolding revelation of the mate aims of God. God's intentions began to be indicated way back in *Gen 1:27-28* – *'God created man ...male and female He created them ... then God blessed them'*. In Genesis 3:15 God said to the serpent who deceived

Eve, *'I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise His heel'*. This looked far ahead to Christ, and to His final triumph.

The call of Abraham pointed to far-off divine plans to bless all the families of the earth.

Abraham 'saw' Christ's day, and looked beyond to the eternal city of God (Gen 12:1-3, Jh 8:56; Heb 11:10). All prophecy, including the gift, should move in that same all-important direction, to focus the hopes, faith, and conduct of us all towards the realization of eternal redemption and the Kingdom.

We need to be aware that prophecies may be trivial, even if they are delivered in resounding and dramatic tones. They can be side issues, unrelated to the wider interests of the Kingdom and to what God is contemplating. Prophecy not born from the womb of the redemption plan of God is worthless. It is in the value- category of palmistry and the horoscope. Somebody has said, 'If a prophecy is not of God it is too slight to be proved, and if it is of God it ought not to be proved. That is flawed logic. We need to know whether it is of God- that is what testing is about.

Prophecy is a manifestation of the presence of God, and therefore places hearers before God. It challenges our direction, and brings pressures upon us to move only in accordance with His moving.

One of the finest descriptions of the true prophet actually comes from that alien and strange character Balaam in Num 24:4. He says he is one who *'hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty who falls down, with eyes wide open'*. 'the vision of the Almighty' refers to God's vision for mankind, and Balaam found he could say nothing except in line with God's future for Israel.

The great prophetic book of the New Testament is Revelation. It gives a unique panorama of the grand divine scheme, drawing together elements from all the previous prophecies. It begins, *'The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants things which must shortly take place'*. If the Spirit of any prophecy cuts across the general scheme of biblical

revelation and the purposes of God in the Gospel, and does not relate to these in any sense, then little weight should be attached to it. Either it is devilish or, more likely, human imagination.

**-Prove all things:** A prophet whose words come to pass might be more dangerous than one whose word does not come to pass. The test of a true prophet is not that his words come to pass. Satanic forces can organize that also. Deut 13:1-3,5 warns us, *'if there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass of which he spoke to you, saying, 'let us go after other gods' – which you have not known – 'and let us serve them', you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer or dreams ... (he) shall be put to death'*. The evidence that a prophecy is not true becomes apparent of course, when it fails to come to pass. *'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' - 'when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him' (Deut 18:21-22).*

A true man of God can nevertheless speak from his own mind, and be mistaken. There is a difference between a false prophet, and one who speaks presumptuously. A false prophet brings false teaching. A failed prophecy merely shows a man is speaking out of himself. Nathan spoke out of his own mind when he told David that he should go ahead and build the Temple. Later, he had to correct this mistake, and brought God's own mind to David, not to build. Isaiah told Hezekiah that he would die, but had to return almost at once with a different message that he would live. In several places, Paul heard prophecies, which he did not accept, and they were not infallible.

There is such a thing as prophesying according to the proportion of our faith. When God spoke to Reinhard Bonnke to build the world's largest Gospel tent to seat 34,000 people, He met with the brethren of his board to discuss it. After they had gone into the matter, they prayed together, and one of the men present

began to prophesy. He began, 'Thus saith the Lord: Thousands shall be saved under this roof. Then he stopped and said to them, 'Excuse me, this is not what the Holy Spirit said, but I did not have the faith to utter it. Let me start again. Thus says the Lord: Millions will be saved under this roof'. 'How right he was, but it was not just under the canvas roof. The tent would have to be filled for many years to house enough unconverted people to amount to millions of conversions. But a work was beginning under that roof, which would continue under the canopy of the glory of God as we moved across the African continent, in which we actually witnessed those millions of precious people being saved'.

There are prophets who abrogate to themselves special authority in order to impose their ideas upon others, and even believe that their own interpretation of Scripture is given by revelation, and is not to be challenged. One teacher asserted, 'God has told me what such-and-such a Scripture means', though it was obviously a distorted interpretation. If we are to prove all things, we cannot let such claims to authority go unchallenged. Of all people, the prophet must submit to the judgment of others. A prophet's own claim that he speaks by the word of the Lord is not enough. God has left authority with the churches. Jesus told us to beware of such dogmatists.

Anyone bringing 'a word from the Lord' should realize what that means -that it is an implicit claim to be a prophet according to Scripture. They ought to be really sure that God has spoken, before they speak. A person claiming to be a prophet, who is nothing of the kind, is an abomination in the sight of God.

**-Mechanics of Prophecy:** some prophecy is in the first person- 'I, the Lord, do say unto thee ...' This is an awesome claim. Sometimes it is proved not to be the Lord God speaking, but only Jack or Mary. A man may claim he is 'standing in the counsel of the Lord'. Let it be recognized that this is an exclusive distinction above other believers, for we all have the Word of God, which is the counsel of the Lord and in which we stand. Notwithstanding the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and prophecy, Paul could say to the Corinthians, *'He who*

*is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ’ (1Cor 2:15-16).* It is therefore hardly legitimate for one

man to place himself on a higher level than all believers who 'have the mind of Christ'.

There is the question of language in prophecy. Often the English lapse into the 300-year-old form of their tongue found in the Authorized or King James Version of the Bible. Actually it was becoming dated even when that Bible first appeared. It is a tradition, copied from one to another through the decades, especially by people who were versed in the Authorized version. However, it should not detract from the value of what is said. The reason prophecy is often couched in this style is because it is filtered through our minds- which, as far as religion, is concerned has come to us from the Word of God in Elizabethan form. It is a religious habit of speech often heard in prayer, as in the Anglican common book of prayer. It is the picture, not the frame that matters.

We can use everyday speech, which certainly was always the case in Bible days. To dress up uninspired spiritual clichés in a majestic literary style, hoping to sound like Isaiah in full flight prefaced by 'I the Lord do say unto thee' is wrong. If our word is from the Holy Spirit, we need not try to make it appear so.

**-The Old Testament Prophet and The New Testament Prophet:** The designation 'prophet' covers all manner of inspired speakers, even the false. The Old Testament prophet is not the same as the New Testament prophet. In fact, Christ said the prophets prophesied until John Baptist, indicating that was the end of an era. Some differences can be mentioned.

The pre-Christian prophet was God's mouthpiece to those who had no direct contact with the Lord. What the Lord had to say was revealed to the prophets, and through them to Israel and to some outside Israel. Individuals, as well as the nation, had access to the will of God through the prophet, or through the High Priest if he had Urim and Thummim. Even the Edomites could have had that access (Is 21:12).

The Hebrew prophets were lone figures- The Pentecostal or Charismatic who prophesies is not, but is part of the prophetic group, the church. They all know the Lord, and do not need anybody to stand between them and God. They are God's New Covenant people in a new relationship and 'know the Lord' (Heb 8). No one needs to 'enquire of the Lord' on another's behalf.

We have said elsewhere that there is no conception of higher or lower, but of one body with many parts. Some may be leaders, which gives them prominence, but not superiority. Those they lead are playing their own roles, and are therefore not inferiors, but equals in God's sight. 'Office' is read into passages in the New Testament relating to elders and deacons, but no such word or intent

is there. The thought is always function, not position. *'Be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility' (1Pet 5:5)*. This applies to the prophet as well as anybody else. There is no 'office' of prophet to which a believer can be officially appointed. Prophets are not judged on whether they are commissioned by men or not.

There is no place intermediary between men and the Holy Spirit when all are Spirit when all are Spirit-energized and gifted, as 'a royal priesthood.' *'Call no man master*, Jesus said. *'Be shepherds, not lording over those entrusted to you'*. There is no hierarchy, for all are servants of all and in Christ there is neither male nor female.

The voice of God to the nations today comes through the whole body of the church, What Isaiah was to Israel, the whole church is to Germany, Britain, or America. The church's existence, way of life, and principles of service should be a constant challenge to the ways of nations. There were times when it was said, 'There was no vision in the land.' When the church ceases to bring God's vision to a nation, calamity is near, which is why the church must be charismatic. All who led early Israel were charismatic, until Solomon. The weakness of Israel subsequently was that they had a Davidic dynasty, but not a Davidic charismatic anointing.



**-How does prophetic utterance come?** The first essential is the sense of the Spirit drawing or leading us in that direction. The sense of the prophetic spirit moving us may come even before we know what the 'burden of the Lord' is. The prophets were called to speak, and then given the message later (Isa 6; Jer 1). One cannot speak from a cold heart. Someone speaking with tongues may bring to us an instant leading to interpret. Some prophesiers need that stimulus, and never otherwise speak. In that case their gift is interpretation. The word of God may come to us as a gradual growing of a burden from the Lord, or as a flash of brilliant illumination. It can be in the mind as words, a thought, or as a significant picture, a vision, a dream, an inner conviction or impulse, but it will be expressed in words. Sometimes it will seem that the process is instantaneous, the thought and the words flowing together, extemporaneously, as if from outside oneself. We cannot 'work up' the voice of God within us, nor think it up. It comes from heaven. That is true, but how we give it, and when, is entirely our own responsibility. It can be written down, and read to those whom God show us. Isaiah and Jeremiah were writing prophets. It might be far better expressed with that kind of care. We even read of Elijah sending a prophecy by letter.

The leader of a church or service is there to keep a decent orderliness, and also to ensure that no wrong teaching is given. To throw open a meeting to all and sundry is almost a tradition in many assemblies, and the risks it carries are only too well known. Some leaders fail to recognize their responsibility, and they let anything go. Certain situations call for rectification by the graciousness of the Lord.

In the case of prophecies at least, this is scriptural. In larger churches it becomes necessary to check beforehand prophecies, which may be given, or at least the prophesiers. This avoids the proceedings becoming a confusing affair. It

is commended practice today that prophecies are submitted to the pastor to 'prove all things and hold fast that which is good'. Then they can be given at an appropriate part of the worship, and if necessary made audible by use of sound

equipment. Otherwise what is spontaneous can become disorderly.

Speaking with tongues is characteristically spontaneous, however. Paul realized this, and offered guidelines for tongues as well as for prophecy. He put it that one speaker should speak only twice, or three times at the most. He knew how some would dominate the worship. We are to excel in the manifestation of the Spirit, and use wisdom in all things. Some pastors insist that permission to speak with tongues must be given. This avoids anything that is out of keeping with what is going on, but it does create a big risk that the spirit of the prophets is dampened down altogether. To 'quench not the Spirit often calls for a lot of wisdom and loving tact.

**-Prophets and Prophesiers:** It will help students of the gifts if we say that we must differentiate between prophets, and those who prophesy. Our lack of language in the realm of such things makes that easier said than done. There are no criteria in the New Testament to help us discriminate between prophets, and

those who prophesy. Presumably, those who frequently prophesy may be called prophets, but we are short of words to make rigid distinctions. Paul calls all prophesiers 'prophets' in 1 Cor 14:29,32, but even in his thinking, a difference seems to exist. He seems to place in different categories those who often prophesy, and those who have the normal 'signs following' spoken of by Joel

('your sons and daughters shall prophesy'); for Paul asks 'Are all prophets?' We read that Philip had four daughters who 'prophesied' it shuns calling them prophetesses, though this may reflect the age when women were not as free as today.

Not only prophesiers, but also tongues-speakers, those healing and working miracles, and others with gift ministries are not given a distinctive name. Prophecy by someone who is regularly heard, or by someone only occasionally, is the same, and equally valuable. A healing by the laying on of hands of an elder does not mean that he has the gift of the gifts of healings, but is as much a sign of God's love as a healing by the mightiest healer in the world.

God does not distribute titles and medals. Nobody does anything except by the Holy Spirit. What glory can there be to a man? I have as much to do with healings taking place in my crusades, as an electric kettle has to do with a nuclear generator. The church has every characteristic since it has the Holy Spirit, but each member has his or her own gift. It is all an organic and charismatic work, but God distributes 'to each one individually as He wills' (1Cor 12:11).

### **(G) Discernment**

The gift of discernment, or more accurately 'of discerning of spirits, is not a natural knowledge of people's psychology, much less the power to 'see through' everybody, and to make the sensational discovery that all human beings are imperfect.

Let us note exactly what 1Cor 12:10 says: 'to another discerning of spirits.' The Greek word for discerning is *diakrisis* and comes from the verb *krino*, which means 'to judge'.

The discerning of spirits is not a gift to see what is invisible, a demon for example, but the power to judge what is seen, whether good or bad. *'But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, [that is], those by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern (diakrisis) both good and evil' (Heb 5:14).*

The Greek *diakrisis* has a meaning of: a distinguishing or discerning clearly; a faculty of discerning. To discern means to perceive the difference between. The overall thought is that of 'separating' one thing from another.

*Diakrisis* is used three times in the New Testament - Rom 14:1; 1Cor 12:10 and Heb 5:14.

From this it is clear that the main meaning is not seeing demons, but judging what is visible and audible. The gift is not sight but discrimination. It is true that the experience of 'seeing' or sensing demons, which may be concealing their presence (as they usually do), is not uncommon among Christian believers and, in a general sense, this gift may include such discernment, though not necessarily. One can have experiences for which no gift is listed.

Next we should note that the word is plural, 'discerning'. That is, it is not a general gift of discrimination, but comes, as repeated manifestations, as God grants them, as with all gifts or revelations of the Holy Spirit as and when needed. While the Spirit may use anybody anytime, these judgments are often specially given to one individual - we then say they have the gift. In fact, we are told that others must exercise discrimination about prophecies (1Cor 14:29). This does not always need the gift of discernment, though without this gift we could make a mistake, and condemn what should be welcomed. The gift is not merely to recognize what is spiritually evil, but also what is good. The Spirit of the Lord rested on David, but his brethren did not want to know. The blessed of the Lord are not always an immediate hit with their friends or colleagues!

There are rules by which everybody can judge prophecy and other matters. Usually, no supernatural help is needed to 'discern' when a person has a demon- it is obvious. The Spirit of all gifts is in the church, and there, His manifestations of one kind or another, are part of the on-going ministry of the church, such as healing, tongues, faith. Particular individuals have a marked ministry in some aspect of the Spirit, and so are said to have a gift. Discernment, or more correctly, the power to distinguish clearly between spirits, has to be very evident throughout the body of the church.

The word Paul uses mean to differentiate between spirits. The same thing is in 1Jn 4:1-3, though a different word is used (***dokimazete*** to prove, to test). *'Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God' (1Jn 4:1)*. He writes *'Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God'*. That is his simple test for one form of false teaching. I know that it sounds as if there may be many spirits, which are of God but John is not saying that. What he is saying, that when spirits seem to be saying that Christ came in the flesh, it is the (one) Spirit of God speaking. 'By this (we) know the Spirit of God. The word 'spirit' is used in a broad sense of spiritual manifestations. Actually, in this case, John mainly had in mind an error that was creeping in- later known as Gnosticism- which said the

body of Christ on the Cross was only a phantom. John does not mention any gift for discerning spirits, but gives a simple test that anybody can apply. He does however insist in connection with this: *'But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things'* (1Jn 2:20), which does indicate a supernatural discernment.

The gift of discernment overlaps with a word of wisdom, but it especially concerns spirits. We are told in many places to evaluate what is said or done.

Believers are not to swallow everything they hear, especially things, which purport to be from the Lord, or are declared to be God speaking. Uncritical acceptance of so called prophecies, and claims to knowledge and revelation without a proper check is regarded as foolish in Scripture, but unfortunately is common. It is astonishing how naïve many are. Constantly, we see people being deceived, perhaps in marginal matters, but often in real error, and with fearful results, producing countless new fabricated cults and fanaticism leading even to tragedy and deaths.

The gift of discernment covers the widest field of spiritual interests, not just one small item of discernment of the devil. It is certainly needed in everything, such as in prophecy, and other teaching about which we are so often warned in Scripture. Demons do ninety-nine per cent of their work unseen without 'manifesting', and we have to be sensitive to the 'doctrines of demons', which come as new revelation.

The voice of the Spirit is often very quiet. The agitation of our own passions and motives can drown it. Jesus temptations in the wilderness were remarkable because, in each one, He was tempted to do what seemed to be good for mankind, even backed up by Scripture, but He saw the subtlety of Satan each time. It is more important to judge teachings than to look for demons in everybody.

The gift of discernment has been related to the three tests of charismatic happenings in 1Cor 12-14:

- That tongues and prophecies never say Jesus is accursed (1Cor 12:3)

- They are marked by love (1Cor 13:4-7)
- They build up the church (1Cor 14:12)

These Bible principles of judgment are not supernatural tests obviously, but the gift of discernment is supernatural and needs to be. There are so many ideas, voices and teachings entering our minds, or even thrown up by our own thoughts, which need the discerning eye of God Himself to distinguish good from bad. Our own heart can mislead us, for it is 'deceitful above all things

says Jer 17:9. There are signs and wonders, and prophecies, and much more phenomena that could 'deceive, if possible, even the elect' as Jesus warned us.

The gift of discernment can save us from deception, though the Word of God also has that work to do, as a '*discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*' Many deceptions are successful because believers understand so little of the Word of God. Our own will, the deviousness of our hearts, and the trickery of the enemy -all need to be exposed. The Spirit of God can make us sensitive to the approach of what is, or is not, of God. '*My sheep hear my voice.*' There is such a thing as failing to discern what is holy, as some do not '*discern the Lord's body*' (1Cor 11:29).

We never read in the New Testament of anyone discerning demons in people's lives. That does not invalidate such experiences however. From the beginning Peter perceived that Ananias and Sapphira were liars. Then Simon Magus, a sorcerer practicing magic and the black arts, wanted to buy the power of God, and Peter said '*I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity*'. The apostle said nothing about demons. To put Simon right, Peter cast no demon out of him, but simply told him to repent of his wickedness, and ask God to forgive him. Simon asked Peter to pray for him. These instances may be classed as discernment, or prophecy, or a word of knowledge. Everything that the Holy Spirit does cannot possibly be categorized under nine gifts.

Because of the mention of this gift, some go looking for demons to cast them out. It has been argued that we must take the initiative in aggression, find the demons, and attack them. Paul certainly did nothing like that. He cast out a demon of divination from a fortune teller slave girl (Acts 16:18). It needed no discernment, as demon possession rarely does. Everybody in the city knew that she had a spirit, and for days Paul refused to go on the attack against the power of darkness. However, she pestered him so much that he felt people might associate her, and her spirit of divination with the Gospel, and assume that it was one of Paul's teachings. What he did discern was that she was doing his work no good. The same thing happened with Jesus, for unclean spirits knew Him, and said who He was, but Jesus commanded them to be silent. He wanted no recommendation from them. He wanted nobody to be misled into thinking that demons were his friends, or went along with Him. He cast them out. They were trying to 'jump on the bandwagon' as if He had come from some general world of spirit.

The Lord Himself, the disciples, and Philip all cast out demons, but people came to them, or were brought to them, for that purpose, obviously because they knew that they were possessed. The presence of a demon is usually too appalling to miss, although the devil does not always make himself conspicuous - on the contrary, occult and physical activities advertise his presence too much and inconveniently. He prefers to walk in the dark, or to masquerade as an angel of light. In fact, those who have tried to be possessed, 'have' a spirit, or a spirit guide, do not always find it that easy. Normally the powers of darkness prefer to Work undercover. Even those with a familiar spirit, or spirit guide do not rave like the Gadarene madman, out of whom Jesus cast a legion of spirits, which were tearing him in every direction. Nevertheless, unclean presences often cling to those who try to deal with these dark spirits, and who try to contact the dead. The gift of discernment is given for other deceptions as well.

There are many teachings today, which have a sound of the truth and seem good, but are not the Gospel. For example, the popular teaching that we are potential saints, children of God, and only need to realize it to live above ourselves the power of positive thinking. It all looks so right and plausible. It certainly is a bad thing to have a deep sense of inferiority, but confession of sin

and true salvation are a glorious and effective remedy, giving the heart-knowledge that one is a son of God. There is no short cut. We must repent at the foot of the cross in loneliness of heart before we can rise in new life. Discernment will differentiate between the seemingly good and the real.

**-Occult Distraction:** Smith Wigglesworth always preached about faith in God, but there are experts now teaching nothing but about demons. There are even schools who train in the lore of demonology instead of the whole counsel of God. They justify their schools on the suspicious grounds that the Bible says little about casting out evil spirits, and they have to redress the shortcomings of Scripture and teach from experience. However, *2 Pet 1:3,4* says the '*great and precious promises are all things that pertain to life and godliness*'.

Some claim to have the gift of discernment, but use complicated tests and multi-page questionnaires, not to mention fearful suggestions upon open-minded people. To investigate Spirit-filled believers for such dark powers is surely a reflection upon the salvation promises of God. The Holy Spirit makes our bodies His temples, and would never come to an agreement with a devil to share such a small apartment, or tolerate such a foul and illegal squatter. If our life is hidden with Christ in God, and we have a demon, then it would mean that the demon hid in us is also hid in God! That is unthinkable.

If believers have anything clinging to them it is the old life, the old man. In that case, Scripture makes us responsible to '*put off the old man with his lusts*' and to '*put on Christ*'. No Christian was ever exorcised in Bible times. They were guilty of many sins and weaknesses, but it is never put down to the indwelling of an unclean spirit. The answer to



faults was not exorcism, but exercise in godliness, casting *off* (not out) the unfruitful works of darkness.

Much is made of Christ's words to Peter, '*Get thee behind me, Satan*', but this was no exorcism, and there was no sign of a demon manifesting, or leaving him. After all, Jesus had just said that Peter was 'blessed', and God had revealed the identity of Jesus to him. Peter could not be blessed of God, and have a demon

at the same time, but he could say something very human, which thrust itself into the heart of Jesus like a dagger of the old temptation in the wilderness.

**-Judging The Spirits:** Where then should we be alert for demon powers? The major area of satanic danger to the church is given as doctrines of demons (1Tim 4:1), that is teachings and innovations thrown into the ring by the enemy. They come from all quarters, religious and secular. Some are subtle half untruths buried in seemingly spiritual, or pious expressions.

Some may be Scriptures in fact, such as Satan tried out on Jesus in the wilderness. Claims of new revelations have been made, which they say not even the apostles understood! The Scriptures speak of false teachers, false prophets, false Christs, false pastors, false brethren, false guides, lying wonders, wolves in sheep's clothing not only from outside in the world, but rising up among believers 'speaking perverse things'.

Satan is behind the divisions; the church off-shoots; little companies around some leader emphasizing some pet dogma of his own; people majoring on minor matters; groups with issues blown up like balloons by windbag leaders, or petty complaints given a disproportionate importance. Satan's arrows are errors, opening a running wound in the side of the body of Christ, bleeding away the testimony, as the devil planned, and also as God forewarned us in the Word. Without the gift of the discerning of spirits, the church is weakened and divided everywhere.

Even outside the church there are major deceptions, which unless watched, will creep into the church itself, and indeed have done so. The enemy's job is to provide intellectual interest for those who do not know the truth, who pretend to search for it, but reject the truth of the Gospel. The twentieth century has been marked by the fiasco, which brought to an end one of the greatest anti-God movements, Marxist communism, which made war on the church for three quarters of a century before being recognized as the empty evil it was. God's people everywhere knew it was sinister, but were derided as 'right wing'. No doubt this hydra-headed and anti-God political monster will struggle yet to survive - as does Nazism.

This is what Peter called 'destructive heresies'. The book of Revelation tells us about *'three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.'* They are a trinity of untruth. The Bible does not speak of a few church members being misled only. It speaks about nations, the whole world, heading for Armageddon.

That is where the gift of the discerning of spirits is needed. As believers, we will increasingly find ourselves out of step with society, not 'politically correct', because the world is deceived. The gift of the discerning of spirits will guide us in our walk through dangerous minefields. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, leading us into all truth, as Jesus promised. The believer is the truth-bearer, and the church is the pillar and ground of the truth.

*'Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons' (1Tim 4:1).* Our first concern is not table rapping, poltergeists, or imaginary 'green demons'

to be coughed up, but the flood of error engulfing the church and the world. Exorcism has an important role in our work for God, but we do not fight demon untruth by exorcism, but by preaching the Word of truth.

Finally, remember again that a gift is a manifestation of the Spirit who works as and when needed, just as does a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, or a prophecy. How does it

come? In all the ways in which other utterances come, by vision, dream, the word of God, spontaneous, even unrealized. In short the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth, not to make us intellectually great, but to safeguard the mind and soul of God's people. The means by which He sometimes does it is this- '*to another the discerning of spirits*'.

**(H) Tongues and Interpretation:** Stanley H. Frodsham wrote *With Signs Following* in 1946 in which he quoted stories of people speaking in languages they have never heard or learned. Of course, critics have asserted that it is impossible, and have written tongues off with the explanation that they were third- or fourth-hand legends. They would, wouldn't they? On the same grounds the miracles of the Bible are dismissed.

Robert Skinner, as editor of the Canadian *Pentecostal Evangel* has written about several first-hand instances in *Redemption* magazine, September 1993. His father, fluent in Kiswahili, heard a young woman baptized in the Spirit speaking perfect Kiswahili, which she had never heard in her life, and which he translated. His son Gary, whom I personally know, was home from Uganda that year at the Eastern Pentecostal Bible College. A student had a German visitor present who had been a Christian only two weeks. After the service, she expressed her enjoyment, and said what a pleasure it had been to hear someone praying in Russian, a language she understood, and also how good was the interpretation. Neither of the two speakers knew any Russian.

Robert Skinner mentions among other incidents twenty language students going along skeptically to a Pentecostal meeting, and hearing several languages, including fluent Italian and Russian, spoken by people who knew nothing of those languages.

Most of this century it has been impossible to write about tongues except in defense. For those who may still be facing objections and critics, we record something of things said in that long struggle, as of course there will always be contrary views.

Of all gifts this has attracted the greatest interest and opposition. The discovery that speaking in tongues is a valid Christian experience turned out to be epoch-making for the church. Tongues

activated the present worldwide Holy Spirit emphasis, and became the catalyst for an evangelistic thrust, which has eclipsed everything before it, both in enterprise and success. Speaking with tongues is often given the Greek name *glossolalia*. Because there are various ideas about tongues, their origin, and what they are, we will first define what we mean in this book. 'Tongues' are earthly or celestial languages, spoken only by believers, as the Holy Spirit gives them utterance. The speakers may not know what they are saying. Being spiritually empowered, interpretation must be by the same means.

If speaking in tongues takes place in worship, addressed to the whole company, an interpretation must follow. Mainly for that reason, it will be easier to consider the two gifts, tongues, and interpretation, together for much of this sub-topic.

**-Tongues in Scripture:** There are twenty-six references to tongues in the New Testament: one in Mrk 16, four in Acts, and twenty-one in 1 Corinthians. This may seem few, considering the weight given to tongues, in the modern Charismatic-Pentecostal scene.

However, references to prophecy often include tongues. On the day of Pentecost, when the first disciples spoke with tongues and a vast crowd came together asking what it was all about, Peter explained '*This [i.e., speaking with tongues] is what the prophet Joel spoke about. Your sons and daughters will prophesy*'. Tongues were prophecy, and if understood by hearers, as on the day of Pentecost, they are as much prophecy as tongues in English would be to English hearers. The same is true of course when tongues are followed by an interpretation, as is usual in worship services -they become prophesy.

The *glossolalia* is mentioned in only three books of the entire New Testament, in Mark, Acts, and 1 Corinthians, but that is not significant. Paul wrote a second letter to Corinth and made no reference to tongues, or any gift whatever. He also wrote about the Lord's Table, the central ordinance of the Christian faith in a long passage in 1 Corinthians but never gave it a passing mention in the second letter, or do any other books refer to it except the first three gospels.

Even the gospel of John says nothing about it, just as it omits a dozen or so other important matters. New Testament writings were prompted by some special need or occasion, and not usually to propound a comprehensive theology. Paul does of course give us much teaching on particular aspects of the faith, but not right across the whole scale of truth.

**-Sad Lessons of History:** Everyone ought to be given the background to the present operation of tongues in millions of believers. For most of the twentieth century tongues were rejected, and even forbidden, despite 1 Corinthians 14: *'Do not forbid to speak with tongues.'* Curiously, when the same chapter says that women should keep silent in the churches' it was given full weight, and applied against women, but the command not to forbid tongues was ignored. There are still churches which silence women *and tongues*, thus showing a fine disregard for the whole of chapter 14, except the verse that suits them about women. They also separate that one verse from what Paul says on the same subject elsewhere. In this short chapter however we have no space to detail the back- somersault of such theologians.

The 'tongues people' as they were dubbed, were for decades the traditional targets needing the exhortations to love in 1Cor 13. It is hard for us to see that such critical innuendos displayed much love, or that the critics themselves were shining examples of that virtue. Of course, chapter 13 is the Word of God and we should all take it to heart. It contains nine verses stressing love. However, what about the seventy-five verses in the same passage, which encourage the use of gifts? Indeed, the love chapter itself is about gifts, including tongues (vs 1, 8) and was written to show the attitude in which tongues speaking should take place. Furthermore, it is followed immediately with the command *'Desire spiritual gifts'*. Unfortunately, the chapter heading destroys the connected thought. Can we give serious attention to the love chapter, and ignore the gift of tongues, which the love chapter is about?

The history of the *glossolalia* from the beginning of the first day of the twentieth century is full of spiritual significance. It has produced the greatest soul-saving witness in the entire Christian age. However, the evangelical world conjured up a real fear of tongues, and leaders massed their weight against it. That was tragic, and had far-reaching consequences. God had sent revival, but it was rejected by millions of biblical Christians. Apostolic-style revival made its own way mainly without evangelical encouragement. When George Jeffreys, the greatest and earliest of British Pentecostal evangelists, the man I mentioned laying hands on me, went through the UK like a flame of fire, warnings against him went out from almost every church pulpit. In Britain's second largest city, Birmingham, 10,000 people received Christ, and 1,000 testimonies of healing were received, yet a leading free churchman tried to organize a counter-attraction against him. That position changed only when the era of the charismatic renewal began in the late 1950s and 60s. The nations, which could have been swept by revival if the moving of the Spirit in this new way had been accepted by evangelicals, were swept by war. This sad rejection of biblical gifts was incomprehensible. Slanderous and false reports were a main reason. The enemy and 'accuser of the brethren' made fear his major strategy. The devil could see what damage a miraculous Gospel would do to his infernal kingdom. In fact, the very zeal of the 'tongues people' to win others for Christ actually deepened alarm among Bible-believers and also liberals. The most godly leaders were misled by the general reports, prejudice, and also by practical pressures. To accept tongues would have put one of the most eminent evangelicals outside the camp, and no doubt outside his church. In 1904 the Welsh revival began. It created almost desperate hunger worldwide for such blessing. In Germany the evangelicals organized conventions and prayer efforts. The cry was,

'Lord, do it again'. The revival visualized was a repeat of the Wesley-Whitefield-Edwards awakenings. But God wanted to do a new thing and waited.

In Germany, an evangelical leader with no charismatic experience began experimental services for the baptism in the Spirit, which drew a mixed multitude of wonder seekers many of dubious religious stock. Things were allowed to get out of hand, and two experienced Pentecostal women brought in from Norway to help, went home disgusted.

The damage was far reaching, and spawned the infamous 'Berlin Declaration', denouncing the tongues movement as 'from below', of the devil. This short document was merely assertive, and contained not a single argument, scriptural or otherwise. Most German evangelicals, under threat dis-fellowship, had to toe the line it laid down. Thus the Declaration rooted itself deeply, and bore bitter fruit.

**-The Basic Problem:** The foregoing will, we hope, help a new generation to understand the background to any lingering hesitations about tongues. There are many who have no objections when others speak in tongues, but they are not keen about it for themselves. Is it possible to be Pentecostal or Charismatic without speaking with tongues? Well, on the first truly Pentecostal day they *all* spoke with tongues. Other supernatural gifts are fine -healing, casting out demons, prophecy, wisdom and knowledge, and miracles. There is a difference: none of these require quite the same self-surrender. They can operate while we keep our best coat buttoned up in dignity. We can indeed heal the sick, give forth wisdom, knowledge, and prophecies all quit majestically, but speaking with tongues is different. We can receive even salvation with propriety, but tongues seem to be a humbling of our dignity and composure. Maybe that is why God gives them.

Many Christians have been brought up with anti-tongues attitudes, and conditioned against the practice. Others have been disillusioned. Those using artificial methods of inducing tongues have done considerable damage. But the

core is fear, a psychological instinct to hold on to ourselves, whereas to speak with tongues looks too much like losing control-it is supposed. This is a needless fear. God never takes over like that and robs us of our will.

According to Acts 2:4, *'they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.'* When the will of man, and the will of God come together in balance, then, and then only, utterance is possible. We need no afraid of being 'taken over', and we should never allow it.

The baptism in the Spirit is not to be described as being *possessed* by the Holy Spirit. It is not Spirit-possession. A demon may render people possessed, but not the blessed Spirit of God. We should of course recognize that God has a right to us as temples and as His servants- *'beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service' (Rom 12:1).*

If we want the Holy Spirit, then we should remember what Peter says: *'Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.'* They had no qualms about it, no worries about being 'possessed', or about keeping their self-possession and dignity. Dignity is not one of the fruits of the Spirit anyway, but joy is! God never wrests control, yet He does need to come into the flesh, and share in the business of our speech. As for dignity, if we want what the apostles got, they did not stand on their dignity too much. They were mocked, and said to be drunk on the day of Pentecost. But that is a small cost for such a big benefit.

Our real handicap is pure instinct: 'I am me and nobody else is going to get so close to me that anything I do is not completely me. Not even God'. We zip our souls up, and regard the Holy Spirit as an intruder. He wants to make our bodies His temple. That is the trouble - it is Just our bodies that we are so fussy about maintaining inviolate.

The Spirit of God has not come to violate. It is not an invasion- we were made for His indwelling, and Dr. Huxley's remark is more true than he realized, that



‘there is a God-shaped blank in our soul’. Only God can fill it. That is the crux of the matter. The human heart has a golden gate, which will never be opened except for the Lord of hosts, like that of Jerusalem.

God wants us not only spiritually but physically - that is the revolution of Pentecost, and that is the Rubicon so many fear to cross, while admiring those who have. Physically, and in every way we are to be one with Him, we in Him and He in us, like a sponge in water. A cloth in purple dye takes on the character of the element into which it is dipped. So do those baptized in the Spirit.

If then He dwells in us physically, should there not be a physical sign? What else but speaking with tongues? Is not the tongue like a rudder that steers the ship, as James says? Then what does it mean when we do not let God use our tongues to speak with? If the gift is from Him-if we speak with tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, could it be anything but wonderful?

The glorious experience of being swept into the ocean of God's purposes, carried along (like the prophets of Israel) in that Pentecostal mighty rushing wind- is that what we are afraid of? Has the starch of what we call civilization

stiffened our garb, and turned into steel armor, so that it has become difficult to 'put on Christ'? Where are His tears? Where His passion? Where our cross-bearing? Where His total unself-consciousness and yieldedness to God? The

world admires every passionate enthusiasm except one, love for God. What do we want? Do we want our cozy culture and sophistication - or the burning and palpitating drive of the divine nature?

There does not appear to be any wide recognition of the fact that the baptism in the Spirit with tongues is a truth, which enhances all other truths. A new dimension is opened to us not only in life, but also in theology and every relationship. Truth shines more brilliantly at every turn of the jewel. God in the flesh, not just 'spiritually.' Joel had said the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh. God comes upon us in our *flesh* as well as our spirit.

Whether we speak about salvation, or forgiveness, or redemption, the flesh is involved - even when we speak of God, for 'the Word became flesh'. There is no way that the divine oneness with our human nature could now be better demonstrated, than when the Spirit gives utterance with us. The presence of God in His people has always affected them vocally. Theologians have now to think in terms of what happened at Pentecost, or miss the key to an enlarged library of truth. If the only perfect Man who ever lived was a divine-human union, and we are destined to be like Him, why shun any evidence of it in the present day? The fullness of the Godhead indwelt Him *bodily*.

**-The Gift of God:** The Pentecostals in their little shop-front churches, and back Street halls stuck to their guns for half a century of contempt. Those church groups, now numbering 220 million, usually write tongues in their Fundamentals as the sign of the baptism in the Spirit. Whatever arguments are used, whether Acts was intended to teach theology or not, the record is enough. The Bible way of being full of the Spirit, and knowing it is clear enough. It was always with outward manifestations, and the only one invariably mentioned is tongues. Nobody but nobody in apostolic days had it any other way.

If people do not like tongues, how do they propose they will know they have the Holy Spirit? How will it show in their personality? Going around healing others does not show how we ourselves are blessed. We are talking about 'new creatures'; not old creatures made a little livelier, but life from the dead.

Tongues are the only gift named in every list in 1Cor 12-14. Tongues - real tongues -would be impossible without God. It is a gift from heaven. Should anybody protect and defend themselves against it? In an earlier sub-topic, we said that there is no such thing as greater and lesser gifts. There is also no such thing as a gift of so little consequence that it need not interest us. God does not give trivial gifts. If we cannot see their value, He does.

There are those who teach that we can be filled with the Spirit without tongues, or even that we receive the Spirit at new birth, and seek the gifts afterwards. It eliminates the need for the

Pentecostal 'initial evidence' of tongues. Well, why is such teaching so welcome? No tongues - what attraction is that? If you do not bother with *this* gift, another will have to be crossed out of the Corinthian list

interpretation. Are we superior to what God offers?

**-Tongues in Operation:** Literature on tongues would fill a library. In this topic we are attempting to set down guidance, understanding, and something more. The object is to stimulate the desire for the God-given gifts, which have always proved to come hand- in-hand with faith and evangelistic vision.

The 'tongues people' are becoming a major factor in history, secular and religious, simply because of their eagerness to see others turn to God. There is a bright fire in their soul, a conviction that runs deep. Do not ask how or why. It is there. Perhaps others have it too, but certainly millions would not have it at all unless speaking with tongues had introduced to them indwelling Spirit.

Earlier we referred to the fact that the nine manifestations, which Paul describes in list one of 1Cor 12, are not all there are. This is a quick list of gifts, which particularly affect Christian worship. Other works of the Spirit, such as casting out demons, taking up serpents, and immunity to poison, are not part of normal worship.

Paul ranks prophecy higher than did the Corinthians, who preferred the more showy manifestations, especially tongues. The love of the sensational is not unknown in any age, and is evident enough today. The miraculous may be sought-purely because it is sensational. Speaking with tongues in Corinth sounded to Paul like 'sounding brass or a clanging cymbal', sounding off, and showing off. This proud accomplishment Paul suddenly reduces to dependency on a prophet, saying a tongues man is not to speak at all without an interpretation.

**-Interpretation:** The word used for interpretation in 1Cor 12:10 is *hermeneia*. The experts tell us that this means 'to explain what is said' rather than translate. In 14:27 and 28 it is similar, i.e., to put into words (Greek *dihermeneueto*).

We would like to offer some help and guidelines, especially as tongues used publicly is expected to be in the context of worship.

What may be concisely expressed by the Spirit in one language may need more explaining in English. We know nothing about the tongues of angels, which could be much more concise than our languages, needing many earth-language words to interpret them. A brief utterance in tongues, followed by an interpretation five times as long, may have another explanation, namely, a prophetic development of the same theme continuing in the spirit of prophecy. The interpretation does not need to take place as soon as the tongues speaker has ceased. The whole service does not need to be quieted waiting for the interpreter to begin. There is no reason why it should not be given later. For that matter, it could be even given in a subsequent meeting if the Spirit allows it, and the same congregation is present, though that would be rare.

It has been said that some utterances in tongues are only praise to God, and need no interpretation. But why not interpret praise? Tongues and interpretation have a worship quality, and praise is edifying. Those who understood the languages spoken on the day of Pentecost heard them 'speak the wonderful works of God.' That is like the Psalms. Why not now? The wonderful works of God before Christ, were described in the Psalms as His miracle acts, such as the deliverance from Egypt. Worship should not be mainly about bowing before a heavenly (and unimaginable) throne in heaven. The wonderful work of God was that '*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.*' Calvary has always been the Christian theme. So when speaking with

tongues is interpreted, the great salvation spoken of by the prophets will, not surprisingly, be the theme of modern prophets. The glory of the Cross, and supreme work of God written in blood at Calvary, were the subject of praise in glory when John saw what was going on there (Rev 5).

To say that Paul discourages tongues is one of the most remarkable instances of turning Scripture on its head I have ever known. 1Cor 14 makes statements about tongues, which are not made even about prophesy. *'He who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God'* (v 2). *'In the spirit he speaks mysteries'* (v 2). *'If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays'* (v 14). *'Tongues are for a sign to unbelievers'* (v 22). You are praising God with your spirit.

**-Service Order:** The Corinthian instructions end with verses 39 and 40: *'Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order'*. What order? Ours, or God's? Our cast-iron structured proceedings? That is not indicated at all. God's order may have an alpine ruggedness about it, and still retain an aspect of grandeur. Worship can have spontaneity, the mountain surprise view. *'Whenever you come together, each one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation'* (1Cor 14:26). This is Holy Spirit worship, rivers of living water, and streams in the desert.

However, speaking with tongues is not confined to use in church. Paul wishes that they all spoke with tongues. Obviously not everybody could give an utterance when gathered for worship, (cf., 14:5, 23). There would not be time, unless they stayed a week. Paul's wish for all to speak with tongues could only be realized if people exercised their fluency in private worship.

Speaking in tongues is prayer (v 2), and is therefore one way in which to 'pray in the Spirit', especially when *'we do not know what we should pray for'*, as Rom 8:26 says. It is interesting that this applies, not necessarily to praying for someone else, but also for ourselves, for it continues, *'The Spirit Himself makes*

*intercession for us*'. We pray for ourselves when we pray in tongues. This explains why millions find themselves 'getting through', when the mood seems to be missing in prayer, if they take advantage of this manifestation in their lives. However, Paul is mainly concerned with tongues in public worship.

It is in the church that Paul visualizes the operation of the gifts for '*edification, exhortation, and comfort*' (14:3), and any prophecy should be proved by others. These two instructions make it very clear that tongues, interpretation, and prophecy are not for private guidance, nor for the family circle, nor between friends, nor between husband and wife. This kind of thing should take place in the congregation where there are others to judge.

Experience has shown how important this is. The practice of using tongues and interpretation privately in the home, more particularly to obtain guidance, does not need to be described as inadvisable - it has brought calamity and shipwreck. It is a way to divide churches. There must be others to judge, which means that oversight is needed even in church worship.

**-What are tongues?** Tongues have been explained as psychological, being 'thrown up from the subconscious mind under mental stress'. It amazes me that such fantastic abilities are attributed to the subconscious mind -that people can utter lengthy and intelligible speeches in languages they have never heard, and even describe in tongues, matters completely outside their knowledge.

Those of us who speak with tongues daily can state that it is not done in an ecstasy or trauma, and that we are in full control of our mental state. Nils Bloch Hoel however is himself not so sure he has explained things, for he adds that

future investigation in psychology may come forward with some different explanation. Indeed, -yes the Holy Spirit perhaps? Why not? And that is an explanation nobody can disprove.

Others think that it was a very special, one-off miracle on the day of Pentecost, when the hundred-and-twenty spoke with recognizable languages, which they had never learned, and that the tongues in Corinth were quite different. There

IS not only no evidence whatsoever for such an Idea, but no value in the idea either, except to push back the miraculous into more remote history.

An objection has been raised that tongues have been heard among those who are not Christians. Mormons can produce their own cases of tongues. No doubt. In fact, as referred to earlier, the oracles at the temples of pagan gods sometimes gave forth their pronouncements in gibberish, through the lips of vestal virgins, which priests purported to interpret. The devil, like the magicians of Egypt, can counterfeit the miracles of God, and supernaturally impart utterances. That

is expected by Paul in 1Cor 12:3: *'No one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed'*. Paul was not inventing a hypothetical possibility. It could happen, and possibly did, but it would be by another spirit than from God. The occult is supernatural as well as the gifts of the Spirit.

That Satan can produce phenomena does not mean that all phenomena are satanic. Jesus was meeting such a fear when He said, *'If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him'* (Lk 11:11-13). Speaking with tongues has sometimes been more battling to unbelief, and more convincing to the unprejudiced, than healing and visible miracles.

The question, of what the gift of tongues is, can now be easily answered. Not everybody who speaks with tongues is gifted for their use in public worship - which Paul is concerned with in 1 Corinthians. If certain people in a church seem to be prominent in this utterance, that is how it should be. Gift has more than one meaning. Speaking with tongues is a gift of God in the general sense, but in the church sense the gift has come to the man or woman who frequently feels a special inspiration to edify congregation in this way -with an interpreter, fulfilling the law *'By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established'* (2Cor 13:1).

**-Tongues That Aid Us:** Let us now enumerate the ways in which we are helped by speaking with tongues:

- They are an utterance in prayer for needs we cannot ourselves express, and do not know how to pray. They enable us to sense the presence of God, and that He is bending to hear us.
- Demon hindrance is overcome.
- When our minds can no longer concentrate, our spirit prays.
- We can pray in tongues when we are otherwise having to concentrate upon some mechanical task, such as driving a car.
- We edify ourselves.

We leave this important subject at this juncture, though it deserves far lengthier examination. The Spirit of God is seeking every way to break through into our needy lives, and our desperate world. May we be open to His partnership!



## KINGDOM PRINCIPLES

**Aim:** To enlighten the church on the fact that believers are kingdom men and as every kingdom has its own rules and regulations, there are principles of the kingdom that are essential for believers to know and so live like kingdom men which they truly are on earth.

**Memory verse:** *I will keep thy status: O forsake me not utterly (psalm 119 vs 8).*

**Text:** Psalm 119:1-16, Matthew 5-7

**Introduction:** The word principle means a moral rule or believe that help you know what is right or wrong which influence your actions. Principles also means a law or fact of nature that explains how something works or why something happens. As a believer, we must always be conscious of the kingdom that governs us and therefore live our life as a believer both in our walk with God and in our work for God according to the laid down principles of the kingdom. We must not forget that God is not just a loving father but he is also a king and a judge. If we have this at the back of our mind, we will focus in our relationship with God and also do the things of God with clear understanding that we are under authority of heaven.

In today's lesson, we will be considering some of the conscious principles of the kingdom to stay current and connected to God. We will also be looking at salvation as the principle of the kingdom that is eternal. May the lord grant us clear understanding in Jesus name (Amen).

### Lesson Exposition

#### **(A) Spiritual sensitivity for alignment; conscious principles to stay current and connected.**

In our walk with God as a believer, it is important for us to always be sensitive and be aligned with the holy spirit. This is the only way to discern if we are currently on God's agenda or we are gradually stepping out of his will and purpose for our lives. Spiritual sensitivity can be attained through a consistent, deliberate and effective prayer.

As a believer, prayer supposed to be our life style. Jesus speaking in the book of Luke 1:18; he said men ought always to pray and not to faint that is if you are going to be registered as a man (human) in heaven you must be a praying person who engage in the act of prayer always. The moment you began to faint and weariness set in, you may still be referred to as a man on earth but in heaven you are not a man, you are another thing because at that point of prayerlessness, you have been disconnected from the source and you are not aligned with the Holy Ghost anymore. Only when you partner with the Holy Spirit in prayer that you can be connected to God and know what he is doing in a particular season. We can see in the scripture how great men have missed out of God's agenda because of their carelessness and lack of sensitivity for example Samson (judges 16:1-31), we also see example of a man who is aligned with the heavens known as John the Baptist (Luke 1:39-80). The bible recorded that he was in the wilderness until the day of his showing forth. It was in the wilderness that this young man discovers his purpose and followed it strictly and when his time come to end he says *that I may decrease but he (Jesus) may increase*. When the people came to ask him who he was, he said I'm the voice. It is only through personal dealings, consistent prayer and smooth relationship that one can remain aligned and sensitive.

### **(B) Eternal principles of the kingdom**

In the kingdom there are principles that are eternal, they are not subjected to time and age, they are forever relevant. One of this principle is salvation which is the only one that we will be treating under this sub-topic because of our time.

- Salvation: (Act 4:12, Rom 1:16, 10:10, 1Thess 5:8): Adam the first man fell in the garden of Eden as a result of disobedient and the position of man with God was taken, man no longer has the right to be called sons of God but God in his mercy has a plan to bring man back to his initial state and this plan is salvation whereby someone who is sinless has to become sin and die the death of man for man to be restored to his position (Act 4:23-28) and this was fulfilled by Jesus who is now the author of eternal

salvation (Heb 5:8-9). Salvation is a principle of God to bring man back to his position where he was initially. Everyman have to trace their step back to the God by being in the finished work of Christ knowing fully what is in Act 4:1-12 and follow the guide in Rom 10:12. It is therefore the responsibility of a believer to go out and preach the salvation of man through Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16, 10:11-15)

### **Questions**

Knowing fully well that we have salvation through Christ Jesus who is the author of eternal salvation;

1. Does a believer have luxury of sin?
2. Can one loose his salvation? if yes explain with bible reference and if no explain with bible references.

### **Conclusion**

The kingdom of God is a place well organized, there are things a believer cannot access by prayer alone but by obedience. Jesus said if you love me keep my commandment (Jh 14:15). Obedience is one of the means through which trust is built in the kingdom because a faith that is not tested cannot be trusted. Therefore, as a believer, salvation through Christ Jesus does not gives us right to live our life for ourselves but for Christ because since we have accepted Christ life, we no longer have any life but the life of Christ (Gal 2:20). Paul said in *1Cor 6:12 that all things are lawful unto me but not all things expedient; all things are lawfully but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

**Prayer:** Lord, give us the clear revelation of your realities and quicken us to pray more in Jesus name.

## COVENANT WEALTH

**Aim:** To enlighten Christians on the importance of covenant wealth and clear out the misconceptions of wealth in Christianity.

**Memory Verse:** *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world”. 1John 2:16 KJV*

**Text:** 1 John 2:16, Proverb 23:4, 3 John 1:2, Matthew 6:33

### Introduction

Wealth is an important aspects of living. Consciously or unconsciously, everybody has need of it, it is actually the keenest contestant of God’s place in a man’s life. Although everybody has need of it, there are lots of misconception and argument over it either to defend the lack of it or the abundance of it. As in all kingdom matters, there is only one person who gives the final word. He is the only authority on it and to Him we will turn. He has left us His will from which we can know His mind concerning every issue of life. Using the scripture, we are going to trace the master key to supernatural wealth. We will see what wealth is all about, the distinction btw worldly and kingdom riches, its place in the covenant, and the conditions for it.

### Lesson Exposition

#### (A) Covenant Wealth and Misconceptions

It is important to know that God is interested in the comfort of His people. The Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines covenant as “a formal agreement that is legally binding.” A covenant is a vow which cannot be broken. It is a contract with a strong spiritual undertone. It is a contract in which the parties involved must accept its terms in totality. Once entered into, it is irrevocable. Wealth is a “possession of a great amount of property, money, riches, etc.” So wealth speaks of comfort, of fulfillment, and God desires that for you, many things He desires for you, but He desires your comfort above everything else. He said: *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth 3John 1: 2*. Who can break God’s covenant? *“I will work, and who shall let it?” (Isa. 43:13)*. In this covenant,

wealth is part of our inheritance. If we fulfil its terms, wealth is guaranteed us. It is not a promise, so you can't pray to get it. It is a contract. You only have to comply with the terms to enjoy it. A covenant calls for your obedience in abiding by its terms. The reason we are given the power to get wealth is to establish the covenant, which God swore unto our fathers, as it is this day. A covenant is the strongest commitment in the kingdom of God. *"My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips"* Psalm 89:34. God has no will power to break his covenant and no one can break it. He says about Himself, *"I am the Lord, I change not"* (Mal.3:6). The scripture reveals all that we need to know about the author of the covenant. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning (James 1:17)

## **(B) Misconceptions**

Christendom has suffered much setback because of its lopsided and haphazard understanding of living from the scriptures. The devil has had a field day taking advantage of the ignorance of Christians. But thank God for the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Over the years, salvation has been preached and taught as being meant only for the future. Its relevance has been seen and limited to heaven. Teachers, Evangelists and Preachers alike have preached the dos and don'ts of living, in order to make heaven. Heaven and how to get there became the hub of gospel message. This put Christians at a disadvantaged position, as they were slowly and carefully pushed off the platform of attainment and achievement. The most affected area is the area of wealth. Let us consider some of the misconceptions and see what the scriptures say about them:

- It is the root of all evil. The chief persecutors against prosperity message claims *that money is the root of all evil*. But they are wrong! A careful study of *1 Tim 6:10* reveals *that the LOVE of money is the root of all evil*.
- It corrupts holiness. The scripture often misused in this regard is *Luke 18:24-25*. *God is holy and he controls wealth*, so it is possible to be wealthy and holy at the same time because we are partakers of God's divine nature.

- It is worldly (1 John 2:16). According to the scripture, heaven is a symbol of affluence. Wealth, which is an epitome of man's accomplishment, is more heavenly than earthly. Biblical definition of worldliness does include wealth. It is not synonymous with it. Neither is poverty an expression of godliness.
- It is materialistic (2 Chronicles 26:5). What is materialism? It is living unto, and for material possession. This is contrary to God's word. His covenant of wealth only work for those who live unto him.

### **(C) Worldly Riches**

- Characteristics: \*Pride (Acts 12:21-23), \*Insecurity (Luke 18:18-23), \*Temporary (Pro 13:11), \*Sorrowful (1Tim 6:10)

### **(D) Kingdom Wealth**

- Characteristics: \*Humility, \*Sorrow-free (Pro 10:22), \*Permanent (Ecc 3:14), \*Increases (Pro 4:18).

### **(E) Windows of Heaven**

...That is the window of heaven. It brings rain, and that rain is the spirit of wisdom and power. It will help you to be productive all the days of your life... *Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it Mal 3:10.* When the windows of heaven open, rain pours out. What then is the significance of rain? In Joel 2:23-26, the Bible says: *...He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God...and my people shall never be ashamed.* The rain is the Spirit of God being released.

### **(F) The Elements of Wisdom**

There are six elements of the Spirit—wisdom, counsel, knowledge, understanding, might, and the fear of the Lord. The Bible says in (*Pro 9:10-The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...*). We are aware that knowledge, understanding and counsel are related to wisdom. You can't dissociate any of them from wisdom. Knowledge when understood, is called wisdom. When correctly applied, it is called counsel, and all of them live in the house of wisdom. That the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom implies that five of those elements have to do directly with wisdom. And then we have might. Thus, the Spirit of the Lord essentially is the Spirit of wisdom and might. When you give therefore, you open up to the Spirit of wisdom that guides you to profiting. In Isa 48:17, the Bible says: *...I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.* What that means is that when you give, you open up to supernatural creativity God tells you what steps to take in order to have your needs met. He rains down upon your heavenly ideas that lead to profiting and wealth. Five out of the six elements have to do with wisdom, and one represents might, which is power. So, God tells you what steps to take and gives you the power to get it done.

### **(G) Conditions for Prosperity**

- **GIVING:** Pro 23:4, Ps 35:27 - It is one of the keys to receiving heaven's increments. Without it God has no access to you, because his laws states that there can be no harvest without first planting a seed. However, no giving can be acceptable without a correct attitude. Not every giver will end up being prosperous. The reason many givers give today is that they are seeking for money not because they are interested in how the kingdom of God can be expanded. But He said in *Matt 6:33- But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* Those who give for their own sake will have nothing, but those who give for God's sake and for His kingdom will receive hundredfold returns.
- **OBEDIENCE** Gen. 12:1-4, Ps 112:1,3- Every time God talks about abundance, He makes reference to obedience to the commandment and the law. Abundance is never

free it places a demand on the people who want it. If any man desires abundance, let him be excited at obeying the law that makes it work. It is worth noting that when we give, it is recorded in heaven (Acts 10:4).

### **Conclusion**

Acquainting yourselves with God (by being in good terms with Him) is the secret of abundance in life Job 22:21,24. The closer you are to Him, the more of His nature you will imbibe and manifest.

### **ANOINTING AND LIVING PORTALS.**

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on what anointing is and the power responsible for it and how men could be carriers of the presence of God.

**Memory Verse:** *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 1john2:27*



**Text:** Acts10:38, Luke 4:18-19, Isa 61:1-2, Acts 19:11-12,20, Gen1:1, 1sam.16:13, Num.18:8, Isa 10:27, Acts1:8, Jh 7:37-39, 1Jh 2:27.

## **Introduction**

Anointing means to smear or rub. John the beloved showed us that the anointing is a personality called the Spirit of God (Holy Ghost) as also described by Jesus in Jh 14:16,17&26. Living portals are gateways of reality. The concept of living is beyond intake of Oxygen. The anointing is God way of making men living portals. Spirit of just men made perfect are living portals. Living portals are alive after oxygen has been taking from them. We pray that the Father of all spirit will help us to see, hear and perceive.

## **Lesson Exposition**

**(A) Anointing and Oil:** The oil commonly used by priest in the old testament was gotten from OLIVE TREE. Olive oil is known in our days as "anointing oil" meaning the oil used for anointing.in the days of Moses, lev24:2, God himself prescribed it, so it became a hallowed tool for consecration. The oil used in old testament to consecrate men for service was an emblem of the reality (Holy Ghost). Men like David (1sam16:13), Aaron (Num.18:8) etc. There are men who were not anointed with oil but operated under the spirit of God. In cases where there is no priest to anoint, Example Daniel, Samson, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah the prophet. The oil is just a figure and we see it in use in new testament for sick people. James 5:13-15 is where the usage of oil to pray for men in the church scripturally proofed. Praying for people with oil must be guided and not to be criticized. The Lord must be leading you.

**(B) Anointing and the Holy Ghost:** The Lord hath chosen that the consecration technique is to smear or rub men on their inside with THE ANOINTING (Holy Ghost). This unction is a teacher; He leads men in TRUTH. An oil will not be useful by just keeping it in a vessel, it must come out. The Lord desire that the anointing flows out of us, John7:37-39, by the cracking of our vessels 2cor4:8. It is on the platform of obedience that the anointing can manifest himself. Jesus have been so cracked that he said to his disciples that virtues had gone out of

him. Our relationship with the anointing is the basis to define our place in God and to enter into it. This is our journey of becoming living portals, where we can birth things, become an advantage to today's dying world. May we get to heaven and see more souls we have won unconsciously than consciously.

### **(C) Prayer, Fasting & The Word as Tools of Operating In The Anointing.**

The beauty of the anointing is seen the more as we engage prayer. Jesus showed us a key in *luke18:1*, "...men ought always to pray and not to faint". As living portals, the dimensions of God should be seen in us. Mercy, light, fire, power, love, might, benevolence and so on are his dimension. If we don't live by prayer and the word, we will become portals of misrepresenting Our father. Paul showed us in Colossians 3:16, how to live and become living portals through the pathway of Growth in God. If we joke with prayer and the word, we will be portals for all kinds of fleshly lust manifestation in Galatians 5:19. It is by prayer and the word that we walk in the SPIRIT and not fulfill the lust of the flesh (1Pet2:11). Our stamina or strength against the lust of the flesh and resisting the devil in our sphere of influence cannot be generated from the flesh but from the SPIRIT. The generator of strength is prayer, the word and fasting. Paul said he thank God he could pray in tongues more than others. 1pet1:22.

### **Q&A**

Brothers and sister, Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth and part of those words are "men ought always to pray". Shall we pray.

## **STEWARDSHIP AND MENTORSHIP (DISCIPLESHIP)**

**Aim:** To let believers understand the demand on them as a steward and the need of Discipleship in the kingdom.

**Memory Verse:** *“let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God” 1Cor 4:1.*

**Texts:** 1Cor 4:1-2, 1Tim 1:1-2,18-20, 1Pet 5:1-3, Luk 16:1-15, Jh 13:12-15, Exo 18:1-24, Acts 16.

### **Introduction**

You need to understand that man that rise most in life, did not rise alone, they rise with others and through others. Likewise, there is nothing as dangerous as living a purposeless life. Every great man you see today was once a child (both physically and mentally). What made them great is that, they were disciple or mentored by a mentor. God is not looking for strong vessels; He is only looking for yielded vessels. Yielded in the sense of humility and total submission to His Spirit.

### **Lesson Exposition**

#### **A. STEWARDSHIP (1Cor 4:1-2, Luk 16:1-15)**

##### **1. Who is a Steward?**

According to dictionary meaning, a steward is a person who manages the property or affairs for entity.

Biblically; a steward is a servant manager, entrusted with God's mysteries (secrets). That is, a servant of Christ to whom God entrusts the hidden truths in the good news. The word steward in Greek is "*Oikonomos*", which means "the manager of household affairs". And affairs of God's household are secrets that should be kept by chief servant. It's not an affair that can be discussed anyhow.

And every born again believers are automatically a member of God's household. Thereby qualifying them to be a steward. Every Christian today is a steward.

## **2. Characteristics and Qualities of a Steward**

- Stewards are keepers of God's mysteries: And every steward is expected to be a preacher of those things that the Lord has revealed to him or entrusted to him. It's not necessary or compulsory to preach that on the pulpit alone, it must be preached in other spheres of life like the medical department, law department, media department, on the street etc.
- A Steward must be faithful (Luk 16:10-12): to be faithful means to reveal/preach the nature and ways of God as being revealed to you by God. God didn't ask you to keep them to yourself, these mysteries are meant for the body of Christ.
- A Steward must be truthful and he that is being entrusted with God's secrets must dispense only a balanced and accurate truth. He/she must not dispense it for the sake of motivating or suiting people's lust and sin.

## **B. Mentorship/Discipleship (Exo 18:1-24, 1 Sam 3:1-9, Luk 2:51, Mrk 3:13-14)**

- God's purpose for Mentoring: the ultimate source of true life transformation is the Holy Spirit plus the Word of God, skillfully and prayerfully utilized by those called as mentors within the body of Christ.

To mentor/disciple, entails more than merely passing knowledge about God. It involves showing people how to love and serve God. There must be a strong communication kind of relationship between the mentor and his mentee/disciple (Ecc 4:9-10, Pro 27:17).

Jesus mentored His disciples by imparting knowledge and values through His words and actions (Acts 1:1, Matt 12:9-13, 19:13-15).

### **Examples of Biblical Mentors**

- Jesus (Jh 13:3-5, 12-15, Matt 19:13-15)
- Jethro (Exo 18:1-24)
- Moses (Deut 31 & 34)
- Elija (1King 19, 2Kings 2)
- Naomi (Ruth 1)
- Barnabas (mentored Paul Acts 4, 9, 11)
- Paul (mentored Timothy Acts 16, Phil 2, 1Tim 1:1-2, 18-20) etc.

### **C. Mentoring Process**

- It is vitally important for mentors to model biblical principles for mentees, providing an example of how God wants us to live and demonstrating Christianity in action (1Pet 5:1-3).
- Mentees/disciples may view seeking advice as a sign of weakness. But mentors are prepared to offer insights and point out alternatives, while remembering that mentees must ultimately make their own decisions (Pro 13:14, 15:22).
- When mentees need help, mentors help them learn to look to the Bible for answers. God's word is our spiritual nourishment and it provides wisdom on every aspect of life (Ps 1:1-3, 2Tim 3:16-17).

### **D. How to find a Mentor?**

The Lord must be the one leading you to a particular person. You can't be mentored by everyone. Notwithstanding, in finding a Mentor, consider the following things:

- He/she must be God fearing and Spirit filled.
- He/she must be diligent and faithful in his/her business (God's given assignment).
- He/she must be a man/woman of character.

**Note:** it's better for a male to be mentored by a man and a female by a woman. But in case there is no woman available that can mentor a female lady, then she can be mentored by a male mentor. The reason why it should be done that way, is to avoid any unwanted crisis.

Don't just choose a person because the person is spiritual. Though is good but let God lead you.

Mentorship is not a distant relationship. It must be a close relationship. For example, you can't be mentored by someone that does not even know you. Probably all you do is to listen to his messages and read his books, that's not the kind of mentorship we are talking of here. The kind of mentorship we are discussing, is someone that is visible and that can be accessed at any time just as Jesus was always accessible to His disciples.

#### **E. The Responsibilities of a Mentee**

- A mentee is expected to be someone that is submissive. That is the most important thing in Mentorship/Discipleship. Lack of submissiveness is called Pride.
- He/she must adhere to instructions and must be teachable and humble.
- He/she must develop a sound relationship with his/her mentor in terms of sound communication.

#### **Questions**

1. Was Jesus mentored/disciple? If Yes, prove it biblically. If No, then prove it biblically.

2. What will be the difference between someone that is mentored and another person that is not mentored.

### **Conclusion**

It's the will of the Father that all men are disciple. *"Go ye therefore, and teach (disciple/mentor) all nations...." (Matt 28:19a).*

## THE SECRET PLACE AND THE GATHERING OF SAINTS

**Aim:** The necessity for the gathering of the believers and the purpose of secret place to enhance fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

**Memory Verse:** *Hebrews 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching(KJV).*

Texts: Heb10:25, Eph 2:17-22,4:13-15, Rev 7:9-12, Ps 91:1-13, Ps 81:7, Dan 2:1-20, Matt 6:6.

### Introduction

The secret place is a spiritual location where communion with God takes place, it is a place of intimacy with the Holy Ghost. *(And in the morning, long before daylight, He got up and went out to a deserted place, and there He prayed Mrk 1:35 AMP).* (Luk 5:16)

**Note:** Your **WALK with God** is more superior than your **WORK for God**.

**The church (fellowship), is like a hospital where the sick people come and are healed, the oppressed come and are set free, the place where the imperfect people are being made perfect. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (emancipation from bondage, freedom). And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit (2Cor 3:17-18 AMP).**

### Lesson Exposition

**(A) The Secret Place:** The secret place is a place of personal intimacy with God. And also a place of intimacy where weakness is being exchange for strength (Luke 6:12). God lives in the secret so he that wants to have an encounter with him must be ready to dwell in the secret place (Matt 6:6) because the secret place is a place we encounter God, meet him and have very serious experience of God which is never in the public. In the days of Daniel, the hidden secret behind king Nebuchadnezzar was revealed to Daniel because he knows the importance of the



secret place (Dan 2:14-20). The most potent power that can be exercise in any place is the power generated in the secret place (Matt 6:6). The lord becomes your refuge and fortress as long as you are a dweller and not a visitor of the secret place (Ps 91:2), there will be nothing that can penetrate to tamper with such a man. The secret and strategy of the devil is being revealed in the secret place (Ps 91:5).

So many believers today yarn for the mantle of Elijah, little did they know that Elijah was not made on mount Carmel but in the secret place. Powerful men are not made in the public but in the secret place (Jam 5:14).

The secret place will help us to have zeal for the gathering of the saints. For the zeal for your house has eaten me up (Ps 69:10a AMP). The Zeal will birth two things in us.

- Personal conviction.
- Knowledge of God.

1. **PERSONAL CONVICTION:** The personal conviction, personal encounter produce personal revelation and personal revelation produce personal conviction and the end product is FAITH, which is in the Word alone.

**Encounter-Revelation-Conviction-Faith:** *38-For I am persuaded beyond doubt (am sure) that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things impending and threatening nor things to come, nor powers,*

*39-Nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).* Apostle Paul is not the first of the Apostle but his secret was encapsulated in: *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven (Act 9:3 KJV).* The encounter Apostle Paul had drastically changed his life.

**Note: The level of your encounter is directly proportional to the level of boldness you would have in the Word. After Apostle Paul encounter Jesus, the Lord**

**needed him to join the gathering of the saints for proper growth. *And the Lord said to him, get up and go to the street called Straight and ask at the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying (there) (Act 9:11-22). Then three years later, I did go up to Jerusalem to become [personally] acquainted with Cephas (Peter), and remained with him for fifteen days (Gal 1:18 AMP).***

**The ENCOUNTER you received that does not birth hunger for the gathering of the saints is not a genuine one, repent and be transformed by the Word. *Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend [to show rage or worthy purpose] (Proverb 27:17 AMP).***

2. **THE KNOWLEDE OF GOD:** Apostle John who was initially recorded has a son of thunder; *but He turned and rebuked and severely censured them. He said, you do not know of what sort of spirit you are (Luk 9:54-55 AMP).* The same Apostle John that want to destroy men was the one that later wrote about LOVE when he had the true knowledge about God. *He who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love (1John 4:8 AMP).*

Commitment to your local church as a believer is very important, even after Apostle Paul encounter God he has to be referred to Ananias for proper enlightenment. *So Ananias left and went into the house. And he laid his hands on Saul and said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, Who appeared to you along the way by which you came here, has sent me that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Act 9:17 AMP).* Apostle Timothy have to learn tremendously under Apostle Paul, Timothy was so submissive to him. *As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine (1Timothy 1:3 KJV).*

- **What you must do in the secret place:** \*Build an altar of prayer, \*Prayer is one of God's authorized system of communion and fellowship with Him (Luk 6:12), \*For one

to build an altar of prayer such a person must be consistent in prayer, because consistency builds an altar, \*study the word (2Tim 2:14).

**(B) How to be committed to your local church (fellowship):** \*Honour the leaders (2Chr 20:20), \*Faithful to the code of conducts (1Tim 3:15), \*Available and useable when needed (2Tim 2:20)

- **Benefits of being committed to your fellowship:** (The benefits are numerous; we will only discuss few); \*Spiritual Enlightenment (Eph 1:17), \*Drastic growth (Pro 27:17), \*Help spiritually, financially, academically (Act 2:45-47).

### **Questions**

1. How do we communicate to God in the gathering of saints, should it be less/greater than that which we engage in, in our secret place? Discuss with scriptural references.

### **Conclusion.**

Commitment to your local church (fellowship) is a necessity to everyone that want to go far in this race, submissive should be the order of the day, no room for rudeness in the body of Christ.

**Note: Your walk with your maker is more superior than your work for your Maker.**

**Hunger for the word of God, appetite for prayer and love for fasting should be our heart cry in this generation.**

Lastly nobody is perfect in his way; initially the reason for the fellowship is to build up perfect men. Your leaders' characters may not be good enough, God will not use the qualified ones, he used the unqualified to qualify men.

## **DISCERNMENT OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.**

**Aim:** To show us that our height of Discernment and understanding is crucial in our dealings with the BODY.

**Memory Verse:** *"For we know in part and we prophesy in part" Icor13:9.*

**Text:** Icor.12:12-17, Rom1:14-17, Eph5:21-33, Acts10:1-48, 1cor13:9, Heb5:14, Judges1:3-4, 1 cor8:12.

### **Introduction**

The Greek translation of Discernment is *diakrino* meaning to judge. Other synonyms are enlightenment, sensitivity, sharpness. The body of Christ is the CHURCH, Christ being the HEAD. What we call churches are actually Ministries handled by the church. We all have been given a ministry known as THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION (2cor5:18). The approach to reconciliation is where we now begin to see that THE BODY has different members, representing different dimensions of God. As we continue may our eyes of understanding be sharpened in the name of Jesus.

### **Lesson Exposition**

#### **(A) The Members**

Apostle Paul used the Anatomy of a man to explain how the church looks like in essence. We tap from Christ our source according to John 15:1-3 but in divers' platform we communicate the life of God. As members of the body, God himself so designed it that our maturity is dependent on partnership (Psalms133:1-3). There will be clamour on the dimension we are called to represent but we will need to submit to the body to be able to be balanced. No man can reveal the fullness of God in isolation. We need to journey with God enough to KNOW what part of him, we are to reveal. Abraham reveal God through faith, David reveal God through

leadership and as a minstrel. Jesus reveal the humility dimension of God. What part of the body are you neglecting?

### **(B) Partnering with the Body**

It is true that there are excesses in the body but in the midst of that, if we can see beyond the excesses, we will see God. As individual members, we must strive for balance, lest we lose out. Confrontation of excesses and error must be done in love. Paul at a time had to confront Peter (Gal 2:11-14). Jesus told the Pharisees in love that they are making God's word of no effect through their tradition (Mark 7:13-16). In discernment of the body, our spiritual sense must be lightened, we must be worded to be able to judge well. To judge and correct excesses, to bring order to a member that is deficient or paralytic. The lack of discernment of the Pharisees made them fight what God is doing. "What move of God will your lack of discernment preach against or fight?"

- There are keys to receiving from the body, transmitting to the body and judging unbiased: \*LOVE (1Cor13:4-7), \*SACRIFICE (Rom.14:1-4,17-21), \*HONOUR (Exo 20:12, 1Sam 24:6,26:11-12,23).

### **Q&A**

Mention and Discuss other keys need in dealing with the body as peculiar to you.

### **Conclusion.**

You and I need each other to be able to carry out our purpose. The body of Christ!

## LEADERSHIP

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the entirety of leadership systems

**Memory Verse:** *But so shall it be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister Mrk 10:43*

**Text:** Mark 10:42-45; Romans 12

### Introduction

True leadership is service. A true leader will be found serving his followers, as greatest in life is in service and the greatest of a leader is seen in his attitude towards service. Christianity is not a call to self - satisfaction; the call of every Christian leader is to keep serving. Ephesians 6:6

### Lesson Exposition

#### (A) Christ, Our Model Leader.

Christ Jesus is the model of every Christian leader. When he came into the world, he didn't just appear as "the son of God" (John1:18), he was also called "the servant of God" (Phil 2:5-8).

This was obvious and visible in his life and conduct in the four gospel. In other words, he was found serving, this is a consistent fact about him (1Pet 2:21).

In Mark 10:45 Christ told the disciples: " .... *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*".

The twelve Apostles were tutored and trained by Christ in his earthly ministry before he bequeaths ministry to them. Jesus taught them leadership, sacrifice, dedication and consecration on several occasion (Mark 10:42-44, Luke24). Jesus did not put them over anybody or ask them to disciple anyone not until his resurrection, after he had taught them thoroughly.

Christ being a model son and a model servant (Hebrews 2:10-11), Christian living will therefore be an expression of Christ. We share in the sonship and servant hood John 14:12 This is not only to the twelve, but all who would belief in him. The essence of the indwelling in the believer is for service.

#### (B) Leadership in the New Testament

No doubt Jesus taught the 12 Apostles through his life, conduct, teaching ministry and chastisement. They were mentored and disciplined by him before he handed over leadership to them. It was upon his resurrection that he handed over leadership to them

In John 21:15 Jesus though was speaking to Peter, the instruction was for all the disciples.

Matthew 28:17-20

Note that the word minister when used in the scripture (for instance Romans 5-8 Matthew 20:28) refers to a servant.

What Jesus did, the apostles continued after Christ resurrection ( Act 2:42) Every true leader must have been submissive under a leader. The Ecclesia (Church) of Christ is where sons are trained to serve. We're sons, then we serve. Romans 12

Paul mentored Timothy before he became the leader of the church (1 Timothy 1:2,18). He then instructed him to replicate the same in others. 2 Timothy 2:1-2

Other references: Romans 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1

### **(C) Qualification of Leadership**

An intended leader must have been a follower and a disciple as explained above

A leader must be accountable and disciplined: God set men in the church to feed and watch over his flocks, helping them to grow spiritually, this involves accountability and discipline (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11-13; Hebrews 13:17)

A leader must be willing to serve in any capacity. When it comes to serving within the local assembly. Except where the skills are technical, a believer ought to prepare to serve in any and every department or unit. We are being given choices today, which is fine; But reading through patterns in scriptures, you just serve.

Anyone not well tested with service and submission to authority should not be granted the privilege of leadership 1 Timothy 3:6-7

A leader must possess good conduct 1 Timothy 3:2ff; Titus 1:7-9

In concluding;

Romans 12:8 *Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; **he that ruleth, with diligence**; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness*

Luke 22:26 *But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.*

### **Questions**

1. Is everyone meant to be a leader?



## PARABLE AND WISDOM

**Aims:** To enlighten believers on the matters of PARABLES AND THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM

**Memory Verse:** *And the child grew and waxed strong in the spirit..filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him. Luk 2:40.*

**Texts:** Matt 10:16,7:24, Luk 2:40, Isaiah33:6, Pro 4:5-7

### Introduction

As a Christian we are entitle to walk in the power of wisdom and to be strong in the lord through his Parables, God is spirit and those that worship him must worshiped him in spirit and in truth, no one can be SENT if he has not been CALLED (luke9:1). As a Christian we must always learn how to STAY WITH THE LORD in terms of denying oneself and have focus on him (GOD). As we proceed on let your heart be open to receive and you will be transform in Jesus name AMEN.

### Lesson Exposition

#### (A) PARABLE (Matt 7:24,24:32,13:10)

As a Christian parable is not something that we are just hearing for the first time, we have been hearing a lot of parables from God's word e.g. the Parables of the ten virgin, Parable of the Sowers and etc. But what is Parable? Parable means mysteries or we say a sacred secret that has been coded spiritually. Brethren we are a spirit being according to 1Cor 15:45-46, 2Cor 5:17, 1Cor 2:14, but according to 1Cor 2:4 which says that *the things of God are spiritually discerned*; so therefore grow in it, is your thing. Now, parable are meant for who? It's meant for both: (a) Believers (b) Unbelievers.

In a word "the followers of Christ", had known that this parable serves as a sharpening instrument in the spirit; that God use to sharpen the heart of men and enlighten men's understanding in his will. God always want those that are ready to come to him and stay... note

that **stay**; because that is what qualify a man to be a disciple of Jesus (Matt 16:24-25) and by doing this, the divine secret of the Lord will be revealed, are you ready to stay with the Lord? Jesus called his disciple to **STAY** with him and that he **MAY SEND** them. Be wise, **STAY WITH HIM**.

**NOTE:** Everyone is a **BUILDER** according to Matt 7:24, but be wise, with which Foundation? **JESUS IS THE ROCK**, “learn how to build on the rock-WISDOM.

➤ **Why Parable? (Matt 13 & 22).**

Parables are sharpening instrument as we have said earlier, but they are things that men “seek for”, men give their time to it because it adds life to their years. It is not something getting free, the word of God says “*those that seek me early shall find me*”. Parables serve as host of wisdom where men’s eyes are enlightened to the kingdom series/secrets. But why parable? If we study the life of Christ according to scripture the bible says “*he grew and wax strong in the spirit in spirit and filled with wisdom*”. We will see that Jesus addressed the gathering of the believers that followed him with parables, not in what they can understand. The reason is that Jesus knew that they are still babes since according to 1Cor 3:1-2, *that all what they need is milk of the words*, still they grow. So therefore he talks to them in a way that it will not hurt them, in a way that their spirit can’t bear, so that these people will be able to stay with him and learn at His feet, because Jesus knows this Matt 13:13-15, and He (Jesus) has come to them in a wisdom pattern so that this people will be healed .... Matt 9:12. *Brethren, wisdom is profitable to direct grow in wisdom*, stay with Him (JESUS), in terms of this, be a different follower and a disciple indeed, because the disciples learn how to go back to Him (Matt 13:10, Luke 14:26-27).

**(B) Wisdom (Matt 10:16 Pro 9:10,3:19, 4:7)**

The bible says “*wisdom is a principal thing*” (Pro 4:7). This means, as followers of Christ, we must not lack wisdom because believers without wisdom will lack direction, and lost

movement. *“Wisdom is profitable to direct”*, beware; a man of wisdom makes things done in successful ways. Now, how can someone obtain this wisdom? Pro 9:10 says *“the fear of god is the beginning of wisdom”*. **Having the fear of the creator not creation**, make men’s wisdom grow and even the scripture says that *“the spirit of God is the spirit of wisdom”*, *“understanding, might, counsels”* Isa 11:2. Believers must not be ignorant of these, *“anyone who this spirit of wisdom is not activated in him, the spirit of God is not in him”* James 1:5. But for as many that this spirit is dormant in him, there is one who gives and He is GOD. Another source except this is ERROR, brethren, God is always ready to give but you need to take a step by seeking His face; he gives freely.

### **(C) Wisdom-The Stability of Time (Isa 33:6, 1Cor 15:58, Eph 1:17, Ecc 3:1)**

Brethren, I pray the Lord should help us in this content **“stability of time”**. Firstly, what is time? Men in Christ, followers of Christ must always be aware of time and discern time. *“To everything”* Ecc 3:1. Jesus is a man that take the issue of “time” important; at that wedding He told her mother, my time has not yet come, the key to discern time is wisdom Isa 33:6, wisdom make men stable at the time of confusion. That is why Paul prayed for the people at Ephesus; *“brethren in all thy getting get wisdom”* Eph 1:17-18, *“be rooted and built up in him you need wisdom”* Col 2:6-7.

### **Question**

1. How can believers work in wisdom Col 4:5?
2. Can believers also address the unbelievers through parable?
3. How can believers display their wisdom Act 6:4?

### **Conclusion**

Men ought to grow in the wisdom of God and always learn to stay/study at Jesus’ feet, so that the sacred secrets/mysteries of God will not become strange to us; let us do like that man at the beautiful gate; he gave heed to Peter and John and he received his miracle (Act 3:2-5). Are

you ready to receive yours? Learn to stay with Him through personal prayer and quite time.  
God want those that can leave all and follow Him. Are you available?

### **BELIEVERS IN THE WORLD (POLITICS)**

**Aim:** To enlighten believers in the need of balancing their Christianity life with their secular world.

**Text:** Matt 5:16,28:18-20, 2Cor 6:14, Eph 4:28, Heb 12:14.

**Memory verse:** *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 2 Corinthians 6:14.*

#### **Introduction**

No doubt, every human (including believers) have a multidimensional life, therefore as believers, you must learn to manage and distinguish between yourself, your ministry and other matters (which include your choice profession). Truly we have one life, however when it comes to circular relationship, you cannot expect everyone you relate with to be believers. You will definitely have unbelievers as customers, boss, lecturer, course mate or leader. Wisdom must be applying in managing all spheres of life. 2Cor 6:14, What this scripture implies contextually is that there should be a distinction between the believer and unbelievers, not that you shouldn't

relate with them; It is quite impossible not to relate with them in your daily activities! If you don't relate with them, how will you preach to them as commissioned in Matt 28:18-20, Mrk 16:15, 2Cor 5:18-21. Note this; *“Even so let your light be shining before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” Matt 5:16.*

### **Lesson Exposition**

#### **(A) Should a believer get involved in politics?**

Often time believers are often confronted with the question on whether (or not) they should get involve in non - spiritual or less spiritual activities, mostly carried out in the circular world.

What does the scripture say about this? There is a certain subject matter which the scripture is silent about. One of such is whether or not a believer should involve in politics or governance. It is instructive to note that there is no express instruction in the scripture which precludes a believer from involving in politics.

Moreover, it is pertinent to note that, there are individuals in the scripture who had their personal profession (particularly in the new testament) yet they are believers: \*Paul, a writer(obviously), a lawyer, as well as a tent maker (Act 18:1-3), \*Aquila and Priscilla were tent makers (Act 18:1-3), \*Erastus, a Chamberlain (A high officer of state) (Romans 16:23), \*Lydia, a business woman (Act 16:14), \*Zenas, a lawyer (Titus 3:13), \*Cornelius (who later believed the gospel), a centurion (Act 10), \*Luke, a physician (Colossians 4:14), \*Even Christ, in the 4 gospel had a profession he was known for-a carpenter (Mark 6:3).

#### **(B) Patriarchs of old leading nations**

Nevertheless, you will find men (in whom God delight) in the scripture who led nations in the old testament:

\*Melchizedek, King of Salem (priest of the most High God) Gen 14:18, \*Moses lead the nation Israel (Exo 18:13), \*Joshua, Moses' successor (Josh 1:16), \*Deborah lead Israel (Judges 4:4) etc.

However, this may not appear instructive, as it was under the old covenant, but it is obvious that these patriarchs lead the nation and were still faithful to God.

### **(C) Don't Fuse It!**

We often claim it's God will for us to be ahead of unbelievers in all spheres and aspect of life (Commercial, political, career, financial), some even call it our inheritance and kingdom take over. However, we must differentiate our ministry from our secular job or professions. Paul was a tent maker, obviously he did not teach his profession on the pulpit or in his epistles or as a means of "kingdom take over".

Note that if the scriptures are to be believed for salvation through faith in Christ alone (2Tim 3:15), the inheritance can't be a material kingdom or accomplishment. Eph 1&2 tells us the blessings we have in Christ (and they are all spiritual blessings not material or physical blessings). You work for physical blessings, just as Paul instructed in Eph 4:28.

Your career is not your ministry in Christ. Set the boundary! Paul, Priscilla, Aquila, Luke, Lydia, Erastus, Zenas, Cornelius had their various profession. None called it their ministry. **“It is wrong to equate your chosen career as your ministry”**. Ministry is received in Christ alone, not shared with unbelievers. 2Cor 5:18-20, our ministry as a believer is ministry of reconciliation in bringing men to the Jesus only. It's preaching and teaching the gospel. It leads to salvation for the unsaved, spiritual growth for the saved.

### **Conclusion**

“Have your career, but find out the ministry of Jesus and fulfill it”!

## THE BELIEVERS' AUTHORITY

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the authority Christ has deposited in the Church (body) through His finished work on the cross and beyond.

**Memory Verse:** *And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover Mrk 16:15.*

**Texts:** Luk 10:19, Matt 28:18, Eph 1:21,6:10-12, 1Jh 4:4, Col 2:15

### Introduction

The authority of believers is unveiled more fully in the book of Ephesians (Eph 1:16-20,3:14-19). Once in England, Smith Wigglesworth was standing on a street corner waiting for a bus. A woman came out of an apartment house and a little dog ran out behind her. She said, “honey, you’re going to have to go back”. The dog didn’t pay any attention to her. He just wagged his tail and rubbed up against her affectionately. She said, “now dear, you can’t go”. The little dog wagged his tail and rubbed up against her again. About that time, the bus arrived. The woman stamped her foot and yelled, “get!”. The dog tucked his tail under his legs and took off.

Wigglesworth said he hollered out loud without even thinking, “that’s the way you’ve got to do with the devil!”. The devil

### Lesson Exposition

**(A) Orderly divisions of the devil’s authority (Eph 6:12):** \*Spiritual wickedness in high places (heavenlies), \*rulers of the darkness of this world (highest class of demons), \*powers, \*principalities.

The phrase principalities and powers occurs six times in the Bible, always in the King James Version (NKJV). Other versions translate it variously as “rulers and authorities,” “forces and authorities,” and “rulers and powers.”

It refers to the vast array of evil and malicious spirits (spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm) who make war against the people of God. The principalities and powers of Satan are usually in view here, beings that wield power in the unseen realms to oppose everything and everyone that is of God.

Principalities and power are real! We're going to expose them and deal with them accordingly. Job suffered under the affliction of Satan for so long because he didn't know the source of his troubles. He thought it was God that was afflicting him (Job 2:9-10).

**The only weapon Satan has is the power we give him when we believe his lies.** Warfare only takes place between two undefeated foes. Once an enemy has been conquered, the war is over. Satan is a defeated foe. Any form of defeat in the hands of these principalities and power will be turned to victory, as you lay hold on the truths. There's a law of sin. A force that remotely controls, subjects and brings into captivity innocent sons of men (Romans 8:2). There is a way out (2Cor 10:3-4). There is a law of the Spirit. An understanding and operation of that law puts the law of sin and death into captivity.

- **Divisions of the spirits of darkness: Spirit of The World (1Cor 2:12):** There is a spirit of the world. A strange influence from the pit of hell! Anything that makes for spiritual arrogance and rebellion is the work of the spirit of the world. What does that spirit command? Whatever makes you tired of the truth is the devil! The prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:1-3) operates wherever (there is air) in the world, it is what moves a man into the lust of the flesh and all that follow it. The lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; Judas was a victim (Luke 22:3). It commands the activities of the lust of the flesh. It **monitors, supervises, co-ordinates, and organizes** the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Every rebellion is perpetrated by demonic influences. They are essentially spiritual, demonic, satanic forces, aiming at men's destinies, to destroy them. You will not be destroyed in Jesus name! Amen!



- **The Lying Spirit (1Kings 22:22):** There is a lying spirit. You may even look so anointed under its influence! Lying is one of those demonic influences over the lives of people, to make them come under God's wrath. *"Being born again can't stop a person from lying, but rather take holiness to be achievable, else you will die in sin."* A believer who fabricates lie for any reason is under the influence of a lying spirit. Those who won't go to heaven know from here. Since it is written that all liars (those who knowingly convey untruth by word or deed) would go to lake of fire (Rev 21:8), and you know you are a liar, when rapture comes, you should not expect to be raptured. This is the implication.
- **Spirit of Bondage (Rom 8:15):** There is a spirit of bondage. It gets people **tied down, locked up, and chained down!** This spirit is responsible for all manner of afflictions that people suffer. Consider the woman that was under affliction for eighteen years in **Luke 13:16**. That's the spirit of bondage! It is a spirit of captivity. You just get captured by it!  
Consider a smoker who has tuberculosis. He doesn't want to die, yet he keeps smoking and is coughing! He is under the arrest of the spirit of bondage, the spirit that causes addiction to evil!  
Everything binding you to what you don't want is a spirit of bondage. Creatures in general are subjected to bondage **unwillingly**. It's a force, a control, by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope. It's a control, but it can be destroyed! (Rom 8:20-21).
- **The spirit of whoredom (Hos 5:4):** There is a spirit of whoredom. It constantly craves filthiness, sexual immorality, making motions in the body (masturbation), etc. It's a spirit —the spirit of whoredom. That's the spirit of adultery and fornication. That crave for adultery in you is a spirit. It's a control! It's an unclean spirit! You have

power over it! Jesus gave us power against unclean spirits, to cast them out (**Matt 10:1**).

- **Spirit of Disobedience (Eph. 2:1-2):** There's a spirit of disobedience! The ministry of that spirit is fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind (that's where it works, it's domain). This spirit works disobedience in people, going through the flesh and the mind to take people off God's presence, so that they can be afflicted and tormented. It works through the flesh and the mind, to make you a child of wrath; to bring the wrath of God upon your life! But the hour of your liberty has come. It's over now! The answer is here!

**(B) Exercising Authority:** If the church would not exercise authority, Christ would not do it. The least member of the body of Christ has much power over the devil as anyone else in Christ.

- **Breaking the power of the devil:** Adam's treason-satan has the right to be here until Adam's lease runs out (Col 1:12-13, 1Cor 15:45). Hold satan in the arena of faith and the spirit, demand your rights in the word (Acts 3:6, Jh 14:13-16, 16:23-24). Base your faith in the word, stand your ground and do not be moved by what you believe. According to 1Pet 5:8, the devil has been likened to a roaring lion but we are to be strong in the Lord (Eph 6:10, Jh 4:4).
- **How to claim the victory?** \*Break that control! (Jer 4:3), Cast off (Rom 13:12), Put off (Col 3:8). \*Put on the new man (Col 3:10). \*Lay aside (Heb 12:1). \*Mortify (Col 3:5-6). \*Purge yourself (2Tim 2:1). \*Exercise yourself (1Tim 4:7). \*Follow after righteousness (Isa 51:1-2). \*Fellowship with God (Jh 15:15). \*Follow the law of the spirit: walk after, engage, pray in the holy ghost and cry "Abba Father".
- **Believe that you have risen with Christ (Col 1:15-20, 2:12-15), maintain balance (Jh 14:12) and affirm that you are seated with Christ (Eph 1:18-23, 2:1-7, 1Cor 12:12-14, 27, 2Cor 6:14-15, Heb 1:13). No earthly father desires to do more for his**

**children than Christ do, if we His children will let Him. God would not do anything except His people permit Him.**

- **Scriptural references of our authority in Christ:** \*Rev 20:1-3-Jesus has done all He's going to do about the devil until the angel comes down from heaven, takes the chain and binds him and puts him in the bottomless pit.  
\*Matt 28:18, Mrk 16:15-18, Col 1:13-Jesus delegated His authority to the church, He can only work through the church, for He's the head of it just like your head cannot exercise authority anywhere except through your body. Although, you can make the devil desist in some of his maneuvers in others' life but you can't always cast him out because you don't have authority in that household (over their will). Jesus has given us power over the devil (yourself and your household); exercising authority over others is not possible except they give you permission (willingness) to exercise that authority.  
\*James 4:7-The devil is not commanded to flee from Jesus because he's once does but he's been bound to always flee from us when we submit ourselves to God and are not ignorant of our authority in Christ or are timid to use it.  
\*1Pet 5:8-9-You are to use the authority yourself, not others for you. After being saved as baby Christians by the prayers of others, hence; the need for growth, that is personal prayers by faith.  
\*Eph 4:27-The permission to either give place to the devil or not is in your hands not others.
- **The weapons of our warfare (Eph 6:10-17):** God's work never fails, even when we fail.
  - \***Girdle of Truth-** a clear understanding of God's word
  - \***Breastplate of righteousness (Holy Spirit)-** the first to be worn; it shows our obedience to the word of God
  - \***Feet shod with preparation of the Gospel-**proclaiming the word

**\*Shield of faith**-complete safety under the blood of Christ; where no power can penetrate

**\*Helmet of salvation**-(1Thess 5:8) Hope of salvation; not to turn from the truth

**\*Sword of the Spirit**-God's word (other parts of the armour are mainly defensive, but the sword is for action)

- **Authority over demon spirits, not human wills**-even as we have authority over demon spirits, we do not have authority over our fellowmen/their wills. To be possessed by a demon is to be controlled in the spirit, soul and body. When your motive is wrong towards the things of God, the devil accommodates you.

**To cast out demons;** \*there's the need to await the manifestation of the spirit (discerning of spirits), \*casting out spirits could only be done by the spirit of God in you (through you), \*don't be slow to manifest the practical authority of the word (believe and act it out), \*your level of faith is directly related to the degree of God's word dwelling in your heart, \*don't say you want to try to act out the word of God, but do it by acting on the foundation of God's word.

**Some are delivered from the oppression of the devil when they are in the gathering of saints, when the faith is high (mass faith) and the gifts of the spirit are in operation but not long after, they still get oppressed by the devil again; this is as a result of them not authorizing the power of the word with their faith.**

### Questions

1. Why are some believers still under the oppression of the devil and his agents today?  
Any way out?

### Conclusion

Claim your victory in Christ Jesus. You must put the word before the Spirit by your heart for you to be safe. Every time you notice a negative influence, turn back like Elisha, and curse it in the name of Jesus! Say, "Loose your hold on me! I have overcome you. I have power against

you! I cast you off in the name of Jesus!” Don’t stay quiet. Open your mouth and slap the devil! And you will find freedom on the spot. You’ve got the keys, from this hour, I declare you free from all demonic influences! You shall no more see corruption!

You are free! In Jesus precious name, Amen!

## **AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE**

**AIM:** To understand the power and authority of the church, the role of the government and the church in providing good governance to its followers in this modern day.

**TEXT:** Romans 13:1-6, John 19:10-11, 1Tim2:1-4, Psalm 122:4-6

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the gentiles exercise authority upon them” Matt. 20:25

### **Introduction**

The word “authority” means *exousia* (*ex-oo-see-ah*) which has been distinctively defined as the force capacity, competency freedom or mastery, potentate token of control, while governance is the action or manner of governing a state, organization etc.

Note: The art of governance comes with authority; authority never precedes governance because it is a subset of governance.

The conceptual distinction between the exercise of authority and the exercise of power provides an essential guide to understanding the present and future status of the world. The truth is the kingdom of God is not a place or a government, much less an earthly end-state arrived at through the political process. Instead, it is established by Christ as a communion of life, charity, love and truth; it is also used by Him as an instrument for the redemption of all and is sent forth into the whole world as the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Its ecclesiastical manifestation is the church that builds and grows until the time for the harvest (Mark 4:26-29), while the perfected kingdom is found only in the final goal of the people of God.

### **Lesson Exposition**

The relationship between Christianity and politics is a historically complex subject and a frequent source of disagreement in which many thinkers (people or idealizers) have conceived of the relationship that Christianity directly supports a particular ideology or philosophy; while some believe that Christianity should have little interest or participation in politics or government. Nevertheless, politics or government emanated directly from God (Gen.1:27, Exo 18:19-23) and up till today, it remains the plan of God that believers are active and effective in the administration and governance of His people and the world at large (Pro 29:2). Our lesson will be divided explicitly into three sections, which are: \*The power and authority of the church, \*The purpose and role of government, \*The church and good governance

#### **(A) The Power and Authority of the Church**

2Cor.10:8 “...somewhat more of our authority, which the lord hath given us for edification...”.

The church is the body and bride of Christ. He is her head, the source of her life, and He is her sovereign king. Such authority as the church has, she receives from Christ. He grants that authority through scripture and the church has no authority or power apart from the word of God. The church is spiritual (Eph.1:19-22), she does not wield the sword or the rod. The church

wields spiritual weapons: the word of God and prayer (Acts 6:4). Any monies, properties or technologies she may employ must serve her use of these spiritual weapons. We cannot make the church a political machine, a business corporation or an entertainment enterprise because when we try such, we actually vitiate her power. The church wields power in the following ways:

- The church has been entrusted with the word of God. She is to preserve it, teach it and preach it (Josh 1:8, 1Cor.2:12-13).
- The authority to carry out Christ's commandment. (Mark 16:15, Matt.28:19-20)
- The church has judicial authority in disciplining members according to God's word. (Job 36:10, 1Cor.5:1-2,13; 6:1,5-7; Matt.18:15-17).

Interestingly, Jesus said that *"all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him"*. Yet, He chose not to pass political authority to the church as an organization. The kingdom of God therefore, remains spiritual until the Lord returns to earth to exercise His rule. Till then, a Christian may be in the political process of his country, but the church as an organization must not attempt to wield power apart from exercising a godly moral influence.

### **(B) The Purpose and Role of Government**

Every ruling authority has been established by God (Rom 13:1-6). Human government is a derived authority; those in authority are described as "servants and ministers" (Rom.13:4,6). Those who reject governmental authority rejects God's authority and human authority is a limited authority. Those in power hold their power because of God (Jh 19:10-11) and can be removed by God (Ps 75:7; Dan.2:21). Human derived and limited authority is to be exercised for the good of all people (Rom.13:4; Pro 29:2). Specific ways in which government serves the people are:

- Government provides earthly justice and protection (Luke 18:2-5, 1 Thess.4:6, Rom. 12:19, Rom.13:4).
- They are to act on behalf of the good of all people (Exo 23:6, Zech 7:10, Deut.27:19).

- They create social space for the display of good conduct (1Pet 2:14, Matt.22:37, Eph.5:8-9, Dan.12:3).

Therefore, Christians are called to respect and honour government leaders (Rom.13:7), be subject to government and obey its laws (1Pet.2:13-14), pray for the leaders (1Tim.2:1-2), and pay taxes accordingly (Matt.22:17-21, Rom.13:6-7). Though, Christians must choose not to obey governments or laws when such obedience would amount as disobedience to God (Dan.6, Matt.2:7-12, Acts 5:29).

### **(C) The Church and Good Governance.**

The church is a community in which the lordship of Jesus is explicitly acknowledged and where doing His will and serving His purposes takes precedence over all other demand (John 13:3, Col.1:15-20). The church is called to be a sign of God's new rule of shalom and the instrument of God's purposes of fulfilling that role in the world (Matt.28:16-20, 5:13-16). The church's mission must be seen in the light of God's ultimate purpose and plan for mankind and the universe as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The church contribution to good governance are outlined below;

- Earnestly praying for leaders at all levels (1 Tim.2:1-2)
- Influencing governmental policies.
- Contributing to peaceful co-existence and reconciliation.
- Giving voice to the voiceless.
- Contributing to strengthening public accountability.
- Empowering citizens.

### **Conclusion**

It is pertinent for the church to discover herself as a pilgrim community (Heb13:13), as a community called to live outside the camp, in the wilderness with all righteousness, holiness and purity of the heart. The church must not be compromised by prizes and gift from the states.



## **THE RISE AND THE FALL OF MAN**

**Aim:** To enlighten believers that God is the only lifter of men and anything contrary to his ordinances and commandments will make us experience downfall in every sphere we represent.

**Memory Verse:** *“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up” James 4:10*

**Texts:** 1Cor.10:33, Phil.12:5-11, Rev.5:1-10, Matt.20:20-28, Rom.12:3, Jh 3:27-30, Jh 8:29-44,17:1-26, Eccl.28:11-19, Isa 14:12-24,40:28-31, Jam 4:6-10

### **Introduction**

The word “**RISE**” according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary means “to k2move upward or to become higher or to assume an upright position especially from lying, kneeling or sitting” while the word “**FALL**” means to come down from a high place of position or to come down suddenly from a position. Rise is a realm where everybody on earth desires while fall is not wanted by either man or God but in this our world today, men rise and at the same time fall, due to many reasons which we will be looking into.

### **Lesson Exposition**

### (A) Why should men rise?

In the blue print of the creation of man, it was not God's intention for man to experience downfall but man's desire played against the will of God. Three reasons why man should rise:

1. **God's heart towards man is not evil (Jer 29:11):** The creator of man didn't and will never intend the orchestration of man's downfall. God is too pure to do evil, if God love to see the downfall of man, he wouldn't have created him in His image and likeness. Men are to rise because they have been given the license to rise from the beginning and if man fall, then it is as a result of man misalignment with God ordinances.
2. **Dominion has been given to him (Ps 8:4-6):** Gen 1:26 *"And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth"*. God has made man to have dominion over the works of His hand. Authority has been given to man by God to rise. Since God gives man dominion, is a man of dominion supposed to fall? No! but can a man of dominion fall? Yes! Man is to exercise this authority given because it is an insult to God if men don't rise. God isn't delighted in our downfall, He is delighted in our rising and the proper exercising of our dominion. We are created in the image of God, in fact Ps 82:6 justified it better; *"I have said, ye are gods"*, gods are to rise and not fall because we are created in the image of God not the image of failure.
3. **God is glorified when men rise (Matt 5:14-16):** God cannot be mocked but He can be mocked in our lives if we don't rise. Vs 14 of the aforementioned chapter of this last point says *"ye are the light of the world, a city that is SET ON A HILL CANNOT BE HIDDEN"*. Hills are high places not lower ground. So, Jesus compared us to a hill meaning that we are to be set on a hill and we are to rise like hills.

Vs 16: *let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* Our light should be so shine not to complete the level of our brightness with others but to bring glory to the Father. God has invested so much in man; we cannot afford to disappoint. Men should RISE!

In your rising, glory is brought to your creator. For an example, the creator of iPhone (Steve Jobs) was happy when the gadget became popular in the market, so it is to God. Rise so you can stay in that level is not bringing glory to God. Arise and shine!

### **(B) What are responsible for the rise of men?**

We will look into five things that cause men to rise.

1. **Obedience (Isa 1:19):** Rising is not automatic it is manual, you have to work. Obedience means complying to instructions, commands, orders of those in authority. God's instructions are full of grace and power. Once you obey you reap goodness. God can't trust you with great height if you are not obedient. Obedience gives birth to many possibilities in the kingdom. Men of obedience are men of stature. Obedience is a proof of love; you can't claim you love God when you don't keep to his commandments. To validate that obedience is a womb. Let's see into Rom 5:19 *"for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"*. Jesus obedience to God's will gave birth to salvation, if Jesus disobeyed, you can't be saved! Now if salvation came through obedience, then imagine the dimensions of God that will come to you simply because you obeyed. Men of obedience are men of wisdom.
2. **Understanding times and seasons and solving problems (1Chr 12:32):** Understanding times and seasons will make you powerful. The sons of Issachar had understanding of times and seasons and they knew what Israel ought to do. Do you know what to do when you stand before challenges, if you don't solve problems you won't rise? Men that solve problems are men that rise. There are times of appearance, season

of retreat, times of preparation, times of manifestation, if you misinterpret these seasons, you then might have misinterpreted your destiny. A time to eat is different from the time to fast, time to rest is different from the time to work, time to pray is different from the time to play, time to sit is different from the time to stand, time to be quiet is different from the time to talk, (Ecc 3:1-8) speaks better and identifying seasons will help you in knowing what to do, per time and help you in solving problems of humanity.

3. **Intimacy with God:** God is the lifter of men. Intimacy with Him makes you look like Him, you become more like Him when you stay with Him. In staying with God, there are many possibilities that aids your walk to the place of destiny, things like transformed mind, fruits of the Spirit, gifts of the Spirit, Visions, Love, Wisdom, Revelations, Understanding, power, pure motives, anointing, graces and a lot of kingdom properties, remove these from the ladder to rise and you'd see the definition of stunted growth. There's more than you see, you can only see those things when you stay with him. Intimacy IS THE WOMB IN THE Spirit, Adam knew his wife and gave birth to Cain and Abel, biologically Cain and Abel were inside of the man and woman but a process must be done to bring them into reality which is intimacy between Adam and Eve; so it is to man and the Spirit, great possibilities are inside of you but fellowship with the Spirit brings them into reality. We are all from the loins of Adam and Eve, their seed gave birth to another seed and that seed gave birth to another till it's got to you which you also will continue in that line, if Adam died, then biologically we all died. So, if you don't arise in the place of intimacy, then your generation will not arise.
4. **Diligence and consistency (Pro 22:29, Acts 6:4):** It is what you give yourself to that you will become. Diligence means the act of performing with intense concentration, focus or responsible regard while consistency means the act of always acting or behaving in the same way. Consistency in diligence makes you intelligent and diligence in consistency makes you brilliant. You might not get it right at first but continual

practice makes you perfect. Nothing works by itself, to be great, you have to be diligent and consistent with the principles of greatness.

5. **Shun laziness:** Even the devil cannot use a lazy man.

6. **Humility (James 4:6, 1Pet 5:6):** humility according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary means the quality or states of not thinking you are better than other people. Men of humility are men that will rise. Humility is a catapult to greatness. The proof of humility is not basically seen in your greetings or clothing; it is seen in your brokenness. Humility helps you to gain the trust of God and man. Our advocate, the first born of the begotten son's (Jesus) was elevated because of His humility to the cross and to death. If the name of Jesus was highly exalted according to (Phil 2:9-11) because of His humility then, how do you think you can rise without humility. Humility helped Jesus to attain greater height, that some humility is one of the greatest weapon to shift you into a great place in life and in Heaven. Humility is wisdom, men of power are men of humility, God resist the proud and gives grace to the humble while hardship is for the proud. The instrument for gauging you how humble you are, is the Heart. Tell God to search it and bring out everything that is not a character of Christ from it. Pray the prayer of the Psalmist (Ps 139:23-24 *Search me, O God and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting*). In the radar of Heaven, proud men are not recognized; be humble!

### **(C) Motives that makes men rise and fall**

Right motives births power that can be handled while wrong motives births power that can kill the carrier. As believers, we should ask ourselves this question “why do I want to rise”? if you answer this correctly, then you are on your way to greatness. Why believers should rise in this earth realm, is to let the kingdom reign in the sphere of influence we represent. You want to rise so men can bow down for you, then you will bow down in the grave; you want to rise so

you will be recognized, then you'd be recognized in hell. Our motives for rising should be corrected so that we will represent Christ perfectly in the field we are called to. Why do you want to become a Doctor? Why do you want to become a Mathematician? Why do you want to become a Biochemist? Answering these questions wrongly will keep you in bondage.

#### **(D) Devil who fell and God who raises men**

Devil fell as a result of pride while men will rise as a result of humility. If the devil was judged by God and thrown down from His presence because of Pride, how do you think you will rise up with pride. Pride makes you heavy for God to carry while Humility makes you light for God to lift up. Isa 40:29 *"He (God) giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might He increaseth strength"*. Those that are faint here means, those that acknowledge that they can't be helped without God and to them that are not proud, He increase their strength.

#### **(E) Why men fall?**

The first man (Adam and Eve) fell due to disobedience even till now, many men are falling because of their disobedience to the will of God. God gives the humble wings to fly while proud men in their thinking have wings that actually can't jump over a stone.

#### **Questions**

1. Why do we have humble Christians that are not of great value and it seems that it is the proud that rules?
2. How can a man be humble because the Spirit is willing to make us humble but our flesh war against it?

#### **Conclusion**

Be humble and simple. Let God lead you and hold your hands to the place of destiny.

## **FLEE YOUTHFUL LUST**

**Aim:** to enlighten Christians that the strength in them is meant for God's glory.

**Memory Verse:** *flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart(2Tim 2:22)*

### **Introduction**

Lust is defined as craving, hunger, thirst, appetite, or great desire. Paul wrote to Timothy in 2Tim 2:22 when he was a youth- that is why it's a great lesson for all youths.

Lust is the same for all humanity - to those that live in the flesh (Rom 8:7-8). But there is a point we need to understand about "**youthful lust**", which is that "youthful"(Pro 20:29). No matter how old men lust after what is not in the will of God, you cannot compare it with the youths. The strength of old man when He was young has been turned to gray head/wisdom/lesson even though the light of the Gospel has not shine upon some to transform them to a new creature (2Cor 5:17).

This is why Satan targets mostly the youth because of their strong desires. Things are so beautiful for the youths no matter how bad it is (Ps 90:6). That is why there is a need for all youths to flee from youthful lust.

### **Lesson Exposition**

**(A) Let the youth seek God (Ecc 12:1, Heb 8:10, Acts 20: 32, Gal 5:22)**

There is a need for youths to seek God (Ecc12:1). After Paul told Timothy to flee, he later said pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace. He knew our passion is required for the work of God. If we refuse to do so, we might not be able to resist the lust of the flesh.

We need to shift our focus of our hearts as youths to pursue the will of God. A lust man never guides his heart- it is defenseless (Matt 12:43-46). Believers must come to the reality of guiding our hearts as a lifestyle.

### **How to know a heart that is being guided**

- Regenerated heart (Eze 36:26, Heb 8:10)
- Renewed by the word of God (Rom 12: 1-2, Acts 20:32)
- Seek God's help in prayer (Heb 4:16)
- Fruits of the spirit (Gal 5:22)

### **(B) Flee Away (Pro 1: 10, Gen 39:7- 12, 2Cor 6:14)**

You don't run away by mistake; it is a decision (Jam 5:12). It is the same pattern in 1Cor 2:9 that enticement enters into the heart of men. Some of us are so poor that what we look, hear every day has been rooted in us that we cannot flee away from sin.

### **(C) Men that fled away in the Bible**

- **Abraham:** The call of salvation is a call of separation from the wicked world (2Cor 6:17). God told Abraham to separate himself from these people (Gen 12:1), that those who is going to live by faith have to do. Our relationship is very important as a believer. Rom 6:1, relationship has something to do with this- we can't continue any longer with that (2Cor 6: 14)
- **Joseph:** What a great decision Joseph made because of his love towards God. For a youth not to lust, his life must be rooted in God's love. He/She must take his/her eyes, ear, mind and even legs from enticement of sins. You need to know it might cost you your relationship, job, career. But God always deliver and honour (Psalm 91:15) those that seek him even in time of challenges (Job 42:12, Gen 41:41).



- **Timothy:** Your standard in life must be God's standard (2Tim 2:19). We will not be judged on the standards of the world; but by the word (Jh 1:3).

One peculiar nature of human is that we can't deceive ourselves. Let us maintain his standard as Timothy did (2Tim 2:15).

### **Question**

1. What are the peculiar nature of youth?
2. Do we need to flee from youthful lust? Discuss.

### **Conclusion**

Under normal circumstances, every youth is very strong physically, emotionally, sexually. The normal thing for them is to look for what to engage this strength in unless there is guide. lust is destructive; the true love is what you need.

## **LIVING SINGLE**

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the need to be successful as singles even as they cling to Christ in growing up to stature.

**Memory Verse:** *“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore, he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” Dan 1:8.*

**Texts:** Ecc 12:1, Matt 1:18-25, Gen 39:1-23, Rom 1:24-32

## **Introduction**

The word ***Single*** (according to the English Dictionary) means; (adj) not divided in parts, not married nor dating, simple and honest; sincere, without deceit. Believers should live after the word of God that; our body is the temple of the Lord and that being successful is not only by faith in the provision of God and His blessings but by getting our hands on what could make the blessings productive i.e work. (Rom 12:1-2).

Being a single Cristian brother/sister, is God-ordained, as well as being married Christian brother/sister. Both must not be joked with, but be taken with all seriousness. Being single has some things that look like pains. One of such is **loneliness**. This can be a serious internal disturbance, especially, if one is up to marriageable age. The solace here for all singles is that, you may be lonely but never alone; Jesus is with you. Apart from loneliness, coping with temptations to misbehave cannot be overemphasized, concerning singles. Since, you are yet to marry, the devil will strategically place some opposite sex around you. But with Holy Spirit filling you and coupled with prayers and watchfulness, you will surmount this. You should beware of those momentary sexual enjoyments that can truncate your future.

The pains should not becloud the gains. It is a time you have all the time to prepare for future challenges. You have at your disposal, time to pray, anytime any day, at home or elsewhere, without disturbance of any kind. Your obligations/expenditure are greatly limited, if you are yet to marry.

And you must save hugely. **Paul’s counsel-1Cor 7:8,9,24-25**. Single’s time, as a Christian, is also a time to prepare for the ministry. Or are you surprised you are told you have got a ministry? Yes, you do! So, use your single days as a believer to prepare adequately for the task

ahead (Col 4:17). If God calls you to ministry while still unmarried, how lucky are you! The reason is that, you have more time for preparation than when you are married.

So, dear brother/sister, single periods can be painful, yet they become gainful at the end, if the time had been judiciously invested.

### **Lesson Exposition**

#### **(A) Singleness; A Pathway to Stature (Luk 2:52, 1Tim 4:12, 2Tim 3:14-15)**

To be single attracts so many opportunities to build oneself either the right way or the wrong way, of which will become the life of who you are and how you will be when you are to be joined with your spouse, also with or without the bride (Christ). Men who make judicious use of their youthful days, soar high in all ramifications of life. People who make the right choice of building themselves to stature while they were single are only those capable of building or bringing up other singles to stature. If you are unable to make you singleness a pathway to spiritual stature, I wonder how you can be able to make the pillars of your marriage stand strong, even the destiny of your children and generation to be fulfilled.

#### **(B) Single and Complete (Married to Christ; your 1<sup>st</sup> love-1Cor 6:15-20,7:8-9, Gal 2:20)**

Many at times, the reason of the misconception or ignorance of the essence of singleness by some is because they are not joined/married to Christ while many have lost their first love for Christ at the point of salvation. That is why we have broken homes and even peaceful homes (unbelievers inclusive) without the joy of marriage.

Although, being single simplifies one who is not married, yet the prerequisite for a godly marriage to carry out the plan of God is to be married/joined with Christ. If eternally, Christ who is the bride awaits the company of the body without spot, so as to be complete even as He presents it to the Father, likewise now; Christ wants us to be joined with Him in the spirit so that we will meet up the spirit wedlock standard of marriage, because marriage is formed for the eternal purpose of God.

#### **(C) Single and successful (Gen 41:44-45, Esth 2)**

Many youths and singles today believe that they can't be successful until they race over the stage of singleness. Some are even hoping and praying that they should be fortunate enough to marry men or women whose parents are well to do, with the thought of using their influence to be successful. Few others also believe that their being successful now as singles could be derailed by the process of marrying those who are poor like a church mouse.

But are all this true? If that is the plan of God in building singles, why would He ordain marriage. If Christ will measure our success on earth as to how we propel the Gospel and fulfill the will of the Father and in return (because of our union/marriage with Him), reward us with the crown of life and the marriage supper/feast after rapture; therefore, His expectation and plan for us is that we are fully prepared as singles at the same successful even as we increase bountifully beyond measures (over our single days) when we are married.

So believers that are single are to confide in Christ for a shew of their success in the plan of God for their lives; thereby, understanding principles and ways that could catapult their marriage to greatness without mediocrity.

#### **(D) Are you ready to marry? (How's your relationship with Christ? Matt 1:18-25)**

Most singles are deceived and go astray when it's time for them to choose their partner as they do not follow the rightful process in knowing God's will. Others because of the fear of that effect, even when they are not ready for marriage, are already setting up strategies, so they won't fall into the same pit. As singles (believers) who want their marriage to be successful in spite of challenges, the need for your intimacy with Christ is a must. Even, either in choosing partners or knowing the right time to marry or fulfilling the will of God for their lives before marriage, are dependent on their fellowship with the Holy Spirit. It is now that you are single that you can have the best of time to set the foundation of your intimacy with God right and build on it; when you are into marriage, you start to bring out the virtues of that relationship without fuss.

#### **(E) Married (Yet, unseparated from Christ (Rom 8:35)**

It is rightful for singles to know the essence of marriage and the establishment of homes/families in order for them to set their priorities/mindset aright. Many homes and families have been broken or torn apart by challenges and the wiles of the devil; mostly because they didn't make Christ the foundation of their marriage and are separated from Christ. It is so astonishing and disheartening to hear of singles that were burning for God in their youthful days and have been choked to the extent that their love for Christ waxed cold all because they are into marriage. If Christ wants homes/families to be without him, why should He bestow upon their shoulder the hope of destinies and nations.

Christ should not be a third party in marriage, if truly the couples were joined with Him when they were singles, even as they become one in the flesh, yet they are also connected in their spirits; Christ Himself being the oneness of their wedlock (Eph 5:31-33). That is why, when you look at the lives of believers who are hidden in Christ, including their marriage, it tends to be as if they have the same thinking, character and love for the things of God with the product of prosperity and unity; it is all because they are one in Christ and are not separated from Him.

### **Question**

1. There are some believers (singles) that engage in lustful activities in the disguise of brotherly/sisterly or agape love, discuss and what are the ways out.
2. What are those things that could be responsible for married men/women not to be able to harness wealth or make productive provision for their family/home while they were in their single years?

### **Conclusion**

Men who are successful in life especially believers, they are those who have seen their future right from their early years (singles/youths) and have kept their fellowship with Christ, even by been able to overcome the challenges of mediocrity. Be wise and make judicious use of your life, time and choice.

### **The Virtues of the Triumphant Church**

**Aim:** To open us to the mystery upon which the church was founded that we may be able to comprehend and earnestly contend for the Faith in this faithless world.

**Memory Verse:** *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10 (KJV)*

**Text:** 2Pet 1:5-8, Jh 15:1-5, Gal 5:22, Eph 5:1-4, Acts 11:26, Dan 6:1-5, 2Sam 12:1-5

#### **Introduction**

Christ leads His Church onto triumph (unending victory) as he has conquered death and shattered the legal ground (by which Satan held us in captivity and alienated us from our Source) by the course of the cross at Golgotha – where He died (shedding His blood for the remission for the sins of His people and redemption of mankind) and made us more than conquerors (1Cor 15:54-57, 2Cor 2:14-16).

A new race Jesus travailed in birth out of every nation, tribe and tongue whom God has chosen in Him before the foundation of the world to be blameless, children of God without fault.

Brethren, we're called onto a Spirit Life – a life not after the flesh nor in accordance to the course of this world. Such that abhors carnality and long for All of God - To be Christ-like in character (virtuous) exhibiting moral excellence which is - living by faith in the Son of God and not by dead works (Atheism or Philosophy). (Eph 1:4-7, Gal 2:20, 5:16-18).

## **Lesson Exposition**

### **(A) What are these Virtues?**

The Christian life flows from the streams of Grace where limitless possibilities can be made manifest (transformation) to the Glory of our God. The excellence of the character of a believer (in Christ) is matchless for what the human mind and an unregenerate spirit can produce and it's incomprehensible to be enlisted yet these are few.

- Virtues patterned by the Early Church: \*the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22, Eph 5:8),  
\*Greatest gifts (I Thess 1:3, I Cor 13:13), \*virtues for growth (II Pet 1:5-7),  
\*Hospitality (Rom 12:13, 3Jn 5-8), \*diligence, circumspection, tenderheartedness,  
forbearing one another (1Thess 4:11-12, Eph 4:28,32,5:15).

### **(B) Why Possess these virtues?**

We're not alone – sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14) and possessed by Him (1Cor 6:19a). His divinity (2Pet 1:3-4) as of the Father is in us so thereby, we're living Epistles (2Cor 3:2-3) and the propagators of His Light (Eph 5:8-10, Matt 5:14-16). How can we grow and be complete in Him without His Virtues? (2Pet 1:8) Or How can we bear more fruit if we're not nourished with His Virtues? (Jn 15:2). We can't afford not to be virtuous

### **(C) How can I be virtuous? (Jn 15:1-8)**

Moral excellence is transmuted from the Vine through God's Spirit in us (2Cor 3:18). As the popular hymnal says "Trust & Obey" - Abiding in Him opens us to be enriched by His Superfluous Supply in accordance to the riches of His Grace (Jn 15:4-5). We should press towards the goal to progress towards Perfection (Phil 3:12-16). Cultivate Intimate relationship with the Holy Ghost to grow deeper in Love with God (1Cor 2:9-10)

## **Questions**

1. Explain how Christ founded the Church and what are those constituents He used?
2. Describe the eternal purpose of God for the Church.

3. With scriptural backup, how will Christ present the Church to the Father even with the virtues the Church has been gifted with?

### **Conclusion**

It's the Joy of the Lord that the Church triumph over her enemy in all areas, that is why He gifted the Church with virtues so as to proclaim victory. Acknowledge the truth of this subject and make sure you portray the virtues embedded in it.



## THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE

**Aim:** To enlighten believers on the eternal purpose and entire plan of God for marriage.

**Text:** Eph 5:22-33; John 2:1-10; Gen 24:1-68; 1Cor 7:1-40; Rev 19:7-9

Memory Verse: *“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honour of king is to search out a matter” (Proverbs 25:2)*

### Introduction

In the bible, there are two great mysteries, the first is the mystery of Godliness (1 Tim 3:16) and the second is marriage (Eph 5:32). Marriage is God’s institution which He has set up to model His relationship with man. This is why marriage has been compared in the scripture to how Christ loved the church and gave himself for her (Eph 5:25). Better still, God has it in provision to have us as the church marry His only begotten son. When God institutes a divine instruction on earth here, it is usually after and according to a pattern of a more perfect one in heaven. So, we in the Lord’s prayer say, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”. If we will learn how to prepare for marriage, we should learn from God Himself who is preparing for His Son’s marriage.

Mysteries are sacred, concealed matters, usually of utmost importance in the way something should work. The sensitivity and importance of such matters makes them to be mystified, such that only a few can access and use it. Often times, opening up mysteries comes with divine direction. For an instance, the scroll in Rev 10:8-11 is a mystery that the method of opening it up was that it must be eaten, and when eaten it is sweet in the mouth but bitter in the belly. The operational mode of mysteries is not cast in stone, they are inspirational.

### Lesson Exposition

#### (A) Marriage; the ordinance of God

Marriage is more than just an institution; it is an intention of God. We could trace the or sin to Gen 2:18, where God said that it was not good that man dwell alone, hence He made him a help meet for him

Man would need a companion to fulfil his mandate, but in animals, such companion could not be found, hence the ONLY provision that would solve that, was the woman.

### **(B) External plan of God in relation to man**

As a part of the mandate upon man, that he was to be fruitful and multiply, so as to operate at the dominion that God has set him over the earth. To understand this, we could consider the operation of God that was used in the scripture as to what marriage represents- in Eph 5:24-33, marriage was represented as the relationship between Christ and the Church. For the will of God and the kingdom of God to be made and established in the realm of man's habitation, the Church was set.

### **(C) Christ; Your first love**

When Christ spoke in Rev 2:1-7, to the Ephesian church that they should go back to their first love, we could picture how much love matters to Christ.

It is imperative that married couples must first have a lover [in the person of Christ] because the way of their love will stem out of the love of God which they have understood. Howbeit, eye have not seen, hears have not heard, and no mind has thought of it, those things God has prepared for the, so that love Him. The key word here is love. A love for God, and from God will give us the right mentality for marriage.

Two lessons to be learned.

Because we love Christ, we would not deal treacherously with Him by being estranged in unholy unions with unbeliever or sons and daughters of strange gods – BEFORE MARRIAGE.

Because we love him so, during marriage we will exhibit fidelity, and keep to the sanity and purity of the love vow and not be profane –AFTER MARRIAGE.

### **(D) God's saying: Your Decision and your Proposal**

Because God is the holder of this mystery, He alone can demystify or unlock it. So, we have to take decisions from Him.

Back to Galilee, at the wedding in Canaan, God revealed to us a mystery there. In normal convention, according to the chairman of the occasion, the sweet wine comes before the less sweet one, but Christ provided the sweeter one after the sweet wine. It tells us a model of God for marriage, that the love should not be getting better with time, but should sweeter on and on. Marriage should get sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb, even after 25 years into it, your wife should still be a sweetie to you

### **(E) For better, for worse: Becoming One (Ezek 16)**

In this section, we would consider two key aspects – Communication and Sacrifice, with a model view of the love between God and Israel.

Love was lost in the dark years (the theological 400 silent years between the old and new testament), because there was no communication between God and man. Your marriage will be on downward spiral if the communication is cut. Another aspect of communication is the information or substance communicated. This is effective by appreciation (Philemon 1:8). God's communication to us is fresh and relevant, making our relationship with Him a progressive one. What do you discuss with your spouse – Gossips or Progressives?

A look at Sacrifice – Israel was a disobedient nation; the world was wicked in heart, but by sacrifice, we became one with God. Sacrifice depicts value.

In Ezekiel 16, we saw how God covered with His love, and adorned her with costly apparels. Even when she was in whoredom, He still made sacrifice (Ezek 16:35ff) for her to bring her back to Him (Ezek 16:60-63)

The time when your marriage seems worse, is the time to make it sweeter, like in the finished wine at Canaan of Galilee. However, it is God's intent that it should not finish or get sour in the first place

### **(F) Faith: See to the future**

If you go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) (the most popular web search engine) to search for an item, you would see, in many cases, millions of related results. However, you cannot see the future. Only God can see this.

So, in marriage matters, when you want to take the decision to marry, you must trust the Holy Spirit, because He alone knows what is in the mind of man, and He will do a spiritual *google* search into the proposed spouse's past, present and future to determine whether this person is the fit for you.

For instance, you might have a burden for Children Ministry, and because of that you decide to look for (by your quota) a woman who loves children. So, the question is this – WHO KNOWS what shall become of the lady's love for Children in 3 years' time. The Holy Spirit who knows what a man would be, instead is suggesting to you a lady, who to you currently does not really love children ministry, but God knows that in 3 years' time she would love children ministry. As believes, we are not bounded by temporal things, but instead we are admonished to look to eternal things.

Trust God wholly, that His plans for you is the best. Faith, however, did not promise that it would be easy, but Faith said it will be possible.

### **Conclusion**

When you think of marriage, think of Christ and the Church. It's too late for your marriage to fail. Keep this in mind, Love has a name, and His name is God, the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

## **RAPTURE AND SIGNS OF END TIME**

**Aim:** To bring to our consciousness the signs of the end time, rapture, marriage and super that it is at hand

**Text:** Matt 24, Jh 14:1-3, Rev 22:1-5, 1Cor 15:51-58, Eph 5:27, 1Thess 4-5, Rev 19&20.

**Memory Verse:** *“Now learn a parable of the Figtree, when its branch is yet to tender and putteth forth leave, Ye know that summer is nigh so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things know that it is near, even at the door” Matt 24 vs 32-33.*

### **Introduction**

It's compulsory that we should be vigilant and beware, because on the last days, evil will be rampant, false prophet will be on the rise, many of Jesus disciples will be seriously persecuted and many will be deceived and some would deny faith. However, according to the scripture these would not mark the end. They are just the beginning of troubles that will befall the whole world before the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God open our minds to understand the teachings of scripture regarding the end time events and we should be always ready for His Coming Rapture so that the devil will not catch us unaware and may we not be deceived in Jesus name. AMEN

### **Lesson Exposition**

We are already at the edge of the end (end time), “end is the final point of something in space of time”, but the end is yet to come. The end will come after the Good News about the kingdom of God has been witness to all nation (Matt 24:14).

The signs/troubles of the end time mentioned in Matt 24 are already occurring; nations against nations (America and Russia), persecution for the sake of the gospel (Islamic agenda to

dominate all the world, the ISIS, The Boko-Haram etc), earthquakes, pestilence and famines in divers places Corona virus in China, Lasar fever in Nigeria here, catastrophic wild fire in Australia that burns 499,621 hectares of land over 74 days not knowing the cause etc, being offended, hatred and betrayal being rampant (Politics in the world) etc. More of this evil is yet to be fulfilled but all will be fulfilled before Christ come (Matt 24:35). When we see all these happenings, we should be sure that the end is at the corner.

#### **(A) Rapture and Being Cut-up with Christ (Luke 12:40)**

The coming of the son of man will be like the days of Noah (Matt 24:36-44). This event/day will come when man list expected, it will occur at the sound of trumpet by the Arch angel, the righteous dead will be the first to rise after the righteous living will be caught up.

This event/day will be a day the righteous dead and the living on earth will be harvested (Matt 13:30,36-43, 1Thess 4:16-17). The righteous dead and living will have something is common

#### **TRANSFIGURATION (1Cor 15:51-52)**

The hour is unknown to every one even to the angels (Matt 13:32-37). Not all eye will see HIM at rapture.

#### **(B) Marriage-Supper, Believers Hope and Eternity with GOD**

This event is meant for those that overcome the world and it toils (Rev 3:21) i.e those that are rapture and caught up with Christ

It will be a great feast “Blessed are those that are involved” (Rev 19:7-9). This will follow the rapture in air after Jesus will return to the earth with raptured believers and angels of heavens to defeat the beast and his armies second coming (Rev 9-14).

The believers shall inherit the kingdom of the Father prepared from the foundation of the world (Matt25:34) shall not perish but have an everlasting life (Jh 3:16), shall shine forth like sun (Matt 13:43). Where Christ is there will be (Jh 14:1-4).

Eternity with GOD there will not be curse, we shall see His face and His name will be in our foreheads, there shall be no night there, no candle nor light of sun but the Lord God giveth light

and they shall be there forever. (Rev 22:3-5). All things will be renewed, no unclean thing will be accommodated

### **(C) FAITH DIMISHED IN END TIME**

This is evil that will befall the world after rapture. This will be the time of “GREAT TRIBULATION” trouble and difficulty as never before seen on the leading up to the millennium. The beast will be in contention with the “second fruit” those whose were not along in the rapture but chose now to serve GOD. (Rev 3:19)

### **Conclusion**

At that moment when Christ shall appear we shall be changed, though we know not when it shall be, but we shall put on incorruptible and be fully alive to GOD and the sufferings of our present time is not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom 8:18, Jh 3:1-3, Rev 22:11- 1).

### **Prayer**

(1Thess 5:23) God who give peace, please make me holy in every way and keep me whole being/spirit, soul and body free from every fault at coming of my lord Jesus Christ... AMEN.

## **CACCF NAZARITES FAMILY SONG**

Trust management, God is counting on you  
Trust management, Africa is counting on you  
Trust management, this generation is counting on you  
All the days of your life, God is counting on you.

Adam had his trust, he disappointed his God  
Samson had his trust, he disappointed his God  
Judas had his trust, he disappointed his God  
All the days of your life, God is counting on you.

Father Abraham has many sons,  
Many sons hath father Abraham,  
I am one of them,  
And so are you,  
So let us praise the Lord (3X).