



# WALKING WITH GOD

10 KEYS

TO BUILDING & MAINTAINING  
A GROWING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD



*Joys Priscilla Oyedepo*

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## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to men and women on the same journey as I, seeking honest ways to better develop intimacy in our relationship with God, through His Holy Spirit and in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ.

# INTRODUCTION

Today, I got a message from a lady I've long covered as friend and little sister. It read in part, "it feels like [God and I] are not as close anymore. I'm not sure I know how to fix it." Those words took me back to the days when I sometimes felt God was far away, but then in minutes, He would show to me how He never left my side. He never even is several feet away; He's right beside us, breathing His air of love and persistence on the very pores of our skin. He is right beside us. However, the more I spend time with men and women of our Christian faith, the more I see how many actually struggle with having a productive and consistent walk with God.

There is a genuine crave for God by many, but the relationship with Him constantly feels *hot* one moment and *cold*, the next. One moment it seems great and as though there's no distance between you and God but in the next moment, as described by my friend above, He does not feel close to you anymore. We know what the *hot* moments with God feel like; living on the same frequency as Him and experiencing life as an unbeatable team. You know God has your *back* and you have His; nothing can move Him away from you and you're sure not going to let anything or anyone move you away from His wonderful presence. This constantly *hot* relationship with God, is what He desires for us, daily.

In seeking God on how to constantly keep this *hot* relationship between He and I, He gave to me 10 keys. These ten keys are examined in great detail within the next ten chapters of this book. Applying these keys daily in our walk with God will guarantee us a seamless and beautiful relationship with God. Every step is based solely on the truth of scripture and using scripture to explain scripture, the word of God is rightly *divided* to give you understanding.

As you read through these pages, I pray for your eyes to *see* what God is *saying* to you. The grace also to put these keys to work, resulting in a more intimate relationship with God for you, I pray for you. These pages will change your life, because the God within the pages is willing, open and ready to. So, read with a praying heart and a willing mind, and you surely

will be on your way to a *burning hot* relationship with God, always. Be blessed as you read.





## Chapter 1. THE HOLY SPIRIT

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." – John 14:26

The Christian walk today is incomplete without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. When the time drew closer for Jesus to ascend into glory, He knew we would need this one gift, our great gift, the person of the Holy Spirit. He referred to this sweet Holy Spirit as **the Comforter**. Jesus said that this spirit of God would come from God and in His name. This is why the Holy Spirit comes for us from the Father but only in the name of Jesus. Our calling on Him is only activated when we do so in the name of Jesus.

A few years ago, God began to teach me how to pray. One major key He showed to me, a key that I use even today, is to pray to Him, with the name of the Jesus, and by the power of His Spirit. This makes the journey to continued answered prayers such a breeze. You see, the Holy Spirit is always available, waiting for us to speak that which we desire God to do for us, but only when we use the name of Jesus. This is the only time He gets involved. Jesus said that the Comforter will come from God and be sent in His name. The reason therefore why many of us don't see the Holy Spirit at work in us or in our situations is because we recognize Him as being from God but not sent in the name of Jesus. So, before we call on the Holy Spirit to intervene in any situation, let's remember to say those beautiful words we get to enjoy in the Christian faith, "in the name of Jesus." Only then, is the Holy Spirit permitted to get involved.

The scripture above continues by telling us what the Holy Spirit can and will do for that one who recognizes Him as from God and called in the name of Jesus. Jesus says that He will "... teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). In this, we see two main ways the Holy Spirit *comforts* us, and that is by teaching us and constantly reminding us of the things of the spirit of God, made available in Jesus.

### ***Our Teacher***

"... the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." –  
First Corinthians 2:13

We understand that to be taught, is to be made to understand for the first time. This is why when we don't know or understand a thing, we ask that someone teach us. To be rightly taught then, always will lead to a knowing. This is why the Holy Spirit's role as teacher cannot be underemphasized.

I recently read the story of William Tyndale, the man who translated most of the Bible from its original text into the English language. He was found by the British government to have committed heresy by believing that the Bible was for everyone and working to translate it for all. It is stated in several messages that he mentioned at one time that he desired that the average man know more about the Bible than the priests at that time, let on. He moved from place to place and hid at several times, that he would finish the translation. He died at the tender age of 41, having done what was almost deemed impossible and to many, *crazy*. He allowed himself to be taught of the Holy Spirit, learning how to go about it, until it was done. No one had ever attempted the translation of the Bible into the English language before, neither had anyone gotten the English Bible on the shores of England. Yet, a man young in years did so, and even when he died, his acts continue to live even today. This was a man clearly taught of the Holy Spirit as only the Holy Spirit teaches us new things in a manner that it may be easily understood.

The Holy Spirit in His teaching guides us and stands right beside us. I remember a science teacher I had in secondary school. Of the three main science courses we took, this one was commonly recognized as the most challenging. So, when it came to the practical class sessions, many students were interested in listening, so we could figure it out as when examinations came, it would be too late to want to work it out then. Our teacher was good at what she did. When in these practical classes, she would explain what we were to do with a sample at her station and then tell us to begin, with our samples at our own stations. Within a few minutes, it was not uncommon to hear things falling or breaking at several stations; not because a student was nonchalant but because of the fear of failure and potentially *never* understanding. Our teacher will carefully go over to the station with the first issue or to the student who looked most confused and watch them a little while, then she would help them until they better understood. It was interesting how carefully she would teach this one student until you saw their dull eyes suddenly light up with understanding. It was clear that her

teaching, to the point of understanding, worked. However, as she would spend so much time with one student, some who also did not understand would not get the extra time needed to better understand the practical and so, after class, many students still will wait behind.

With the Holy Spirit however, He is available to and for each and every one of us, all the time. He can spend as much time as we need Him to, until we get *it* and our eyes light up. The teaching power of the Holy Spirit is so evident in the life of that one who would let Him.

Living in a family with victors, I've seen a number of battles in my own time; battles fought and won. My father and prophet, Dr. David Oyedepo speaks of an encounter he had many years before I was born. The Holy Spirit showed to him in scripture his redemptive rights in Christ as it related to his health and as He did, my father jumped up, spun and screamed, "I can never be sick!" I have seen how the devil has *tried* to fault this revealed word in my father's life but with each attack, my father only gets etched the more in the victory hall of fame within the kingdom of God. Today, it's been over 40 years since he has suffered any kind of sickness! This all started on the basis of his Holy Spirit interpreted word. If the Holy Spirit does not interpret to us the scripture, it will only be as letters and as we know, "... the letter killeth [and it is] the spirit [that] giveth life" (Second Corinthians 3:6). The wisdom from that Holy Spirit interpreted word of God that my father had is not only still speaking today but also is setting many others free. Just as the case of a certain man who shared a testimony in our church, he heard my father share this testimony once on the altar and he received it and proclaimed that he also *cannot* be sick! He began searching the word of God and being regular in services so he could learn more and for him, it's now been 11 years since he says he's even felt a headache! That's the power of the Holy Spirit in teaching us what it is we do not know. Whatever we do not know or seek to understand, the Holy Spirit is our teacher and always is available. No time is too late and no season is too busy to call for Him.

My parents always taught me to involve the Holy Spirit in whatever it is I do and this involves, among other things, praying for His help in examinations. Right after secondary school, I *thought* my family and I had decided what University I would go to so, I prepared myself. However, over the holidays, I went with my mother on a trip. While with other family, someone mentioned that the University my siblings all went to, was setting

up for the final day of examinations to be written by potential students. My mother thought I *might as well* just write it. The only problem was, it was about a week to the examination and for this, many others had been preparing for months. However, we went to the school and asked if I could register for the examination and they said yes. So, we went to buy the examination books and while on this two-week trip, I now was to write an exam. I did, asked for the help of the Holy Spirit and opened up the test paper. Interestingly, at the very top of the examination paper was the name of the test we were taking – it was not at all the test I had been preparing for and I knew absolutely nothing about this type of test! It was the first time I had ever heard of it. The questions were written differently, the mode of answering was different; everything was different. With this, I knew that the only one who could help me was the Holy Spirit – He alone could teach me in *that* moment.

After the test, we were told we would receive our scores within minutes. It was a little nerve-wracking as my mother waited for me outside the hall. Within minutes, I was called and told ... I passed the exam! That was the first step to my admission into my University for my bachelor's degree; altogether, it was finalized in about a week after which I returned home, packed my bags and turned around to resume. In the examination hall, the Holy Spirit was teaching me; He wasn't helping me remember, because I knew nothing about what was in front of me, He was teaching me, and that is what He does. He teaches us what we do now know.

## ***Our Reminder***

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” – John 15:26

The Holy Spirit is the sweetest, calmest and most reliable reminder. He brings to our remembrance the things we may have forgotten, especially the things as instructed us by Jesus (John 14:26). We see in John 15:26 that He testifies of Jesus Christ and as so, with each word He speaks, He reminds us of who we are as believers and what we are called to while on this earth. This is why we can call on the Holy Spirit at any point and His answers always will push us toward Jesus. **If it does not point us to Jesus, it is not the Holy Spirit.**

In the Holy Spirit's testimony of Jesus to and with us, He leads us closer to heart of God. This is why when we find ourselves in questionable situations as believers, there's that sweet voice that tells us we're in the wrong place; the voice that seeks to lead us out of that wrong situation and without guilt. That's the voice of the Holy Spirit.

I often share the story of when I decided to go for the birthday celebration of a family friend; one I last knew from years before. I knew that I did not need to be there but because I let the need to "show my support and love" outweigh the *soft-spoken* inner voice of the Holy Spirit, I went. It did not take long at all to see why the Holy Spirit did not want me there. The environment was not at all conducive for Him and I wanted no part of that; though I went with someone and it would be challenging to find my way home otherwise, I did. The Holy Spirit helped me get out of there as quickly as possible and I choose today, and every day, not to grieve Him. What He says, I do, and that brings me peace and victory!

We can call on the Holy Spirit to remind us of the *smaller things too*. So, have you lost your keys and want to find them? Be at peace and ask Him! He will reveal to you exactly where they are. Do you need help solving a seemingly overly tasking situation? Ask Him and He will give you an immediate way out! All of His directives will be of Jesus and from the Father, bringing us peace and victory.

## ***Our Prayer Partner***

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." – Romans 8:26

One of the great roles the Holy Spirit plays in our lives as believers is that of being our prayer partner. The scripture says we don't know what to pray and that is where the Holy Spirit comes in (Romans 8:26). Some of us may be saying, "but when I go into prayer, I know exactly what I want!" Question however is, do you know *how* to pray into answers for that desire? It is about praying in the Holy Spirit; always in the spirit.

## **Praying in the Holy Spirit**

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit..." – Ephesians 6:18

As believers, we are called to pray every prayer in the spirit. it is therefore impossible to do this without the Spirit. This means that whatever words we utter in prayer must be done in the Spirit. We commonly know about praying in tongues (First Corinthians 14:2), and the power of that in the life of every believer. However, we do also make certain prayers in our understanding (First Corinthians 14:15). We also know that when we pray in tongues, our *understanding* is unfruitful (First Corinthians 14:14). Whether we are praying in tongues or in our *understanding* however, we are told we must make all prayer and supplication in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18). This means that we are to pray in the Spirit, **through** the Holy Spirit, whether that prayer is done in tongues or in our *understanding*.

I recently heard an interesting true story I would like to share with you. In a small town in the United States, a certain bar began construction on a new building to increase their business. They had been doing well and wanted to spread out a little more and found this space that would be big enough for the area of the town they wanted to service. However, a local church was not happy about this bar coming into town and so, they started a campaign to block the bar from opening with petitions and prayers.

Work progressed on the bar right up until the week before opening when lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground. Members of the church, upon seeing what had happened, seemed surprised but pleased with the outcome. However, the joy only lasted until the bar owner sued the church for being ultimately *responsible* for the demise of his building, stating this as either through direct or indirect actions or means. The church strongly denied all responsibility and stated that they had no connection to the building's demise in their reply to the court.

As the case made its way into court, the judge looked over the paperwork. He was surprised by what he saw and commented that he had in-front of him a bar owner who believes in the power of prayer, and an entire church congregation that does not. This is the case for many of us in the faith today.

We make prayers through the Holy Spirit yet are unsure of what the outcome will be. Truth is, every prayer made through the Holy Spirit is guaranteed an answer by God. So, as we pray, we must pray in the spirit and in the name of Jesus, that we may access the Father.

## **How to Access the Holy Spirit**

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” – John 16:7

The Holy Spirit is so needed, that Jesus said that it was important for Him to go so that we would have access to the Holy Spirit. I am so thankful for the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ but even more thankful that He made the sacrifice to leave *friends* He had made while physically walking this earth, so that *everyone* then would have access to Him through the Holy Spirit. Jesus went from an earthly ministry having impact on only a few to sacrificing that ministry so that the Holy Spirit can be made available to all, including you and I, wherever we may be per time; that we may rightly make intercession in the name of Jesus.

This Holy Spirit is available to all who are believers. However, there are certain steps to access Him. Our access to Him is what will lead to a continued blossoming relationship with our Father and in the name of Jesus Christ. There are three main ways we access the Holy Spirit and those are by being born again, believing in His ministry and calling to God through Him and in the name of Jesus Christ.

### 1. Be Born Again

To be born again is to surrender your life to Jesus Christ. Jesus said, that when He departs from His earthly ministry, the Father would send to us the Holy Spirit who would “testify of him” (John 15:26). This means that we first must surrender our hearts to Him and be His, if the Holy Spirit would work with us. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is closely linked with that of Jesus Christ and His ministry never will be separate from that of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must be of the same family as Jesus, to have the Holy Spirit on our side. If you are not yet born again and have not surrendered your heart to God therefore, you do not qualify for the workings of the Holy Spirit in your life. To join this family therefore, simply say these words:

*Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. Today, Lord, I repent of all of my sins. I believe that You died for me; and on the third day, You rose again. I ask that You wash me in your precious Blood and make me new again. Take charge over my life, become my Lord, and lead me as my Saviour. Now, I know, that I am Born Again. Thank you Lord, for saving me. Amen.*

As you have said those words, you now are a part of the family of God. The beauty of a relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit is now set to begin. Follow the next two steps and watch as your relationship with the Holy Spirit blossoms and that with God, now your Father, also blossoms.

## 2. Believe in His ministry

The ministry of the Holy Spirit will not be activated in our lives if we do not believe in Him. We must believe that He exists and is here for and with us, if we must see Him at work. John 14:16 says, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.” He is with us, but we first must trust and believe that for it to be of benefit to us.

## 3. Call through Him

Romans 8:26 says, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Of a truth, the Holy Spirit is available to help us in our infirmities by making intercession for us; that is, praying what we do not know to pray, in line with our desires, that we then may receive our answers. If we decide to pray bypassing the Holy Spirit, we miss out on His grace to help us pray aright. The Holy Spirit can never pray wrongly; this is why we must be wise enough to make ourselves subject to His leading in prayer. So, we must call through the Holy Spirit in prayer, to be guaranteed of constant answers. This, we do, by asking for His help daily and or, during our time spent in prayer which is always (as we pray without ceasing, First Thessalonians 5:17). He is with us to help us, and when we call on His help in the name of Jesus, He will step in; that we may pray rightly to the Father. This is needed if we must develop a deeper relationship with God.

## ***He Remains Forever***

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” – John 14:16

The beauty of a deep relationship with the Holy Spirit is that we know that He will be forever. Scripture tells us that the Comforter from the Father will abide with us forever. As long as we keep our environment conducive for the Holy Spirit, that is, doing what only is pleasing to the Father, as



reminded us by the Holy Spirit, then we secure His presence. This leads to us always being welcome to the presence of our Father, with whom we desire deep relationship. The Holy Spirit will stay with us forever, and oh what joy that brings to our souls as believers.



## Chapter 2. HOLINESS

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” – First Peter 1:15-16

There is a desperate call for holiness today in the Body of Christ; a desperate cry for holiness amongst those who call on the name of Christ. To be holy is to live in constant fear of the Lord. This fear does not mean being wrongfully afraid but living in **cautious awe** and worship of God.

“The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him...” – Psalm 147:11

“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.” –  
Matthew 10:48

Today, we see much talk within and outside the four walls of the church about *grace*. We’re told we can do *whatever* we want and as long as we appear in church on Sunday and raise our hands in beautiful worship to the lighted *stages* we call our pulpit, say a few words to God on forgiveness, then we’re good – to go out again and do whatever we want, the next six days. We’re told that the church is a place for the broken (which is true), and a hospital for the sick; but no one talks about it being *school* for *training*. God is not looking for a multitude who appear weekly to request forgiveness for the sins of the coming days; He’s looking for those who would come to receive clear instructions and ask for grace to put them all to work the next six days. **The church as a building is not a place for unrepentant sinners to seek self-given forgiveness on the weekly, it’s a place to receive instructions that we then may live out, to bring Him glory.** The problem is, we no longer live in constant, cautious awe and worship of God; we no longer value the fear of the Lord.

When we look through scripture, we see those who came in contact with God having one response: *fear*. We see Job, who by seeing God saw his own foolishness and repented in dust and ashes (Job 42:5-6), Isaiah, who declared his own sinfulness (Isaiah 6:5), and into the New Testament, John, who collapsed like a corpse (Revelation 1:17). These men saw God and responded instantly in fear; in cautious awe. Seeing God changed everything; not only in the thoughts of those who saw Him but in their

actions to the point that they *collapsed*. You see, the Old Testament God is not more terrifying than the New Testament God; He's the same and can never change (Hebrews 13:8). This is why this fear of the Lord is not taught only in the Old Testament but also throughout the New Testament.

When we think on the *final* day, the day Jesus returns for His Bride, we think about the beauty of ascending to Heaven, about how glorious it would be to see the streets of gold and rejoice with the Father. Very few of us think about the moment when we will stand in line, and one by one, give account for **every** idle word spoken (Matthew 12:36), our stewardship (Luke 16:2); all of our actions (Romans 14:12). We joke and laugh about things to our friends or on social media and then say, "*oh, even the Holy Spirit knows that was a joke!*" It sounds funny in the moment but if it's an idle word, we would defend that too in the day of judgement. Some may need to give account for their words alone for 3 *earth days* or more; it is no joke and must be taken seriously. Thinking about this always will keep us centered and allow us focus on this moment: living holy today and always, that He may glory in us.

Knowing how terrifying this last day would be, we then must live in that holy fear every day. When we come in contact with God, it's clear we're bound to experience this fear; so, how then should we live if we desire to be in His presence daily? As Christians, we ask on a daily basis that God go with us, ahead of us, behind us, be for us and not against us. If we must have this be our reality then, we must live holy. God cannot stay in sin; He cannot live and abide in willing negligence, and surely will not accept a lack of holiness, fear and reverence. Those who stay in His presence, we are told in Revelation 4, cry "... Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." It says that they do not rest day or night, making this cry out to Him. It's constant, it's daily, it's loud, and it's true. The awe and worship of God is loud and takes over every fiber of their being. What if this also was our cry?

What if as believers, our heart for God is so loud, so obvious, so strong that all that resonates within us is that of holiness? What if we cried out in holiness to God day and night, that even when we wake up to turn at night, words of glory and honor, purity and holiness, emanate from our mouth? What a place it would be for God to abide if our environment was so sanctified. You see, God stays in a holy environment in Heaven; it is

pure and full of His glory. So, if He was to visit us, now or on a daily, it must be because it resembles His own environment, His holy environment. This is why when people speak of having encounters with God during a fast or a time of separation, it is most believable. They separate themselves from the things that contaminate and then fill themselves up with Him through His Word so much so that He appears to them, with divine answers.

A little while ago, three others and I were discussing preparations for a spiritual week we hold at our church every year. It always is a mountain of encounters but truly, you get out only what you put in. One of the ladies asked how to avoid distractions and we discussed this extensively. After all of our discussions, it was left to us – to prepare by spending time with God and to go ready for our encounters. Where I sat in the church was interesting. It was the first time I ever would sit in that area within the tabernacle, but I was determined to receive my own encounters. I decided I would listen more than I write and focus on the transference of a certain spirit I desired from my father and prophet, Dr. David Oyedepo. After one of the night sessions, the lady that sat beside me was telling me about what a couple men on the row in front of us were doing. She spoke about how much of a distraction it was and said, she was determined to say something the following day. She then asked me what I thought when I saw the things that apparently went on for 15 or so minutes. It seemed like I was in a state of shock and she asked me why. The honest truth was: I did not see any of it happen. I was so focused that I did not notice this thing that was such a huge distraction to someone else. That night truly was a special night for me because I received my healing. You see, **it may be a mess around you but as long as it is holy within you, God can reside there.** It is not about what goes on around but what goes on within. If it was at a time I could control what went on around, then I would have; but not to the detriment of the holiness that rested within.

### ***What do I do to be and stay holy?***

“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour” – First Thessalonians 4:4

“That each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor” - First Thessalonians 4:4 (ESV)

We are called, as believers, to learn how to control our bodies and live in holiness. It is our responsibility and not God's. God has given us the tools in His Word, He has given us the strength by His spirit in us, and it is therefore left for us to do the work; what it takes to see the results. Scripture says that we must learn to *possess* our vessels.

I remember the first day I read this. I mean, *really* read this. I had read the Bible cover to cover in the past, but my eyes hadn't been opened to see this. You see, we have the right to *possess* our bodies and tell it what to do. When I say *we*, I mean our spirit man; it can control our physical body, but only if we let it. The process to *possessing* our bodies requires our very own choice. God will not *possess* our bodies by activating His spirit in us on His own; we have to choose this for ourselves.

I watched a movie recently, and by watched, I mean I skipped scenes so I concluded the hour and a half long movie in under thirty minutes. I believe the goal is you get the point and I believe I did. Not being a movie person, the thirty minutes was stretched out but anyway, to the point. It was a *hallmark* movie and if you watch these movies, they're usually somewhat sappy but many reverence God (the reason I watch a few). The lady was a self-proclaimed shoe addict and over Christmas, an angel of sorts appeared to her. Over time, the angel showed her how choices she had made had limited her. If she had lived by faith in all things, this angel showed her where she would have been. She taught her over the time she was with her then to live by faith. In the beginning, it looked as though things were getting worse, but in the end, she saw it all was working together for her good.

Let's take fasting for example. The bible tells us about when we fast, not if we fast (Matthew 6:16); but that doesn't make it any easier. As a believer, when you start fasting, it isn't just about abstaining from food and looking at the clock until it's time for a meal, it's about abstaining from food to be more present with God. Also, because you desire to fast does not mean it will be an easy process. When you have a *regular* busy day and don't eat all day, you're *fine*; but the moment you decide to make it a day of fasting, one hour in and you're battling hunger. Truth is, fasting is not recommended, it is commanded by God, especially if we would live a life of dominion and power. However, when we make the decision to fast and

we choose to stand by our choice, we make it through and the more steadfast we are in our decision, the easier it becomes.

In the same vein, we must *possess* our bodies. There will be times this body will tell us it needs food during a needed fast, times it will tell us we need what we don't because of covetousness, times it will tell us to take performance enhancing drugs before a competition; we must know that in moments like this, we must stick with our choice—choosing to be steadfast in our decision. Whenever our body tells us to do what goes against the earlier directive of our spirit man, we must learn to tell it **No!** It's as the training of a little child; once is not enough, twice surely does nothing, we must do it constantly. We must train our bodies to do what our spirit desires and stick to that choice until the body ultimately begins to fall in line on its own. We see parents today who sadly struggle with untrained children who now have become lawless adults. It is clear that many of them corrected their children at some point; once or twice, maybe even five, six, seven times throughout childhood into their teenage years. It also is clear however that, it was not enough. It was not that they didn't correct those children, they just didn't do it enough. Correction of our bodies 100 times may sound like a lot, but it is not. Our bodies want a lot of things at all times, but our spirit seeks sanctification and honor of our bodies.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” – Second Corinthians 6:17

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” – Second Corinthians 7:1

To sanctify is not just to make something clean, to purify it, but to keep it clean. If we must be received by God, we must live sanctified lives; we cannot just be clean one moment and then let sin in, the next. We must live clean, separating ourselves from things that make us *unclean*. Whether this is the sex-focused movies you watch or the theft you practice on a regular, the lying you do without concern or the unholy conversations you begin, it is time for all of it to stop. Sure, your flesh is interested in these things and potentially seeks more of it, giving you that happy tingly feeling every time you get your way. However, **that feeling isn't God – God is what His word says**; He promotes what His word says and nothing else;

sanctification and honor. If you've stopped all those things that grieve your spirit however, that is wonderful. You must then work to ensure that you keep that and continue to abstain from those things with the help of an empowered spirit.

My father, Dr. David Oyedepo, says something about salvation. He says, "it is not only about being saved, you must stay saved." This is true and must be applied to every area of our spiritual lives. We must not only become holy but must strive to stay holy. Below are five practical ways we may become and stay holy:

1. Crave holiness

"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" –

Psalm 63:1

**How important holiness is to you is made clear by what you are willing to do to see it become your reality.** We see how desperately the psalmist in the above scripture sought God. It was a longing of the flesh and a deep thirst of the soul, all for God. Question then is: how far are you willing to go to live holy?

It must go beyond just a desire, it must be a crave. I recall a video I watched once about a man who went on a seven-day dry fast. It was not for spiritual reasons and he did it solely to gain financial reward from a bet. So, they took him in, and would taunt him day after day; plus, he had blood drawn from him on a daily basis because they needed to keep up with him medically. Apparently, they expected him to die. So, he was determined to make it all seven days. He spoke about how he would lay in fetal position because he felt like he was losing himself. It got to the point where he did not know if he would make it through so he had one confidence: that right before he could die, the medical practitioner they had on deck would hook him up to whatever was needed to keep him alive. He had to believe this. To you then I ask, in what is your confidence?

How much do we crave the holiness of God? How confident are we that when we seek Him, He will make it our reality? Are you willing to abstain from food? From television or your phone? What things are you willing to give up, to see the holiness of God activated in your life? Crave it. Run after it. Seek Him that you would receive it; then, it will be yours.



## 2. Pray for it

As believers, we have two voices: the voice of the heart and the voice of our mouth. What we say in our heart is most important and is only more strongly echoed by what we say. If we speak with our mouth when our heart has not spoken, we receive nothing; but when our heart speaks and then our mouth follows, there is a guarantee of answers.

“And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for **who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?** saith the Lord.” – Jeremiah 30:21

This scripture shows to us what God sees first—our heart. God saw a people panting hard after Him and He caused them to approach unto Him. He saw people who brought His heart great pleasure, so He said, “I have to bring them close.” In His own words, “who is this...?” You see, if He saw our faces first, He would have called them by name and then said, *let me check through for their hearts* but it was the other way around. Does your heart attract God to you?

What is it that is in your heart? What prayer is being made from your heart? Does it raise a smell of good savor or does it stink in the nostrils of God? The voice of our heart must raise prayers to Him that are after holiness. It is about desiring a closeness with Him that only what is holy will be in and around you. The voices of our heart must be strong, seeking solely after God.

It also is easy to know what the voice of your heart speaks the most. This is by searching to see: what do I most think about? You see, our heart’s voice is a function of the thoughts of our mind which then feed the faith in our heart and the voice it has; the words it speaks. **What consumes your thoughts? The things which are holy or those which are unholy?** What are you listening to and what are you watching? What do you give your time to and what do you most seek after? Do you rush home after a Sunday service to watch a particular television show with a lot of cussing or is it that you go straight to a bar?

A man recently shared a testimony in a church service I was in. He spoke about how bound he was by the devil that he would fast and go break his fast with beer. Drinking, womanizing and a broken family (a very unhappy wife) were the things that characterized his life. Then, he spent

adequate time with God and after a season of drawing near to God in fasting, he was set free. He lost taste for alcohol and in turn, taste for other ungodly things and now he is set free forever. You see, he was determined to be set free after years living in this bondage, so he decided to crave holiness and be steadfast in his decision. It takes a determination and a continuously speaking voice of the heart to live holy.

### 3. Stay surrounded by the Word

The Word of God is the most powerful tool to connect with the holiness of God which in turn keeps us holy. What are you surrounded by? Scriptures or words of doom? It's worth asking: when you wake up in the morning, what is the first thing you see?

In our world today, many of us pick up our phones when our eyes are barely open; surely before we pray. I once let a friend stay over at my place. I realized that when she got up in the morning, like deep habit, she would slide down the bed to her knees and pray. She did that before she said *Good Morning*; before she said how good a day it was out loud and certainly before she picked up her phone. I learnt a lot from this.

I did not slide down with the finesse she did when I woke up every morning but would turn to God to commit my day to Him. However, every once in a while, when I was awakened by a phone call, I would answer the phone call before I said my prayers. If I was about to do my bible study but had something bothering me which I felt the needed sorting out, I would do that first, and then return to my study; only to realize I barely had the time to study and what I broke my study time to do, could have waited with zero issues. So, I started to put into practice what I learnt from those few days she stayed with me. Now, I wake up some days to phone calls but absolutely nothing is as important as turning to God to first say, *Thank You for today*. Every phone call can wait, every seemingly important thing can be rescheduled – after sorting things out with God for the day is always the *better* time for anything. I choose to stay surrounded by the Word. So, I wake up to the Word. I have my phone filled with the Word. Take breaks for the Word. Go home to the Word. Play the piano with lyrics from my heart, of His Word. Eat while watching the Word. May nights, I go to bed listening to the Word. You see, I choose to be so surrounded by Him that whatever comes my way, His Word is first in my heart. My life is so porous to His Word that it seeps into every bit of me.

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” – Ephesians 4:23

We hear so often how we are spirit, soul and body but it seems many of us still do not understand this. We know we have a body, we see and touch it daily. The spirit and the mind though, we seem not to always be as focused on. Our mind feeds our body; this is why a person who's *out of their mind* may have the perfect figure, even fit for the cover of *Vogue*, but because they are deemed unhealthy in mind, they are not considered. Nobody wants a person fit in body but unfit in mind. This clearly shows that the mind is even more important than our bodies, though we cannot see it. Then, the spirit. When the body dies and our mind stops functioning, our spirit stays alive. It is the most functional, most secure, most sacred part of our being and therefore, must be treated as such. Our spirit is our actual person, it is a being; hence why the spirit itself has a mind.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” – Philippians 2:5

The spirit can make decisions, think through choices, determine answers and make its own rules in line with Christ and His instructions to us (when we are born again). However, the choices the spirit makes, though through its mind, still must pass through our human mind, as God has designed us as creatures of will. This means that although our spirit knows what it wants, when it passes it through our mind, we may further choose something else and/or to go a different route. This means that at all times, it is key to stay surrounded by the Word, this way, our spirit man is fed and our human mind is made to understand what we choose to give priority.

I read a story from the wife of a *well-known* pastor once. She wrote about how her husband would bring drastic changes into their home until it became the norm. He would tell them they had to limit television and then study the Word, until he got to the point where he said everyone was allowed to watch television only for the same number of hours they studied their Bibles daily. She wrote about how much it brought the Word to their fore front until it changed their home for the better. Because of pleasure they thought they needed, they surrounded themselves with the Word. Just as a shield, it keeps us safe and makes us complete in Him.

#### 4. Surround yourself with friends of refreshing

This morning, as I studied my Bible, God opened my eyes to these kinds of friendships. He asked me from Second Corinthians 7, ***who is your refresh company?*** Throughout the next chapter, in Second Corinthians 8,

the bible speaks on living a life of equality. Not equality in the way the world describes it but in love; that no one is in need of whatever it is we have in excess. It's so simple: **whatever you have in excess, it is so that you can give to those in need.** Some people make it much more challenging than it needs to be – it's actually quite simple. You give whatever you have in excess. You see, God makes this so simple and even somewhat automatic. This is why when your heart is filled with love, hugs and words of encouragement come out of your mouth, but if your heart is filled with hurt and/or hate, that is what overflows. We overflow what we let run into overflow.

”Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.” – Second Corinthians 7:13

Question then is, **when others come in contact with you, what do they experience – a refreshing or the stagnant waters of greater pain, discomfort, worry and discontentment?** This easily will tell us what it is we overflow with and we then know what we must do to change it if we must have that great encounter with Jesus and a consistent walk with God. Men and women of impact in the Bible kept company with them who constantly refreshed their souls. Daniel had his three friends. Ruth had Naomi (who told her exactly what to do when it came time to *refresh* Boaz, laying at his feet). Paul had the apostles, Titus too; and Jesus Himself, had His disciples. If we must be and stay holy, we must stay around those who relentlessly pursue same.

A few years ago, I made a lovely friend – but she was of a different faith. She was kind and truly sought answers, from what I saw, however, she knew that her faith was something she had to keep. She grew up with it and had to keep that if she would have the support of her family. I had other friends who were of my same faith, and with my family (including from the church branch I added at the time), I had a solid refresh company. So, I loved this friend even more. I would talk with her about Jesus in the small things. She would visit and with every story, there was Jesus mixed in – not always because I planned to talk about Him; He was so intertwined in my life that I couldn't have a full conversation without the mention of Jesus. We were in the same location a little under a year and stayed somewhat close, so I stayed speaking Christ. We eventually moved farther away from

each other and continued with *life*. When it was time for her to get married, she got back in touch with me. She knew what she was doing but it was clear, she still wanted answers. There was something about our God, my God, that she couldn't shake. We haven't spoken in a while, but she remains on my heart. I hope I continue to remain on hers too, because I pray that she continues to seek my God and receives the answers she so desperately has sought. I remember when I hosted a bible study and asked her to come. She did and was quiet throughout but listened intently. It was about commanding a refresh company for her that I hope would last until the next company is built. If we do not consciously develop that refresh company around ourselves, the devil will develop his *stagnant* company. We are who we surround ourselves with.

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” – Amos 3:3

There is no way around our friendships; who we keep company with is who we become. I read about a longitudinal study once conducted which concluded that we are an average of the five people we spend the most time with. This does not always mean physically. In today's world, we spend so much time on the phone, making calls, on social media sending messages; we're truly almost always occupied. So, who are we most occupied by? I spend a lot of time several times a year writing down the five people I spend the most time with. I analyze the good lessons I learn from them and the bad ones I don't appreciate. If I would prefer not to be or become like any one person, I separate myself. You see, I know my sphere of influence is and will continue to grow. I know the plans God has for me (Jeremiah 29:11); they are good, they are full, and they are perfect. So, to reach that place He has for me per time, I surround myself with those who challenge me for good. Yes, there would be those I have around me to be a blessing to but they will not outweigh those I spend quality time with. I can only give what I have and what I have is largely a function of those I spend time with.

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.” –  
First Corinthians 15:33

Have you noticed that when you spend enough time with those who think fornicating isn't such a bad idea, you start to change your mind too? It starts with the small things until you find yourself in your *boyfriend's* house, wearing lingerie, posing sexually in his bed as you wait for him to

walk in; then you realize it's become your norm. Evil communications corrupt good manners.

## 5. Value it

“In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.” – Luke 1:75

I recently got a dress on *sale*. It was a *random* day in a shop; not as random however, as I went out with family and I came across this dress. I thought it looked nice enough (without the plaster of a brand name all over it) so I put it across my body still with the hangar on, and I felt *alright* looking down at it. I took about two steps to show those I was with this dress so, I looked at the price tag. It originally ran into thousands of dollars but was on sale for less than 10% of the original price. So, even though the shop was nearing closing time and I'm rarely one who tries on clothes at *any* store, I decided to try this one on. I went into a changing room, tried the dress on and it was perfect to size. I twirled in it (as any girl would when she feels pretty in a dress), left the dressing room, and went to the teller. To be fair, my family and I had trolleys of items and became friends with the workers the next few days we went by for other smaller items.

Knowing what the dress is worth, it's so exciting to think on how much of a *sale* I got it on! Even if the dress potentially could've been too small or too big before I tried it on, there already was the sense of, *I'm getting this dress regardless!* Upon returning home and arranging all my items, I realized I put the dress in a different part of my closet. The more I thought about it, the more I realized my more *valuable* dresses were in this closet. The kind of dresses I would put on the cover of my laundry basket rather than on the inside so that the launderer knew to *take good care of this one!* Even when the time comes to give these dresses out, I first would think on friends or persons I know would appreciate them, before giving them out. All this because I placed value on them.

It's clear that this value is as a result of cost. The cost I paid (or could've paid) for the dress increased the value I placed on it. It wasn't about the style or quality of material; I could've gone into a similar store to purchase the material and sewn the dress for a lot cheaper than the original price on the dress but that would've been *no* fun, right? The cost determines the value. In the same vein, question is: how much do you value your

holiness and right standing with God? **The cost you are willing to pay for holiness determines the value you place on it.**

“For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?” – Luke 14:28

Have you counted the cost? The days of fasting so that you not only see God draw nearer to you, but you draw nearer to Him? The days of judgment from man for obeying *clear* instructions from the Lord? The days of painful mockery because you stick to the Word and change not with the world? How far are you willing to go and what things are you willing to do to prove that holiness matters to you?

Your flesh will not carry you through. There will be times you need to combat your flesh heavily with the Word of God. In all this, be determined to stay true to Him. I saw a quote sometime today about one day of being a lion being greater than a thousand days living as a sheep. David said,

“For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” – Psalm 84:10

How desperate are you for time in His presence? How desperate are you for a relationship with Him? How much of a cost are you willing to pay for holiness that you may stand with Him? Truth is, our value is only a result of our cost. As we read through the bible book of Psalms, we see the breakthroughs of David and when he started to go astray. He lived the highs with God and saw the great price he paid to be away from His covering. So, he was willing to pay whatever cost. Can you say “Lord, even if nothing else changes in my life, for the things you already have done, I say thank you! Even if you do nothing else for me forever, you have done me well enough! Even if I remain in this position forever, at your feet is more than enough for me!”? Where is your heart and what are you willing to pay? The more you are willing to *pay* for holiness, the higher the value you will place on it.





## Chapter 3. FOCUS & FOCUSED REMINDERS

“And tell Archippus, ‘Pay attention to the ministry you have received in the Lord, so that you can accomplish it.’” – Colossians 4:17 (HCSB)

In walking with God, He shows us more of Himself. He leads us into the path He has for us and opens us up to His plans for our lives. God has ordained us for a purpose (Jeremiah 1:5), and He did so before we were born. To continue to stay in His presence therefore, He asks that we walk in this plan.

Imagine for a moment a son or daughter, even a spouse. You know their greatest heart's desires and make a plan for them. You have it all figured out because you've been through the same process. You lay down the plan for them because they give you the infamous “I'll do whatever you say,” especially as long as it guarantees the results they desire. You're so excited, you choose to follow the same steps alongside them so it's a little easier; whatever it takes, because you know how challenging it may be, you'll be by their side. But then the first day rolls around and ... no commitment. Same thing the next day and the day after, until the plans *die* down. You still are following your own steps and hope that one day they pick up to run beside you but nothing. Then they come back to you for a different plan and you draw up the step by step again and still, nothing. Imagine this happens over and again, do you keep drawing up new plans or just keep directing them to the old plan until you see commitment?

This is the same thing with God. Many of us keep asking God for His plans for us and He keeps showing them to us. He shows us in different ways and at different times so we may get up and work them but we still, we don't. After asking Him 10 times and Him showing us 10 more times, it gets to the point where He needs us to show some commitment before He grants us the *additional grace* we say we need.

Recently, a group of ladies and I read through the Bible cover to cover in eight months. When the journey was to begin, I told the ladies what God has said to me and how He was ready to make disciples out of us. Some of the ladies, myself included, were committed and every week we would read chunks, chapters and even books of the bible at a time to meet up with the reading plan. We would meet weekly to review what we learned from scripture and examine how to put it to work during same week. With

every one's various commitments, it was not always easy to keep to task, but because we were committed, God was more than willing to grant the grace when we needed it and requested it of Him. He knew the grace would not be in vain. I can say today that the women who were committed to the reading plan and completed the reading of the bible, had evident encounters. For many, there was cheap fulfilment of prophecies, clarity in direction and purpose; for all, a deeper relationship with God.

During this time, we did whatever it took to keep reminders before our eyes. Most of us have cellphones we pick up ever-so-often to send messages, view pictures and/or post on social media. So, we made a colorful schedule that we could use as phone wallpapers, sent each other weekly reminders, and posted the schedule on social media at least once a week. It was always before our eyes so there was no way to forget. These kinds of focused reminders are needed if we must continue to strive for what's *before* (Philippians 3:13). So, what do the posters in your home, the wallpaper on your phone and the writeups on your desk remind you of?

In my home, I have a *main* wall. It's the focal point of my home but not the first wall you see when you walk in. When people do take a few steps in however (and I do not recall one person who visited for the first time and didn't do this), people tend to walk toward and stare at this wall. I remember when I first moved in, that wall was bare. I knew I needed to do something with it but I wasn't sure what. Then during one of my travels, I went into a store that had these great biblical signs – it was a breakthrough! I knew they were meant for my wall. So, I got home, put a few nails in, and got them up. Walking down my steps every morning, it's impossible to miss these signs and the one at the very top, the largest sign of all reads, "let your faith be bigger than your fears." So, guess what my day is like when I choose to meditate on one of the last things I read before I walk out my door every morning? A day when my faith is bigger than my fear.

Question therefore is, what is that thing God has called you to? What is that ministry God has handed to you? As Paul warns in Colossians 4, it is our responsibility to pay attention to it, and ensure that we complete it. Another version reads,

"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." – Colossians 4:17

It says to **take heed**. Our God-given assignments cannot be taken lightly if they must be fulfilled; and you see, they must be fulfilled as proof of our obedience, if we must continue to grow deeper in our relationship with God. To “take heed” is to seriously ensure that we do whatever it takes, and as my father says, through “whatever godly means”, ensure that it is adhered to. So, if God has given you an assignment to write one book this year, what are you doing about it? What steps are you taking? What time slots in the day or week or month have you set aside to write? If He has given you an instruction to set up a business, what books are you reading about that line of work? What times daily have you given to build your stock, reach clients, build a website or social media, if He’s leading you that route? What are you doing with what He has instructed? No obedience means no taking heed which means a lack of reverence for God and a failed relationship with Him.

The second part of the scripture above doesn’t just say to take heed but to do so that the *ministry* is fulfilled. Many times we put focused reminders before us but have no timeline. **There is nothing God will tell you to do that will be void of a target.** We live in a world run by time, so when God tells you to do a thing, it also has its timing. Your doing one thing and completing that is what will lead to directives for the next and so on. Take for example you believe God has asked you to write a book. When does He want that book out? What does He want it to be about? Who is it for and what message or healing does He desire it will bring to them? When there’s a focused reminder, it helps to have it alongside a timeline. So, you work and can work effectively. If you don’t have a timeline, you may end up spending ridiculously long hours doing little to nothing, as there is no desire to meet any specific goal. Even in *conventional* ministry, God gives you a mandate. The mandate answers the where, when, how and to who. If your mandate is void of any of these, it still may be missing a few pieces. God then tells you something He may want you to do for one month, or particular teachings He wants you to give for one year or notice on a particular convention He wants you to hold one season. This is why we never go to conventions or conferences that do not have a title or a target. Even if the convention is themed, “Whatever!” it has a target.

Imagine for a moment you’re invited to a convention that has no theme, location, date or speaker/s; it’s pretty much a blank invite flier. When you then ask for details, the person who hands the flier to you says,

“oh don’t worry, God will reveal it to you in due time.” You immediately would lose interest and would make a *note to self* that such an individual is unserious. However, this is what many of us do with whatever ministry God hands to us – we are unserious about it and walk about without a mandate or a timeline. Who has God sent you to and how do you plan to reach out to them, in what timeline and with what arsenals? We must live with specific and focused reminders if we will reach out to all those God has set aside for us to; also as a show of our obedience to Him.

## **WHY FOCUS?**

I met a man once who spoke so highly (and for most of the time we sat across from each other), of how he was called of God to be a writer. He spoke about how whenever he put pen to paper, it was as though fresh revelation dropped just on him from heaven. The anointing was apparently so strong, it took over his being. If you listened to him for anything over thirty minutes, you may begin to question your anointing because his encounters just seemed so powerful. So, after such a conversation, the only rational thing would be to ask where you can buy his book(s). Obviously, there should be something in one or more of them for you. The only problem is: he had not written or published any books. It’s expected to then just begin to question one’s self: how would someone be so anointed but do nothing about it?

On the other hand, I met someone who wrote over 20 books in one year. Yes, they were mini-books but anointed books, nonetheless. People could read them, be blessed by them and take next steps. The difference between the first person and this individual was the action. Action which is birthed from a constant reminder.

When God lays an assignment on our hearts, it always comes with our part to play. He never gives promises we have to do nothing with. Whether we *war* with them in prayer or *work* with them to results, we always will have something to do. Personally, I remember the first book I co-authored. I wrote it with three others and at the time, I was 13 years old. We were determined but not as dedicated. We were in secondary school and didn’t have as many reminders placed on our heart to the point it was a *great* burden to us. I mean, we would meet, discuss, plan, pray, but it wasn’t half as much as it needed to be. Thanks be to God for His faithfulness, He helped us through. When it came time to author my first two books on my

own however, I learnt a lot more. I knew I had to have the reminders in front of me and most importantly, deeply embedded in my heart. For one of the books, I wrote it while on a trip and in those days, I was totally consumed by it. I would wake up, spend time with God, do work I travelled for, and write. I would write in the day time and write at night, write during a meal and write in the bathroom. I was consumed by my work and the focused reminders on my heart kept me going. It wasn't always easy but so worth it. I knew that I wasn't *allowed* to stop writing; It was my assignment and no one could do it for me; it's my responsibility to put pen to paper and work. Learning through those times, especially with other increasing work on my plate, I've learnt how to *work*. Whether it means me writing until I sleep, writing when I wake, writing as I take other lessons or am on calls, I do it. Same must be for us all: what focused reminders are you keeping in front of you and what level of focus do you have on your assignment?

We must focus on our God-given assignment for three main reasons:

- to complete the work given us by God,
- to bring glory to the name of Christ, and
- ultimately, to win souls

Jesus Christ while physically walking this earth said,

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” – John 9:4

We have a *day* time and a *night* time. During the day of our lives, in our youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1), we have the time and energy to do many things. We have strength in our bodies and can work long hours. We have the strength to so easily subdue our bellies to ensure we do not make it our *god*; pretty much to do as much as our minds can think to. So, while it is day, we have the strength, and our Lord tarries, let us work. **If you are unwilling to work, you are unwilling to live like Christ.** Jesus worked and so did the apostles; our fathers in the faith work and so must we. There must be the strong burden placed on ourselves in the sense that we know, without doubt, the expectation of God on us to ***work the work of Him that sent me.***

For a long time I lived by these 12 words “... that I may complete the work given to me by Christ Jesus.” I still do today and always will, just in more evolved terms. Truth is, if we are unwilling to live to complete the work given us by Christ Jesus, our lives will be incomplete (and no one

wants to live an incomplete life). A man of God who I greatly admire, family more than anything, says we must desire, live to and work toward dying “empty.” To die empty meaning to have completed the entirety of God’s assignment to us. Whether one dies at 40 or at 90 is not the concern, it’s about whether one dies having completed all his work or none of it. Jesus died at 33, yet “empty”. With the blessing of 120 years by covenant, if Jesus tarries, we can do a lot more. This is why Jesus said:

“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.” – John 14:12

Greater works! We are called to do even greater than Jesus did so surely what He did do, we must first do. There’s this concept of deduction we largely follow in my family. By faith, we will live until 120 years of age in health and divine strength if Jesus tarries. So, if you’re 20 years old now, you have 100 years left. I see people celebrating their 30th or 40th birthdays running around showcasing their lives as *pimps* or *show girls*, proudly showing off on social media; many, noting that though they love God, they believe they have a *long* time to live so can fix themselves up *later* in life. Except, later already has arrived. They barely have 90 or 80 years to go (& that’s if they believe for 120)! Life is in phases as we know, but all are filled. Some, thirty-fold, others sixty-fold and some, a hundred-fold (Matthew 13). All of us are filled by God to fulfil His assignments to us but unfortunately, most die full; still full of everything God once deposited in them, depositing and investing none of it in the earth.

What are you doing today to ensure you live out all that God has deposited in you? What steps are you taking to ensure you complete the assignment God has placed in your hands? Surely, we will be asked to defend our choices when on this earth on the day Jesus returns (Luke 19). Question is, in the end, will our Father embrace you to say well done or will you cover your face in shame for you left this earth having emptied nothing of yourself? Live full, die empty; live with the law of deduction in mind, for a life of impact, & do **not** get weary. Remember, we are here with a strong burden to *work the work of him that sent us*.

As above mentioned, the second reason why we must focus on our God and His assignment to and for us is so that we bring glory to the name of Christ.

“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” – First Corinthians 15:10

Paul in the above scripture was clear on the truth that he was a result of grace. The grace of God took him from where he initially was, to being the most valued apostle, writing the largest chunk of the bible’s new testament; persecutor to declarer of the truth. However, one thing is for sure: as much as he gloried in the Lord for all to see *and* believe, it was made possible by his labor. Imagine if Paul believed he was too anointed to need to write to the churches? That would mean we need to take out a few books of the Bible because they may never have been written. Or if Paul believed Timothy knew he loved him and was praying for him so there was no need to write to him? More books in the bible may never have been written. It is clear that when God calls us to any assignment, He expects us to buckle down and work; this way, we bring glory to His name.

My parents are both in the second half of their lives; of their 120 covenant years, they’ve done quality work by his grace in the first half. I hear them both unashamedly testify of how good God has been to them by granting them strength, health and vitality. They both read without any vision challenges, think so quickly; I forget sometimes they are past their thirties (I mean, look at pictures of my mother; she’s absolutely gorgeous). They both clearly are beautified by God but one thing is for sure, it’s part of the reward of their labor. My mother works many hours into the night on a weekly basis to get assignments done and of course, is up at our daily hour of prayer for 5.30am. She’s never late, never falls asleep and is always beautifully put together. She clearly must be up, at least, an hour or so before and may get two hours of sleep. Yet, she can go about her day afterwards so productively. My father, in same light, is such a productive worker. He used to work an average of 18 hours a day but now, it’s more in the 20 hour-range. He works these hours and has clear results. There’s no question about what he’s doing in the office because between meetings, church programs and University assignments (oh, yes, as Chancellor of Nigeria’s two best Universities), he comes out with volumes of work completed at the end of each day. For people who work so much, why give the glory to God and not themselves?, some may ask. Truth is, the glory of God is available to us all. It makes us shine and causes us to be the envy of

others. Both my parents are so beautified by God as no one who works that much should be as beautiful, inside and out, as they are; yet, they are. However, the grace of God is only made valid because they work. We can return glory to God when we see them and their results because we know that only God can strengthen a man like He does them. **God's glory is made void in a man who desires not to work.** So, whatever reminders it takes, let's get them in-front of us, until the glory of God is made perfect to and for us for others also to glory in His name.

“My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.” - Psalm 63:8

The above is one of my father's most shared scripture. A little while ago, he referred again to it and this time, it struck me. At the start of this year and on the first day, the Lord gave me a scripture; it referred to this year being one of labor to results for me. So, when the above scripture came up again, it was another confirmation. How hard are you following after God? The scripture makes it clear that the right hand of God only upholds you when you're following hard after Him. God is not just upholding everybody; yes, He loves each and every one of us but He has a special place for and upholds only those whose souls are following *hard* after Him. This is not the kind of followership where you read your Bible in the morning but are in the bar at night, the kind where you sing sweet songs to Him in the morning but cuss out your neighbor for parking in your spot later in the day. This followership is that kind which consumes you day and night; you study His Word in the morning, put it to practice by loving even those who offend you in the day, and going out to share the love of Christ at night. It's the kind of followership that consumes your thought and therefore your conversation; the kind that is complete. Again, I ask, how hard are you following after God? Does He get the glory in your life or is your life void of focus, work and productivity that He gets no glory?

The third reason why we must focus on our God and His assignment to and for us is the most important reason of all; to win souls. I spoke about my parents earlier. Truth is, when my father stands on an altar to give glory to God for His strength in his life, I know it's true and so do all those who work with him. It's clear that he's upheld by God and remains beautified by Him. So, when he then asks all in the congregation if they would like to surrender their lives to Christ and see God strengthen and beautify them



like He does him, it's a *no-brainer* that the altar will be full. People same age as my father barely walk around the altar a few times; my father, he walks around it, climbs the steps around it a few times, walks to the back and then to the front, all in one message; plus on a Sunday, he ministers three to four services. It may be easy to assume it's because he rests through the week but he's in the daily morning prayer services and almost always teaches, is in the evening services held one to three times a week and mainly teaches there too, any overnight services, he teaches there too, and never weak or weary. That is the strength of God! He still goes on the streets to minister the gospel of Christ and in one year, brought in over 30,000 souls to church from his street outreaches; the numbers increasing every year.

For my mother, she once battled with the spirit of death and wrote a book about it titled, ***Rescued From Destruction: The Story of My Journey Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death***. She once was bound in a wheelchair, could not walk, could not eat or toilet on her own, had chunks of her hair falling out with barely a touch. It was her journey through the valley of the shadow of death and in those moments, she never let her gaze off of Christ. To see her today doing all that she does, living so strong and beautiful, showing Christ in her every step, it surely can only be God. So when she stands on the altar, tells the story of her victory and asks others to surrender to God for same order of victory in life, it is not surprise that tens of thousands of people rush to receive Him. She still goes on her own street outreaches today, winning thousands of souls to Christ.

For us today, what work are we doing that so easily points others to Christ? We live to bring glory to the name of Christ as Paul did, ascribing the glory to God. If people are not moved more toward Christ by our daily actions and results, we have more to do. We must have reminders so as not to lose our focus. May we all live to complete the work handed to us of God, bring glory to His name, and win souls into His kingdom. Everything we do must ultimately be to win souls into the kingdom of God and may we do that this time more than ever before.

## ***HOW TO FOCUS?***

There are two main ways we best aid focus and they are:

- with what's in front of us

- with our heart

When we wake up in the mornings, we open our eyes. Our physical bodies switch from one world (of sleep), to the next (of limitless possibilities). We open our eyes and for some of us, are immediately consumed by a thought or desire; many times as a result of the first thing we see. Have you realized that if you sleep with a wall clock in front of you, when you wake up to see the time, your first thought is either how late you are (so you jump up and begin running around with intensity) or how early you are (and you're tempted to sleep just a little longer)? If you wake up to first see the poster of your *celebrity crush* you've hung in your room, you think about them most of your day? Imagine if you then woke up to *tongues* as your alarm tone or an audible bible quoting scripture such as Psalm 63:8; how different would your focus be in the day? I have realized that the more I spend time with God in the mornings, the less interest I have in my cellphone throughout the day. My focus is so strongly on God, that whatever I see, leads me back to Him. It helps to have God-reminders around me throughout the day, also. The wall in my home that I earlier described, I see every morning, and there are no wall clocks, cellphones or even closets right in front of me. I set up my bedroom so strategically that I first wake up to the light from the outside and I am reminded to thank God for such a wonderful day; then, my Bible right on my bedside stool and when I do get to my phone, a scripture for the day. They all keep me grounded for the day. Even if I have no contact with any human for a day, though community is extremely important, I am with God and can never forget or play Him down in my life. I have many focused reminders. Question therefore is, what are the focused reminders in front of you?

With all of these in front of me, I'm constantly left checking my heart. I have alarms and reminders set for a lot of things, prayer time during the day included. Recently, I had quite a busy day. This has become the norm, but when I have a number of things not going according to plan, it can slow down a lot in a day. It was one of those days and some of the people I was working with just were not doing their part. It was a fasting season for me and when I had my afternoon prayer time, I left it out and spent time with God. I returned to only more things needing correction. I was beginning to get upset but the scripture I had for the month kept ringing. I was determined to love in the place of anger. So, when it was time, I left for home and continued with my assignments; it was clearly

going to be a long work night, correcting a little more than a few things. However, I was determined to love through the process. I called to the person still at the office, spoke a lot calmer and asked questions. First was, we found the documents they had so adamantly said they never had. Half the battle was won. Then, we made progress; in the end, it was a productive night for me. I had scripture not only around me but in me to the point of focus. Nothing and no one was going to stop me from loving them in the day. I gave out *well done* and *good job!* like candy that evening, it was as though I had it stored for the day. We made progress and I ended the day in joy; all stemming from the focus of scripture in my heart.

**You must check your heart constantly to see what is in it.** Is it scripture or is it how much you're waiting to repay the last person who upset you; the word of God or reality television? What we have in us will determine what we do and what we do will either bring glory to God or to our flesh. As believers, we focus on God and His assignment to ultimately win souls to His kingdom and that will only happen when we have His word in our heart and flowing through our veins. Don't let a day go by when you don't have a scripture to carry you through.



## Chapter 4. WORSHIP

I'm a worship girl. I don't think I fully realized this in my early years. I grew up in such a praise environment and because of this, I truly saw wonders. As we know, our God makes Himself so manifest in the midst of praise (Psalm 22:3). It was such a blessing to see Him move in strange ways in my life and the lives of many others; instant testimonies were a common occurrence. However, once I turned 16, I hit a strange turning point. I started listening to more than the occasional worship song and the more I did, the more I saw God. I listened more, so I worshipped more. Then came the times I worshipped by myself. No music, just my voice, however crooked it sounded, and I experienced God. You know, **no testimony is greater than that of a man who experiences God for himself**. To take it a step farther, I bought myself a keyboard and with the four chords I knew, would play hours of spontaneous worship to God. In those moments, I would see God, speak my heart to Him, listen to Him sing to me, and enjoy the thrill of His sweet presence. In truth, there is nothing so sweet. It was as though in praise, I saw the hand of God but in worship, I saw the person of God.

In my quest to even deeper depths in God, I found this artist who worships so powerfully in tongues and my native language, Yoruba. I've always been intrigued by worshipping God in my native language because to me, English just does not do it justice. So, I would listen to her, enter the presence of God, and after about an hour or so when it is time to switch videos, I would realize how much I had been sobbing, in awe of the presence of my Father; as I call Him, Abba. You might say you don't know how to worship God spontaneously, but you can worship Him with the help of another. How about you find a worshipper or worship group that helps connect you to the Father? How about you play some worship music until you enter into his gates? Psalm 29:2 says to, "... worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

Worship is so powerful. You know, when the Bible speaks of Lydia being baptized, it was because she was in the attitude of worship. Acts 16:14 says, "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which **worshipped God**, heard us: **whose heart the Lord opened**, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." The

opening of Lydia's heart by the Lord was as a result of her worship. She was a beautiful soul, by reason of our knowing of who she was, but in worship, after the baptism, her true heart shone. Verse 15 says, "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." Her story reminds me so much of Abraham; when he welcomed angels unawares, compelling them to come (Genesis 18:2-8). The Bible says that Abraham hastened into his home to ask that Sarah make a fine meal, a fetched a *good* calf, the best of the best and top of the line, to entertain these three men, who were angels. Note that in just the chapter before, Abraham had worshipped God in the circumcision of Himself, his son, and all those in his house (Genesis 17). It is clear that in worship, we are experience God, who is Love, and live out this love deeper than we have in the past. The love of God causes us to chase after others for good.

## **COMMUNITY WORSHIP**

There is the place for worshipping God by yourself, and the place for worshipping God in community. Community is so important and so powerful in our worship of God. First Corinthians 14:26 (NLT) says, "Well, my brothers and sisters, let's summarize. When you meet together, one will sing, another will teach, another will tell some special revelation God has given, one will speak in tongues, and another will interpret what is said. But everything that is done must strengthen all of you." In community, there is the place for worship; however, order in worship is of utmost priority. God does not like disorder (First Chronicles 15:13).

As will be examined in Chapter 10 of this book, Community, the place of community in our Christian walk cannot be overemphasized. God desires we walk in good community as it enhances our walk with Him. The place of community is to encourage our relationship with the Lord; not to distract from it. In worship, community also is important. In Second Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem "fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD." (verse 18). After this was when the Lord gave the instructions that led to the destruction of the children of Ammon, Moab and mount Seir, who were against Judah. All of them worshipped in community and then the right instructions came. Jehoshaphat could have worshipped alone and received answers of the Lord

but this time, the Lord required and desired community in worship, for their answers to be released. There is power in community.

## ***HOW AM I TO WORSHIP?***

### 1. Worship God in spirit and truth

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”- John 4:24

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”- Philippians 3:3

If you read through the new testament, you see that the bible never speaks about worshipping **before** the Lord but about worshipping Him **in** the Spirit! This means that after the coming of Christ and the physical manifestation of the revelation of Christ, we went from needing to worship in a particular place or way to have our worship accepted; to worshipping **in** spirit and **in** truth. This show *progression* in worship. So, we must not seek to worship God the exact same ways they did in the old Testament, but in the way through which He has made for us in Christ Jesus.

Just a few months ago, God began speaking to me about living a life of progression in my knowing of Him. It is about being uncomfortable with where you are, that you crave for more of Him. Not more things but more of the revealed Him – to you and in the earth. Brother Kenneth E. Hagin spoke in one of his books about how he prayed for several years concerning the coming of the *power* gifts to America (as highlighted in 1st Corinthians 12); this, as was revealed to Him by God. He prayed practically every night to the point that there were nights he woke up to himself kneeling by the couch when he could not even recall getting up at night. His body had been programmed to this schedule that he lived it out even when he did not know he was. The question is, what have we programmed our flesh to stay subject to?

We must live a life of progression in our worship, and this can only be done **in spirit and in truth**. So, we must stay growing in our knowledge of Christ, if we must progressively worship him deeper and more correctly. This, is how we are called to worship God as believers.

### 2. Worship God with your heart

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:”- Acts 24:14

Paul is a man that I greatly admire. He was a man of great depth but even more, a man of great surrender. Paul lived by one rule – to live to the extreme. Paul so lived to worship God with his heart, that he chose to believe every word of God.

Today, we have people and groups that argue *what God really meant* with certain words, that they miss the point. In Second Corinthians 11:3 (NAS), God says, “But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” The word of God is exactly what it says it is. It is the word of God and God Himself (John 1). Just as we need time to understand a person, we need time to understand the word of God (who is God) – alongside the help of the Holy Spirit. We don’t argue for the truth, the truth is strong enough to defend itself because in the end, only the truth will stand.

What if we decided to worship God with the radicality of our belief in His every word? What if we chose to stand agreeing with every word of God, even when we do not understand; worshipping until it became easy? What if we subjected our hearts to the word of God and lived like it dictated our every move? What a world it would be! We as Christians would be the envy of the world, even as was the case of Isaac when all of the Philistines envied him (Genesis 26).

You see, it was recently in the news that some Christians stood against what the world wanted them to say, because they mentioned it was not in agreement with the word of God; they were widely crucified on the internet for this. It was even more interesting to see that *the church* and many who identified as *Christians* were against them. Some said they should know when to speak about things in line with the bible when regarding culture and others thought that what they stood against no longer qualified as sin because *things have changed* and “*we live in a more evolved world than in Bible days.*” You see, none of these things come as a surprise; the same word of God that *they* call *archaic* spoke on the coming of these things, today. **Even though we stay progressive in worship, our progression must not, should not and cannot exceed the bounds of**



**scripture.** We only grow in our understanding and revelation of the word of God, not beyond the bounds of same Word.

Truth is, we are called to believe the word of God in the manner which they call heresy. We are called to act on the word of God; without reservations and even many times, without a deep understanding of *why*. We are called to live out the word of God, in season (when we feel like it) and out of season (when we don't). The word of God is complete, concise and without fault. The word of God is the person of God and because He can be trusted, it can be trusted. This is why whether the world agrees or the time seems right, we worship God, in our thoughts, words and actions – with our hearts.

### 3. Worship God with your tongue

“And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.”-  
Revelation 19:4

My biological father is an addicted worshipper of God with his tongue – worshipping with the words of his mouth. If you've met him, been on a phone call with him, sat with him only but a few minutes, then you know what I mean. My father seems to have it down, it makes it clear that I have a lot more to learn. When he sits, he says *Thank You Jesus!* When he gets up, he says *Praise the Lord!* When he goes to get a glass of water, he says *Amen*. When reading, he periodically says, *Alleluia!* There is absolutely no action that does not have a corresponding word of worship to the Father for him. This is why as much as I remember, I do the same. I await the day when I will do it just as I breathe; the same way my biological father, does it. It must be so freeing; for the little I do, brings peace to my soul.

You see, reading through the bible book of Revelation, we see the reality of how much worship goes on, and will go on, in heaven, with our tongues. When you read Revelation 19, the most repeated word that probably would catch your attention is Alleluia! It's almost as though when God went through writing the core word of each chapter in the great Book, the bible, that of Revelation 19 was worship. When believers are with our Father in heaven, this is what we also will do – worship. There will be no day or night, but there will be continuous worship; so why not learn to do it today, every minute of every day?

Worshipping God with our tongue cannot be overemphasized and although in the beginning may need to be practiced, just as it is for my biological father, it becomes easy. It becomes a part of who we are. We worship in the day and at night, with food and without, awake and in our dreams; we are called to worship God with the words of our mouth and as believers, must live it out daily.

#### 4. Worship God with your physical body/strength

“And I fell at his feet to worship him...”- Revelation 19:10

We have strength in our body for a reason – and that is to worship God. We have only one acceptable way to worship God which must be in spirit and in truth, for any worship done outside of it is unacceptable. However, we do use our physical strength even when we worship God. The account of our resurrection with God speaks to our worship of God not only with our tongues but in laying before Him. It is common in my culture to kneel before a dignitary as a show of honor; how then do we worship God with no physical reverence? Worshipping God in the spirit, it must be impossible not to show Him reverence. The presence of God living on our inside is so powerful. It is awe-inspiring and life-changing that we must easily see ourselves set before him in worship, showing this also through our physical actions.

## ***STYLES OF WORSHIP***

In worship, alone or in community, we worship God. His spirit moves us to worship Him in the way most acceptable to Him, from us. As so, we may use the same and or different styles each time. Many of us stay consumed with *how* the right way is to worship, making this an important segment of this chapter. Truth is, we may throw our hands up, dance in the spirit or shout sweet names to Abba. I constantly find myself in many of these modes and when at Christ-centered gatherings, these are common occurrences as well. Some styles of worship include:

#### 1. *Barak* – to kneel, to bless God, to bow down

“And I fell at his feet to worship him...”- Revelation 19:10

*Barak* means to kneel or bow down in worship of the Lord. It is a show of our reverence of God; not for the people around us, but to rightfully communicate the state of our heart to the Lord. To *barak* is to humble ourselves before the Lord, even *in* the spirit.

2. *Halal* – to boast, to rave, to celebrate

Just as we read above in Revelation 19, there is power in our reverence of God with our tongue. This is what *Halal* is. When we worship God *in* spirit, we cannot but have sweet words to speak of His person. These words may be spoken out loud or said in the spirit. It comes first from Him and then ascends back to Him as a sweet savor, from us as believers – when done in the spirit.

3. *Shabach* – to shout loudly, to command

“... worship God.” - Revelation 22:9

*Shabach* means to shout loudly or command. You see, I am blessed to belong to a church that believes and teaches the complete Word of God. There are times when my biological father and spiritual teacher, led in the spirit, commands us to sing or clap in worship of God. This is *shabach* and it is pleasing before the Lord. This however, is pleasing to the Lord *only* when done in the spirit. Of course, it isn't simply about being loud. Its focus is to worship the Lord with one's whole being.

4. *Tehillah* – to sing praises in the spirit, to sing in the spirit spontaneously

*Tehillah* means to sing unrehearsed, unplanned praises to the Lord. Truth is that there are times in the spirit when the Lord will give new songs. Those songs will open one up to more of an understanding of who God is. It may be songs with words in a language you understand or songs in the spirit; these may then be interpreted by the spirit of the Lord to you. These songs don't require music or an instrument to make meaning, they have great meaning and power always when done *in* the spirit.

5. *Towdah* – extending hands in the spirit

“I will therefore that men every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” – First Timothy 2:8

“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;” –  
Hebrews 12:12

The extending and raising of our hands in worship of God is so powerful; again, when done in the spirit. It may be a state of honor or one of surrender. To extend our hands in worship cannot be done only one way. A person may worship with their hands fully extended in the spirit and another may do so not fully extending their hands. This also extends into

dancing in the spirit. However, only when done in the spirit is *towdah* found acceptable by the Lord.

6. *Zamar* – to touch strings, to make music with instruments

Just as the Lord gives to some a song in the spirit, he moves others to play instruments in the spirit. To *zamar* is to worship God with the sounds of instruments, and when a person plays in the spirit, it is powerful. It ascends as acceptable to God and causes His presence to be given preeminence in whatever environment it is.



## Chapter 5. PRAYER

After a few years of praying – sometimes with results and other times without, it became important for me to learn *how* to pray. My father once said, “faith is having it always the way you want it.” He said that it’s “stepping into the shoes of God to have it the way God would have it.” It struck me. It was as though a thunderbolt hit me hard and I began ruminating on this. I’m still not done – I doubt I ever would be. It seemed I had heard it before but for the first time, it sunk in. This means that **prayer without faith is a boatload of empty words, and prayer with faith guarantees answers.**

“For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” - Mark 11:23-24

The bible is clear. You can speak to the mountain and watch as it goes from *land to sea* or you can close your eyes, believe in your heart, ask it of the Lord, and open your eyes to see the mountain moved. Don’t misunderstand me – there’s the place for speaking to the mountain; but there also is the place for prayer to the Lord. And, in prayer, without desire, there will be no results. God guarantees that if we desire a thing, whatever it is, and pray believing that we will receive; just like that, it would happen!

Seems like it just may be too easy. Want something, ask it of God believing, and receive. However, being this simple, why then is it that we as believers barely receive the half of what we claim to believe God for? The answer is simple: the heart, the determination, and the act.

### ***THE HEART***

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” – Romans 11:33

You see, before prayer is about receiving things, it is about depth of a relationship with God. As believers, we never come to understand the *full*

of the heart of God at salvation; we grow in it. Paul describes the depth of God so well as though he daily lived it; yet, further down in scripture, he cries “that [he] may know him...” (Philippians 3:10). The ways of God are unsearchable, and his wisdom is beyond – for even his foolishness is wiser than man’s wisdom (First Corinthians 1:25).

God desires deep friendship with us. He created us as his sons and daughters, joined heirs with Christ, and *budding* rulers in His kingdom, living to represent Him not because we are controlled, but because we are to be so understanding of His ways and knowing of His methods, that we may speak on His behalf as ambassadors (Second Corinthians 5:20). The Psalmist in Psalm 103:7 said, “[God] made known his **ways** unto Moses, his **acts** unto the children of Israel.” God sought deep relationship, but the Israelites sought things; all they wanted were the acts and nothing about the person behind them. So, God’s relationship with them was limited – and he only could bless them to an *extent*. However, Moses sought close relationship. He spent time with God not because he wanted to *look* like a good leader or sound eloquent before the people; he spent time with God to know God. God spoke to Moses regularly, and face to face (Exodus 33:11, Deuteronomy 34:10). I wonder today what depths of unrecorded conversations Moses had with God. In Exodus 34 when Moses went up to Mount Sinai as declared by the Lord, He was there forty days and nights. The words given him by God were powerful and will remain of importance unto eternity; but, did the words in the few verses below constitute God speaking for those days? Moses neither ate food nor drank water; he didn’t ask God for these either; so, we know his focus was on God. What then could have been the bulk of the forty-day conversation?

“And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord,  
The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in  
goodness and truth,

Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,  
and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers  
upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the  
fourth generation.

And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, **and worshipped.**” – Exodus 34:5-9

It all began with worship. You see, the heart of Moses was to know God; to love Him by serving Him, and then see the love overflow into a love for the Israelites. Sure, Moses loved the Israelites – he asked the Lord that they be forgiven time and again; but it was as a result of the depth of His love for God. He came in contact with God, encountered Him, and the love overflowed into his heart as a result. If we spend one hour on average daily praying, let’s check it – how much of that time do we give to seeking deeper depth of understanding of God? Is it all *me, me, me!* or is there a deep crave to see and know Him? Even if five minutes spent in prayer per time, what percentage of that is spent speaking to God about your love for Him, your crave for deeper depth in Him and your desire to see Him made most manifest in you; or is it all about your *bread and wine*? Our heart in prayer; known even before we get into prayer, determines the level of answers we get from God.

I’ve known a woman a few years now. Just about the end of every month, she asks me for things; clothes, shoes, bags. Thing is, a lot of these items may not fit her size-wise or her style, but she asks anyway. Initially, I would give a few items to her here and there because in truth, I did have them. Some, I would earlier have sorted out to give to people I had anticipated I would come in contact with, who needed them. So, since she asked, I would give them to her. Then, it became *too* much. It seemed as though she needed something new every time we saw, and she would ask with and in every conversation, it slowly became irritating. She then would ask, and I would say no. Even if I had it in one of my piles to give to others, I would be sure to give it to someone else who needed it. She began to hear *no* more times than she heard *yes*. She once told someone that I was *stingy*; unbeknownst to this third party, it now was because I knew she was more of a hoarder, than a woman in need.

Look closely. Does this story speak to you or your relationship with God? We tend to begin our Christian journey truly seeking God; then, somewhere along the way we miss it. We go from, “show me your ways and word for today, Lord” to “Lord, remember I have to eat before I go to work. I need food, new clothes, new shoes, replacement for this *rickety* car” and the list goes on. It gets to a point where it easily just gets *irritating* to



God; leaving us only to see His limited blessings. It is time we return to the place of earnest desire for Him. Not for his gifts or many blessings but first, for His person. May we find our way back to His heart, in Jesus name. This is the key to beginning on a sweet journey to continuous answered prayers.

## ***THE DETERMINATION***

Determination as defined by *Dictionary.com* is, “the quality of being resolute; firmness of purpose.” It is about being firmly set in your purpose without room for change or the acceptance of failure. There is firmness in purpose and a no-quit mentality on the journey to the foreseen destination.

The truth is that many of us believers quit too easily in prayers. Can we say we’ve prayed if we have no answers? I’ve come to realize that unless we have answers, we technically have not prayed. To pray is to seek God on questions we have on our heart and unless we receive answers to those questions, we haven’t truly asked them. We know this because the scripture says:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:” – Matthew 7:7

“... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.” – John 16:23

Whatsoever we ask God, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are entitled to receive answers to. So, when we go before God in prayer, how ready are we to receive of Him? I recall the testimony of a woman shared in our church a little while ago. She believed God so desperately for a job; so, after a Sunday service and prayers, God told her to pick up a book from the bookstore and read it. She knew her answer was in it; so, instead of going home, possibly getting consumed by other things and taking too long to read the book, she bought the book and went back into the tabernacle to read. She completed the book in a couple hours and thanked God for the answers. She then left the church and before she arrived home, was called; mind you, this is on a Sunday, to come receive her letter of appointment! She was not willing to delay her answers and was determined to receive them in the presence of God. Many people have shared testimonies drawing from this same oil of determination, leaving with their own answers. The problem with us is, we want the answers but do not want to do the work. We believe God for answers but are not willing to sit in His presence until

we receive them. We have to be willing to give everything up; telling God that we would not leave until we receive our answers. You remember the story of Jacob?

“And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob.

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” –  
Genesis 32: 24-28

Jacob was determined to have an encounter that he decided not to let the angel go. Even when his bone was taken out of joint, he still wrestled, and was determined to do same until he received his testimony. Some of us would let go when we were asked and then say, “oh, it wasn’t God’s will to bless me.” We would blame God for things we are unwilling to take responsibility for. Jacob did not want to give any excuses; he was tired of giving excuses and was ready for his own tangible encounter. We must learn to wrestle in prayers until we receive our own testimonies.

We learnt above how important the heart is in prayer, and faith is required to see our prayers answered. Faith puts us in the shoes of God that we then have our desires, in line with the word of God, the way we want it. What do you want? Is it in line with the Word? How willing are you to do whatever it takes to see it made manifest? Are you willing to war in prayers? Will you war to the point of answers?

Another lady shared a testimony at our church. She had been ridden with AIDS and came to the annual gathering the church hosts. She knew her testimony was tied to it and after the full week of meetings, she went for a checkup. She was told she still had AIDS. She had come in from a different country and she knew what God had told her through our father and prophet: God had said to her that she would not return home with AIDS. So, she bought the tapes from the week, booked a room at one of the

camp houses on grounds of the church, and locked herself in the room. She stayed two weeks, listening to every message, camping with God, and reminding Him of His promise. After two weeks, she was certain she had received her healing. So, she went back for another test. This time, she was told the AIDS was all gone! She repeated the test in two other places for confirmation and the results were the same. She returned home rejoicing, praise God!

You see, our determination in prayer is so important because we must live with the “I will not let you go until you change my story” mentality! We should only enter the room of prayer when we desire (to the point of absolute determination), an answer. Every time we approach the throne of grace unsure of whether God will hear and answer us, we already have made the decision for Him. We get what we desire according to our faith and our faith is what says, “this time, I will not leave without my answer!” The determined are the only people who return with answers. We must therefore always stand resolute in prayer if we will receive our desired answers.

## ***THE ACT***

We’ve seen the importance of a right heart before God in prayer and determination in the place of prayer; now, let’s examine the act itself. How many times have you sat down, come up with a list of things to pray about, even added scriptures to each request, and then set up a time to pray. Then, when the time comes, not pray at all? Have you ever said you will wake up at 3am or 4am every morning to spend time in prayer, committing the day to Him for success but then hear your alarm at that time and just turn it off?

I remember the first time I heard someone teach about using the night season to take charge of the day. He said that if we wanted to have authority in our day, we must take that authority through prayer in the night. I wanted to wake up a certain time each night; I tried sleeping earlier or waiting up to sleep quite late, getting hours of sleep in the day and working to stay up at night. Nothing seemed to work as things continued to get increasingly busy. It took me years and continued determination; a lot of strength from God was of great help. To take charge of the day each night has been wonderful! You see, Jesus was a night pray-er.

“And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.” –  
Matthew 14:23

Every time Jesus would get a chance, He would separate Himself to pray. The new testament is filled with statements like that in the scripture above. It was the power He got in the night that ran through and with Him in the day. Remember when a man brought his son to Jesus noting that his son was a lunatic and would fall, even into fire and water? He noted how the disciples couldn't heal him and it was why he needed the help of Jesus.

“Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.” – Matthew 17:17-18

Jesus was fully God but also fully man when he walked this earth. So, why then did he succeed with every word spoken, in every situation? He also knew God heard Him whenever He prayed:

“Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.” – John 11:41

Do you see that this was the prayer Jesus made at the tomb of Lazarus and before he spoke to Lazarus, before the people saw the miracle, he said he knew that God had *heard* Him – past tense? Jesus was constantly convinced of His prayers being answered by God, and one main reason was, He had taken control of the day before the day broke, each day. All of us desire control of our day in the same manner as Christ but how willing are we to do what it takes?

Do you have a set time to pray each day? Do you have a set time to pray at night? Do you take the needed time not only to plan your prayer times but to pray when the time comes? I have a set time to pray during the day and also, at night. I know that it may be challenging to keep to it sometimes but one thing I've realized is that I have too much on my plate, not to keep my focus on God. I have too many things that could go wrong at any time, that I cannot but make the time to pray to God each day; morning, noon and night. God has my heart and because He does, He has my time

too. God knows that I am committed to my time with Him so to help me, I set alarms. When the alarm rings, I drop everything I'm doing, wrap up any meeting I'm in (and can control), close my door, and spend time with God in prayer. Some of us are so focused on what the world thinks of us, we don't take the time to seek what God desires of us. We're on social media more than we are with God in prayer during the day.

I used to enjoy watching reality television shows and there was a certain website I would go to watch this. I could have an 18-hour work day and still watch these shows for about an hour in the night while eating dinner or whatever else. Then, God told me to get rid of them! I did, then realized how much time I had in the day. My mind no longer was consumed with what show was on Monday or which was on Tuesday. I still have a television but that's not connected to any special channels. I watch a couple interesting short videos the few times I turn it on, and my mind is so consumed on the things of God. Recently leaving social media in addition has given me that much more time during the day. Truly, 24 hours is more than enough for anyone. We can spend ample time with God, be productive and love on others with the pure love of Christ. Truly, life has become more beautiful for me and the more time I spend with God, the more I see myself inching toward being able to say the same thing Jesus said, "... Father, I thank thee that thou hast **heard** me", even before I pray.

A few years ago, my father told my brother in conversation, "... I know that God hears me when I pray." There is a confidence in my father when he prays – to God and over a person. He knows his stand with God and treasures that relationship. So, to see results, he spends time in prayer. Question to us then is, do we pray? Do we give God anything to answer? Or is it just the two-minute prayer we make once a week and go about doing whatever we want the rest of the week?

My father is known to give one-word prayers, when people rush to Him. "Peace" is a common one, yet people receive strange testimonies from that. Many have commonly testified that they initially expected much longer prayers but after the one word, they received that which they were looking for. Why? Because he had taken charge before he saw them. He had spent time praying to God before he saw the men. He didn't know what would come his way that day, but he took control before he came in contact with that one. Same as with Jesus, He had spent such time with God that

when it was time to see Lazarus raised to life, all He needed to say was “Come forth!” So, how much time do you spend with God?

As I have mentioned throughout this segment, prayer to God and time with Him is important, but prayer to God and time with Him in the night season is of great importance. Many of us have never heard of this before or have not taken it seriously in our own lives. So, let’s set a time and stick to it – hours before day breaks, spending at least one hour praying for the day ahead. Not for things, not for pleasures, but for power and dominion in that day. If we all did this as believers, how great a control would we have in the world today. The world would tell us there is much to be concerned about and show us hours of that on television, but we have the choice to make – whether to be fed by the world or the word of God.

Prayer is important in the life of every believer. If we must take charge of life, we must take charge in our prayer lives. Our heart before and in prayer, the determination to pray and the action of prayer is what grants us divine answers. So, let’s get set to build our prayer lives as we walk intimately with God.



## Chapter 6. WORD STUDY

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” – Second Timothy 2:15

I was raised in a family that deeply loves God. My siblings and I were taught the ways of God and just like Timothy, it continues to carry on for generations and always will. To have parents who deeply love God, we could see the love and wanted a part of it, so we learnt to develop a relationship with Him very early. My mother spent the most time with us at home and would sit to teach us His word. Even well into womanhood, my mum still does this. A huge emphasis is placed on word study and there's good reason for this. So, I would study the word when I was on my own, when in University thousands of miles away and during my travels; this word of God, always with me. Truth is, as much as I desired to be consistent in study, there were times I would fall off the wagon. Until I grew the more in my faith and crave for God.

A couple years into my walk with God, I started to take God more seriously. I would not only desire more time with Him but ensure I got more time with Him by getting more time in His word. I know that the easiest way to access God is to access His word. How wonderful! When others say, “God, where are you?” I can open His word and in the pages of scripture, so easily find Him. Now, I do not let a day pass by without proper, efficient word study. This means my bible and note, a readiness in my heart and joy of access to His presence.

Paul deeply loved Timothy and was a father in the faith to him. He told him what to do, how to keep the faith, what to teach, and a desire to soon see him. It's impossible to read through the epistles and not see the deep love Paul had for this son of his. One big lesson Paul taught Timothy however was that if he would receive approval in the sight of God, he would need to study the word of God. Just studying my bible this morning, I read through the book of Titus. Something had happened during the night that I was not happy about, so I desired the knowing of a cleansing by God. He gave me fresh instructions on how to keep clean in my soul and He gave me what I needed most – a word for the day. It was my prayer for the



morning and left me with a knowing of cleanliness of soul and spirit. You see, every time we study the word of God with an open heart and a desire to learn of Him, no matter what we may be going through, we would receive an answer from God.

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”- Titus 2:14

God desires that we are purified unto Him; made clean, washed without blemish and unmistakably, His. There are certain things that God cannot do *for* us, even so, cannot do *with* us, if we are unclean. It's true that we go to God many times in prayer with desires on my heart; we want Him to *do* something for us. Problem however is, what we need sometimes is not for God to *do* something for us but for Him to tell us *what we must do* to see our answers realized. For example, many if not all of us desire financial breakthroughs; yet we hold on to every little funds that come through to us; unwilling to help, unwilling to sow into the kingdom of God. When we read through scripture, we see that financial dominion is not a gift but a covenant; we reap bountiful harvest only from what we sow, not from what we pray. So, what are you willing to give to establish your financial dominion? There may be that one thing that just crossed your mind as you read that last sentence; the one thing you said in your heart "... I can give; but not this one!" what if that is what God wants of you to settle you financially, forever? No matter how big a thing seems today, it would be as nothingness tomorrow. I remember when it was all the rage to have a *blackberry* cell phone, so everyone who had one, asked for your *blackberry* messenger pin; even a lot more than they asked for your cell phone number. Now, no one asks for that anymore; something new has come up. What if God wanted you to sow that *blackberry* cell phone to Him then but you didn't because it was too *precious*? It could have settled all your financial issues from then on, but you kept it and now all you have on your hands is *trash*. We don't always need God to act to settle us; many times, we need Him to speak – to tell us what to do – and then, we will be settled. This is what we find when we open the word of God, the book of answers.

**The word of God is the book of answers.** If you think about it, there would have been times (hopefully), when although you did not have the answer to a thing for a period of time, after that while, maybe while you were not even actively searching, you opened the word of God and the

answer was right there in front of you. There's something so powerful about having a compact book of answers and that is what the word of God is. Do you have questions on your heart that you are seeking answers to? Keep those questions on your heart, study the word of God periodically throughout your day with a desire to find your answer and if you do not give up, you will find that answer!

I prefer to spend my actual birth date every year, alone with God. I almost always will take the day off work, find a space where I can be alone (if within my work/home environment), and just spend the day with God. I am somewhat radical in my affection for the things of God so on average, I couple the day of prayer with fasting. I had a question on my heart I had been asking God about, somewhat un-seriously, for a little while. On my last birthday however, as I began my day with God, He showed to me how much more seriously I needed to take the question. So, I buckled up. I began to ask it honestly and with a heart to receive. Coupled with my bible and a journal, I sat with God and listened intently for answers. In those few hours, I received my answer and walked away with my desire for the year, settled. There is no day, birth date or other date, where I spend time with the word of God with a question on my heart and leave without an answer.

Every time we sit to feed our spirit man, we walk away as a ball of wisdom. This is clearly because the word of God is the wisdom of God and there is no one who would sit with the wisdom of God daily and still be a dullard. This rings true with the story of a friend of mine in secondary school. She came into school supposedly not deemed the brightest in her class. However, she was an only child and her parents deeply loved the Lord. She was one of those students who barely got past primary school so of course, secondary school was expected to be a challenge. In a school like mine with so many bright minds, it was going to be a huge test. She was my senior in class in school but because we knew each other from home, it was so easy to get along. By the time I got into school however, she already was receiving awards for being so bright in her class, among her peers. I knew the story about her before, because I had seen clear evidences of the same at home. So, I watched her a little closely. While her mates were playing, she was studying one of two things: her bible or her class notes. She had studied the word of God so much, it had made her wise; when she opened her class notes, everything was much easier for her to assimilate. During one of my years, I asked her what she recommended if I also was to begin doing much

better than I currently was and she told me something so simple: study the word of God and study your notes. *Go figure!* I should have known that from barely studying her, but it felt easier to ask again. It is the same thing for many of us in our walk with God. We study the word of God and He tells us what to do but we are so unsure why we have to do something and just want God to do it for us, so we keep going back to Him in prayer when He already gave us the answer. The problem is that many of us are *lazy* Christians and do not want to read our bibles; when we do, we do not want to be asked to do anything but want the blessings to flow so we decide to *stick with prayer*. Prayer is a wonderful tool for us as believers, but we must not assume that it replaces word study. When Jesus went into the wilderness to fast and pray for forty days and nights in Matthew 4, He came out empowered but was met by the resistance of satan (funny how your computer automatically wants you to write satan with a capital S! Surely not giving him that much power). With each *idea* the devil gave, Jesus said, “it is written!” it was not, “oh, but God said” or “I heard...” Those may be powerful tools in certain instances but knowing what is written in the word of God is a powerful tool to disarming the enemy.

Just a few days ago, I heard my father echo something I had been hearing in my spirit man; he said, “**Obedience is better than [a] voice.**” To obey God in covenant is to guarantee results; because God never will deny Himself. If waiting on a promise, you may *wait* wrong, wasting days, weeks and even years, in the process. To obey God is to guarantee His hand in your situation. However, we do not make the rules for our obedience to God.

## ***Obedience to the Word***

Some of us barely read through the word of God but expect God to respond in action to what we choose to do on our own accord, whether in line with the word of God or not; it does not work this way. We must live by the word of God if we would experience the results of the word of God. Scripture says:

“For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.” – Hebrews 3:4

When God opened up this scripture to me, He showed me that He is the builder and I am the live-in tenant. I must not make myself think I have

the building power or that all the things I have seen and the beautiful experiences I have had are as a result of my building; He is the builder. This absolutely does not make us void of responsibility; however, no matter what we do, if God decides not to respond in accordance with His word, there would be nothing to celebrate. God remains faithful to His word and that is what gives us the assurance that when we obey, He will respond.

Only a few weeks ago, God asked a sacrifice of me. The first time I heard it, I knew it was He and I determined in my heart to listen. However, afterwards, I thought about the cost of that sacrifice. It was so interesting that in the moment when I thought on the magnanimity of the sacrifice, I had such peace. He gave to me two scriptures: these weren't *guarantees*, per se, of the blessing to come but the reason for His asking. I was filled with such joy. I had lived with a heart where everything I am and have are God's, but in this moment, I truly understood what a joy it would be to give this to Him! A few weeks later, when everything was sorted and I could hand them over, oh my, what a joy! Question then is, for that situation you are going through, what word are you holding onto from the wisdom of God? What do you know to do to see that breakthrough established?

“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.” – Hebrews 4:12

Recently, I hosted a convention for women on faith. It was our first and a powerful experience; chains were broken, hearts were set free, there were diverse healing testimonies, and the list goes on. God laid it on my heart days before the convention, in preparation, to write down as many issues as He laid on my heart that the women were going through. He said to write scriptures that speak to the will and promises of God for that situation and read it out loud when the time came. I did exactly as He instructed. It was greater than I could have imagined, as women received the backing of scripture for many issues they had silently struggled with. The word of God is the will of God and it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6:18). So, we can hold on tight to His word. It all starts from knowing these promises of God and all are put fully on display in the word of God.

## ***Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth***

“And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.”

– Isaiah 29:11-14

I listened to a panel once, as they discussed scripture and linked it to how we as believers should operate today. They spoke to their understanding of several scriptures and came to several conclusions; one, being completely contrary to writings in the same word of God. They justified this and then said the major reason we must live this way is because it is *okay* by God, and it will help “win more souls” into the kingdom of God. The interesting thing is that today, we live in a world where anyone can pull out any scripture to buttress a point they want to make. It’s so easy for people to mold the word of God into what they want in the moment and when they do not want it anymore, they mold it into something else. I also saw someone justify listening to *worldly* music when she exercises in the morning with First Timothy 4:8. She said that since God wants us physically healthy and that is the kind of music that gets her *pumped*, she needed it to stay physically fit. This is what our world has come to.

I commonly say that **if you speak to something without a scripture, you speak your opinion; however, if you cannot *divide* your current scripture with at least two more scriptures and still *obviously* come out with the same point, then your *division* is wrong.** When you believe a scripture in the word of God means one thing, search for more scriptures that would bring you to the conclusion of the same point; if you cannot find that, then your point is unfounded. You see, the devil knows the word of God and he wants us confused by this Word. If he cannot keep us away from the word of God, he wants us misinterpreting it to do what would be

to his benefit in the end. We however, when walking in the spirit, are way smarter than he ever will be.

To rightly *divide* God's word so that we know and understand what it says, we cannot use our human mind. In Isaiah 29 above, we see that the one who is not learned in the things of the spirit cannot read it; surely, he then will not understand. This even is to the benefit of that one because the letter kills, and it is the spirit that gives life (Second Corinthians 3:6). So, with no understanding of the God we serve or a dishonest heart; that is, one not truly seeking to know God and void of salvation, that one has no guarantee to understand the word of God. To him that then is learned, seeking to read the scripture not for the right reasons such as maybe wanting to prove that he *knows* the word of God and is *better than anyone else*, that one too, will have the word of God sealed to him. This does not mean a physical bible locked and the keys thrown in an ocean, it means there will be a lock on that one's mind and he never will *see* the true word of God.

In rightly dividing the word of God therefore, there first must be honest salvation and a true surrender to God, and then a deep thirst and desire for more of Him, even in and through His word. Those who thirst for the truth of the word of God are guaranteed a divine filling (Psalm 42:1). So, honest in desire to see, know and understand the word of God opens the door to us beginning our journey into the deep and secret things of God. In this, we see what He has for us in His word each day and may begin to then, rightly divide the word of Truth with understanding.

## ***Deep and Secret Things***

“He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.” – Daniel 2:22

The word of God contains the secrets of God (Daniel 2:22); they cannot be understood using the natural mind. This is why Christ ensured that we are not left on this earth, functioning without the mind that He functioned with when He walked these grounds; surely not after He rose from the grave, ascending to His place of power in heaven. He knew that we would need His mind to understand the way He did (and still does), for same results.

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.” – First Corinthians 2:16

If we try to understand, interpret or divide the word of God with our natural mind, we will be limited in results. This is why with each division of the word of God that we must do to then take the right steps into victory, it must be on the platform of the mind of Christ. You may be asking, “how then do I function with the mind of Christ as a natural man?”

You must first understand that although we live in the natural, we are beings of the spiritual. What we touch when we feel our skin is not our being, it is our clothing. Imagine waking up as your natural self in the morning, taking a shower and going to work; no clothes or shoes, naked and *not afraid*. Anyone who comes in contact with you, whether or not you show concern for yourself, would be concerned for you; most would determine within themselves with all surety that you’ve lost your mind. Even if your boss never has spoken with you in the past, he or she would that day – to send you home! – and a letter of termination would follow shortly after. In the same vein, our spirit beings are *who we really are*. Because God was sending us to this earth, he gave us earth suits, our physical bodies, so we can be recognized in this world, not tossed out for being *naked*, even if *unafraid*. You see, this is why angels are jealous of God’s love for us. Even they don’t have this earth suit so were made our *messengers* (Hebrews 2)! Just as we as humans care for our physical bodies so much, we must care for our spiritual bodies much more.

I know a lady who is so passionate about her physical health, she takes so much time exercising daily. She pours *her heart* into it. I happened to be with her once during a work-out (honestly, she was working out & I had a cute work-out outfit on with no actual zeal to exercise). She did a warm-up, a few stretches (really, more than a few), and started with some loud music. She asked if I was okay and to let her know (maybe by waving hysterically) if I needed her because now, she was about to put her headphones in and work-out until her sweat said to stop. Watching her alone made me feel like I had done my own hour-long work-out, so I was fine with it. The more I got to know her over time however, she had a huge desire to know God but did nothing with it. She would ask God to speak with her but day-in and day-out, she was consumed with thoughts of a six-pack and a running frame. She was doing what was profitable to her

physical body but nothing that was profitable to her spiritual body, the core of who she is. I continue to encourage her in the word of God when I can (and myself, to eat *clean* and take walks since the hard-core work-outs just don't do it for me).

I wrote an entire book on the truth of our spirit being and earth suit of a body, ***The Real You: & Your Spirit's Clothing***, because until we start to function from the space and mind of us being spirit beings, we never would be able to access the deep things of God hidden in Him. Daniel, in the scripture above, experienced the *revealer* God and so could speak to Him; and God wants the same with us. If we would live out life from the realm of the spirit, we would experience the breakthroughs of the spirit.

“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” – Galatians 5:25

To walk in the spirit is to do everything we do on a daily basis, first from the point of the spirit. When we wake up, our first thoughts are spiritual, and we take the day by faith in the spirit realm. Every thought we think, first from the spiritual, every word we speak from that realm, also. I went through a season a few years ago when I felt that I just was too dependent on my flesh – for understanding and decision making. I knew it was my right to walk in the spiritual and having experienced God to some extent, I knew it surely would be most *fun* to live and walk in that realm, always. So, I asked God for how best to go about living and walking more in line with Him and His tactics were the greatest (surely, they always will be). One of the main things God had me do was talk with Him first, before talking with anyone else, on anything that bothered me; anything I needed answers to. I would be on the verge of speaking with someone casually about something but the prayers from the morning would be a strong reminder and I would go to God first. I realized through this season that beyond God always being smarter, He always is quicker. With this, it is easy for me to speak with Him and receive my answers, and also limit any unnecessary conversations with others. God is always willing to reveal to us secret things, if we are willing to connect to Him to receive them, and then to obey. We will not always hear these words verbally, many times we see them in His Word; and to see, provides better assurance than merely to hear. The word of God is quick, powerful, sharp and visible to the eyes of those who genuinely seek after Him.





## Chapter 7. THE MIND & FAITH

A little while ago, I had an incident with my knee. It was one of those where I was not supposed to be able to walk for months; using a wheelchair, then crutches, and it was going to take a while to be up on my feet again. After choosing to return home, we had our church's annual gathering, only a few weeks later. I had a couple options and high on the list, from doctors, was, not to go at all. These doctors even told me that if I thought I could walk any earlier than the dates they gave me, I should see it as a *fluke*, for they noted that no matter what, I should stay within the confines of their timeline. Upon arriving, I had already attempted follow-up and with three doctors. The two specialists involved gave the same verdict. As anyone knows, this easily *messes* with your mind on what you can and should not do. However, as I prepared for the meeting, my faith kept on rising. I stayed away from any more doctors to avoid any more *bad* news, and focused on the chief surgeon, the One who's never had a patient that did not have 100% full recovery in His OR – Jesus. The more time I spent with Him, the more excited I got for my healing.

The first night of the meeting, hundreds of thousands of people present, I got out of the car, with the help of a friend who would be staying/sitting with me that week, because I was determined not to use crutches. I had hardly seen anyone outside of *home* in weeks so, as soon as I was getting out, two friends saw me and came over. One of them quietly stood in shock as he looked at me, I know, figuring out what would be best to say. The other, quietly looked at me and blurted out, “sorry.” I remember looking over and saying, “oh, don’t be sorry, I’m okay; I’m about to be healed [today].” It was interesting because those words were not at all planned, but my heart was most prepared for an encounter. Days before, after I received the last drove of horrible doctor news, my father spoke with me, strengthened my faith and said to me, “do whatever your spirit tells you to.” He took my focus from the physical things to the spiritual and I know the God who raises the dead because, he raised me up, at the age of 7, when I was *dead*; so, what’s a little knee challenge? The devil continues to fight so hard, but I knew he came too late; I had been empowered by a good God for what He had lined up for me to fulfill, and I will spread the good news of the gospel of Christ without reservation, all the days of my life. My faith

was on a *high*. I don't need to tell you that doctor-given months of recovery turned into an instant testimony. During the evening session of that gathering, I got up on my feet, received my healing and was, in the same service, able to dance, jump and to crown it all, walk out of the service on my own! It was so shocking to all those who had seen me earlier that the friend who had been helping me was so shocked. Walking out of service, she began jumping from excitement, and all who saw me couldn't resist the word, "Congratulations!". By the next morning, walking into service, I stood every time we were to stand, and did everything, made perfectly whole. With each service, I got stronger, and I never went back to any walking aids!

The thing is, we live with a power house: our minds! Whatever we believe with our mind, we take with our hands. This is why one main target of the enemy is our minds and we constantly have battles in it against the ideas thrown in by the devil, as believers. It is our battlefield. My mother, Pastor (Mrs.) Faith Oyedepo, in her book, ***Rescued From Destruction: The Story of My Journey Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death***, one of my all-time favorite books, describes her journey to supernatural recovery. It was a season of clear spiritual attack and **medical science cannot heal from spiritual attacks**; so, it was a fight. I was in secondary school at the time and figuring it out as a support system, for the woman I love the most, was a journey. Thank God for a family that binds strongly together, and for a faithful, never failing God! During this time, there came a season when my mother knew she needed to physically touch the soil of our church home. She wanted to touch the grounds. It wasn't about just watching services online, she needed to connect in a deeper way, and she knew that if she could, she would be perfected. In the end, she did, and I remember that day like it was yesterday. She arrived and went straight to the tabernacle, walking in and giving God thanks. What a faithful God we serve! As my mother commonly says, "[Our] God is too faithful to fail!"

Even my father, who shares the radical testimony of how he was set free from high blood pressure the moment he was about to be given the diagnosis, shows how our minds must constantly be powered by the word of God. My father was checked and told he had high blood pressure and responded with "I **cannot** have it!" He was further asked to check it to see the reading by the doctor and my father responded, "it is not necessary!"

Can you imagine? He was so filled with the word of God, the word of healing took charge of his mind and caused him to speak his knowing! He's never had to find out a high blood pressure medication and was recently checked and was told his blood pressure levels were as that of a 30-year old!

It is clear that the mind is important to our everyday living; a Christ-empowered mind, key to successful living. To be empowered by Christ however, we must follow one main key, and that is following hard after God. Scripture says:

“My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.” – Psalm 63:8

To follow *hard* after God is to pursue Him relentlessly, and this is what we must do with our mind. Our mind is the seat of our thoughts and imaginations. So, it's about studying the word of God as earlier examined, reviewing and meditating each moment of the day, the word from God to us for that day, thinking thoughts only in line with what God will give the okay to, and using that until we *become* as He is (First John 3:2). From when I was much younger, my mother taught us that with daily devotions, we should have an overriding point after it all. So, when I do my bible studies today, I write (A LOT!) what it is God shows to me but more so, at the end, an overall point that I carry with me the rest of the day. So, I keep meditating on it, seeking deeper depth, and I see results. Imagine a day I'm meditating on a word of divine healing and the devil tries to hit me with any form of pain; that is crushed down *too* easily!

What we meditate on, constantly, is what we believe and see; what we become. In the mind we win or lose battles and that determines our decisions, beliefs, and results. So, question is: what do you have constantly going on in your mind?

If we have questions on our heart, it's important to keep those questions as we study through the bible and meditate on the word of God. Truth is, we are curious beings and seek answers to various questions, regularly. **A call to Christianity is not a call to the end of all curiosity, it finally is the beginning to receiving of answers to those questions.**

Personally, I'm generally curious; I have questions and seek answers. It's something I've always enjoyed and I tend to ask the kinds of questions that make people say, “I don't know about that! Who even thinks of

questions like that?” So, when someone has an answer, I’m generally quite intrigued and can sit there, listening for hours on end, asking more follow-up questions. So, thank God for the Christian faith! God made us in His image, He knows we always seek to know more, so, He has made room available for this. He has given to us a book of answers so that we can receive whatever answers we so desire; however, only when we think through it with His mind in us. It’s a book written in the heavenly language and only those who know the language can interpret the scripture.

I started learning Italian a couple years ago and got pretty good, and then I left it for about a year straight. I recently went back and realized I had forgotten simple words and when someone spoke, I took time breaking down the words, not being able to so easily understand, less, respond. On the other hand, during my *revamp*, relearning the language, I decided to also begin learning Hebrew. The first few times, all I saw was symbols, not letters. So, I would work to remember things in terms of the symbols. It took me a little while to see words and immediately know what they are, then easily interpret sentences (and that’s where I still am; getting better). The process of leaning and keeping to a new language, is what understanding the word of God through His mind, is about.

“And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed:

And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.” – Isaiah 29:11-14

We can only see the word of God when we look through His mind; if read otherwise, it’s as though one is reading those letters in the Hebrew language, seeing only symbols that make *no* sense. The more we spend time in prayer with God, building relationship with Him after salvation, we begin to understand more. Little by little, we see symbols that start to make sense, and then symbols that make sense in words, then words that make sense in sentences. There’s nothing automatic about understanding the word of God, it all about determination and patience in our walk with Him. This is why we cannot just say a two-minute prayer and read a couple words out of the bible weekly but expect to live seeing things through the mind of God. We must spend adequate time with Him in prayer, study and thoughts, until all we do is see things through the eyes of God.

This past year, I met a number of wonderful ladies from various walks of life who had various experiences in their Christian walk. Of the many wonderful women, a few struggled greatly. They were going through certain situations and had scriptures to back up God's desire for them in this area and so, would say they believed for an encounter. However, after conversing with them a little, it would be clear that it was not faith but hope. Hope that one day, God would have mercy and maybe give it to them. But faith is different; it may begin with hope, but already has received the desire in the spirit before anyone else sees it physically.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”- Hebrews 11:1

Faith is about taking it in the *now* and giving substance to what formerly was merely a *hope*. However, these ladies would start with faith and the more they thought about things, during the battle in their minds, somehow and at some point, they would lose that battle. They know that God cannot lie, and His promises are yes and amen, but keeping to that truth, is where the battle is. In sleekness, the devil would whisper things about how their belief could not be realized and one way or another, they would choose that over what they knew to be truth. I believe that at one point or another, we all have had similar experiences. All in all, the battle was fought and either lost or won in the mind. How then do we guarantee a better walk with God?

## ***Take it in Your Mind!***

“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them ... For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; **I will put my laws into their mind**, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” – Hebrew 8:9-10

In this, we see the old and new covenant differences, as laid down by God. It is made clear that in the old covenant, God had to make the decisions, of how He was going to lead His people. However, in the new covenant, he says that, He will put His laws in our mind, and then we then we will do with it as we please. In the old covenant, He had to hold them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt but in the new covenant, the covenant which we are under, He states that he already has given us the tools, and

with them, we must lead ourselves. What is that tool? His laws, which He has put in our minds.

This shows us the power of our minds; it is to us in the new covenant, as the hand of God was to them in the old covenant. Our minds pull us some way, forward or backward; and where it goes, we go. To then have a consistent walk with God, we must build on it in our minds.

Today, it is so easy for us to believe for something and take it in our minds but in the same vein, lose it within minutes. I spoke with a lady once who told me about what she believed God had said to her. She sought confirmation and I said to her that if she believed it was from God, she should listen and take the right steps. She did; then, about a month later, came back to me. She told me she had gone back to what she had left at the time of our conversation because, she just didn't know if she heard God right and as time was passing by, she didn't want to be void of a tangible answer that others could see. She went back because in her mind, she lost her faith; she lost all belief. Truth is, as long as we believe and know something in our minds, we are then led from there. **Our mind leads our life.**

“For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.”- Job 3:25

The battlefield of our mind is where we lose or win. We lose to the devil when we let fear in and we win when we let faith take its place, not wavering. Job was a blessed man and was the wealthiest man, not only in his state or country but in all neighboring areas, all throughout the east. This would be the wealthiest man in about 3 continents today. He was truly blessed. However, he daily offered sacrifices for his children because he knew they weren't walking in the ways of the lord and one of his fears was that something would happen to/with them. After he had lost everything, he made the statement in the scripture above. It is clear that Job had feared this great disaster that he now was living. He had long lost the battle in his mind, so, it was sure to be realized at some point in the future.

“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And **having this confidence, I know that I shall abide** and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;” Philippians

1:23-25

Paul, on the other hand, was determined in his mind not to lose his battles. As we see in the scripture above, he was conscious about keeping the control he had over his life, sure not to give that power away to anything or anyone else in this world. He knew whose he was and stood firm in that truth. How many times have we seen people in a little bit of a situation and they say something seemingly so simple like, “that’s it, its over.” What may have been so easily resolved, truly then is over.

## ***Your Confidence***

In what is your confidence? This is what will determine whether or not you have the battle won in your mind. If your confidence is shaken, then you haven’t yet won it in your mind, you still are battling and must then be determined to win.

For many of us as believers, it’s easy to end every prayer session with thanksgiving, as we say “thank you Lord for hearing me.” This is clearly Biblical, as we see in Philippians 4:6 that we should pray and make supplication with thanksgiving. However, do we believe that God heard us, and the scripture that says that if He hears us, He surely will answer (First John 5:15)? If we truly believe, then why do we go out and have a friend or acquaintance ask us about an update on that thing and we respond saying, “I hope God does something,” or something similar?

A lady had been believing God for something for a while and every time she would go to church and we were told to ask God for what we wanted, she said she always would ask God for this one thing. However, I saw her once and asked her how it was going because I had also been praying for her. She then said she had begun losing confidence as she had been waiting on that breakthrough a while and it seemed like it was not coming through. It seemed like she prayed on other matters and had speedy answers but not on this one, and she was beginning to lose her confidence.

It was easy to encourage her on what to do because it was clear, she had lost her confidence and only in that confidence do we have and retain victory. As we saw earlier, God has given us the right to *lead* ourselves with His word, from our mind; so, when the mind loses, we lose too. This is why our confidence must never be shaken and we must consciously and continuously take our victory!



“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:” – First John 5:14

Even our answers to prayer must first be received in our mind. You see, the bible says to watch and pray (Mark 13:33). This means that as we pray, we must see, and we see to victory through the eyes of our mind. When we pray, believe, and receive our answers through the eyes of our mind, God says that then we will have what we have requested of Him (First John 5:15). When we take it in our minds, it shows in the confidence we then have afterwards.

Are you believing God for a miracle job? Have you seen yourself already working that job, bringing glory to the name of God? Are you praying to God for miracle children? Have you gotten their names, started arranging their room and buying you baby clothes? What are you believing God for and what have you done to prove that you believe Him? What is the level of your confidence and how firm are you in the same? The God who never sleeps nor slumbers has given us a mind that does the same, that we may be led into victory, first made visible through our confidence.

## ***Your Tongue***

Our words show our confidence, or lack thereof. However, it does not only show what is on the inside, it leads us to our destination. Our mind determines where we're going; our confidence shows the strength of the winning side in our minds and our words take us to that destination.

“Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” – James 3:5

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his **tongue**, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.” – James 1:26

As little as the tongue is, we see that it has the power to turn our bodies and lead us into our desired destination, as determined by our minds. So, the question is, what words do you speak? Would your words lead you to your desired destination or farther away from it? Clearly, the mouth speaks according to what the mind determines; however, we can restructure the thoughts of our mind with the words we speak.

“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh

from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.” – Luke 11:21-22

It has been clearly shown that our minds are strong, however our words are stronger and our actions, even stronger. I commonly cite an illustration with this scripture that makes things a lot clearer. Imagine you were having ungodly thoughts and didn't know what to do. You start combating those thoughts with thoughts of scripture, but it seems like one is battling the other with no clear winner. Then, you immediately start speaking out loud in tongues, giving no room to the devil. The more you do that, it is expected that your words will begin taking the lead; the ungodly thoughts will begin going away. However, if you get up on your feet, start taking a walk as you pray loudly in tongues, you gain even more of an edge against those thoughts contrary to the word of God. You see, no matter how strong the thoughts you wanted to use in the beginning, you could be doing that for hours on end before there is a clear winner, but your choosing the *stronger man* of your words and the even *stronger man* of physical action gave you a quick edge. This is why our words must be wisely used.

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” – Matthew 12:36

For every word we speak, we take action toward a destination. Our words mold our lives through action; however, more than it all, we will give account for every word. This is why we must be careful to ensure that our words lead us closer to God and not away from Him; that they speak to His glory and not bring shame. We either glorify God in our minds or we take action (beginning with our words), farther away from Him. May God grant us the grace to utilize our minds wisely in this fight for deeper relationship and victory with Him, in Jesus name.



## Chapter 8. LOVE, SERVICE & FORGIVENESS

Love, service and forgiveness are three keys that go together; different yet merging into one. To love leads to honor in service, and to easy forgiveness of wrongs. This is clearly shown in God's honor of all to and for us. Below, we examine each key, what it means and how we may walk in it in accordance with God's word, will and expectation.

### ***LOVE***

“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 neighbour as thyself**. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”- Matthew 22:36-40

When Jesus physically walked the earth, the people around him had physical access to Him. When He ascended to Heaven, we as believers were given *constant* spiritual access to Him by faith but also, physical access to Him by the word of God we get to hold in our hands – the bible. Jesus was asked what *the great commandment* is; that is, what commandment from the law, if we had to choose just one, every Christ-follower, every Christian, should live by. He gave not just one, but two – and in order. Jesus says that if we are to live honest and true Christian lives, we must **love** – The Lord, and our neighbors.

### ***Love The Lord Thy God***

*The great commandment* is simple, and it is that you **love the Lord thy God with all thy heart** (Matthew 22:37). As believers, we live according to God in the spirit (First Peter 2:5). So, as we live in the spirit, we do so first and foremost, to *better* love the Lord with all our heart. Love is a living being – for God is love (First John 4:8). As a result, love grows. The proof of any living thing is growth; so, to show no growth in our love for God is proof that there is no love – it is proof that it is not love.

Our love for God is shown in several ways: our service to Him, our giving to Him, of time, energy and resources; overall, our willingness to sacrifice, even of ourselves, to Him and for His cause. The growth of our

love in and for God is beyond *magical*, it's *heavenly*. The more we love, the more we desire to love. I remember a time when it was difficult to randomly kneel before God in the presence of others. It was easy to stand and pray, easy to sit and pray, easy to walk around and pray. It seemed all these were most widely acceptable; when it came to kneeling, not when the Pastor was kneeling on the altar but when God sporadically tells me to or when my spirit desires this show of love to my Father, it was a bit more challenging. It was almost as if my ears were willingly blocked to hearing these kinds of instructions. And then during an evening service, God spoke so majestically to my heart; it was simple and calm and He asked that I kneel before Him in that prayer session. I did. That was the beginning of me letting go in His presence. It went from kneeling only ever so often to being so frequent. I believe that God made me kneel so frequently until it no longer was a concern of mine, "how it looked." Then, He took me a step further. He asked that I lay before Him – yes, when others were merely standing and waving *holy hands*, He wanted me to lay down flat before Him. You see, the first time God asked this of me, I was tempted to begin the back and forth in my heart. The usual, "*but God, we'll be told to sit down in one minute and I'd just have laid down*" and "*oh my, it'd be so strange*", to name a few but after a few moments, I reminded myself: I have chosen not to ever be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, Lord, if you want me to lay down, I will. And that was it. Living to love God has been my greatest desire and will continue to be because that is what flows through to everything else.

I recently had a conversation with an acquaintance of mine. They asked what my plans were for the year ahead and I said, "to love people." In a joking manner, they said it was interesting how I always wanted to love God and now wanted to love people; they were waiting on when I would finally desire to love *myself*. It was somewhat comical because I always will desire to love God as my highest priority. You see, we live in a world today where we're told, people will treat you how you treat yourself so *love you first*. This is so untrue, I would like to make a banner out of it and post it all around town. **You will receive love to the extent you give love** and it all begins with your love for God. If you will not love God, you never will encounter love.

To *encounter* something is to *meet with* it, it's to so come in contact with it that it becomes a part of who you are and you, a part of what it is. I

enjoy art. I know this may sound simple or conventional but it's not – I *really* enjoy art. Not the regular painting on the wall but to almost get *lost* in a world of colors is beautiful. Think *Yayoi Kusama infinity art* or sitting underneath a 100-foot aquarium with fish of different colors, shapes and sizes and water clear as *Orda cave's hydro-cosmos*. Art where there's no interpretation but the one you create for yourself. That type of art, the one you easily can be immersed in, to feel, see with your eyes closed, and dance to no music art is what I'm talking about. I regularly see myself in this art world and it gives me the happy *dance-in-the-rain feel*. This is the art you encounter and let encounter you. With this, you may see me as a person, and I see you as art. Everything about you is beautiful. The birth mark the world says to cover up, I say to show because of its uniqueness. The bald head *they* say is ugly, I say is beautiful and immediately allows me to see colors in and through you. I've encountered deep art, the art that was at work in creation, making the fish of different colors, shapes and sizes, and that speaks deeply to this affection for art.

In the same vein, every day we get to encounter love. We get to feel love and let love feel us. We get to read love, touch it, experience it and let it pour out of us. It is so powerful and cannot be watered down. From the moment we wake up, when we say our prayers to thank God for waking us up and ask what is on His heart for the day, we open the door to *fresh* love. Woah, how powerful. The love that moves, that breathes, that talks and that lives; we get to daily encounter this love every moment we spend with Him. So, to wake up in the morning should not only be a routine, it's the opportunity for a deep encounter with love. To raise our hands to Him is an opportunity to connect with love. Surely, to give to Him is to sow into the grounds of love. And when He speaks to us as we respond in obedience, it is pure, *hydro-cosmos-clear*, order of a love exchange. It is so powerful.

To love God is an opportunity; an experience we should not take for granted and a pure, honest, just, true and lovely encounter with love. He pours into us and fills us up so much that it overflows. We live in that *Sound of music* type field, dancing in the rain and loving colors in ways we never knew existed. To experience this love is to experience new life and that is why salvation is the greatest gift of all. So, let's stop walking around like loving God is such a chore, it's full of beauty and we get to experience it daily. Now this does not mean that loving God will require no sacrifice because it will; but to our flesh.

“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.” –

Daniel 1:8

Imagine for a moment being an earthly king's seed, a prince in your own right, and suddenly, your kingdom is besieged and in that moment, you go from living as a prince to being a captive. It's common for you to enjoy the *finer things* in life but when you're handed them in this foreign country, you choose to honor God instead. First, kudos to Daniel's parents for teaching him the right way (thank God for God-conscious, God-teaching, God-loving parents! I am so blessed to have two of those), but this was down to him. He had to take responsibility, and instead of choosing luxury, he chose sacrifice; sacrifice that was entrenched in seeing life in art colors of love.

After a day's hard work, when every other prince was eating good food, laughing, cracking jokes, drinking wine, Daniel sat on his own, eating vegetables and drinking water, that he may please God. Some were drinking to get drunk, but Daniel stayed *drunk* in the beauty and color of God and His love. With this, he stayed relevant because it was never about fitting in, but always about staying pledging allegiance to one person only – to love.

God may tell you to give all the money in your account to Him or to His cause, He may tell you to give your car, to stop building the home you had long planned and to build a tabernacle for His kingdom and hand it over to the one He has assigned caretaker. He may ask you to give out all of your clothes, save the one on your back, at any given time or ask you not to buy any new clothes for yourself but only for others. He may ask you to give a year's salary to someone else or move you from where you're comfortable to a different state or even nation. He may ask you to go daily on the streets to feed the homeless or to clothe the naked, to care for widows or even to bring one of them under your roof. It may take a little out of you or a lot (and the ones that are a lot are the most *fun!*); but one thing is for sure: it will bring you to the place of life, love and an adventure in color. God has asked me to do many of the above at several times and more that I still have no release to speak of, for they may shake the core of a few but the truth of the matter is, the more I do, the more I grow in my love for Him and the more *life in art and color* I live. This love for God,

laced in daily sacrifice, I would not trade for the world, and neither should you. He created us in such wonder, and we should willingly live to make Him smile. Living our lives laced in deep love for Him is how we are most made to feel alive.

## ***Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself***

“**Owe** no man any thing, but to **love** one another ...

Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: [it] is **the fulfilling of the law.**” –  
Romans 13:8, 10

I once needed two envelopes for my offerings on a Sunday. I serve in a unit in my church and went there first, as I always do, for the first few hours of the day. When I got into the area of my service that Sunday, I asked a lady who I regularly serve alongside, if she had any extra envelopes. She answered in the affirmative and brought of two envelopes but gave me one. I asked politely if I could have the other one as I actually needed two. She said very kindly, “I only have these two and God said to love your neighbor as yourself, not more than yourself.” Well, what do you say to that? We laughed hysterically and I went my way. This however, has always stuck with me.

How well do we love others? Do we love them as much as we love ourselves or do we love them just a little less? Loving others as much as we love ourselves does not mean doing for them what we can as long as it requires no sacrifice of us; it means doing for them what we would like to be done to us. If we were in those same shoes, what would we hope that others would do for us – that, is what we should do for them. Loving others requires sacrifice. It is not just about throwing clothes, shoes or even money one’s way, it requires **honesty, sacrifice and presence.**

What would you like done to you? What are you willing to sacrifice to see it done for another? What are you willing to give of your time, if required, to ensure this is made possible?

I work with both my mother and father’s foundations and both have been instrumental in sending help and relief materials to this particular internal displaced persons (IDP) camp. Persons closer to the camps in location are also asked to go give these materials and ask if anything else is needed. Management of the camp have become also as family to us and we would do whatever it takes – scholarships, travels, to be sure we are a



blessing. So, for my 25<sup>th</sup> birthday, I wanted to do something special. I have never been big on birthday parties so doing something big for others has always *filled me up*. To match what my parents do on a regular would be no small fit, so I wasn't trying to match their giving. I just knew: this would be my greatest opportunity to love, yet. So, two or so weeks to the day, I made a decision on what I would do. With great help from my mother, I planned an outreach to this IDP camp. They had grown a whole lot since both foundations last visits and with the increased insurgency at the time, surely needed all the help they could get. We bought the materials from that end, loaded up the trucks of materials, and did something special: made fresh breakfast meals for the almost 3,000 children on camp. I laced up my shoes, took a friend, and travelled to the camp to make the special delivery. We laughed, we sang, we prayed, we talked, we cooked, we danced; it was the best experience I had had, yet. It was so refreshing to see the smiles on their faces and the energy in their steps. My desire to love on them was encountered by their thunderbolt love for me. The warm breakfast was the first they had in years, we were later told, and everything was better than could've been expected. When we got on the plane to return home later that day, I looked at my friend, sighed a bit and burst into laughter, I was filled with such joy. To love them was to be loved. I realized that more than I desired to love others, I would be loved multiple times in return. My friend who went with me was married with children yet two days to the time when I called to ask if she would be willing to go with me, she said yes without reservation. She took of her own time and sacrificed whatever else she could've been doing for me. She loved me without requiring anything in return, just as they loved me at the camp without requiring anything of me.

How do we love and are we willing to love others as we do ourselves? When you've been waiting in line and an elderly woman passes by, who you know could use a quick checkout so she can go about her day, do you let her in front of you or do you pretend you don't see her? When the person in front of you at checkout in a hospital is clearly buying *needed* prescriptions but is short of the total by a little change and you have more than enough on you, do you request to cover their balance, or do you question them as to why they would buy more than they had money for? If an elderly person came on the bus or train and there were no extra seats, do you offer them yours or look away because "you need to sit down!"? what are our priorities and how do we love? Do we love others as much as we

would if we were the ones in those situations, making sacrifices, as need be, or do we love others just a little less than we do ourselves? To love is to fulfil the law (Romans 13:8, 10).

## ***The Law***

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.” – Matthew 5:17

There are false teachings today about how *the great commandment* of law is based on *the law*, and how this is an old testament gospel; with no meaning in the new testament age of today. The scripture above clearly states Jesus response to those who felt that He came to break the law. Scripture notes that a house divided against itself cannot stand (Luke 11:18). How then would the Lord stand against Himself? He wrote the law and so was not focused on destroying it but on fulfilling it – this clearly shows the ways of a God of order; the God we serve. So, the New Testament does not change the laws of the old testament, it fulfills it; and this scriptures shows how *the great commandment* stands, even today.

## ***SERVICE***

“For God is my witness, whom I serve **with my spirit in the gospel of his Son ...**” – Romans 1:9

The epistles are a powerful portion of the bible. You see, parts of the bible were written **for** us and others, **to** us – and the epistles were written **to** us. In the very first chapter of these epistles when Paul wrote to the Christian church at Rome, he said he worshipped God **with** his spirit, **in** the gospel of Christ. How powerful.

We are called to serve, as a show of our love. How can we say we love if we are unwilling to faithfully serve? To serve God and to serve others. As we see in scripture, if we love God, we will love others (First John 4:20); the same is true of service. If we serve God, it will easily flow into our service for others. However, let us not forget the start of the just past sentence – “If we serve God.”

## ***Serving God***

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Luke 4:8

Our service to God must be of utmost priority. We must choose to serve God with everything; that is, not just our finances by raising up an offering in church (although that is as commanded by Him – Psalm 96:8), but with the entirety of your spirit which you’ve given primary control in your life. Paul speaking in Romans 1:9 said that he served God “... with [his] spirit ...” The same man in Second Corinthians 6 & 11, talks about things he endured for the cause of Christ; still, he stayed serving God. His spirit had so great a control of his body that his service to God trumped everything else. Question is, how much control have you given to your spirit man – the real you? Your determination to serve the Lord with and in everything will engage your mind, might and strength. Even if you went to church an hour every day, what do you engage your mind in and with the other 23 hours of the day? Are you consumed with thoughts on how to better serve God, what to do to please Him, carrying out His instructions? Are you always walking in and speaking from your spirit? Where is your heart and what power have you given your spirit man over the affairs of your life, even those of your flesh?

I was entering into a church service one evening and a lady saw me. I had set up a meeting with her earlier in the day, but she didn’t show. So, walking into church that evening, she saw me from afar and called my name. By the time I turned, she was barely a few steps from me. I assumed she wanted to mention why she missed the meeting, which she did, and as she apologized, the conversation was getting longer ... and longer. A minute passed and then another; and with going into that service, I had spent some time with God, I was craving this presence. I could see a few things happening in the spirit and abruptly cut her off to tell her we could see to discuss later. The meeting which was scheduled was to discuss something quite important and I believe that was what she had begun discussing but my heart was focused on something else – someone else, and I was more concerned about that. The same day was when I had determined that I was *too* busy and put in charge of *too* many departments and organizations, not to spend adequate time with God daily. It wouldn’t just be for my *sanity* but to great benefit of those around me, that I spend a couple hours with God daily. In the morning, an hour during the work day, and at night. You see, these moments would not be for me to ask God for things, but to draw nearer to Him and to see Him draw nearer to me. His

presence would be more than enough and His desires, I wanted to fully be my desires. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that everything I gave up, at one point or another, and still am giving up, are for a deeper relationship with Him. My service to Him is for Him, not for things, and this must be our heart if we will walk with God consistently. How deeply do you serve God with your spirit?

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.” – Colossians 3:24

There are certain things we do not need to ask God for, He just would reward us with. **If we have to ask God for everything, it's a clear indication that we are not serving Him.** In service, we are rewarded; with all He knows we need, and even those we may have mentioned to Him in passing as a *want*. For, when “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” (Psalm 23:1). We are not permitted even to want when we serve God. In all things and ways we may physically or mentally serve God, whether that is in a service unit in church or in preparing a sermon as a minister, we must serve in the spirit. Only when we do this is our service acceptable to Him.

## ***Serving Others***

“No man hath seen God at any time. If we [serve] one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.” – First John 4:12

I am constantly learning how to serve those around me. Whether that is in giving time to listen when they need me to, praying for and over them, giving of the good treasure that God has given to me, I seek to serve. Whether it seems comfortable or not in the moment, my desire in all relationships the Lord brings my way, is to serve. It's such a desire and a lot of what consumes my thought when considering my relationships, that to give, is so much easier for me, than sometimes, to receive.

I truly have been blessed with amazing people in my life who seek to serve in their relationships that I've learnt and continue to learn a lot from them. My most recent birthday, I got gifts from my friends, within and out of state, and from outside the country. This is a big deal, especially for a girl who is *not at all* into birthday celebrations. Plus, my friends have noted in the past how they'd give me gifts, sometimes quite expensive gifts (in the sense of the word), and days or weeks later, they'd ask me about it and realize I had given it out to someone else I felt or believed was more in

need of it. I know some of us enjoy throwing ourselves birthday parties; well, I enjoy throwing myself special time with God. The best birthdays for me are when I am in a new location with no distractions and can spend the entire day with God. Just writing about it now makes my heart so happy. However, in addition, every year to celebrate my birthday, I enjoy doing something **big** for people I expect absolutely nothing from in return. Whether that is reaching out to thousands of children who need it, or spending hours alone with a random person in the hospital who has no family, to make them smile, feel loved and then paying their bills, or sending friends who have worked so hard on a vacation to *reset*, those things bring my heart so much joy. Yes, I get to do it throughout the year but for my birthday, it needs to be *big*! It's such a way to celebrate God for how well He continues to love and teach me. So, yes, for friends to send *gifts*, that's huge!

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” – Galatians 5:13

To better serve a few more friends during the just past holiday season, I got out a few of my best shoes; the *special* name brand shoes I had either never worn or worn once. I asked a few of them their shoe sizes and thankfully, they were similar to mine. So, I sent them shoes as packages. Some got bags and/or a few other items too. It's somewhat common to have my friends come over and take with them a piece of clothing or two (for some, more) when they leave, for truly, I seek to love and serve others. It's become such a part of me that sometimes, I tend to say so many yeses, my friends would want to return things I send to them saying it is way too much! It makes my heart so happy when they try (and some really do try), so we then do *shipping wars* if that happens. There's the back and forth until someone gives up and that surely isn't me – not when it comes to service. There are certain things God has asked me to do that I cannot even speak or write about yet; they'll be too *heavy* for some. Overall, God knows He does not have to push me to give or give me a “special word” with His *baritone voice* from Heaven; once I have the nudge, I'll run after you to give; whether it be a one-time thing or a requirement of time and presence. This is one strong reason I believe God continues to bless me so radically.

I get to serve those I know, but also those I don't. Those who I know God genuinely put in my way to help, whose stories are *true*, I am honored to help. I recently found out the names of four wonderful children I had been paying through school, for a while. I was at the starter-end of my love rope when God brought them my way through a lady. She told me their stories and I knew of their mother who was a single mother, plus the lady who told me of them was someone I trusted. So, I chose to invest in those children. To now see them advance in their classes with one graduating this school year, it makes my heart so happy. Your first thought may be, "I cannot sponsor someone to secondary school!" Well then, do so for someone in primary school, or give part payment to someone in Nursery whose parents you know are in *dire* need. Maybe even just bring lunch to them once a week, if that is what you can afford or volunteer to tutor a child struggling in class with extra lessons during the week, if you can. If you are not giving and not serving, with your time and presence, you are missing out on a *whole lot* of God; we all need a *whole lot* of God.

## ***FORGIVENESS***

I live practicing the act of advance forgiveness, especially to those I love and spend ample time with. This type of forgiveness is what God calls us to as believers; forgiving others before they sin against or anger us. You know, this is not always easy, and the Holy Spirit constantly reminds me whenever I harbor hurt against another or choose to hoard pain, even when I say I have forgiven. The Holy Spirit reminds me of my position on forgiveness, the one which I as a believer have been called to and empowers me to live it. In truth, when I converse with the Holy Spirit on these matters, He eases me through the process and in the end, I always am grateful for His empowerment of my choice. Truth is, this is the same way the Lord acts toward us; He has done it from the beginning and continues to do so today. God sent His son, Jesus, to die for our sins while we still were sinners (Romans 5:8). He saw our sins, knew we still would make mistakes in the future, but said to Himself, I choose to so live in love and advance forgiveness for these ones, that I will pay the price for their current sins, and those that even are yet to be committed.

My father has this list at a certain hospital. It has on it the names of certain individuals who, if they ever came to the hospital, would have all of their bills charged to him. At the end of each month, he is sent the total and

breakdown, for payment. He doesn't ask questions, he just pays it. Some of them frequent the hospital due to age or other illnesses and others, not so much. However, all of them, no matter how many times they come back, as long as they are alive, would be catered to in this way by my father. It reminds me of the sweet love of our Father. Although the earthly man can only pay as incidents happen or balance pay as they happen, God paid in full, more than we would ever need; before we were taken into the hospice of sin. He set us free and removed the bond on us for non-payment before it even came. What a powerful, future-seeing, and loving God. He prepares things for us way before they are even needed.

## ***So Why Ask God For Forgiveness?***

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...” – Isaiah 9:6

You know, there is a strong difference between a child and a son. A child can make *big* mistakes; but no matter how upset you are at that child, in the end you come to the realization that it was probably mainly out of ignorance. If he knew better, he would do better. This would be the response if you two-year-old threw his food in your face, if your five-year-old thought to drive your car when you left the keys in the ignition, or if your nine-year-old barged into your room that clearly had a *do not enter* sign on the door, to get some money for the ice-cream truck that was passing by. In the end, he's a child. However, what if your 20-year-old threw his food in your face, if your 25-year-old thought to drive your car out of town because you left the keys in the ignition, or if your 29-year-old barged into your room that clearly had a *do not enter* sign on the door, to get some money for the *Swarovski* sale that was going on at the mall? Now, what if he did all these without thinking to apologize or be remorseful?

The issue really would not be that your 20-something-year-old did these things, but that there was no remorse. For the child, all three things could be forgiven. For the adult, it would have been disrespect, dishonor, and theft, respectively. You see, nothing changed in the actions; the only change was in the age. In Christ and in our walk with Him, we are expected to grow. Just as we grow in the physical, we are expected to grow in the spiritual. However, many of us do not. We stay growing in the physical but remain five-year-olds in our Christian walk. Many Christians today are unfortunately spiritually incapacitated. We must be determined not to be such a one.

Say, you as the parent in the above illustrations live that lifestyle of advance forgiveness. You may choose to forgive your child, young or old; but only if you know of their mental state. You know that a grown adult should recognize their wrongs, apologize for the same and not knowingly do the same thing in the future.; you would therefore expect this from your grown son. This is the case in our walk with God. So, you may think: why do I need to apologize to God for A when *so and so* does the same thing and doesn't apologize? But there are many questions in this one question. Is *so and so* a new believer and still a babe in Christ? Does God remain sovereign, choosing to forgive whom He will (who may or may not apologize)? Are you still a babe in Christ or have you grown into a *son*? Do you want the blessings and dominion that comes with being a *son*? If yes, then **take responsibility!** It is time for us as believers to grow up and show up. No more looking around us to see how little responsibility we can get away with to still make it in the kingdom of heaven; **we are called to be sons, and sons don't try to evade responsibility.**





## Chapter 9. HONESTY

I read a quote once about delayed truth, and another about reckless honesty. The first noted that it was okay to delay truth, as long as when it was spoken, it still was truth. The other noted that truth was to be spoken with reckless abandon; the manner in which it was spoken, notwithstanding.

Recently, I was asked a question by an acquaintance; a direct and fair question that they desired an answer to. There was desperation in their voice for truth, but I knew the answer was going to hurt – a lot. So, I was diplomatic about my answer. I went to bed that night and struggled with the way I answered. It was unfair to them because, well, I knew the truth – the whole truth and nothing but the truth. So, during my devotion the next morning, I asked God if He would rather, I called them or just forgot about it and let it go. Interesting enough, my reading for that morning was the first three chapters of Galatians. I mean, read those chapters and you'll see the answer to my question as though it was written in all capital letters. So, I called them and let them know the truth. I was direct and clear and was sure not to mince my words. Everything however, done in love.

You see, honesty is right when done in love. Whether in the moment or afterwards, when done in love, it yields good fruits. This does not always mean that the recipient will take it in *stride*; they even may show a lack of appreciation or disdain for your honesty, but when done in love, it always pays.

### **HONESTY TO GOD**

“For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” – First John 3:20

If there's one person we must learn to be most open and honest with, it's God; to love. God already knows all things. There's nothing we would tell him of what things go on in our hearts that would be strange to Him. Nothing would be new to him because he “... knoweth all things.”

I watched a video clip from a television show a few days ago. The man said on there that he would forgive and forget whenever someone wronged him because it said clearly in the Lord's prayer that if we did not, we ourselves would not be accorded forgiveness from God (Matthew 6). He however proceeded to ask the other guests on the same show how often

they asked God for forgiveness. They all had their different answers, but he rounded up by saying he only asked God for forgiveness on Saturdays, in time for Sunday service, and made it clear that when it came to vain thoughts, those weren't serious enough to ask God forgiveness on. You see, we take in all this information from various sources on a regular basis, and then question how we fall off the wagon so quickly. God sees our heart, He sees our thoughts and hears those ill words we speak loud and clear on our inside. God is not only interested in our actions, He is interested in what goes on within. This is why when we go to Him, we must be willing to bare it all.

I recently adopted a habit the last few months of my morning bible devotions. Once it's time to study, I pick up my bible and notebook. Before even opening my bible however, and after my prayer, I begin to write. I have prayed a little while at this point so, I write down my heart. I tell God my desires for the day and ask questions I desire answers to. I thank Him for the good things He's done and sometimes, even write sweet words of poetry to Him. Other times, it's the music that comes to my heart and as I hear it, I write it (and sometimes, record it for keepsake – or more; who knows). Whichever way it comes to me, I write. I write down at least a page, and then I'm ready for my bible study. This culture has worked tremendously well for me. It opens me up to His heart and I see things more clearly. I know what He wants me to do for the day, many times before I even begin to read the scripture. Scripture then just further elaborates this to me. It's such a beautiful experience that I desire not to ever trade for the busyness that comes with life, unplanned.

The thing that I believe aids this beauty in His presence the most is my honesty. When I mess up, I tell Him about those mess-ups, and not just in my spoken words but by my written words. The thing about honesty to and with God is that it's freeing.

“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:” – Galatians 2:4

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the lord is, there is liberty.” – Second Corinthians 3:17

The spirit of God is the spirit of liberty. When we are honest and true with God, we become one with Him and enjoy this freedom in spirit. No Christian ever should walk bound in spirit as when this happens, we no longer are walking hand in hand with God; and this lack of freedom comes from sheer dishonesty or a desire to keep things away from Him. We can be honest with God. You can be honest with Him. You can tell Him your heart and gain His forgiveness and/or listen to His words which greatly soothe.

The world would try to tell us that we shouldn't be as honest – we shouldn't take *this Jesus thing too seriously*; but that's the key to freedom in spirit. Truth is, **anyone who encourages us to either be dishonest or withhold things from God so as to fit in with the world's okayed "Christian" beliefs is only keeping you bound in the spirit.** Watering down the things of the spirit of God is one of the devil's tactics to separating the believers from God in this end time. We must stay alert and refuse this from happening – not to us or to those we love. We must declare it loud and clear: I will stay honest to God in all things; never wavering, withholding holding – He has my heart and I will never keep away from Him.

### ***HONESTY TO ONE'S SELF***

“For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” – First John 3:20

There would be times that our heart may condemn us. This is why today's teaching that says to *follow your heart*, without first ensuring that it is in line with scripture, is not in accordance with God's Word and is false teaching. Our heart will not always be right; just as we may portray emotions on the outside that may not always match what goes on, on the inside. Some may be smiling to the world but hurting inside; some, enraged with the world but crying on the outside. Our emotions on the outside are not always true depictions of the emotions we have on the inside. In the same way, our heart may tell us one thing – but there's just as high a percentage of it being right as it being wrong, that is, out of line with God's word. So, would you rather live this one earthly life you have to chance or take it to the one who knows all things and will get it right the first time?

I remember a time when I wanted to sell my car. I knew nothing about selling cars; in-fact, the year before was my first time dealing with anything car insurance related. I knew nothing about the steps and what documents

needed to be exchanged. So, I called a few people who knew a lot more than I did, for some help. I called on those I believed had a clear understanding on the processes and chose to go with the person I believed knew the best about it. They were helpful and made the process so easy. Everything was concluded in a few days. You see, many times we stay relying on our *heart* that just is a mediocre player in the clear-cut game of life with so many clear-cut rules it knows nothing about. This makes little sense when we could go to God, the one with all the knowledge, and excel, every step of the way.

We must learn to be honest with ourselves. Are we unsure of our next step? Let's tell that to ourselves instead of saying we have all the answers. Do we seek answers from God? Let's say that instead of moving about aimlessly. Truth is, when we have the answers, we will know. We wouldn't need to write it on our mirror and repeat the words to ourselves over and again, *vision-boarding it* into hopeful reality. It would be a knowing and the surety that comes with that will be undeniable.

The morning after my knee incidence toward the end of a beautiful year, I had to go to the emergency room as I was in intense pain, could barely stand, and had to cancel two flights. Amongst other things, I was told I would not be able to walk the next few months. *I was shook!* How? Why? For how long? I had all these questions and at first, listened to everything the doctors said. I believed God would heal me, but I had not *received* my healing. So, I worked toward it. I listened to messages to build my faith and spent time with God; He had healed me and now it was time for me to take that healing (Isaiah 53:5). When my healing came, I was ready! I took it by both hands and went from using various walking aids to nothing – in one instant. It wasn't gradual, it was immediate. Even after that night, there were times those who love me deeply would say, *be careful not to overdo the walking or take it slow*. But with this, I knew; I had *received*. It wasn't about confessing things, I had proclaimed it into reality (– and there's a difference between the two). My heart wasn't what assured me of my healing, my God did, so, nothing and no one could take that away. Today, I am stronger than I ever was and can do the things I was told I never would be able to again. Honesty with self. It will take us where we need to go on this journey of life with “so much uncertainty,” so says the world.

## ***HONESTY TO OTHERS***

I knew a man once who seemed to just not know how to be honest about his relationships. He would talk with two or more women at the same time about a potential marriage-focused relationship with them until one day, his plans seemed to come crashing down. One woman found out about what he had been doing and suddenly cut off all ties with him. It seemed to shake him down to his core because he desperately started to track her down through every means possible, including visiting her home several times. It so happened that whenever he showed she was not around or available, but he says that all he wanted to do was to “clear the air” (really, who knows). That ruined his stability with the other women, so all his potentially *wonderful* relationships came to a sad end (really though, *blessed* ladies for the *escape!*). Overall, it was as though he started to change ... until it was clear he didn’t. It just was the same cycle all over again.

Some people struggle immensely with being honest to others. It’s as though the truth changes course when leaving their mouths; a completely different reality than when in their hearts. Truth is, we cannot change our level of honesty with others if we do not first change our level of honesty with ourselves, and most importantly, with God. **Anyone who has an issue with lying, first has an issue with their relationship with God.** I’m sure we all recall when we last told a lie; at least, one time we told a lie. If after we had started building a relationship with God, then we must have had an immediate conviction. The Holy Spirit of God saying to us, “you know you shouldn’t have done that, you know that wasn’t necessary, you need to repent.” God might even ask that we go tell the person we lied to that we just lied. I know, may seem tragic but that is one great way God corrects us so quickly, leading us away from a desire to lie; far away from the impact of the lying spirit. You see, the reason the conviction is immediate is because God is intentional about honesty. He lives in honesty and desires we do the same if we must live in His presence and He, in us.

“That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation...” – Hebrews 6:18

Honesty is not just bare. There’s deep trust in honesty. You know why we can trust God? Because it is impossible for Him to lie. Generations have tested Him, and His word remains true. So, when He says He will do something, even when it seems it is taking such a long time, we have a

strong consolation: our God cannot lie, and because He said it, He will do it. Question is, can others hold on to your word? This is different from, “I said I’ll do *so and so*, so, even though God now has said *no*, I still have to do it” – that is NOT at all what I’m teaching to you or speaking over you. As my father once said, “our words are not immutable – only God’s Word is.”

There’s a clear difference between immutability and honesty. Our words should always remain subject to His Word. When God says *no* or our spirit is bound on an action we had earlier promised to take, we must understand that it then becomes time to deeply practice humility. It is the time to look those we earlier promised in the eye and say, “I’m sorry, I promised but my spirit is not giving me the allowance. I have to now say *no*. Let me know if there are other ways I can be of help.” In a world where many say, “oh, I said it so I must keep to it” and hold others to the same standard, we must understand that this **only** stands when God is on board.

It is also another thing for God to earlier have said *no* but because you don’t want to line up with His instructions, you pretend as if He said yes or disregard it and then make your promise to another, for the first time. That isn’t knowing after a promise is made and then having to revert, that is dishonesty with God, self and others. God will never put on us more than we can bare. His word is “yea, and in him Amen” (Second Corinthians 1:20), so we can trust in His promises. From this we understand that **we aren’t called to strive for immutability, we are called to strive for honesty.**

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.” – Ephesians 4:25

The honesty we give to others also is what is returned to us. We are members of the same body, so impurities shared toward others, we also are bound to continue to experience. Science tells us that when there’s impurity in one part of the body, *fighter* cells rush to first, fight against those impurities at source and second, to help protect the areas around source, yet to be infected. If the impurities are so many, more *fighter* cells keep rushing over, until there’s little to nothing more to be done. This is where treatments thereafter, play a huge part. Just recently, one of the outreach teams I am a part of, went to the hospital to pray for and be a blessing to those who were hospitalized. I wasn’t on that particular outreach but saw the report from it.

There was a woman hospitalized who had one of her legs amputated; she was in recovery during the visit. You see, I imagine that whatever happened to her, the *fighter* cells in her body did all that they could, but the impurities were stronger than they could handle. So, in the end, more than the area the impurity began, was infected.

The Bible tells us that we are members of "... his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:30). We are members of God's body, his flesh and His bones. Do you see that? **We are members of God's body, his flesh and His bones.** I wish I could write that out a page long and let that be the core of this book. I wish I could let that be the whole book. **We are a part of His body, his flesh and his bones.** It's one thing for the body to have a mild scrape. You may not even realize it because the body's *fighter* cells rush to that quickly. This is why some never even notice a paper cut until it's healed. It's another thing however, to have a deep flesh wound. It's impossible not to notice this; think *muscle-showing, tissue-hanging major-accident* wounds. People with these kinds of wounds aren't asked if they're okay, they're immediately rushed to a hospital and booked for operations. There's great chance for recovery if taken to a hospital in good time. Then, bone injuries. Think *showing broken-femur, lower arm facing backwards, and/or injured spinal cord*. Now this is major. If there's one thing no man wants injured, it's his spinal cord. It's the most important bone in the body as far as most as concerned. Think however, that beyond an accident that may cause such intense bone breaks, it could be something small that causes such major problems.

I read the story of a woman who had a javelin thrown in her; it was an accident and as she was in the way of the javelin, it hit her and pierced a few bones, from her head. She died instantly. Also, another woman who had a javelin thrown at her from her upper side and though she survived a while longer, the impurities were too much for her body to handle and before a solution to remove the javelin was realized, and then a plan for treatment to fight all of the impurities in her, she died. I know; these stories are gruesome, but this is happening today in the body of Christ. You see, **we are members of the same body, flesh and bones.** When impurities in one aren't curtailed, they spread throughout the body and do harm.

This is why we as His body must not tolerate impurities and ensure that honesty and truth are our backbone. Honesty to one another should be



encouraged and expected. If the body allows and openly permits the impurity of lies and dishonesty, it means it encourages the death of the body. We are his body; not merely a body. The body of the one who is not only holy and righteous but holiness and righteousness and calls us to be same.

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness” – Ephesians 6:14

Let us therefore discourage lies and dishonesty amongst one another. When we notice anyone who regularly practices this in His body, let us call them to order if we are in a position to. If not, let us call this to the attention of one who may correct and lead them aright. In the event that there is no such person around to help with this, then let us separate ourselves from such individuals and pray for them, sending *fighter* cells their way that they may be set free from that spirit. When there is honesty in the body, there is peace and freedom in spirit. The body, flesh and bones of His body thrive, and there is victory on all sides. This is what we are called to, and this is what we must encourage – the girt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” – Philippians 4:8

Finally, Paul says, only the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report should we think on. Whatever is not true and honest, let's remove from our thoughts. It seems as though its two words repeating the same thing – truth and honesty; let us doubly check our thoughts and ask: are they true and honest? If they are lies and full of dishonesty, let us not allow them in our thoughts, much less in our actions. We are His temple: His body, flesh and bones and what we carry, we add to His body, flesh and bones. What an honor it would be to carry truth, honesty, purity and cells of good report. Beginning today, let us no longer look at honesty as an option, let us view it as His priority. Scripture tells of God speaking once and we, who seek His presence, hearing it twice (Psalm 62:11); what then when He speaks twice on the same matter? ***Twice has He spoken, multiple times should we hear and radically obey, for we are of His body, flesh and bones.***





## Chapter 10. COMMUNITY

I recently visited an aquarium. There's something so beautiful about the water and the feeling of being in one; swimming for hours on end and seeing all the beautiful creatures in all different colors, shapes and sizes. I went with a few family members on this particular visit, and they went to a different floor, the top floor of the aquarium, while I stayed on the one below. It was one of those caves, with some space underneath for people to look up and through the large aquarium with all different creatures. It was so beautiful and by all the wonder I saw, I was drawn in. I saw fish schools and how they tried to protect themselves from the larger fish, the power in numbers, and ultimately, how much fun they seemed to have. The color contrast of the different fish against the crystal-clear water was a plus. And then suddenly, I heard my name called out loud; it was time to leave.

Whenever I find myself in the ocean, swimming into deep waters or snorkeling, one thing is for sure, you never feel alone. Clearly, there's the *unknown*, as you never know what may be just around the corner; worse is, you never know how many of the things around the corner there actually are. The power of one shark hunting for one human in the ocean can lead to a major incident; but when it's a number of them hunting around the same area and it is one human, the chances of survival get even slimmer.

I watched a documentary a few days ago of a group that had been hunting for some sea creatures along a wide stretch of ocean water. Along the way, they spotted a shark, about 35-feet long, and got to film a bit of the interaction. One woman swam by the shark and had a smaller camera while the others shot from a farther range. As big as the shark was, they were comfortable staying as close as they were to it because of the strength they had in their numbers. They knew that if anything were to come up, they would quickly have each other's backs, and thankfully, they had right training too. Truth is, its undeniable the strength there is in numbers; now imagine the strength in right people and right numbers.

### ***RIGHT PEOPLE***

The beautiful thing about community is that for it to be successful, it must be made up of the right people; honest and pure with the strongest desire to serve and honor God. In a short video I watched recently, the host

said, “friends are forever.” There were some who seemed to disagree in the audience, so she said, “well, if they end up betraying you, they were never your friends in the first place.” Clearly, there are those who come into our lives for seasons and those that are meant to be forever friends. With community however, persons within the community may come and go, but the community itself always remains. This means that within the community, the individuals may change but the *office* remains.

When talking with a woman once, she spoke about how much she at a time, believed in spiritual leadership. She said she went to a spiritual leader and mentor about many things and in the end, was *abused*. She said to me that she no longer believed in spiritual leaders, teachers or mentors. The truth is, she was *abused* by one, which should never have happened. It would take a lot for her to be able to move on and trust again; however, her need for a *true* spiritual leader and mentor always will remain. You see, because she was *abused* by one did not negate her future need of one; the need for the *office* remained, even when the individual in her life who once filled that *office* had done her wrong. Our community is made up of certain people who must teach us certain things in life and no matter who messes up while in that space, our need always will remain.

## ***Right Offices***

These offices are those which need to be filled in our journey of life, that we then may have around us the people who continuously will lead us to God. This is the making of a good community; however, our community is not entirely limited to this. In addition, there may be more than one person in each *office*, leading us toward God.

There are three main groups of people who should make up our community: those who are older (Job 12:12, Titus 2), our fellow brothers and sisters (First Corinthians 1:10), and those younger than us (Galatians 6:2). All within this group, older, peers and younger, within the context of our spiritual lives. This means that someone may be considered *younger* even if they are older in age; as long as one is younger in *the faith*, they fall into this category. Truth is, there is no way we would walk in true community and find ourselves in *pits* we cannot so easily be dug out from. The blessings in community are too numerous to willingly want to avoid. Note that all that is discussed below is in the context of all persons loving

God. No one is ordained within your community by God to lead you closer to Him if they first, do not have a deep crave and love for Him.

1. Older men/women

“And king Rehoboam consulted with **the old men**, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

And the **young men** that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah,  
Rehoboam reigned over them.

Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.”

– First Kings 12:6-19

Scripture repeats over and again, in several ways and with several examples, the need for wise counsel. In the scripture above, Rehoboam had those who knew *times and seasons* and could give wise counsel, the older men, but chose not to listen. He chose to do what was *hip* and popular at the time, seeking the counsel of the young, the power-hungry and the inexperienced; and today, the price for this still is being paid.

In today’s culture, we’re encouraged to forget the *old* and be in with the *new*. Children are encouraged not to obey their parents because they’re *old school*, friends are encouraged to love but with earthly wisdom; Christians are encouraged to only be Christian to the point that it does not influence our relationship with the world. This is why when we get right counsel from those older in the faith, we’re told not to listen. The *young* and seemingly *easy-to-accept* in today’s social media generation is not always right; on the contrary, many times, its wrong. This is why we all must have those who do not care about the acceptance of the world but the instructions of God; those who can be open and honest with you and teach according to scripture. In this group, there are those who we may need to learn of from afar, and those who we must have close to us.

- Spiritual leaders/ teachers

This comprises of those who we have been called to learn from, who may or may not be easily accessible. Our pastors, teachers and leaders at church fall within this category. We may not be able to have regular one-on-one sessions with them to discuss issues we are going through but because we have been led to them by God, they know what to say per time that gives to us the answers we need.

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” – Jeremiah 3:15

It is clear that God assigns to us our own pastors; He says, “I will give you ...” in the scripture above. So, when He gives, He does so knowing what it is we need and what it is He has put in those pastors for us. When we are under the right pastors as assigned to us by God, we are under His covering because we are where He wants us to be.

In my church, it is so common today for me to arrive on Sunday for service and receive a word clearly for me, for the week. For many others also, they come to receive their own word as they are where God wants them to be. Many have testified about how they come to church and get the clear answers they were looking for. This is why above all else, we always must be in the center of God’s plan for our lives per time.

I remember when I was applying for a post-graduate degree. One of the things I searched for, beyond the school itself, was the churches within the city. I needed to know what I would be surrounded by and where I could easily plug myself in. Truth is, I knew that if I went outside of the covering of God’s pastoral leadership for me, I was bound to encounter issues. Within the first week after arriving school, I went to the church only a few minutes in walking distance from my home; however, after three weeks, I knew I was in the *wrong* place. This place was not wrong for everyone, but it was wrong for me because I was not being *fed* spiritually and I knew I did not have that covering. I eventually had to move where God was leading me, my church which ended up being almost two hours (including an hour-long speed-train ride) away, to be under that covering.

“There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.” – Proverbs 19:21

You may not have the opportunity to sit weekly or even monthly with the leaders God has placed over us who fall within this category, but what we gain from them, daily, bi-weekly or weekly (and should be no longer than this per time), carry us for the journey ahead. We listen to them for counsel from God and walk in the same. We follow them closely that we may receive of them, what God has for us.

- Older (and close) mentors

This comprises of those who are older and wiser, and that we have close access to. We cannot solely rely on the pastors who we may not have close access to, but also must relate with those to whom we can ask



questions. These men/women are there to mainly answer our questions and correct us when we make mistakes.

“Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days.” – Job 12:12 (ESV)

I have a friend who has influenced me so strongly in this area. Before I began to understand how important older and wiser counsel is from a biblical stand point, I saw this in his life. He would speak so profoundly about his friendships with those much older than he. In the beginning, it was intriguing, but I just didn’t understand it fully; possibly because he had them in his corner but did not utilize their wisdom in certain situations, as much as I thought he could. However, growing in the word of God, I have come to understand how important it truly is. Listening to a pastor once, he noted that the reason many men and women are making so many mistakes today is because they have no older and wise counsel.

Note that because a person is *older* with grey hair does not automatically mean that they are wiser. However, when we find someone who has the experiences that have led to visible progress in the direction that we desire to go, we must listen carefully and intently as they speak. Scripture says:

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” – James 1:19

The problem today however, is that many of us want to speak more than we want to listen. This is the same even in our relationship with God. If a person cannot be quiet enough to listen to wise counsel from a person who has closely walked with God a lot longer than we have, then it means we wouldn’t be quiet enough to listen to God if He decided to speak with us directly. One common thread I see when I get the opportunity to be in the presence of those who walk in sweet fellowship with God is their character. They’re deep thinkers, and not because they merely are thinking but as I’ve come to realize, largely because they are listening. Quiet moments are much desired and when they come out, the presence of God is visibly around them. Remember the story of Moses?

“And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights... And it came to pass... when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.” – Exodus 34:28-30

In the same vein, when we spend time in the presence of those who have the word of God and can listen more than we speak, we are sure to return with more answers than we have questions. By merely listening, questions we have will be answered. This way, in the end, when we get the time to ask specific questions, we already would have many of them answered.

### ***Utilizing the resources***

As we get the opportunity to have men and women like this in our corner, it is wisdom for us to carefully utilize the resources they provide us – wisdom beyond our years that will cause the world to marvel. If we do not know how best to utilize these resources, we will end up always on the losing end. So, the blessing in itself is not in having them around alone, but in utilize the resources they provide us.

“Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.” – Proverbs 19:20

As far as I’ve seen, those who utilize right counsel; asking the right questions, listening to answers and corrections, and obeying same, never end up in disgrace. Personally, I am blessed to have great access to one of the wisest women I ever have come across – my mother. One thing I tend to do with her is, ask lots of questions. If I’m unsure, I ask questions. Before I take a step, I receive her blessing. It’s saved me more times that can ever be expressed. Wise counsel has been greatly instrumental in bringing me to where I am today, and I will continue to utilize it that I may continue to grow in God and in His word. The thing is, sometimes we feel too proud to seek counsel and end in disgrace.

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.” – Proverbs 12:15

An acquaintance once spoke about how seeking counsel was for *babies*; they felt that as “grown” men and women, we should be able to make our own choices and “do what we want when we want to.” In this, there is a clear lack of understanding that counsel is to direct but still, each one must make his choice. Plus, doing “what you want when you want it” is not in scripture. Even Jesus said that he would do nothing of himself and seek only what His Father sent Him to do (John 5:30)! This is not because He is “weak” in any way but because He is strong; in control of the affairs of His life, His thoughts and His actions, choosing to follow instructions

closely and carefully. If you want to “do what you want when you want to,” you are neither acting in the image of the Son nor living in obedience to the Father.

A lady once did a project for a woman she and I greatly respect and admire. I had known the *older* and *wiser* lady wanted this project done and so I recommended the other lady. When the job was done, the *older* and *wiser* lady asked that I send her the bill from this other woman. I connected the other woman to the staff that this *older* lady requested, and I left it at that. A few days later, the *older* lady got back in touch with me. The other woman wrote a bill and included her service fee; however, what the *older* lady initially sought to give her was twice her request. She asked what I thought. Honestly, the woman I recommended for the project was someone I knew greatly admired the *older* lady and I couldn't understand why she included a service fee; whether or not she did, she would get *something*, maybe not in cash but in blessings that speak, as this is a guarantee in the kingdom of God. Some may not understand this today but when you walk with wise Kingdom counsel, you learn a lot, and quickly. By requesting something that easily could have been done in *service*, she missed an even bigger blessing. With wise counsel, we are connected to wisdom beyond our years and experience the blessings that come with the same.

## 2. Brothers/ Sisters on same journey (friends pursuing the same God and goal)

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” –

Psalm 1:1

It's important that we stay cautious of who we surround ourselves with. Who is it that we have running toward God with the same passion that we are, in our corner? Do we have friends who want the same things in terms of a deeper relationship with God and how consistent are they in this journey? It's one thing to sit with someone every week for right counsel, but how about those who are around us, daily? Who are your friends and are they godly?

I made a friend in the past year who has been more instrumental in my walk with God than she knows. The thing is, she has such a reckless abandon for God that she's willing to look *foolish*, asking questions to go deeper in God. The more I stayed around her, the more it rubbed off on me

and the more I desired more of God too, even with more determination. It was less about the seeming sensibility of my questions and more about the honesty in them. We could sit for hours asking each other questions about God and life, searching scripture for answers, and keep each other in check in implementing *the found*.

With friends, one can constantly, even daily, check on each other to ensure growth, which senior mentors and spiritual leaders may not be able to do. With these mentors and leaders, they may have hundreds, if not thousands, whom they teach and counsel, making it impossible to daily check on each one. With friends however, it may be just the two of you. This is why godly friendships are so important.

To eat vegetables may be healthy for one's body; however, if you eat the vegetables of older and wiser counsel once a month but eat unhealthy things every other day, you then are bound to live an unhealthy life. Health is not based on weekly or monthly decisions but on daily decisions. In secondary school, my mother once came by and taught us something that stuck with many of us, myself included, after many years. She says, *repetition easy, easy pleasure, pleasure often, often habit*. What we repeat on a regular basis is what makes those things easy, then that increases the pleasure we have when doing it, allows us do it even more often, and when done most often, it then becomes a habit. Spending time with the right friends, those who build us up in Christ, and not those who lead us away from *the way*, is what allows us access to continued right counsel, giving no room to the devil.

### 3. Younger men/women in the faith

“Every purpose is established by counsel...” – Proverbs 20:18

As much as we learn from many in the faith, we are called also to be a blessing to others. These are people younger in the faith (however, possibly older in age), who we can be a blessing to, with the wisdom we have received through right counsel. We live to be a blessing and that's the main reason we are blessed. So, if we choose to hoard the counsel we benefit from, when others can benefit from same, then we are removed from the cycle of blessing. These individuals complete our right company; our right offices.

## ***RIGHT NUMBERS***

“And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself... And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men... And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.”

– Judges 7:2-7

When it comes to those who occupy the above explored *offices*, we must understand that the number is not what guarantees effectiveness. It is about having the right people around, and not the number of people that seemingly make one seem surrounded. In the scripture above, we see how God brought victory to Israel by three hundred men, versus the tens of thousands of men the army initially was constituted of. In the natural, we are told that number is what counts but with God, *correctness* is what counts. As my father says, “one with God is the majority.” We do not need to have a physical army backing us, or in this case, tens upon tens of counsellors we run to, *testing the waters* with each one because we want to “be sure” each one is “right.” With right counsel, we are safe. That is, with right godly counsel. Clearly, it is about being at rest in the counsel we have around us, once backed by the directive of God to them as our chosen counsel in the kingdom of God; always, listening to such counsel only when in line with the word of God.

No matter the number of counsellors we have with us then, the quality of the persons within the offices as described above, is what counts. With right counsel, we are guided deeper into God and never allowed to veer away from His presence. With the right people, our walk with God is sustained and the quality of that walk, improved.

## ONE LAST THING...

In this introduction of this book, among other things, I noted that applying the keys in this book will improve our daily walk with God and guarantee us a seamless and beautiful relationship with God. I believe that statement to remain true, even as we now have examined all ten keys. The keys of the Holy Spirit, holiness, focus and focused reminders, worship, prayer, word study, the mind and faith, love, service & forgiveness, honesty and community, will transform any life in this kingdom of God. I believe it already is transforming your life.

As we use these keys however, let us be sure not to do them in the flesh. “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6). Nothing spiritual will be productive without the help of the Spirit. So, our focus, more than ever before, must be placed in God, through the holy Spirit, and in the name of Jesus.

God desires a deep and meaningful relationship with us. As we walk with Him therefore, our gaze must remain fixed; fixed on Him by His spirit and not on the things of the flesh. The ten keys examined in this book show to us where we should examine in our own lives to develop intimacy in this walk with God. However, let us walk in them as interpreted to us by the Holy Spirit.

May we live a life that is pleasing to God. May we never lose our desire for more of God and may He always have our gaze. Welcome to your best season yet with God.

**“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”  
– Psalm 42:1**



