

DAILY DOSES OF RHEMA

JANUARY - DECEMBER

*APOSTLE GEORGE &
REV. MRS. VERONICA AYIKU*

DAILY DOSES OF RHEMA: JANUARY - DECEMBER

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DEDICATION

To all Love Community Chapel International members worldwide. Keep the fire burning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nobody can take the glory from God for what He does using earthen vessels like me. To Almighty God be all the glory.

Lots of messages in this book were preached at Love Community Chapel International, hence I thank the whole church for their prayer support.

My wife was a co-writer and editor of this devotional. Thanks to Rev. Mrs. Jennifer Boateng, Clara Mettle Nunoo and Mrs. Irene Nak Nettey for their tireless efforts in editing this devotional on a tight timeline. God bless you greatly.

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INTRODUCTION

We live in a fast moving world today. Many Christians just get up each morning and hurriedly get themselves ready for the day's business without spending time with their maker, father and king.

How can you be a good Christian without spending quality time with your maker? Being our creator and sustainer of life it is just prudent to spend some time each day in His presence, to worship and commune with Him in prayer and in word to speak a specific word to us for our daily living. Remember that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

Daily Doses of Rhema is full of biblical principles for living, and gives you daily doses of Rhema, God's specific word for your particular situation within a specified period of time.

Daily Doses of Rhema is inspiring, encouraging and eye-opening. Try it and see. It will enrich your Christian life.

BEGIN WITH GOD

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”

(Gen. 1:1)

We need to structure our lives by God's standards as defined in His word. If you ask me how to start anything in the world, I will refer to the above scripture and tell you that if in the beginning God created, then it makes sense that in every beginning God must be the focal point. He must lead the life we live. He must be first and foremost.

The Hebrew word for beginning means *first* in place, time, order or rank, and specifically a *first fruit*. It also means chief or chiefest, principal thing. So, when the world was created, God was in the beginning. He existed before the beginning and was responsible for the beginning. This simply means that anytime the year begins the first person that must come to the fore is God. He must be the first in place, time, order or rank.

That is why it just makes sense to start the year with God. It is very important to think of ways to begin the year with God. True believers begin the year by waiting on God through prayer, fasting and reading of scriptures. This is laudable. Once you start the year with God with the various spiritual activities, you are sure to receive divine creativity and blessing in your life the rest of the year. You may have many plans, but it is still important to present your plans to God in prayer. In fact, it is not unscriptural to sit down and plan your life. God admonishes

us to plan. The word of God says that *“The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.”* (Pro 16:9)

However, when we plan it is the Lord that will establish the steps we take to bring our plans to pass. That is why it is needful to devote some time in the first few weeks or even the whole of the month of January to seek the face of God. Seeking God's face is a way to commit your plans to Him as the following scripture says; *“Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.”* (Ps 37:5)

In the first month of the year, we teach from the scriptures that we should give God our first fruits just as the word “beginning” means in the Hebrew. As we pray, we also engage in applying the principle of sowing and reaping by giving God our first fruit, which is our first harvest of the year. This could mean your first salary of the year, your first income of the year, your first profit of the year etc. In Israel it was the harvest of the year (Heb. 10:35).

We therefore combine prayer, fasting and giving as a way to seek God's favour for the new year.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I seek your favour for the New year in Jesus' name.

CREATE THE WORLD YOU WANT

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

(Gen. 1:1)

God has put structure to everything He has made in the world. There is nothing without a defined structure in the universe. I decided to look at the picture of the stellar system only to discover that everything has been arranged perfectly. See how beautiful the planets revolve around the sun and the placement of the various stars scattered in the universe but arranged perfectly with other stars. It reflects the wisdom and glory of God in the universe. There is always a Master Architect behind creation. The existence of God cannot be overemphasized by the very things we see in the universe. God made human beings to create and manufacture because He made us in His image and we reflect His person. *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”* (Gen 1:27)

We have the capacity to create because the one who created us is a Creator Himself. We must understand that the power of creativity far surpasses religion, colour, culture or creed. Every person has the power to create because our Maker is Himself a Creator. Fortunately, many people from many nations exploit these God-given abilities to manufacture many useful things for the benefit of man.

The scripture gives us a clear clue about God from the very first chapter and first verse of the first book of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” See yourself as

one who was made to reflect his maker. There are creative abilities in you. It is amazing that God left creating things after creating Adam. He did the most important things we needed in life and handed over the rest to mankind because He made us in His image with the ability to create.

God did not create a ship, or airplane or automobile. God did not create computers and smart phones. He made us with part of Himself in us to enable us to continue the work of creation. Do not underestimate your capabilities. Never look down on yourself. One major setback of many people is the low self-image syndrome. Many nurture a slave and poverty mentality. We have a dependency mentality. We always want to borrow. We think we cannot make it without getting external help. Indeed, we live in an interdependent world and we must assert ourselves equally to produce for other people in the world to benefit. God is a creator and we are also demi-creators in view of His nature embedded in us. On a more serious note, if you are born again, you can receive more inspiration from the Holy Spirit to be more creative in your life and business.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God made me in His image. I have the ability to create the life I want in the name of Jesus.

WE NEED THE OVERSHADOWING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

(Gen. 1:2)

One of the cardinal truths we must embrace in life as long as we live in this world is that there are forces assigned to us to fight the plan of God for our lives. Until we accept the reality of the existence of these forces, we will not be able to fully dominate this world the way God expects us to do. Every evil against humanity started when man disobeyed God and obeyed the devil who came in the form of a serpent to deceive Eve. (Gen 3:1-8). Why do people take guns to kill? Why are innocent worshippers of Christ caught and beheaded in the name of religion? Why do we have beautiful ladies who make ends meet by prostitution? Why do nations war against other nations? Why do people kill others in the name of ethnic cleansing? These and many more questions raised about the evils of society point to the fact that the Bible is very true about the existence of the evil one called the devil and Satan:

“And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.” (Rev. 12:9)

When we read the key scripture that says that “the earth was without form and void; and darkness was over the face of the deep...” what comes into your mind? It is the presence of evil.

God is not chaotic and does not create a void world. It was the presence of the devil on earth that created this scene. Anytime God plans something nice and good for you, remember that the devil also plans to thwart God's plan for you by creating confusion. The earth was without form and void. This means it was shapeless and empty. Secondly, there was darkness over the whole surface of the earth. This is why we need to engage the help of God as we begin every year. We must keep on seeking the face of God continuously throughout the whole year and walk in fellowship with Him.

God allowed His Spirit to brood over the surface of the waters and move over the whole earth in order to bring order to His creation. We need the Holy Spirit to overshadow us as He did in the creation story. When the Holy Spirit moved over the face of the earth, God began to speak things into being. The creation story cannot be completely told without mentioning the work of the Holy Spirit and the commanding efficacy of the word.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, overshadow me to live for the Lord in Jesus' name. Amen!

WE NEED LIGHT IN OUR DARK WORLD

“And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.”

(Gen. 1:3)

We all know the importance of light in our world. Whenever there is power outage, everybody becomes unhappy. Due to power outages, many homes have power generating plants to help offset the negative effect of darkness. This shows that many things can grind to a halt in the absence of light. That is why the first day of creation was the calling into being of God's light to shine in the dark and chaotic world. We need light in our world. Light is symbolic of vision, leadership etc.

The problem of darkness is easily solved with the introduction of light. Darkness also represents many evils; sin, disease, poverty, spiritual attacks, degradation, etc. We have spiritual darkness and physical darkness. Spiritual darkness is more serious than physical darkness in that spiritual darkness can lead to many societal evils and finally hell. The sin of Adam and Eve introduced darkness in the world. Satan is a master of darkness. That is why Jesus came into the world as Light. Jesus said, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”* (John 8:12)

Whoever is born into this world will certainly grapple with the darkness of this world in the person of Satan. Satan tries to keep people in darkness. Darkness also means ignorance of God. He tries to keep people from knowing Jesus, the light of the world.

The Bible says that *“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”* (2Cor. 4:3-4)

All those who do not believe in Jesus Christ are blinded by the god of this world in the person of Satan, so that they will not believe in the glorious gospel of Jesus to have the light of Christ shine in them. This is very serious. Light is knowledge.

The true light of the world is Jesus Christ: *“4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”* (John 9:4-5)

Jesus came to work for the salvation of man. He came as the light of the world through whom people who believe would be saved. Christ's light teaches us the path of life in the world and leads us to eternal bliss. Life without light is darkness. Many people become rich and are still not happy in life because of the lack of this light. They are blind and miserable

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please continue to guide me with your light in Jesus' name.

SEEKING THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD FOR YOUR LIFE

“NUN. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*”
(*Psalms 119:105*)

We need direction in every area of life; business, academics, ministry, marriage and family etc. A time comes in one's life when he needs just one direction to take a strategic step in his life to make progress. There are many people who have fallen flat in business and marriage because they took the wrong step by reason of not having the right light to direct them.

The above scripture says that “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” We need light in a dark world. That light is the word of God. It is a lamp unto our feet. When you have a lamp with you, it shines right where you are. The moment you start moving to another location, the lamp moves with you and gives you light wherever you decide to go. On your path to your destination the word of God which is your light shines all the way, so you do not stumble.

That is why true believers who have the word of God are not hindered by geographical barriers in any location of the world. The word of God, which is His light shines across all geographical and cultural barriers. It shines in every vocation and profession. It becomes the measuring rule for all moral, societal and sometimes professional strategic decisions.

A Christian lady wanted employment somewhere. She applied for it. She was interviewed. Later the boss made a proposal that if she accompanied

him on a trek to enjoy a time together, he would employ her. Based on her knowledge in the word of God, she declined the offer and left. Any young lady void of the light of the word, desperately looking for a job after school would have easily succumbed to the trick and yielded her body for that earthly reward. The world of business and politics is a very tricky place. Many believers who do not have the light of the word compromise their faith when they see big money coming their way. All they must do is to agree and append their signature to some twisted conditionality to qualify for a corrupt deal irrespective of what God's word says. When we get born again, we are delivered from the corruption that is in the world through lust.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2Peter 1:4) Our divine nature does not permit corrupt practices as the light of the word says. We therefore must be guided by the principles of the word to govern our lives. That is the light that lightens everyone's path.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please open my eyes in your word for the light of your word in Jesus' name. Amen!

SUBMIT YOURSELF TO THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE LIGHT OF THE WORD FOR A GOOD LIFE

“For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.”

(Pro. 6:23)

One of the many benefits of the light of the word is that it gives reproofs of instruction. A reproof is defined as an expression of blame or disapproval. When your mother or someone shows in word or action that he does not like something you have done or are doing it is called reproof. It is often expressed in criticism, blame, accusation, rebuke, scolding or reprimanding, etc.

That is precisely what the light of the word does to us. Anytime we seem to be going the wrong way or doing the wrong thing, there is something in the word that throws light on our actions to convict us that we are veering off the right way. So, it checks us instantly from within and it shines in us and on our decisions and actions like a conviction. If we refuse instructions which are the way of life, we will find ourselves in error: *“He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.”* (Pro 10:17)

A lady was very desperate for marriage when a man of another religion proposed to marry her. Before the marriage I sat her down to teach her what God’s word says but it was to no avail. She was bent on getting married. Later she came looking for me to apologize. The man’s religion required that she accepted three more wives in addition to her. Later in the marriage her body became a punching

bag. Among the many ills she suffered, the man never came home to provide for her and the children she gave birth to. One day, she came to her senses and fled the marriage to end that saga. She neglected the light of the word and suffered for that. When you have light, you see clearer and your vision and understanding in life is better than many who lack the light.

There are many believers who blatantly refuse instructions in the light of the word because of their own selfish interest. We do not need a prophet to tell us that we will crash our lives in the path of darkness. Darkness is as visible as light. When you see darkness, you do not need anyone to tell you that this is darkness. When you enter a dark room, you do not need to pray the darkness out. All you need is light. Just light a candle and you are fine. When you seem confused about a major decision of your life and your mind is blank and dark, consult the word. *“For it is you who light my lamp; the LORD my God lightens my darkness.”* (Pro. 18:28) Stay close to the word. Read and enjoy its instructions. Let it guide your actions.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, guide me by Your word and light my lamp.

DISTINGUISH BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARKNESS IN YOUR ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

[*“And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness”* (Gen. 1:4)]

On the first day of creation, in fact, recreation and reorganization of the earth, we see God dividing between light and darkness. Frankly speaking, this is all that life entails. Your ability to decipher between light and darkness is a show of spiritual mental and intellectual maturity. Let us look at the scriptures again: “⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.” (Gen. 1:4-5)

It is very important to camp on this verse for a while. The first day of creation involved the calling of light and the separation of light from darkness. I believe that this carries a very deep instruction for us. Before we dare take a decision in life, our priority should be that we should be able to know the right way to go from the wrong way. Let us look at these scenarios. Do you want to marry? Which kind of man or woman do you want and are you sure he or she is the right person for you? It takes many factors to determine the right and wrong. If you are a believer, God’s word throws light on the person’s spiritual background. Is he or she a believer? Secondly, does he or she love God and His kingdom? Why these questions? The light of the word is our final consult in relationships. “¹⁴Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said...” (2Cor. 6:14-16)

From the above we have the light of the word throwing light on our relationships. We cannot partner with unbelievers in marriage or friendship. We have different objects of worship, so we can never agree. Secondly, if the person you want to marry is a believer but has a questionable relationship with God and does not love God and His kingdom as expected, you endanger your life coming into such a marriage covenant with that person. It will look nice at the start but eventually it will land on the rocks. The light of the word says that, “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all things shall be added unto you.*” (Matt 6:33)

These are but a few examples of separating light from darkness. It can happen in your search for jobs or decision for ministry. Use the word to separate light from darkness.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to separate light from darkness in Jesus’ name. Amen!

THROW LIGHT ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

(John 15:5)

Your first step to anything you do is very important. You may either take the wrong step or the right step. That is why it is very necessary to throw light on your actions. When God is left out of the equation of life the product will be an error. This is another great light we need in our effort to succeed in the world.

"...Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain." (Ps 127:1)

Have you ever thought about this for once in your life? Without God you will be stagnant and your efforts will be null and void. This is the light of the word. We must be able to involve God in everything we do. How do we do it? *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Php 4:6)*

Anxiety in life is a killer of enthusiasm and faith. Nobody makes it being anxious in life. It is against this background that God's word throws light on our moods and attitudes to life. Instead of being anxious we are admonished to engage God by prayer. He says, "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." This means that, everything we do, we

must consider taking it to God first in prayer with added thanksgiving. We commit our requests to God on the basis of His care for us: *"casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." (1Peter 5:7)*

We must understand that God is already interested in our affairs and expects us to hand over our cares to Him with trust and thanksgiving. God is interested in you as a person no matter your background. He is interested in your health and welfare. He desires that you prosper and be in good health: *"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."* (3John 2)

In view of God's personal interest in your life, do you not think that it is appropriate to tell Him about how you feel? Go back to the light of the word which says, "...but in everything by prayer..." Let very business, courtship, marriage, pregnancy, travelling, preaching, family, friendships involve prayer. When we cooperate with God in prayer His light will always shine on our paths.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will commit my cares to God and allow His light to shine on all my ways.

ENGAGING GOD IN FASTING AND PRAYER FOR YOUR DESTINY

“And in every province, whithersoever the king’s commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.”

(Esther 4:3)

What about fasting too in the quest for a prosperous destiny? If God is indeed, interested in me, why will He not shower everything on me without my personal engagement in prayer and fasting? These are very reasonable questions we need to answer.

Esther was an orphan who was brought up by an uncle named Mordecai. Mordecai happened to be an official in the king’s palace. When the king’s wife disappointed him and was dethroned as queen, a new queen was sought for by the king and Mordecai proposed Esther to be part of the maidens being prepared for the king to choose one as queen. Esther won by God’s favour. There was another official, named Haman, who hated the Jews so much that he orchestrated their total annihilation in the land. All the Jews started mourning and fasting. The news got to Mordecai and he in turn relayed it to Esther. There were laws governing entrance into the king’s presence including timing. It was not Esther’s time to go. However, she said to Mordecai; *“Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.”* (Esther 4:16)

She also declared three days of fasting with her maidens prior to going before

the king. Eventually God intervened and the massacre was stopped as she gained favour before the king. Haman was an enemy of Israel’s destiny. The spirit that influenced him to want to massacre the Jews is not dead because spirits do not die. The spirit of Pharaoh that influenced him to enslave Israel is not dead. The spirit that influenced Sanballat and Tobiah to oppose Nehemiah from building the walls of Jerusalem is still alive today. Demons do not die. Demons work against God’s people throughout all ages. That is why we engage in fasting and prayer for power to defeat these forces.

Jesus Christ the Son of God also engaged in forty days of fasting and prayer and was still tempted by the devil to thwart His ministry (Luke 4:1-8). Paul was hindered by Satan in his ministry. (1Thess. 2:18) Great personalities in the Bible had to engage in fasting and prayer to accomplish their destinies. Do not take chances. Fasting empowers you supernaturally to enforce your destiny. Risk this season and seek God’s face for your life and destiny. Your life is in your hands.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*I determine to pray and fast this season
to enforce my destiny.*

A CLOSER WALK WITH GOD

[*"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him"*
(**Gen. 5:24**)]

How would you feel if the President of your country called you for a chat and you are seen taking a friendly walk with him in the presidential garden and around the court? Anyone who sees you will wonder how in the world you got this favour. To walk with the President? It feels good. Somehow some favour will be splashed on you before you leave his presence. Is it possible for man to walk with God? It surely is.

In the above scripture we are told that Enoch walked with God. It is not easy to explain in detail how Enoch did it. We will try an explanation. The surprising thing about Enoch's walk with God is that he was not found because God took him away. In other words, Enoch did not see death because God took him out of the world. We can also walk with God. Let us study about Enoch in the scriptures. We are told that Enoch was a prophet and prophesied about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

"⁴And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, ¹⁵To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 1:14-15)

With the ability to prophesy he had spiritual insight. He had abilities to

see visions and dreams. However, the Bible is very clear about the precise things he did to succeed in walking with God. *"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."* (Heb. 11:5)

Enoch was a man of faith too. He pleased God in his walk with Him. It means he did things that made God happy. If he was a man of faith and faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17) then we can imply that he received word from God and walked in accordance with the word. Since faith is obedience, we can also infer that he walked in obedience to the word of God. We get this clue from Abraham, a man of faith who also walked with God by faith: *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."* (Heb. 11:8)

Therefore, to have a closer walk with God you must have His word, believe His word and obey His word. Such is the life that pleases God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*Lord. I want to walk closer to you.
Help me Lord to know more of your
word in Jesus' name. Amen!*

ENGAGING THE BLESSINGS OF GOD

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

(Gen. 1:28)

It is important to know the fact that you are blessed. Man is blessed. God's original intention for man was for Him to walk in total blessing. Walk in the consciousness that you are blessed. God blessed man and gave man fruitfulness, multiplication, filling or enlargement, the ability to subdue the earth and dominion. Somehow, I see all these blessing in progress in the life of man. You see, despite the fall of man, this blessing was not taken back from man. We are told that when God destroyed the world in Noah's time, God continued with the pursuit of blessing in Noah's children till date. *"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."* (Gen. 9:1) *"And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein."* (Gen. 9:7)

We can decide to mark God's word of blessing to see whether all these have come to pass. God pronounced fruitfulness on man. Fruitfulness in the sense of productivity is happening in every country. Businesses are booming. Fruitfulness also means profitability. Indeed, every nation under heaven is making profits with their resources. Some have made more than others by reason of ingenuity and hard work. All the same there is fruitfulness. Man has multiplied. Taking it literally, there are more people in the world today (7.87 billion) than in the generation

of Adam and Eve. God has helped humanity to come this far. What about filling the earth. Great! Man has made it. Statistics are that humans comprise a very small share of the life on earth, i.e., 0.01% of the total and 2.5% of animal biomass. Notwithstanding this insignificant amount, wherever you go in the world, you will certainly see people everywhere; from the mountain top to the valley. Population is dispersed according to national boundaries. God has fulfilled His word.

What about subduing the earth? Indeed, man has subdued the earth significantly. We fly above oceans, mountains, rivers etc. Communication by internet has made the world a global village. We have made amazing strides in industry, commerce, etc. How about dominion? We seem to be in charge of our lives to a very large extent. We are still taking dominion over issues and have challenges because we have set aside God, the overall dominion holder. We are trying to take dominion over the corona virus now. It has killed thousands. What next? We do not know. When we walk in God's blessings according to His word, God will never fail us.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am blessed. I cannot fail in life in Jesus' name. Amen!

TAKE DOMINION

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

(Gen. 1:28)

One of the many blessings God pronounced on man is dominion. All the blessings God gave to man must be under man's dominion, eventually. Dominion means control, influence, rule, authority, supremacy etc.

To a large extent man has been able to take dominion over the surface of the earth. Man has control over the atmosphere. We are able to go into space. We live in a world of knowledge. Information technology is key to running our world today. The prophecy of scriptures has come alive today:

"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. 2:14)

This means that it takes knowledge to have dominion. Years ago, God sent many missionaries to Africa to spread the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. Quite a number of them died of malaria fever. However, this did not stop them from coming. Out of their commitment to Jesus and the spread of the message of the cross today many countries in Africa have received the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today, by knowledge, the issue of malaria fever has come under man's dominion. The invention of anti-malaria drugs has remarkably reduced deaths caused by malaria. This shows that man is really taking dominion. Knowledge is key to dominion.

I discovered that in the kingdom age, which is from this time going till it reaches its climax, it will take knowledge to avoid getting hurt in God's holy mountain which is the church. Believers shall take dominion over things that hurt people because they possess the knowledge of the Lord.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:9)

We can lead a hustle free life if we so desire. We can be free of things that corrupt us, like diseases, poverty etc. by virtue of in-depth knowledge in the word of God. We possess dominion over things about life and godliness by virtue of knowledge:

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁴Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2Peter 1:3-4)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, impart divine knowledge in your word for dominion in Jesus' name. Amen!

DOMINION OVER THE FORCES OF DARKNESS

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

(Daniel 7:27)

God permitted Daniel to see the benefits of the kingdom Age many years before Jesus Christ came to the world, probably four hundred and ninety years. God knows the future and behaviour of humanity and imparts a minute part of that knowledge to his prophets. All the prophets prophesied about the coming of the Messiah. These are called the messianic prophecies. We see many of these in the prophetic writings and Psalms. Daniel saw the coming of the kingdom and dominion of Jesus Christ and how the greatness of the kingdom shall be given to the saints of the Most High. Isaiah also prophesied about Christ's kingdom as follows:

*“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. **Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,** upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)*

Jesus, the Wonderful Counsellor and the Prince of Peace is associated with His government which increases unto everlasting life. This means that God's kingdom is not instant and static. It is dynamic and progressive. The Hebrew

word for dominion is synonymous with government and all point to an empire or rule or power. It was installed by Jesus the Messiah when He came into the world. One day Jesus called the disciples with an assignment to preach the gospel of the kingdom around town:

“Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.” (Luke 9:1) “And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” (Luke 10:9) This means that when demons are cast out and diseases are healed, the kingdom of God has come. The coming of the kingdom is accompanied by dominion and power demonstration. Jesus said,

“But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.” (Luke 11:20). If you are a true believer, you have dominion over Satan himself and all his minions. Do not fear demons. If you lack knowledge in this area, you will be cheated by demons, false prophets etc. Read God's word and locate your rights of redemption and authority to rule your world.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I take dominion over every power of darkness fighting against my destiny in Jesus' name. Amen!

BEHAVE LIKE A KINGDOM AMBASSADOR

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

(2Cor. 5:20)

Where is Jesus now? This is a simple question with a simple answer from scriptures. Jesus is sitting on the right hand of God the Father in heaven. The Bible says that, *"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."* (Rom. 8:34) Yes! He is making intercession for us on the right hand of God the Father. He is not resting. He is still working. Jesus said something about working while it was day. He said the Father was working and He was also working: (John 5:17) *"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)

I thought that the night had fallen on Jesus after He had died and gone to heaven. Indeed, He cannot work physically on earth but is actively working spiritually on earth by His Spirit and literal ministry of intercession. If Jesus is working, then it implies that the Father is also working. What is God up to? He wants the salvation of man. How is God working on earth today? He is working through the church. The church is His representative on earth. Our key scripture says that *"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ..."* (2Cor. 5:20).

Jesus came purposely to introduce to us His kingdom. He said, *"And I appoint*

unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me" (Luke 22:29)

Now that we must act on behalf of Jesus, it is our responsibility to manifest as sons and daughters of the kingdom of God. We must preach the kingdom as Jesus did and bring the virtues and power of the kingdom of God to bear on people's lives. We must heal the sick and cast demons out as a demonstration of the presence of the kingdom of God on earth. Whatever pertains to the kingdom of God must be expressed in our lives. For instance, God's word says that, *"¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."* (Rom. 14:17-18)

We must demonstrate God's righteousness in our lives for the world to see that we are different. We must walk in peace in every area of our lives as in relationships, family, business, finances, marriage, ministry etc. Peace carries the idea of blessings, prosperity, good health and welfare. That is the Hebrew import of peace (shalom). Then we must be joyful in the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am an ambassador of Christ in God's kingdom on earth.

KNOWING THE GOD OF THE BIBLE

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

(Gen. 1:1)

The very first chapter and the very first verse of the Bible mentioned God as the creator of heaven and earth. It means the whole universe has an owner whose name is God. God is the English version of the Hebrew name Elohim. Elohim means Supreme One or Mighty One. God has the ability to create: ***“To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.”*** (Psa 19:1)

This knowledge of knowing God as a creator imparts faith in us that there is nothing that God cannot do. It also assures us that God is good. All the wonderful things we enjoy in nature are the handy work of God; the rivers, oceans, mountains, valleys, grassland, vegetation, etc. are things humanity thrives on. This also enlightens us on our existence on earth as something that did not happen by accident. We are not an accident. The Bible states clearly that God created us (Gen. 1:27-28). We must look at the rationale for why God made us. We see from scripture that God made us first and foremost to love us: ***“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”*** (Jeremiah 31:3)

We have been loved with an everlasting love. Everlasting simply means without beginning and end. It means before we were created by God, He had us in His plans by an act of love. God

loved us before we were created. That is why you are not just a mere being on the surface of the earth. The Bible describes the extent of God’s love to us in the following Psalms: ***“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; ⁴What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? ⁵For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honour.”*** (Psalm 8:1-3)

We are so special that God made us a little lower than Himself. The verse 5 renders it “...a little lower than angels...” but the GODS WORD VERSION renders it “...a little lower than Yourself...” Why? Because if we are lower than angels, how could they become our servants as the bible says: ***“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”*** (Heb. 1:14)

God commands angels to do stuff on our behalf. We are very loved by God. Do not feel demeaned and unloved. Do not feel rejected and dejected. Someone loves you more than you can ever imagine. “We love him, because He first loved us.” (1John 4:19). Jesus loves you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I am grateful for your love for me

YOU ARE A MANAGER OF YOUR DESTINY

“And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion”

(Gen. 1:28)

It is important to understand that man was in the mind of God long before he was created. It is amazing to find in scriptures God's plan for us. Jesus made some statements about how God extended His love to us: *“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”* (John 17:24)

If Jesus desired that the Father should allow us to be with Him and see His glory just because He loved Him before the foundation of the world, it also implies that before the foundation of the world we were in His plan for love. Frankly speaking God loves His creation and desires the best for us. You see, He made us to take dominion over the rest of His creation. Everything on earth was given to man to control. The Hebrew word “radah” means dominion, rule, prevail, tread down, subjugate. It carries the idea of a king who is set to control a domain or to manage a territory. This shows that God committed the management of the earth to man.

He even asked man to name every creation: *“¹⁹Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the*

man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field....” (Gen. 2:19-20)

What does all this mean? It means man must manage his life and destiny in accordance with the commandment he was given by God (Gen. 2:15-17). Anything that happens to our lives is our own doing. Your business, marriage and destiny are under your management with God as your Overall Boss, His word being your point of reference. The only caution is that the one who made us fall is still around. Spirits do not die therefore the devil is still actively trying to thwart God's plan for us. *“For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.”* (2Cor. 10:4-5)

That is why we need to engage God's help in the management of our lives and destiny. The outcome of your life in any affair of this life is a very crucial battle. Manage your life with God, and you will always smile.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I pray for help to manage my life in Jesus' name. Amen!

SPIRITUAL WARFARE AGAINST YOUR DESTINY IS VERY REAL

“The LORD said to Satan, “From where have you come?” Satan answered the LORD and said, “From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.”

(Job 1:7)

Satan was an archangel in heaven who rebelled against the authority of God because according to the Bible, which is our reliable source of information, he wanted to take the place of God. Africa has been bedeviled with many coups by military intervention and civil wars because people want to take over power. Satan was very close to the presence of God. God created him as a worshiper but he coveted the very seat of God's government:

¹²How you are fallen from the heavens, O shining star, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! ¹³For you have said in your heart, I will go up to the heavens, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. ¹⁴I will go up above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.” (Isaiah 14:12-14)

Being like God means to have all the universe to worship you as a manager. Did Satan, a created being have the clout to control God's handy work? God immediately summoned another archangel named Michael to fight and cast this guy to the then already made earth:

“⁷And there was war in Heaven. Michael and his angels warring against

the dragon. And the dragon and his angels warred, ⁸but did not prevail. Nor was place found for them in Heaven any more. ⁹And the great dragon was cast out, the old serpent called Devil, and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (Rev. 12:7-9)

This Satan who was cast to the earth is here with a mission of anger against all of God's creation. It was in this context that he appeared before God with an accusation against Job. God knew it. He is not omnipresent because He is not God. He moves from one place of the earth to the other to cause commotion in the world. He is always looking for any opportunity to destroy. Jesus said, “The devil does not come but for to steal, kill and destroy.” (John 10:10) However, Jesus came so that we would have life and more. Satan accused Job of having been blessed and protected by God and proposed a test of Job.

“¹¹But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.” (Job 1:9-11) Job's woes started right after here.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I come against every satanic attack on my destiny in Jesus' name. Amen!

WHY WE PRAY

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (2Cor. 13:14)

It is very important to establish reasons for any actions we undertake on the earth. When I watch National Geographic, I learn so much from the activity of animals and nature in general. I just wonder why people invest so much into studying nature. Sometimes they show how ants behave towards themselves and other insects. I realize that animal behaviour is the same everywhere, and even close to the behaviour of man. They show how lions catch their prey and how snakes survive in the bush with other animals. There is a reason for investing so much into nature.

Of course, we live in nature and we cannot divorce ourselves from nature. Whatever happens to nature affects us now and later. It is said that when the last tree dies the last man will also die because we live interdependent lives with vegetation. So, there is always a reason behind human action.

What about prayer? There is a reason behind faith. Every religion prays. Religion is an effort of man to relate to the supernatural. The supernatural comprises of the world beyond the physical which is considered more powerful than the natural. There is a spirit in man that is desiring to relate to its Maker. This quest for the spiritual cannot be over-emphasized. The Holy Bible is not silent about how God made man a spirit being, with a soul and living in the body made of clay (Gen. 2:7). So much is said about

the fact that the real man is a spirit. Why? Because God is a spirit (Jn. 4:24). God made us in His image so that He can relate to us on the same platform as spirit; spirit to spirit sharing fellowship. This wonderful fellowship experience was truncated with the deception of man by the devil in the Garden of Eden. This is what brought death to the human spirit. God warned Adam that, “¹⁷*but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*” (Gen. 2:17)

This death was a spiritual nature that later impacted on man's body because spiritual things reflect on the physical. Real death is spiritual. That means separation from God; man's spirit cut off from relationship and fellowship with God. Man kept on living but had an insatiable spiritual thirst culminating in the worship of mountains, trees, rivers, oceans etc. In his bid to worship them demons surfaced and man began fellowshiping with them. We pray because we were primarily made for fellowship. Prayer is simply having fellowship with the supernatural. This could be either God or Satan. Understanding prayer from this perspective makes it enjoyable and not a burden.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I long for you. Holy Spirit, I love to fellowship with you.

MADE FOR FELLOWSHIP

"But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'"

(Gen 3:9)

When you are employed in an office, they take into consideration your abilities and capabilities. They need your inputs to make their establishment effective and productive. That is why whoever is employed must first meet the basic requirement of presenting your curriculum vitae (CV). It contains all you believe you can do and also what you are worth. Your salary is based on meeting their demands. So, when you go there you just stay focused on your reason for being employed. You stay focused on your assignment and you deliver to the best of your ability.

When we understand the reason for our living it will help us to stay focused. We must go back to the drawing board and define why we are here. I am sure that many people have missed it, especially believers who say they believe in Christ but do not fulfil their mandate for their spiritual rebirth.

Our key scripture is about God calling man for fellowship. "...Adam, where are you? Reading this scripture makes me feel so bad but a so good too. Why should God be looking for His partner in fellowship? There is something we need to know here. If God is Omnipresent and Omniscient then it does not make sense that He was looking for man and calling Him. I am sure that God knew where he was and knew that man had sinned. Why? When Moses was on the mountain with God for forty days and forty

nights, the children of Israel asked Aaron to make them gods because they did not know what had become of him (Ex 32:1). When they began to worship the gods, God told Moses on the mount what was happening down the mountain:

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. ... They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" (Ex. 32:7-8)

God knows everything, so He knew the whereabouts of Adam. The fact is Adam had moved to another spiritual level when he obeyed the devil through deception. His location had changed. The wavelength of fellowship had changed. That designated place of fellowship he was created for had vanished through sin, hence God's call.

We were made for and called into fellowship: *"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."* (1Co 1:9) If God should be calling you today for fellowship, will He find you at that spiritual level? Where are you now spiritually?

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I am coming back to the heart of fellowship.

GOD IS CALLING YOU TO THE PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP

[*"But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"*]

(*Gen 3:9*)

There is something I have discovered about God in my few years of serving Him. He is love. In fact, when the Bible speaks about God being love it is not an exaggeration. God is love. He does not have love. He does not exhibit love. He is love. His nature is love. *"Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love."* (1John 4:8)

Since God's call to Adam, that call to man has not stopped. God is calling us back to a relationship and fellowship with Him. You see, when man sinned against God he went into hiding. He fled from God's presence. He did not want anything to do with God any longer. It was God who came looking for man. It was God who called man. He wanted man back to fellowship. Fact is when man even saw his nakedness and tried to cover it, he did not get the right material for his covering. He used leaves of trees: *"Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths."* (Gen. 3:7)

However, God being so loving and caring changed the leaves to something better and more durable. *"And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them."* (Gen 3:21)

If they were garments of skin, we could guess that it was the skin of animals.

If that is the case, then God may have shed the blood of an animal to cover their nakedness. Could this agree with scripture that says, *"...whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* (Rev. 13:8)

Well, this means that the Lamb of God (Jesus) was slain in the type of an animal from the foundation of the world but was manifested at the right time as the real human lamb of God to take away our sins. The essence of the shedding of the blood of Jesus was to cover our nakedness or remove our sins so we could come back to the place of fellowship.

In the Old Testament they shed the blood of animals using priests and high priests to allow them to fellowship with God but now the blood of Jesus has done it all. He Himself is the High Priest and at the same time the victim of sacrifice who shed His own blood, all for fellowship with God. We are admonished to come boldly to God for fellowship by the blood: *¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."* (Heb. 4:16)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I thank you for your great love for me.

RETURN TO THE PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP

"Come, let us return to the LORD; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up"

(Hosea 6:1)

God is calling us back to fellowship. You will see "return to the LORD" several times in scriptures. He made us for fellowship. We missed it through the fall of our first parents, but Jesus came to restore us back to fellowship by shedding His blood to remove our sins that separated us from God. He says, "return" and He will build us up *"If you return to the Almighty you will be built up..." (Job 22:23)*

God is love and is passionately calling us to Himself. Many times, many believers feel guilty for missing it in their walk with God. No matter how torn and struck down you feel just return to God because He is more than willing to accept you. There is a heart cry in everyone in the world for God. Those who are able to receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour are blessed to fill the vacuum in their hearts. They feel settled and at peace with God. Those who are not able to have access to the gospel still wander in search for God and many find alternatives in wrong religions. They seem to fill an empty place in their heart for a while but most do not feel at peace and at ease with God. When they find Jesus Christ, then they realize that they have wandered hopelessly in darkness.

God wants you to lift up your fellowship life with Him. That is why we make effort in many ways to

connect to God. Our first effort is to pray. We need to spend time with God in prayer. Prayer is not only meant for asking God things. Prayer is a fellowship we enjoy. When you feel sinful and guilty God says come and let us reason together: *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow..." (Isaiah 1:18)* When Jesus came to the world, He still threw this invitation to people to come to Him. He reached out His hand to many people. He said, *"²⁸Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls...: (Mat 11:28-29)*

Our fellowship with God is supposed to be restful and end up in rest from all spiritual and life's labours. We must make time with God. Now we do not see Jesus but the Holy Spirit is here for fellowship. If it matters to us and we value God and a time with Him, we will certainly make time to be with Him.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, I love your presence in fellowship with me.

WHEN I FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD WHAT DO I DO

*“And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.”
(Gen. 17:22)*

Talking is the easiest thing everyone can do. Fellowship is simply chatting with God. The word fellowship in Greek means interaction, communion, participation, intercourse etc. This means that it involves two or more people. In the above scripture the Lord appeared to Abraham with a promise of making Him a father of many nations and spoke with him about how his descendants would become slaves in Egypt. After the conversation, He left off talking with him and God went up from Abraham. It was a two-man talk. He came down and went up. This was His custom with people in the Old Testament. After the fall of man fellowship structure change. In another encounter God came and communed with Abraham and left: *“And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place”* (Gen. 18:33)

We should not make fellowship with God a hard encounter to grasp. Today God is with us. God came down to us in the Person of Jesus Christ. This was a prophecy given by Isaiah about 500 years before it came to pass: *“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”*

When Jesus was born it was fulfilled and the writer of the history of the birth of Jesus quickly referred to

Isaiah's prophecy: *“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”* (Mat 1:23)

He is Emmanuel, God with us. We must not view God like some old wicked man ready to punish us for the little sins we commit. He is loving and welcoming. Jesus came to call us back to fellowship. Jesus literally interacted with people everywhere as the Son of God. He called twelve disciples and spent time in fellowship with them: ¹³*“And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. ¹⁴And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach. ¹⁵and have authority to cast out demons.”* (Mk 3:13-15)

We read about Jesus being among people and preaching the gospel of the kingdom to them. He did not interact and go to heaven. He lived among men. We read about Jesus being the Word of God who was with God and who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1-3, 14). He wants a chat with you. See fellowship as a chat with God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I can easily chat with you from now on.

GOD IS ALWAYS READY FOR FELLOWSHIP

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"

(Joshua 1:5)

Most of the time I have realized that, we are not really ready to have fellowship with God. This is because of how we view God and how we must prepare ourselves to meet with God. You see, in the Old Testament we read about very simple ways of chatting with God and also very complicated ways of God chatting with us. For instance, When God came to the Garden to fellowship with man, He just called Adam by His name. That alone showed a high class of intimacy. God was very personal with Adam. He spoke and called Him: " *9And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*" (Gen. 3:8-10)

The interesting thing about God and Adam and Eve is that they knew the voice of God. That was the only voice they were used to. It was indeed, a very intimate relationship. It was God who came to Adam. God was not in the Garden because that was not his domain. God's headquarters was in heaven.

"The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." (Ps 103:19)

"The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men." (Ps 115:16)

So, I see man and God as cool friends who engaged in a cool chat in a cool day because God came down in the cool of the day. So, we should make our chat with God cool. In another instance, God spoke with Moses Face to face as a man speaks to his friend.

"Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend..." (Exo. 33:11)

In other instances, God spoke to people with thunder and lightning. This is the horrifying picture we carry in our minds when we go to pray.

"And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder." (Ex. 19:19)

The scene of thunder and lightning was few as compared with friendly personal encounters with man. It has always been friendly and cordial. Talk to God today and He will talk to you. He is a spirit. However, and wherever, He will flow. He is always ready: on your bed, as you walk, as you drive or shower or in your office while busy with workers you can fellowship with God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I can talk to God easily and cordially from today.

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”

(Heb. 1:1-2)

God dealt with man according to times and seasons we normally refer to as dispensations. This is because God's original plan for dealing with man personally took a negative turn when man was deceived. That fellowship was affected by sin. God, however, never gave up on man but gradually related to man in a way such as would cause man to be drawn to Himself again.

The above scripture says that God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. That was in the Old Testament. Only prophets were privileged to hear God because they were intermediaries. They heard God's voice and communicated same to the people. Some of the prophets are Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah etc.

However, the coming of Jesus Christ has brought to bear the ability to hear God's voice again. Primarily or fundamentally, Jesus was the voice of God to the world. The scripture above says that “...in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...” When Jesus was being baptized this same voice of God was heard audibly as follows: *“¹⁶And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;¹⁷ and behold, a voice from*

heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

This was not the end of such a manifestation of the voice of God in the life of Jesus. One day He took Peter, James and John to a high mountain to pray and have fellowship with God together. Moses and Elijah appeared in the vision talking with Jesus. In that encounter God again confirmed Jesus as His Beloved Son whom they must hear: *“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” (Mat 17:5)*

It means the voice of God in the time of Moses representing the Law and Elijah representing the prophets has been taken over by Jesus and He is now the voice of God to the world. If we want to hear the voice of God, we must of necessity hear Jesus. That is why we must read more about Jesus in the New Testament. God will speak to you by Jesus through His word. Do not expect thunder and lightning any more. It is much easier now. Go to the Bible, especially the New Testament.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, speak to me by your word in Jesus' name. Amen!

FOCUS ON JESUS THE VOICE OF GOD TODAY

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”

(Luke 24:44)

The voice that first spoke to Adam in the Garden of Eden was the voice of His creator, Elohim who was called Jehovah. However, a second voice from the devil deceived them and they fell from the glorious place God had prepared for them. We must be careful of voices. Voices are important for many reasons but we must be careful of the wrong voice. Speaking about tongues speaking, the Apostle Paul said,

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.” (1Cor. 14:10)

When Jesus died and rose again from the dead, he entered into a conversation held by two disciples on the way to Emmaus. They were discussing the resurrection of Jesus Christ and it seemed that they had their own doubts about His resurrection. Jesus disguised Himself and joined them on the way and inquired of what they were discussing. After hearing them narrate the incident of his death, burial and resurrection he interjected as follows:

“²⁵Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ²⁶Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? ²⁷And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:25-27)

This implies that all the prophets from Moses spoke about Jesus. He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises and prophecies. Later He met the disciples in a closed room and ate with them and said the following:

“⁴⁴And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.” (Luke 24:44)

Jesus is the last voice we must hear. He was the reason for the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. All of them pointed to Jesus. Now, because they lacked understanding, the Bible says

“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures” (Luke 24:45)

We must pray for a deeper spiritual understanding about Jesus in the entire scriptures. Hear the voice of God through every page of the Bible because they all point to Jesus. Refuse the voice of religions and focus on only Jesus, the most authentic and truthful voice of God today.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please, open my understanding to your word

HOW JESUS SPEAKS TO US TODAY

"²⁵These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

²⁶But 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 14:25-26)

When I read about Jesus in the scriptures He wins and captures my heart. Our subject is how Jesus speaks to us today. From the above scriptures we see clearly that He was speaking with the disciples. He had said so many things already and still had more to say. At one point in time in His conversation with them He said, *"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."* (John 16:12)

Jesus amazes me. He did not want to overburden them with too many revelations and stuff they could not bear. You see how loving Jesus is. He knows our weaknesses and is not interested in just pumping things we cannot bear into us. Jesus handled them a step at a time. He gave them daily bread; what they could afford, here a little and there a little. That is how we preach and teach at church. I have never finished my sermons even if they are in series. Everything I study I get so much stuff from the Holy Spirit and I'm never able to deliver all. Why? Time factor and the ability of our members to take in.

So, if we want to hear the voice of God in the person of Jesus, we must first go to all that Jesus spoke while He was on the earth. That is why in some scriptures we have bold Red-letters showing the

very words of Jesus. I believe it is very good. Everything we need to worship God acceptably was spoken by Jesus. Read the scriptures and find out. He spoke about all subjects pertaining to life; marriage, business, worship, giving, relating to people, etc. If you are interested to hear the voice of God through the pages of scriptures start reading the Bible seriously, especially the New Testament (N.T) and I will explain why the N.T, later. Apart from the very words of Jesus which speak the voice of God, Jesus said,

"¹²I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. ¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself;..." (John 16:12-13) So now, the Holy Spirit is the voice of God. He carries whatever Jesus wants to say and shows it to us. When Jesus left, the Holy Spirit took over the teaching ministry of Jesus and taught the apostles who also wrote many of them down as epistles.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, speak and teach me the word of God.

HEAR GOD'S VOICE BY THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH SCRIPTURES

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself..."

(John 16:12-13)

One of the truths about God is that He revealed Himself as Father in the Old Testament, came as Jesus in the New Testament and now as the Holy Spirit in the latter days or the end time. This is very true in scriptures: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2)

If you want God to speak to you, He will do so through Jesus using the medium of His word and the Holy Spirit. When Jesus finished His work on earth and was about to leave, He began to introduce the disciples to the Holy Spirit as the comforter and teacher. He knew He could not teach them all things since they could not bear them but the Holy Spirit would come and teach them all things. That is why the apostles also taught and penned them down for us. The Holy Spirit taught them, and He is still teaching us today.

If you want to hear the voice of God for your life, then contact the Holy Spirit. He will first speak to you from the pages of scriptures. Jesus said He will guide us into all truth and will

hand over to us what He will hear from Jesus. When the Holy Spirit speaks through scriptures do not harden your heart.

⁷Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, ⁸Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: ⁹When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. ¹⁰Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. ¹¹So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) (Heb. 3:7-11)

If we refuse to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit TODAY, we are just like the children of Israel who provoked God and were all overthrown and never entered the promise land except Joshua and Caleb. God has rest for you. That rest will come when you hear the voice of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit broods over the scriptures to impart faith into us to believe so we can have a restful life.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, speak to me as I read the scriptures in Jesus' name. Amen!

WHAT DOES “TODAY” MEAN TO US ABOUT THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness.”

(Heb. 3:7-8)

Do you want to hear the voice of God today? Hearing God’s voice is very crucial for your guidance in your Christian life. There are certain crucial decisions you must take by the guidance of God so that you do not make any mistakes. When God guides us and we follow His way we shall prosper: *“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.” (Isaiah 48:17)*

We are blessed that God has given us His Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth. Today, we are led by the Holy Spirit. This is His season. That is why the Bible says that *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (2Co 13:14)*

Today our fellowship or interaction or intercourse or communication is with the Holy Spirit. So, if you hear His voice in the pages of scripture, listen and do not rebel. Today is current. The Holy Spirit is still current. In the days of David when he was calling for worship, he took the same words spoken to the Israelites to warn his generation in the following:

“Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our

Maker! ⁷For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, ⁹when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. ¹⁰For forty years I loathed that generation and said, “They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.” ¹¹Therefore I swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest.”

So, in the time of David, it was TODAY for them. He applied the word. Then in the days of the apostles, the writer of Hebrews referenced this same scripture and applied same by the Spirit and called his generation TODAY.

“Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” (Heb. 4:7) Today is your DAY. Apply the scriptures to your life TODAY

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord I will not harden my heart TODAY. I will obey the leading of your Spirit.

YOU NEED TO CONNECT WITH OTHER BELIEVERS FOR DAILY EXHORTATION

"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin"

(Heb. 3:13)

God is wonderful. He has diverse ways of managing the earth. He has put people in all continents with diverse kinds of natural gifts and talents so that each nation will definitely need other nations for development. Some nations possess oil which they can trade in for food while others possess gold that they can trade in for other commodities their citizenry may need. We live in a world of interdependence. The survival of the world depends largely on reasonable and fair cooperation so that one particular nation or continent is not cheated. Then the world becomes a beautiful family that cares for one another. It is one of the wonders of God. He uses natural things to teach us of how our spiritual lives should be. The church is called the Body of Christ. Every local church needs other churches to make progress. They must learn to cooperate through joint programs of evangelism, worship, and other spiritually and socially driven programs. Every local church is also called the local body of Christ with many members possessing different kinds of gifts and talents. Each member is blessed with the capacity to bless other members:

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." (1Cor. 12:12) Whatever gift you possess is for the building of other members of the

body. You must use them to bless the church. Somebody's spiritual growth and prosperity depends on your contribution. *"⁵so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith" (Rom 12:5-6)* One of the common abilities given to everybody is the ability to encourage or edify others. As for this, everyone has it. That is why the Bible admonishes us to encourage one another daily: *"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."* (Heb. 3:13)

Each new day in your life is called today. Once today arrives you must look for someone to exhort while you must also submit or humble yourself for others to exhort you. This is how we grow spiritually; one hand washing the other and vice versa. That is why in the early church, apart from meeting in the temple they met daily in homes so they could fulfil this spiritual principle. *"And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes..." (Acts 2:46)*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will humble myself to other believers' exhortation.

RESPECT THE EXHORTATION FROM CHURCH MEMBERS AS THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“⁷Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, ⁹where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.”

(Heb. 3:7-9)

Christianity is not a religion as many people think. It is real life; the life of Christ imparted to believers. The Bible says that *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)* Eternal life is the life of God imparted to the believer’s spirit. It is the nature of God. God has also put His Spirit in us to seal our sonship: *“Because you are God’s children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into us to call out, “Abba! Father!” (Gal 4:6)*

By this nature we are made to share in the family of God. We must therefore relate as family and do good to one another: *“Whenever we have the opportunity, we have to do what is good for everyone, especially for the family of believers.” (Gal 6:10 GW)*

One of the salient good things we can do to each other is to allow the voice of the Holy Spirit to speak through us in order to exhort one another. Anytime you call a brother or sister to exhort with scriptures it is not just you but the Holy Spirit’s voice speaking through you. Our key scripture says that, “⁷ ... “Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, ⁹where your fathers put me to the test

and saw my works for forty years.” (Heb. 3:7-9)

The Holy Spirit is a Person. He has all the faculties of a person. He speaks through people. If a believer speaks to you to exhort you see it as the Holy Spirit speaking to you. Do not rebel, otherwise you will be behaving in the same way the Israelites did in the wilderness and were overthrown and did not see God’s rest.

*“¹¹As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’”¹² Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³**But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,”** that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (Heb. 3:11-13)*

If you refuse the exhortation of believers you are not likely to enter your rest in destiny. So take care. Everyday is a day of exhortation from the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will not harden my heart when any believers exhort me. Lord, I receive the voice of your Spirit.

WHY WE NEED DAILY EXHORTATION

"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

(Heb. 3:13)

Sin may look desirable but in the end it kills. Today, sin comes in many shades and colours and if you are not careful and sensitive to the Holy Spirit and God's word you may fall into any of them unknowingly. That is why God in His infinite wisdom says that *"but exhort one another everyday as long as it is called today that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."*

Indeed, sin can harden people's heart. There are so many people who say they are believers but the kinds of shameful things they do in secret, only God can tell. I chanced on some brothers who woo ladies with the aim of marrying them and later break up with them. I interrogated the ladies about any sexual misconduct with them and they all answered in the positive. This is their life. I wonder whether they are even born again. As for the ladies, by reason of their role in the church ministries I never expected that they could yield easily to that but they did, in desperation for marriage, fearing they would lose them.

We should not forget that our first parents were deceived by the devil. We must not also forget that deception is the main tool of Satan. He concocts many forms of deception to believers so that they would be lured and go to hell. The scriptures refer to him as the deceiver of the whole world (Rev. 12:9) and Jesus called him a

liar. (John 8:44) Because of this we need each other in the journey of life. That is why attending church service is important. Apart from worship you hear the voice of the Holy Spirit speak through the preachers and teachers of the word of God. Then we have the opportunity to meet other believers again for encouragement. Seeing the Christian family everyday is a great encouragement to me and others.

One of the easiest ways to grow and become a strong believer is when you take it upon yourself to allow the Holy Spirit to speak through you to build others up. Look for younger believers you can daily call and encourage. *"For when for the time you ought to be teachers ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God..." (Heb. 5:12)*

Graduate your Christian growth level by teaching and exhorting others daily. Note it: it is daily. When you have your daily devotion, you can share it with someone you are trying to help spiritually or anyone you are led to. The Holy Spirit will use you to save him from sin.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, use me to exhort the church family daily in Jesus' name. Amen!

BE LED BY THE VOICE OF GOD

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”
(Rom 8:14)

Many years ago, a man came to my office to try and introduce me to a business. He brought a sample of a certain mineral that was quite strange to me. Unsure of it I contacted a police man in our church for clearance. He looked at it but did not also have much knowledge about it. He made some inquiries from his friends but who also didn't have much knowledge about it.

Later, I discussed it with one of my associate pastors, and showed it to him, but he did not know much about it either. The profit on that investment sounded very good. However, I kept on feeling not too good about it. In fact there was a still small voice saying, “do not do it.” Then secondly, I felt strong heart movements also giving me a warning but I over-ruled all because of the profit margin. I went ahead and later realized that it was a scam. I had been defrauded.

Why didn't I even listen to my spirit and the still small voice to back away when I had all the spiritual signals to say no? It was because of my personal interest. You see, every child of God is entitled to hear from God. God leads His children by His Spirit. I have discovered over the years in my walk with God that the voice of God that comes like a still small voice is very authentic.

Elijah was led by God to engage in a forty day fast. At the end of the fast,

God decided to show him that His voice could be heard not only in the spectacular and dramatic way he expected.

“¹¹And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: ¹²And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”
 (1Kings 18:11-12)

In the above scriptures we understand that God's voice is neither in the great and strong wind that rent the mountains and rocks nor in the wind and earth quake nor in the fire. The voice was rather in the still small voice. Isn't this amazing? We expect God to speak with a very loud voice which is not impossible for Him to do but He decides rather to speak to us in a still small voice. Tune your heart to the still small voice.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I am ready to hear from you every day.

OPEN UP TO THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:...He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you"

(John 16:13-14)

The greatest gift to us after salvation is the ability to see and hear from God. We need to explore the way we can hear God very clearly. It is an experience that grows over time. When you walk with God and follow Him hard, one of the benefits is that you are able to tap into the mind of God easily concerning life's issues.

In the Old Testament God spoke to the prophets through dreams and visions of the night. The prophetic ministry as it pertained to the Old Testament ceased for about five hundred years between Malachi and Matthew until Jesus Christ came. Then God spoke through Jesus Christ and is still speaking through Jesus Christ:

" 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. ²Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb1:1-2)

When Jesus was about to leave to His Father in heaven, He also introduced the Holy Spirit to us as one who will hear from Him and speak to us: *"¹³Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to*

come. ¹⁴He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13-14)

We must open up to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If God is going to speak to us, He will do so by His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is here to please Jesus. He is to testify about Jesus. In fact, Jesus is the reason for His presence in the world. When we ignore the work of the Holy Spirit we can never walk with God and we can never be successful in knowing God and flowing in a relationship with Jesus.

Our daily fellowship with the Holy Spirit will help us to know His voice. The Holy Spirit speaks to us everyday. Why? It is because He is with us forever. If we can only tune in to Him on every issue He will lead and guide us. Sometimes we want to hear a deep loud voice talking to us before we believe it is Him. Most of the time He speaks with a still and calm voice but it is God's voice leading you. Do not ignore it else you will make serious mistakes in the steps that you take in life.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, I will open up myself to you daily.

HOW GOD USES THE STILL SMALL VOICE TO LEAD US

*“And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire:
and after the fire a still small voice.”*

(Joshua 1:6)

I have grown to like the still small voice from the Holy Spirit. He speaks to me about the church, people and things we can do to glorify God in ministry. The still small voice functions from the inner core of our being; the heart. When we get born again God sends His Spirit into our hearts. Another name for the heart is the human spirit

“²⁶A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” (Eze. 36:26-27)

Sometimes the Bible writers repeat a word to lay emphasis. A new heart is the same as a new spirit. God promises to give us a new heart and a new spirit and then later put His Spirit within us. So here we are, we have two spirits in us; one is our new human spirit and the second is the Spirit of God. This is what happens when one receives Christ. He receives a complete transformation of his life; a new heart or spirit (human spirit) and the Holy Spirit. This is what the scripture says in the New Testament:

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. 4:6)

The Spirit of God's Son is the Holy Spirit and He has been sent into our hearts or reborn human spirit. It is this Spirit in our spirit that speaks to us through our spirit. Our spirit is a container of the Holy Spirit and whatever the Holy Spirit will do or say will come through our human spirit.

The still small voice comes from the Holy Spirit through our human spirit. He is still in the sense of being quiet and calm or silent. If you are too carnal and controlled by your flesh, you will not hear this quiet voice within. He does not force us. He is not aggressive. He is like still waters. He is also very peaceful.

I was praying for people in a prayer line one day when He whispered to me to stop when I got to one particular person. In fact this happens many times. He alerted me about the person's character and asked me to investigate. So I stopped. When I investigated from the person it was the exact thing I heard from the still small voice. I try to tune in all the time when I am praying for individuals because He may speak.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, speak to me.

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR HUMAN SPIRIT TO HEAR FROM GOD (1)

*"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their **senses exercised** to discern both good and evil."*

(Joshua 1:6)

There are two kinds of senses in the human being; natural and spiritual senses. When you get a grasp on these dynamics your Christian life will take a new turn. You will enjoy fellowshiping with God all the time. God made man with both spiritual and natural senses. God made us spirit, gave us a soul and clothed us with clay (body).

We have a soul that contains all our senses. Our sense of sight, taste, smell, feel and hearing are in the soul and work through the body. As a matter of fact, all these senses are also in the spirit. Our human spirit can see deep into the realm of the spirit and discern other spirits. For instance, God's word is spirit. (John 6:63). Therefore it takes the spiritual eyes to see the wonderful things in the word. David prayed and said, *"Open my eyes and I will see wonderful things from Your Law."* (Ps 119:18) We also need our spiritual ears to hear the word. Many people have ears but do not hear the word of God. They lack spiritual hearing that generates understanding just as Jesus said in the following: *"Because of this, I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and **hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.**"* (Mat. 13:13)

It is possible for believers to read the Bible and hear God's word and never

grasp what God is really saying. This is why Isaiah said the following, which was repeated by Jesus: ¹⁴*"And the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled on them, which says, **'In hearing you will hear and in no way understand, and seeing you will see yet in no way perceive.**'* ¹⁵*For the heart of this people has grown fat, and they heard heavily with the ears, and they have closed their eyes, that **they not see with the eyes, or hear with the ears, and understand with the heart, and be converted, and I heal them.**"* (Matt 13:14-15)

The spirit of man has all the senses that help him to understand God's ways and word. Eventually it is when we understand and perceive spiritually that we see the fruit of the word. Jesus taught the parable of the Sower and concluded that the land that bore more fruits was because such people who heard the word understood it: *"But that sown on the good ground is this: the one hearing the Word, and understanding it, who indeed bears and yields fruit, one truly a hundredfold, and one sixty, and one thirty."* (Mat 13:23)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please open my spiritual eyes and ears to understand your word in Jesus' name. Amen!

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR HUMAN SPIRIT TO HEAR FROM GOD (2)

*“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their **senses exercised** to discern both good and evil.”*

(Heb. 5:14)

Training is key to attaining any skills of life. Whatever profession you choose based on your natural gifts and abilities, you need to be trained to excel and be a master in your own field. What pertains to the natural is parallel to the spiritual. Training is needed in Christianity to become like Jesus: *“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”* (Luke 6:40)

That was why Jesus took three full years to train His disciples. So when He left, they continued where He ended. No one can do all the work of God alone. That is why every church must engage in continuous training to ensure that we have many people carrying on the work of the Master. In every training one is made to undertake some exercises.

In the same way we train people in professions, the believer needs to train his skills in hearing from God. The human spirit can be trained to be like Christ and hear just as Jesus did. Our key scripture says that mature believers or those of full age, have used their senses and exercised them to discern both good and evil. It means that when a believer is able to exercise himself well in what God’s word says about spiritual growth he can distinguish between good and evil in every area of life. You can tell who is the right

person to marry. You can identify right and wrong investments. You can distinguish between good and bad friends. It takes exercise or training. We are admonished to undertake godly or spiritual exercises:

*“Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather **train yourself for godliness**; ⁸for while **bodily training** is of some value, **godliness is of value in every way**, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”* (1Tim 4:7-8)

This training or exercise pertains to the human spirit. Just like we train the body to be strong and enduring, we can do same to our spirit. Go to the gym and experience the strain people put on their body in order to get into shape. It is the same in the realm of the spirit. We must put some strain in doing some spiritual exercises to put our human spirit in shape so as to be sensitive to spiritual things, especially hearing from God and being led and guided by Him and also gain the capacity to withstand spiritual enemies in all shapes and colours.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to draw close to you as I exercise my spiritual senses to hear from you in Jesus’ name. Amen!

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR HUMAN SPIRIT TO HEAR FROM GOD (3)

"But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness."

(1Tim 4:7)

The essence of fellowship is good relationship where you are able to hear what your partner says clearly while he also hears you clearly. One of the cardinal factors of our relationship with God is the ability to hear and if possible, see what He says. This easily takes care of our limitations and helps us go through life with faith and strong direction. Many problems, if not all, will be easily solved with this God-factor. I believe that every believer must be able to hear God speak and see into the realm of the spirit. Yes! It is possible. It is high time we lived the word. Whatever happened to people of Bible times can also happen to us because we serve a living God who is more interested in us than we ever think. To be able to hear from God we must first of all understand that God is a spirit and relates to spirits. Secondly the human spirit must first be born again by the Holy Spirit and the word of the gospel of the kingdom (John 3:3-7). Then thirdly we must train the born-again human spirit to grow and develop the capacity to hear from God and see into the spiritual realm.

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1Peter 2:2) Training or exercising is very crucial in spiritual growth and development. This starts with the word of God as the foundation. Our key scripture says that, "...exercise thyself rather unto godliness." (1Tim 4:7)

The issue of godliness is spirituality. God is a spirit and all issues about Him are spiritual. Therefore, there are spiritual exercises we must undertake, and it starts with God's word:

"¹²For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. ¹³For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. ¹⁴But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. 5:12-14)

The emphasis in the above scripture is the use of the phrase "to exercises our spiritual senses". Years ago, a gentleman from a village came to one of our branches possessed with demons. We did very serious deliverance for him. He seemed alright but never stayed long enough for the word of God to affect him. He stopped coming. Months later we saw that he had started a church in the same area as a prophet. What spirit do you think he may be operating with?

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will subject myself to spiritual training.

HOW TO TRAIN THE HUMAN SPIRIT TO HEAR FROM GOD (4)

"But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. ⁸For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

(1Tim 4:7-8)

In order to be well trained to access spiritual signals, the first and foremost thing you must do is to refuse profane and old wives fables. This is very important. If you want to start doing physical training for good health you must agree with the trainer to stop doing some things that will not help you build up muscles. There needs to be consistency in training so that you can match up and achieve results. You must refuse the temptation to relax. Soldiers for instance are trained in the barracks to ensure that there is strict oversight on their training schedules for maximum results. They leave their homes for that kind of training. Sometimes they are taken deep into the forest away from home so they can concentrate on their training.

It is the same in the spirit. There are things you must refuse in life. In the case of Timothy, Paul asked him to refuse profane and old wives' fables before trying to exercise himself to godliness. Why refuse first and then train? Distraction and contamination! Profane has to do with uncleanness and uncleanness has to do with sin. You cannot be walking in sin and be successful in spiritual training. Sin will contaminate the spiritual principles you have to employ in sensitizing your spiritual ear to hear from God. Why? Sin separates us from God: "Behold,

the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. ²But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." (Isa 59:1-2)

No relationship or fellowship is possible when one party cannot hear you at all. Sin is the cause of bad fellowship between God and man. So, the first principle of spiritual training is, refuse sin. It is the same thing believers were told in their effort to grow spiritually in the following: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, ²As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1Pet 2:1-2) This means if you want to grow by desiring the word, first of all lay aside sin (malice, guile, envies etc.) They will contaminate the pure word and distract your attention from your focus on Christ, the Master trainer. In summary there must be some separation from sin and all contaminations. They hinder the human spirit from spiritual connectivity.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I confess my habitual sins and forsake them today and forever in Jesus' name. Amen!

HOW TO TRAIN THE HUMAN SPIRIT TO HEAR FROM GOD (5)

⁷*“But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. ⁸For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things...”*

(1Tim 4:7-8)

Every training demands some disciplines. If we do not discipline ourselves, we will not be able to stand the strains of the training we need to be effective in our walk with God. The first discipline is to avoid sin. We must control our appetite for sin. The above scripture says, “...refuse profane and old wives’ fables and exercise thyself...” There must be a strict discipline of our body against indulging in sin so we can move on to do the other disciplines for gaining spiritual sensitivity to the voice of God.

The second discipline is to avoid old wives’ fables. Fables are tales and myths which are not in line with scripture. Old wives represent old ladies who have nothing doing at home but telling of stories. In Africa many old people are experts in telling stories. Such people having lived their lives already may have more time to talk. In fact, such old ladies can talk. That is the best they can do to while away the time. The essence of avoiding is to save time and energy and invest into your spirituality. Stories in themselves are not evil but the time they take can be reinvested into enhancing your spiritual life which is better.

Generally, fables represent things you read, hear or watch which do not add much value to your spiritual life. In order to exercise yourself to godliness, God’s word says, refuse them. There are

some believers who can spend much time on social media and watching T.V news and Movies. It is not sinful, but it qualifies to be a weight that slows us down in running the Christian race: *“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:10)*

Sometimes, it wastes too much time; precious time that can be used to engage in other profitable spiritual exercises. Can you imagine watching news which is repeated every thirty minutes and you are there for two to three hours? What do you gain? Other representations of fables are myths held to be true. We must check all myths with the word of God. These myths and fables are sometimes interwoven in traditional practices and customs during birth of children, out-doorings, funerals, burials etc. During a one-year memorial service of a loved one we were reminded to go to the cemetery to pray. I found this unscriptural. Then after thanking God some sprinkle perfumes on the grave. It has no spiritual value.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I discipline myself from tales that waste my time.

THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN TRAINING THE HUMAN SPIRIT TO HEAR FROM GOD

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

(Mark 1:35)

When you understand the importance of prayer in training your human spirit to hear from God, you will make prayer a lifestyle. Jesus made a statement to the effect that He was always hearing from the Father: *"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."* (John 5:30)

Jesus said, "...as I hear I judge because I seek not mine own..." Jesus heard what the Father said and gave His judgement as required from His critics. His spiritual sense of hearing was very sharp to hear from the Father. That is the kind of connection I am talking about. We must grow to that level. On another occasion He said, "...Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.**" (Acts 5:19)

Here again Jesus' spiritual sense of sight was so strong that He saw things the Father was doing before He did likewise. We have lots of work to do to sharpen our spiritual senses. The question is; how did Jesus have such great spiritual sensitivity? We learn from the key scripture that, *"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."* (Mark 1:35)

This seems to have been the lifestyle of Jesus. He spent a long time in the morning in prayer in an isolated place before day. It means by 6am or so, Jesus had done His quiet time or what we call morning devotion. Such prayer disciplines have the capacity to sharpen our spiritual sensitivities. He prayed many times in a day as and when opportunity yielded itself: *"⁴⁵And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray."* (Mark 6:46)

After such a wonderful experience of feeding the five thousand Jesus went to the mountain to pray. This was like early evening. On another occasion Jesus spent all night alone in prayer: (Luke 6:12) No wonder Jesus was sharp spiritually. Prayer is a spiritual discipline that when adhered to as a lifestyle, polishes and hones the spirit man to hear from God. It works better when it is done every day and consistently too.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, from now I will spend time alone with you.

THE PLACE OF FASTING IN SHARPENING THE SPIRIT MAN TO HEAR FROM GOD

*"¹And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, "²Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered."
(Luke 4:1-2)*

If you want to see and hear clearly like Jesus, then you must follow His model. Jesus is our role model in knowing God. When Jesus called the disciples to follow Him, He was actually saying, "follow my footsteps and my way of doing things." When you watch Chinese films there is a lot of fighting and clamouring for dominion. They show the disciplines the students go through before they turn out to be the best. They follow the training schedules and mode of operation of the teacher. It is like a student-master or student-teacher relationship. It is the same as the discipleship program Jesus engaged those He called into.

Jesus modeled fasting for His disciples. He Himself fasted forty days and forty nights with water. He recommended fasting in the following words: *"¹⁶And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."* (Mat 6:16-18)

Jesus said "...when you fast..." to imply that we must fast. He also said

"when you pray" to imply same in Matthew 6:5. The disciples of John criticized Jesus that His disciple did not fast like they and the Pharisees but the Master was smarter:

*"⁴⁴Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? **The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.**"* (Mat 9:14)

Jesus said the days will come when He as the bridegroom would be taken away from them and then they will fast. Jesus is not here with us so we must fast. Fasting reduces the appetites of the flesh and elevates the appetites of the human spirit. When the body is subdued through fasting the spirit is empowered and that is where spiritual sensitivities are sharpened. Prayer is very good but adding fasting can act as a catalyst for heightening the power in the spirit man.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please give me a passion for prayer and fasting in Jesus' name.

PERSONAL DESIRE FOR GOD IS THE PLATFORM FOR PRAYER AND FASTING

“A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

(Ps 63:1)

I have discovered in my Christian life that the greatest asset to engaging in spiritual things is desire. Why do you have to take the time to pray for hours if it is not a thirst for God and His intervention in our natural life? If we see that God is the object of our search and we really know the profits we gain from such exercises, then it is not a punishment after all to abstain from food for a while and spend very precious time in prayer to seek the face of God. In the above scripture we see both prayer and fasting as platforms for engaging God's presence.

David said, *“O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”* A thirst for God is key to seeking God.

David fled to the wilderness when he was overthrown by his son Absalom. Until we get to the wilderness in the spiritual terrain, we will not feel that hunger and thirst for God in order to engage in prayer and fasting. All these experiences of David made him very sensitive to the Holy Spirit. A wilderness experience is a waterless and barren place.

Sometimes it is good to present ourselves as waterless and barren in order to qualify for supernatural

watering and fruitfulness. Spiritual satisfaction happens on the basis of spiritual thirst and hunger. Jesus said, *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”* (Mat 5:6)

Anyone who feels already filled and satisfied does not qualify for anything any longer. Mary made a thanksgiving oration to the effect that God lowers the mighty but lifts the humble and fills the hungry and sends the one already filled away empty: *“⁵²he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.”* (Luke 1:52-53)

Thirst and hunger for God are synonymous to desire and they are the factors that generate prayer and fasting. David was a great prophet with a high spiritual sensitivity. His life of consistent prayer and fasting helped to sharpen this. He said, *“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. ²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? Ps 42:1-2)*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I long for you.

HIS VOICE BEHIND HIS WORD

“The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters.”

(Ps 29:3)

The fundamental way we can hear the voice of God is by His word. We must exercise our spiritual senses in hearing the voice of God through the word. The above scripture says that the voice of God is over the waters. Water is used to represent many things especially the word of God: ²⁵*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,* ²⁶*...having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word (Eph. 5:25-26)*

Jesus cleanses us by the water of the word. The word is likened to water and its cleansing ability. The voice of God is over the waters of scriptures. Anytime you read the scriptures you will hear God's voice behind the verses of scriptures. God has something to say from His word to direct your paths and lead you in the right way. Sometimes as you read the scriptures take your time to meditate. Think deeply and your mind will be challenged with ideas from scriptures.

Anytime you are in a dilemma, a word from scripture will pop up and stand out among the many scriptures you already know. Do not take that for granted. God may be speaking to you. Sometimes that word in scripture comes like a still small voice. It is the voice of God. A sister booked an appointment with me some time ago to see me about certain issues. When she came, she interrogated me with hard questions about the ministry and

the church. I sat down quietly always listening to my spirit. Every question she asked me found an answer in the voice of the spirit whispered to me from scriptures. She did not have anything to accuse me of. I did not say anything from myself. It was all scriptural answers.

After the meeting she told someone who later told me that when she came, I was quoting scriptures all the time to her as my answers. You see, scripture cannot be broken. It is safer to use the word to answer people's accusations than your own concocted word. Nobody wins a battle against the word. So be alert with scriptures. God's voice is always behind His word. Effects of God's voice cannot be denied.

⁴*The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.* ⁵*The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.* ⁶*He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.* ⁷*The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.* ⁸*The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness...* *(Ps 29:4-8)* All this implies that God's voice conquers every hindrance of all sorts when you hear and follow.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will meditate in God's word to hear the voice of God.

EXERCISE YOUR FAITH

“For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”
(1Tim 4:8)

One of the many exercises we need to engage in our training schedules in order to move forward with the voice of God is faith. Faith is a spiritual virtue that makes all things possible. The Bible is clear about the exploits of faith in the following: *“And Jesus said to him, ‘If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.’”* (Mark 9:23)

It takes faith to believe that God is speaking through the still small voice and that His voice is behind His word. Sometimes it is easy to take the voice of God in your spirit for granted and not believe that it is God speaking. We need to believe and exercise our faith in that little voice and see the outcome. It may sound unreasonable to start but still believe it and move on. Take a faith step. One day, ten lepers came to Jesus to be healed. He just spoke a word. They heard His voice: *“¹⁴ When he saw them he said to them, ‘Go and show yourselves to the priests.’ And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice”* (Luke 17:14-15)

It was when they took a step of faith that they were cleansed. Taking a step of faith to obey the voice of God is what generates the exploits we need. If you do not obey number one of what

God has said, He will not say number two because you did not obey His first word and value Him. Just obey and act immediately. Jesus met a blind man and ministered healing to him and gave him some specific instructions to follow to be healed: *“Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud ⁷ and said to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.”* (John 9:6-7)

All it required on the part of Jesus was a voice. All it required on the part of the blind man was to act as instructed by faith. This is what releases the miracle. We must learn to exercise ourselves in acting our faith. Until we put our faith into action we will remain the same. Faith comes from hearing the word of God and the voice of God is behind His word. So anytime you are prompted and stirred up in your heart about any word of scripture, take action steps by faith and you will see results.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, let me hear your voice behind your word.

BE CAREFUL OF DECEPTION

“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you”

(Mat 24:24)

The greatest tragedy in the world is deception. Jesus knew it. He warned the disciples about deception. Speaking about His coming He warned them about false prophets and false Christs. *“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”* (Mat.24:11) A life lived on deception leads astray and to death. God speaks about being careful of deception many times in His word: *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”* (Pro 14:12)

Deception takes many forms. It may begin with a way that seems right. It just looks like the right way to take from all fronts. If you do not critique it or have it shown to you, you are likely to take that way. You will be going on and on until you finally realize that the end is death. Wrong religions, bad marriages and wrong business investments are all founded on deception. Deception actually rules the world in many ways with its destructive effects.

From biblical perspectives, we discover that deception begun in eternity past. We read that deception had a beginning and will one day have an end. The Lucifer saga in heaven down to the earth was the beginning of deception. *“Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon*

*was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, **the deceiver of the whole world**—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”* (Rev. 12:7-9)

We are told from the above scripture that the devil, called the ancient serpent and the great dragon who deceives the whole world today was cast down from heaven to the earth. This means that he came with deception. His deception started from heaven. We must know how his deception started from heaven.

“¹² How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! ¹³For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. ¹⁵Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

The above spells the beginning of the deception of Lucifer. It began with delusion. He had a misconception about himself and God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to be deceived by the devil in Jesus' name. Amen!

DECEPTION AND DELUSION

"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

(Isaiah 14:14-15)

I have seen many people take the wrong steps and ignore warnings from reasonable people. I have worked with young lay leaders some of whom left the church to start their own and have regretted it. A young missionary came to me one day and said, he wanted a release. He demanded it so in a pastors' meeting we all prayed for him and wished him well. Soon after the release he went to start his own church and could not sustain it. He abandoned it and nobody knows what became of him. Deception takes many forms. I see this attitude as delusion. Delusion is defined as an idiosyncratic belief or impression maintained despite being contradicted by reality or rational argument, typically as a symptom of mental disorder.

This is what is happening to many people regarding deception and delusion. Our key scripture is talking about Lucifer who wanted to be like the Most High. I see this as a delusion because it was impossible to topple God's government in heaven. You see, God has a throne in heaven and rules from there: *"The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men."* (Ps 11:4)

I was wondering what came on Lucifer to want to be like God by revolting. I am sure he had a false impression about himself. His role in heaven was a

psalmist. He was made for worship but he envied God's position and felt he could be like God. How can a creature remove His creator? Secondly, did he not know that God is everlasting and His throne is established and cannot be moved as the scriptures say -in the following? *"¹The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved. ²Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting."* (Ps 93:1-2)

The delusion is that he saw himself above who he really was. He thought of himself as capable of doing something which in reality was impossible. I believe this self-delusion caused the devil to suffer from schizophrenia. He had a false impression of himself. He used the pronoun "I" five times to show his ego. *¹³For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend...I will exalt my throne above... I will sit also... in the sides of the north: ¹⁴I will ascend above...I will be like the most High.* When you have self-importance far above what you really are and begin to act against all realities, you are in deception and delusion.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to avoid delusion and deception in Jesus' name.

I WILL BE KING

"⁴Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!"

(2Sam. 15:4)

Absalom's end was a tragedy. Absalom had a false impression about himself that he could be a better king than his father, King David. This is the problem with many countries in Africa today. When a president or prime minister is in power, others close to him entertain the impression that they can do better because probably they see the weaknesses of the president and feel that given the chance they can rule better. This has been the cause of many wars and coups in many countries. Absalom committed a serious crime by killing Amnon who raped his sister. The king was infuriated with him causing him to flee the king's presence for about two years. Later, Joab the captain of the army arranged to bring Absalom back to the palace after Joab had mediated. David allowed him in the palace. He then began orchestrating to take over as king;

¹*"And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.*

²*And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.*

³*And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.*

2Sam. 15:1-2) He began to undermine the Kings rule. The people began to like him and he won their hearts: "And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." (2Sam. 15:6)

Wherever you are placed in life maintain a low profile. True servants maintain a low profile. Do not imagine that you can do better than your leader or senior. This conspiracy grew so much that David fled the throne to the wilderness. However, eventually everything Absalom did failed and he died an abrupt death. He took over from his father by force but it backfired against him later. His delusions were dispelled.

This was the same delusion the devil proposed to Adam and Eve. He said, ⁴*"But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. ⁵"For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Gen 3:4-5)*

Satan gave them the impression that they would be like God, just like what he aspired for and failed.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will humble myself as God's servant.

MONEY MATTERS

"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction"

(1Tim. 6:10)

One of the most important desires of life is for one to be self-dependent and self-supportive. Whether we like it or not, we can never divorce ourselves from the quest to have resources that can take care of us. This is part of our nature. God created man and supplied him with all the raw materials he needed to make life comfortable for himself. So, we have no choice than to follow this land mark.

God has set a law of sowing and reaping in place in the entire world. Whatever we get is an outcome of what we give. The Bible is clear about this as follows: *"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."* (Gen. 8:22)

It is not wrong or sinful to be rich. However, the lust for riches is a great problem in the world today. There are many people who want instant riches without sowing much. For every harvest there must first be a seed time. Wealth is created over time when we are able to exchange what we have with what others have. Do you have a gift or talent to do something? It can be used to meet a need in exchange for money. When we fall in love with money and do the awkward and the illegal to get it, then it becomes evil. This is called love of money. I know a man who killed his own brother to get an inheritance left for them by their father. This is how

far folks can go because of unbridled search for money.

"The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a snare of death." (Pro 21:6)

Trying to get money using deception and lies is a great delusion. Such people see themselves in a certain light. They want to have more and spend more. They want luxury. This is a way that seems right in the sight of men but the end thereof is the way of death. God is clear about this: *"Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death."* (Pro. 10:2)

Most of the time, such people amass so much wealth and leave it behind for others to come and spend. Look at the prodigal son who entertained the delusion that it is better to get rich quickly and explore the world. Eventually others spent all the wealth he received from his father and he was left with nothing:

"Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living." (Luke 15:13)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to make riches your way in Jesus' name. Amen!

I WANT TO MARRY NOW

"But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry."

(1 Cor. 7:36)

Pastoral work exposes us to many deceptions and liars the devil uses to lure people into problems. Years of pastoring has taught me that many people still do not learn, especially the youth. They are always in a hurry to marry and when they do, in less than no time, they start complaining and then back out of the relationship. It is not a sin to marry. The Bible says that when a man or woman starts having sexual feelings and they have reached the age of marriage, i.e., mature enough to understand marriage, they should marry. It is better to marry than to burn.

Today so many girls become uneasy when they reach a certain age and try to test the terrain of marriage even before they marry. They possess a certain impression that they are matured enough to engage in sex or to marry. Those who want to abstain from sex insist that they want to marry right now without considering the character of the one they want to marry. They go into the marriage only to realize later that they have committed a big mistake. The focal point of the marriage celebration is the intimate sexual affair and not the quest for a companion till death. This is a great illusion. Another deception that people have is that when they propose to each other they entertain the impression that since they will marry by all means there is nothing wrong

with having sex. So, they commit fornication, and this later becomes the cause of problems in their lives. The Bible says that, *"Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel."* (Pro. 20:17)

When you try to indulge the pleasures of the flesh before you marry, it initially looks pleasurable but afterwards you will bear the consequences. This can take many forms; guilty conscience and later breakup of the relationship. Sometimes this could result in divorce after marriage. It is better to take your time, get a God-fearing person in your life who will say, "no to sex" until the wedding night, someone who is a marriage material and not a wishy-washy person. Avoid the deception of fast marriage and be patient for the best. *"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit."* (Ecc. 7:8) When we think of a relationship we should think of permanence. A good relationship can last till death. Many couples are only excited about the marriage ceremony and spend so much money that they end up in debt which sometimes destroys the marriage. Wise up!

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will be wise to discern between truth and lies.

IF I GIVE BIRTH WITH A MAN, HE WILL LOVE ME

“And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, “Because the LORD has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.”

(Gen. 29:32)

One of the many illusions of life is that when you give birth with a husband or wife or with a fiancé or fiancée, he or she may love you. This is what causes many girls and boys to take the wrong step in their lives in their effort to marry.

I have seen so many ladies who bear children with their fiancé and are later separated to be on their own with their children. The presence of children in a relationship is not a guarantee that your spouse will love you. Leah, the first wife of Jacob will be our counselor in this matter. In the first place, she was married under duress. It was a mistake. Jacob did not love her because his choice was Rachel. His father-in-law deceived him by presenting Leah to him at night in a veil and it was only in the morning that he realized he had slept with the wrong bride. He had to work for an additional seven years for the person he loved.

Leah thought that by giving birth to children with Jacob the latter would love her but she was wrong. All the subsequent births did not change the equation. Jacob did not have any passion for her.

Gen. 29:33-35 *“She conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Because the LORD has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also.” And she called his name Simeon.* ³⁴*Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, “Now this time*

my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” Therefore his name was called Levi.

³⁵*And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “This time I will praise the LORD.” Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.”*

From the above-mentioned scripture we learn a lot from the mind-set of Leah. She said, after giving birth to Levi, that, *“Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons...”*

She kept on giving birth with the intention that she would be loved. It did not happen. I have witnessed some men just leave the matrimonial home leaving wife and children behind to marry other women sometimes inferior to their former wife. It is a deception. This is why it is important to start with the right foundation before you make a choice to avoid the consequences. True love is patient.

True love is sacrificial and long-suffering. Do not be deceived. Make sure it is the love of God working within and not any other circumstance luring you into a relationship.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please give me a discerning heart in Jesus' name. Amen!

HAVE BIG VISIONS AND DREAM BIG

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."

(Joel 2:28)

One of the salient operations of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to give us supernatural ability to see visions and to have dreams. This prophecy came to pass on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured on the disciples in the upper room during a prayer session. Peter alluded to the experience of the prophecy of Joel as follows:

"¹⁴But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵this is what was uttered through the prophet. "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams"' (Acts 2:14-17)

We are in the last days. These last days began from the days of Pentecost till now. Probably we are in the latter days of the last days, implying that soon Jesus will come again. However, the point of interest is in what the Holy Spirit will do when He comes. Joel said, when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions." We need to understand that "visions" in this context means purposes and directives.

They also mean goals and objectives. The Holy Spirit comes to impart God's purposes He wants to achieve here on earth in young men because the young are vibrant enough to carry through God's plan in their generation. The book of the prophet Amos says that God will do nothing until He has revealed it: *"For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets."* (Amos 3:7)

So anytime God is about to do something here on earth He reveals it. That revelation qualifies to be called a vision. God gives visions of His intentions. If you stay close to the Holy Spirit, He will impart to you God's heart purposes. We thrive on God's plan and purposes. Without these all will fail. God has said in His word that, *"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."* (Pro 29:18)

You need to have a vision about what God wants you to do in His kingdom first of all, and then what He wants you to do with your life in business and other concerns.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, open my spiritual eyes to God's plans and purposes for my generation in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE PERSON OF THE DECEIVER

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”
(2 Jn 1:7)

It is amazing to know that all people, nations, institutions etc. which do not believe in Jesus Christ are called antichrist. There are many believers who are expecting the antichrist to come one day and fight Christians but from the scriptural point of view the antichrist is already here:

“⁴⁸Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” (1John 2:18)

Who is the antichrist? The Bible explains to us vividly about who the antichrist is in the following scriptures: *“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”* (1John 4:3)

The antichrist is a spirit, and that spirit does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This means Jesus Christ is eternal and at a point in time in human history He came into the physical world. This points us to the truth in God's word that Jesus was not just a man. Jesus is God. He became man for the sake of our salvation and after finishing the work of redemption He went back to His glorious state in heaven. This is the truth. However, there are many religions and human institutions in the world who carry

the spirit of the antichrist because they do not believe in Christ as God the Saviour of the world and also go a long way to promote this lie that stops people from believing in Jesus. How do they do it? Through lies and false propaganda. Again, the Bible is clear about this too: *“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”* (1John 2:22)

I have been preaching from house to house and many times I meet people from other religious faith who argue passionately against Christ. They are strong in their belief that Jesus is not God and not the saviour of the world and that He is not the only way to God as He claimed, that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The only way to determine the right spirit in a religious organization is the acceptance of Jesus as having come in the flesh.

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (1John 4:2)

Stay focused on Jesus and do not be deceived.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord Jesus I believe that you are the Lord and Saviour of my soul. I am grateful for this.

THE DECEIVER AND HIS OPERATIONS

"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

(John 8:44)

There are so many lies these days in every facet of human life. This could be attributed to only one fallen angel whose lying intent brought him down to the earth and with that fury of an outcast decided to render the earth uninhabitable. Who knows that probably your life now is a whole lie? The whole saga of lies began with the devil. He is a lie dealer and that is how come he deceived a third of the angels in heaven to follow him in an attempt to overthrow God's throne as we read in the scriptures:

³*"And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. ⁴His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth...."* (Rev. 12:3-4)

There are so many symbolisms and figures of speech in scriptures, but thank God that scripture always interprets scripture. The dragon is a type of the devil and the stars are representative angels;

⁷*"Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who*

is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." (Rev. 12:7-9)

So, the dragon was thrown down here onto the earth. Then we read that he had come in fury against man: *"Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"* (Rev. 12:12)

Satan's first interaction with man as recorded in scriptures was full of lies. God gave a command and said, "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**" (Gen. 2:17). Satan misrepresented it and said, "...**You will not surely die.**" (Gen. 3:4) He turns truth into lies, wisdom into foolishness, right into wrong and life into death etc. God says there is hell. Satan says the opposite. God says you can make it. Satan says the opposite. He is the master of all liars.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord I will hold on to the truth of your word.

TURNING A LIE INTO A BLESSING

“Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.”

(Gen. 37:20)

God has a plan for humanity. Satan has a contrary plan. Whenever God plans something very good for us, the devil tries to turn it into the opposite. There are several examples in scripture about this trend. The above scripture is talking about Joseph's brothers who had a bad intention for Joseph because of his dreams. God had very good dreams for Joseph concerning his future. As innocent as he was, he shared his dreams with his brothers but they did not take it lightly. They hated him for his dreams.

⁷“Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” ⁸His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.” (Gen. 37:7-8)

So, this hatred of Joseph continued for a long time. Sometimes people may hate you for your dreams. Do not be surprised. It is the devil working through them. Why should people hate you for the good things God has in store for you? It just does not make sense. Yes, it does not make human sense, but it makes spiritual sense because Satan is not favourable to anything God does for and through people. His brothers said, *“Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one*

of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.” (Gen. 37:20)

This happens in families and business circles. When a God-fearing family member begins to break through the devil conspires spiritually through one or more members of the family to kill or frustrate him in every way possible. It is a real spiritual warfare. However, God eventually turned their wicked acts into victory. Eventually Joseph was sold to an officer in Egypt and by a divine hand the dream became fulfilled:

“Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. “Where do you come from?” he said. They said, “From the land of Canaan, to buy food.” (Gen. 42:6-7)

Keep faith with God like Joseph did and God will see you through all.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God can turn the devil's lie into a blessing for me.

DREAM AGAIN AND KEEP ON DREAMING

"Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, 'Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.'"

(Gen. 37:9)

One of the graces God bestows on people by the Holy Spirit is the ability to see visions and dream dreams (Joel 2:28). I have discovered in scriptures that we can see more visions of the future and dream many times. God gives visions and dreams and He keeps repeating it to confirm His intentions for us. We all know that the vision of the Messiah coming into the world was given to all the prophets in the Bible. Every prophet spoke about the saviour either directly or indirectly through events and drama. So, whether by clear visions or dreams or by a drama or events Jesus was the focus of all. Joseph's destiny came to him in dreams more than once. We know from the scripture above that "...he dreamed another dream..." The first dream was that his brothers' sheaves rose and bowed to his sheaf. The second one was that the sun, moon, and eleven stars were bowing to him. Indeed, all these dreams pointed to one thing, that Joseph would one day be king, and all his family would bow to him.

If you have a vision or are dreaming to do something great in your life, keep seeing and dreaming about it. If you started dreaming or seeing something God has impressed on your heart to do and it seems that you have not seen any progress and therefore are giving up, start dreaming again. Pharaoh

had a dream about the famine that would strike the world twice, but they all meant the same thing. Joseph's interpretation of the two dreams of Pharaoh is the same. (Gen. 41:25)

Be encouraged to dream again. Engage the Holy Spirit again in prayer. Go to God and chat with Him concerning your dreams. They are the future. Your dream is your destiny. In case you dreamed once and you are not sure of it, dream another dream. God has something to tell you. It is God's desire to show it to you again because He wants to do something with your life for your good and that of humanity: *"For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets."* (Amos 3:7)

Anything God intends to do He reveals it to us as an alert. Yes! He will always alert us because He engages us to bring His intentions to pass. This is where prayer comes in. We need to collaborate with God to make it real through intense prayer. We enforce destiny by prayer.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I pray that my vision and dreams for my life will be accomplished in Jesus' name. Amen!

GOD ACTS FOR THOSE WHO PRAY

“From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.”

(Isa 64:4)

When I read the above scripture, it always paints the picture that God only acts when we wait on Him. The act of waiting on God has two connotations. It means being patient in faith to see His will or our desires accomplished.

When we believe God for something, indeed, it takes patience to see its performance. We read from scriptures that Elizabeth encouraged Mary with a prophetic word when the angel appeared to Mary with the news of the birth of Jesus: *“And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”* (Luke 1:45)

As long as God has spoken or revealed it there will be a fulfillment or performance with time. That is where patience comes in. We wait on God patiently to see visions, dreams and heart's desires accomplished. *“That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”* (Heb. 6:12)

When we pray using promises in the Bible, we need to understand that we must patiently follow up on them daily with our praise, thanking God for their fulfillment. When you have an expectation from God you wait on Him by faith to see it materialized. David said *“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.”* (Psa 62:5)

The second use of waiting on God is in the context of prayer. Anytime you want to pray, it demands time to wait on God. Wait in the Hebrew means to tarry, silence or to quiet one's self. Tarry was the word Jesus employed when He was about to be taken to heaven in His last discourse with the disciples:

“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49)

Again, the word tarry is used to mean the same act of sitting down or dwelling at one place. We know that the disciples were not passively sitting down but praying for the promise of Jesus to be fulfilled. (Acts 1:14) Waiting on God also means praying. Our key scripture says, *“From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.”* (Isa 64:4)

It means God will only act when we pray. God is ready to act but for only those who wait in prayer and faith for Him. Do not sit down idly thinking that God will do it. Engage to wait in prayer.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will take up the challenge and wait in prayer in Jesus' name.

DISCERNING THE VOICES THAT INFLUENCE YOUR LIFE FOR GOOD OR BAD (1)

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.”

(1Cor. 14:10)

I once watched a man who could relate to animals. He somehow could understand animals. A voice is needed to act on plans and purposes. A voice gives instructions. Every voice in the world has a meaning. It is of utmost importance to discern the many voices in the world in order to live and be in sync with those which will influence our lives for the best.

We have the voice of God, the voice of men, the voice of our human spirit, the voice of the world and the voice of Satan. Which of these voices is influencing your beliefs and actions? When you see somebody, whose life is awkward or beautiful or is migrating towards a particular direction there must be a voice he or she obeys.

The earth and heaven were created because there was a voice that called them into being. In Genesis chapter one we see the phrase, “...And God said let there be...” several times in the creation process. When it was done, we read again that “...it was so.” (Gen 1:7,9). We further read that “...and God saw that it was good” (Gen. 1:9,12). If we join all together, we see a beautiful process of creation; “And God said...and it was so... and God saw...” What does this teach us? When God speaks, it is so and we see that it is good.” We must therefore locate God’s

voice, and speak that voice, and it will be so spiritually as said, and we must see that it is good. In our realm we do it by faith. Faith speaks. Faith believes that it is done and therefore faith sees that it is good.

So let us hit some wisdom of God in scriptures now. I believe that a voice is always needed to create something new. It starts with the voice of God in the pages of scriptures. Today, God’s voice is in the written word. To activate the power of the voice of God in the written word we must locate a word spoken by God and speak it with the faith of God:

*⁵“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. **“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear...”** (Heb. 13:6)*

It is amazing to discover in scriptures that this principle works. Jesus used it and He said that anyone who declares something and believes it and doesn’t doubt in his heart shall have whatever he declares. (Mk 11:23)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will obey the voice of God.

DISCERNING THE VOICES THAT INFLUENCE YOUR LIFE FOR GOOD OR BAD (2)

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.”

(1Cor. 14:10)

We have identified at least five major voices which drive human life. The voice of God, the voice of men, the voice of the human spirit, the voice of the world and the voice of Satan. The voice of God is in His word and by His Spirit. The voice of men is what the crowd is saying. In democracy they say that the voice of the people is the voice of God. It is not fully true. Some people choose the wrong president who totally destroys the nation. There are some who are even impeached while in office. Sometimes when the people have a particular desire and it is met by any president, the voice of the people has spoken. Sometimes, the voice of the people can put pressure on a leader to act contrary to his personal conscience and especially God's voice.

Saul was commanded to attack and destroy Amalek. He did everything except sparing the king and some fat animals which he said he had brought to sacrifice to the Lord. However, Samuel rebuked him saying, “...*Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity...* (1Sam 15:22-23)

When Saul rebuked him, he then began to tell the truth as to why he

did what he did as we read in the following: “*And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.*” (1Sam 15:24)

In church leadership the government is headed by God. We listen to the voice of God to lead the church. Sometimes the voice of congregations represented by deacons and deaconesses and other pastors try to put pressure on the lead pastor to take some steps contrary to what he is led to do. When Moses was on the mountain for forty days and night the people put pressure on Aaron to make them a god to lead them.

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses...we wot not what is become of him.” (Exo 32:1)

Maybe you are easily driven by what people say more than what God says. When you decide based on people's voices or opinion and not God's voice, you will take the wrong step.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord I will listen to your voice and refuse people's pressure.

DISCERNING THE VOICES THAT INFLUENCE YOUR LIFE FOR GOOD OR BAD (3)

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification."

(1Cor. 14:10)

Everything in the world came into being because of the voice of God. God speaks and He made us in His image with the same ability to speak. You see, animals have their own language they speak. Those who study zoology end up knowing the meaning of particular sounds animals make and can tell what they need. Every voice has a meaning. God created everything in the world with His voice. He said it and it stood. *"For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."* (Ps. 33:9) When we take the voice of God seriously and speak in line with it, we shall have similar results God had in controlling the circumstances of life. Another voice that can influence our lives is the voice of the human spirit. It is also called the conscience: *"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another"* (Rom. 2:15)

Sometimes your human spirit will accuse you of wrong things you do. Everybody has it. God put our conscience in us to check us in our behaviour and relationship with people. Everybody feels a check inside irrespective of religion, race, colour or creed. Apostle Paul used this same conscience, the voice of his spirit, all his life and continued to exercise himself: *"And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I*

have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." (Acts 23:1) *"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."* (Acts 24:16)

When the voice of your spirit does not allow you to do something and you feel bad about someone or an issue it is your conscience checking you. Be careful. When the voice is good, it means it is good. It is like a green light. When we neglect the voice of the human spirit, we are likely to destroy our faith as some did as was reported by Paul: *"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck"* (1Tim 1:19)

As believers we are blessed and advantaged to have the Holy Spirit in us to influence the human spirit and its voice so we can measure the voice with that of the Holy Spirit. Paul said, *"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost"* (Rom 9:1) When your conscience pricks you several times and you refuse to obey, it becomes seared or inactive. (1Tim 4:2). That is when people sin and keep sinning without feeling sin.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will listen to the voice of my spirit.

DISCERNING THE VOICES THAT INFLUENCE YOUR LIFE FOR GOOD OR BAD (4)

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.”

(1Cor. 14:10)

The commanding voice of God is very crucial in everything He does in the world. God commanded the earth into being by His voice. He said, “let there be...” and it was so. By the power of His voice creation came into being. This has not changed.

There are other voices which bring their influence to bear on people and issues of life. We have the voice of the human spirit which is commonly called the conscience, the voice of people, the voice of the world and the voice of Satan. We are dealing with the voice of the world. The term world in scriptures represent the system of the world and not just the earth mass. It portrays the government of the world. We know from scriptures that the god of this world is the devil. (2 Cor 4:3-4)

Jesus referred to Satan as the god of this world. He rules the system of this world. *“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.”* (John 14:30)

As a prince of the world, he has twisted the minds of people to run the world with his principles. He has endorsed gay and lesbian life. He propagates illegal abortion. He enriches his followers with wealth and opulence. He tried to lure Jesus into worshiping him so he would lavish the kingdom of the world, its glory and power on him but Jesus was wiser:

“And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. ⁷If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. ⁸And 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 4:5-8)

However, Jesus came to judge the devil by His death on the cross and His triumphant resurrection. Jesus said before He died that, *“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.”* (John 12:13)

Satan’s assignment in the world on your life is to frustrate you in your service to Christ. So, he interferes with your marriage, family and business, the very important life’s sustenance. Do not listen to the voice of your problems and the circumstances in the world. It is all deception.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I turn a deaf ear to the voice of the world.

DISCERNING THE VOICES THAT INFLUENCE YOUR LIFE FOR GOOD OR BAD (5)

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.”

(1Cor. 14:10)

It is very entertaining to watch a drama. A drama can take an hour or more but it could also be a skit of five to fifteen minutes. However, the time used in real dramatization on stage is a product of weeks, months or even years of rehearsals. Many things may have gone on unnoticed during drama rehearsal. Even within the time of the drama, many things happen behind the scenes. There are people there who put things together to make sure that what was rehearsed matches with the presentation.

It is the same as a church life. We have the behind-the-scenes ministry which many people do not see. These are what bring success in every church organization. It also happens in many secular organizations too. What has just been described also pertains to the life in the spirit. The issue of voices which influence people to do things in particular ways is real. These are voices behind the real drama of life. Why people attend church and why others do not and why others worship trees and rivers etc. are not in vain because there are voices speaking to folks to act that way.

The voice of God, the human spirit, the human body or flesh, people, the world and Satan are the major voices that drive people to act in some ways. The voice of Satan is deadly. The first time he spoke to man as recorded in

Genesis brought death to man when man obeyed his voice. Why do we think that after this event Satan has changed his mind? Satan inspired David to count Israel contrary to God's will. (1Ch 21:1) He listened to the voice of Satan and the consequences were terrible. Thousands died until he built an altar to halt it (1Chron 21:7-30).

Satan does not speak in such a way that we could easily know it is him. He pretends to be speaking the truth and he disguises his voice so we will not be able to make him out. The Bible says that, *“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”* (2Cor 11:14)

The fact is, he is a liar and a master of deception. How do we know the voice of Satan? His voice is always contrary to the word of God. That is the first way. If you do not know the word of God, you will find it very difficult to identify his voice. There are many prophets who start out genuinely but for the lack of the word, a lying spirit functions in a way they can't identify and thereafter they veer off the right way.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, give me insight in your word in Jesus' name. Amen!

OBEYING THE VOICE OF THE LORD CAN BE A BLESSING

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth."

(Deut. 28:1)

Nobody hears the voice of God, obeys what He says and remains the same. Throughout the history of man's relationship with God as recorded in the Bible, all those who heard and obeyed God's voice saw tangible results. The above scripture is a very serious promise from God to Israel that if they obeyed His voice and did as commanded, He would set them on high above all nations of the earth. This means no nation on earth could match them in any aspect of development that provides the essential needs of man on earth. How was God going to raise Israel to be on top of all the nations of the earth? God gave the answer as follows: *"And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God."* (Deut. 28:2)

God says, "and all these blessings shall come upon you..." This means that God will use blessings to elevate Israel above all nations. This shows the importance of blessings in the life of man. We cannot underestimate blessings at all in any way. When you look through scriptures, all that matters for man is God's blessing:

When God made man, He pronounced blessings upon them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and then take dominion.

Fruitfulness in marriage, business and all the work of our hands are products of God's blessings. God pronounced blessings on Noah and his children after the flood as follows: *"And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.'"* (Gen. 9:1)

All kinds of fruitfulness and enlargement are functions of God's blessings. If you want to enjoy God's blessings in your life, then key into obeying His voice.

It seems to me, and I believe this, that anytime God called people, He always gave them a promise of blessings. God called Abraham and promised him blessings:

"And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 12:2-3)

Obeying God's voice is the key to accessing His blessings.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will obey the voice of the Lord.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE LORD ON CONDITION OF OBEDIENCE

“And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God.”

(Deut. 28:2)

God wants to bless us but on condition that we obey His voice. Obedience to God’s voice ushers us into His blessings. The blessing is not automatic. It is triggered by obedience. When God called Abraham, he obeyed the voice of the Lord as commanded: *“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”* (Heb. 11:8)

We do not always have to understand God before we obey Him. Why? We are finite and limited in scope in understanding the ways of God. Abraham did not ask God to show him where he should go. God said, “... go to a place I will show you...” (Gen 12:1) If God asks you to do something, you do not need details before you act. Walking with God demands trust. We must believe Him for who He is. His nature is such that He can never lie or lead astray. *“God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfil it?”* (Num. 23:19)

All that Abraham did was to obey and move. That is how we flow with God. Just move at the sound of His voice. Abraham experienced blessings thereafter as stated in the Bible as

follows: *“Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.”* (Gen. 13:2) “Very rich” is the description of Abraham’s blessings. No wonder the Bible says that, *“The blessing of the Lord makes rich and He adds no sorrow with it”* (Pro 10:23).

Any time God demanded obedience from Israel, He added blessing to it. Here is another example:

“And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹⁴he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil.” (Deut. 11:13-14)

Here is a promise of seasonal blessings of rain that is needed to generate a harvest. God can cause rains to fall or to withhold it which can result in famine and poverty. It pays to obey the voice of the Lord. God’s record of blessing people through obedience is clean. He fulfills His word.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I confess to obey God’s voice and submit to His commands.

DEALING WITH THE OPPOSITES OF GOD'S VOICE

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"

(Isaiah 53:1)

A report is a specific form of writing that is organized around concisely identifying and examining issues, events, or findings that have happened in a physical sense, such as events that have occurred within an organization, or findings from a research investigation.

The main purpose of a report is to provide information (Massey university, New Zealand). We are dealing with a very crucial aspect of God and His voice or His word. It is important to understand the many voices in the world which are all vying for our attention. We have the voice of God, the human spirit, the voice of the flesh, people, the world and Satan. Which of these voices should we believe? This is the same as saying; whose report will you believe?

All voices are already conclusive in their pursuits. They demand allegiance. They want to be heard. When the voice of the flesh, for instance, is demanding that you engage in illicit sexual intercourse, what do you do? If the voice of Satan is asking you to compromise your faith and submit yourself to other religious faith contrary to the Bible, how do you react to it? If the circumstances in the world are not in your favour at all and you seem to be fighting all the time to make inroads in life what should be your attitude? All these voices are conclusive in reporting to you the

situation at stake and demand that you react to them. Whose report will you believe?

This is not new. All these have their foundation in the beginning of the world. God spoke with His voice and gave a command to Adam that on the day he would eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil he would die: *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (Gen. 2:17)

That was conclusive. It was final. God does not change His word. God's integrity is clean and pure. Now, Satan came with a different voice to the woman and spoke something directly opposite what God said: *"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die"* (Gen. 3:4)

This is the bedrock of spiritual warfare. God says you must be saved by believing in Jesus. Satan says you cannot be saved by believing in Jesus only. God says in His word that you are healed. Satan says your sickness will kill you. Whose report will you believe? Your friends say you are a failure. God says you can make it and for the righteous it is well with him (Isaiah 3:10).

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will believe the report of the Lord.

EXPOSING AND DEALING WITH THE LIAR

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

(John 8:44)

The above scripture describes the nature of Satan. He is called a murderer, a liar and a father of liars. As believers, we must know the voice of God and submit to it. We, however, must not forget that Satan is vying for our allegiance to his voice.

Adam and Eve knew the voice of God and yet Eve listened to the voice of Satan, yielded to it and convinced her husband to follow suit. Eve was not present when God commanded the man to avoid the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam informed Eve after she had been created. God addressed the man as a single person in the following:

¹⁵***"The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden..."***¹⁶***And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden" (Gen. 2:15-16)***

Did Adam give the exact command God gave him to Eve or Eve misinterpreted God's original command? From the question of the devil, it is clear that he tricked Eve. *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" (Gen. 3:1)*

Let us analyze this. He quoted God as saying *"you shall not eat of any tree in the garden."* Is that what God said? No! What did God say? **"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden"** Did you see the trick. God said *"you may surely eat of every tree of the garden."* Satan said, *"you shall not eat of any tree in the garden."* He presented the information as though God was wicked and withholding something good from them. He painted God in a different light. That is his ministry to date. All the time, he turns God's word upside down to deceive people. So how do you deal with him?

⁴*"For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ"* (2Cor 10:4-5) What we need is the knowledge of God to take the thought or voice of Satan captive.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I subdue every satanic voice against me in Jesus' name.

DEALING WITH CHRONICLES OF LIES

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"

(Isaiah 53:1)

Journalists will tell you that many reported speeches are slightly different from the original. It is still information but wrongly reported. The prophet is asking us a big question here: who hath believed our report? Prophets receive from God and report as commanded by God. All through the scriptures, we see that whenever the prophets spoke anything as coming from God, it was confirmed by God to mean that it was from the Lord. *"who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the counsel of his messengers..." (Isaiah 44:26)*

Read all the account about Moses and Pharaoh in the land of Egypt and discover that all the things God spoke through Moses that He wanted to do were all fulfilled. All the plagues God promised came to pass. So, the prophetic word in the Holy Bible contains the truth. It is genuine and a true reportage. It was against this background that the word of God says that,

¹⁸*As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. ¹⁹For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. ²⁰For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. (2Cor 1:18-20)*

All the prophecies of scripture are yes and true. They are the true report of the Lord. So anytime you want to cross-check on lies consult the word of God. It is God's voice. Whose report will you believe? There is always a sharp contrast between God's voice and Satan's. They do not agree. The way to unravel the chronicles of lies he bombards you with is to know the truth. If you have a firm grasp of the truth when any lie appears you can easily discern it. Let us try to identify a few chronicles of lies Satan projects against us. He says that your sickness is hereditary and cannot be healed. The voice of God says that, *"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."* (1Pe. 2:24) This means healing is available for you. It is a lie to believe that you cannot be healed of hereditary sicknesses. Another lie is that unless you cut corners and engage in forgery you cannot be rich. The voice of God says that, *"The blessing of the LORD makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it."* (Pro 10:22) So, we must identify the truth and compare it with the false and hold on fast to the truth.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, give me insight into your word of truth.

SERVING MY GENERATION (1)

“For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption”

(Acts 13:36)

*All the world's a stage, and all the
Amen and women merely players.
They have exits and their entrances; And
one man in his time plays many parts*
(Shakespeare). Indeed, the world is
a stage. We come and go and others
follow to play their roles. You are not
an accident. God planned your life and
brought you into the world at the right
time through the right parents and in
the right environment. The Bible is
clear about you as follows: *“Before I
formed you in the womb I knew you, and
before you were born I consecrated you; I
appointed you a prophet to the nations.”*
(Jer. 1:5)

God formed you to be a blessing to
the world. He has blessed you with
gifts and talents which must be used to
His glory. No matter your profession
or vocation, you must use it to glorify
Him. The scripture is clear about
using all we have and are to His glory:
*“whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles
of God; whoever serves, as one who serves
by the strength that God supplies—in
order that in everything **God may be
glorified through Jesus Christ.** To him
belong glory and dominion forever and
ever. Amen.”* (1Pet 4:11)

The Holy Bible is also clear about
using our human body to the glory
of God because for many people, they
think their body belongs to them and
therefore they can do anything they

like with it. *“¹⁹Or do you not know that
your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit
within you, whom you have from God?
You are not your own, ²⁰for you were
bought with a price. So glorify God in
your body.”* (1Co. 6:19-20) This applies
to believers in particular but in actual
fact, nobody owns his own body. That
is why when we die, our body goes
back to where it was borrowed from.
Yes! Everything we have is borrowed
from God and will eventually return
to its source. *“and the dust returns to the
earth as it was, and the spirit returns to
God who gave it.”* (Ecc. 12:7)

So why are you on earth? You are
here to fulfil God's will for your life.
Whatever you do must glorify God in
fulfillment of His will. What is God's
ultimate will for us? *“The Lord is not
slack concerning his promise, as some men
count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-
ward, not willing that any should perish,
but that all should come to repentance.”*
(2Peter 3:9) So, repentance leading to
salvation is God's ultimate will for us.
Therefore, in order to glorify God on
earth, you must align your life to any
work linked to the salvation of souls.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*Lord, please help me to serve my
generation in Jesus' name. Amen!*

WHAT WILL YOU BE REMEMBERED FOR IN YOUR CHURCH?

“The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.”

(Ps 34:16)

Is it possible to die and not be remembered at all? Is it possible to go into oblivion as though you never existed in the world? Yes! It is! There are many people who have come and gone and nobody even knows that they came. There are many people who have done well for humanity but not well to the ultimate will of God, which is salvation. Out of sheer giftedness in natural abilities, many have impacted their countries and the entire world. Those who invented scientific products, automobile, etc. are honoured by men for their contribution to the development of humanity. However, how many of them have their names written in the book of life? How many of them are in heaven right now? They will be remembered for their worth in society but spiritually they are doomed because they lack salvation.

If you are saved what will believers remember you for? Are you a committed believer in your church? What contribution do you make to help the church to grow and impact the kingdom of God? David served his generation and we all know what he did to help God's work prosper in his time. He fought God's battles. He had passion for the children of Israel when Goliath insulted them. David said, *“...what shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”* (1Sam

17:26). It was against this background that David went to fight against Israel. He had an irresistible passion for the people. His concern was the reproach of an uncircumcised person insulting the people of God and no one was able to withstand him. It was a sad and shameful moment for Israel, God's people who had experienced God in spectacular and wonderful ways now, afraid and backing away from their enemies. David's burning passion was *“...who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”*

We know that Israel represents the church. In today's context, there are many things fighting the church and many church needs must be met to get us going forward. Church projects take a long time to finish and sometimes the church becomes a ridicule among unbelievers. Sometimes church growth becomes a problem because believers refuse to win souls. Where is the David of our time to stand against the Goliath mocking the church? Today, we remember David for fighting the Lord's battle and winning it to take away the reproach from Israel. What will you be remembered for as a member of your church while alive and when you die?

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will arise and fight God's battles.

THE WAY TO THE TOP IS FROM DOWN

“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.”

(Mat 20:27)

God’s kingdom runs on keys. Jesus made it so clear when Peter confessed Him as the Son of God: *“And I will give unto thee the **keys of the kingdom** of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”* (Mat 16:19)

If you lack the right key to open the door you desire into your destiny, you will be standing behind the door for years. We need keys to unlock some things we want heaven to answer. Jesus said, I will give you keys of the kingdom of heaven. This promise was given to Peter when he caught a revelation about Christ. Jesus asked the disciples who He was and Peter said, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* (Mat 16:16).

Upon hearing this Jesus also said, *“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven”* (Mat 16:17) It was against this background that Jesus promised to give Peter keys of the kingdom. Jesus also interpreted keys to mean knowledge. *“Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away **the key of knowledge**...”* (Luke 11:52).

This means that any key of the kingdom you need is tied to knowledge in the word of God. We must not only get knowledge but revelation knowledge because the promise of the keys to Peter

was based on the Father’s revelation to him. This is what guarantees the key we need to open heaven to meet our needs.

If you desire to be great in the kingdom of heaven, you need a key to be that. Jesus gave us a key as follows: *“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant”* (Mat 20:27). The Greek rendition of chief (protos) is to be great, foremost in time, place, order or importance. It means to come before or be the best. This therefore means that in order to be first, important or the best, the key is to be a servant in the kingdom of God. That is the way to the top.

God’s kingdom differs from that of the world. In the world, you must be served to be great. In God’s kingdom, you must serve to be great. Jesus said, *“...You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ²⁶It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,* (Mat 20:25-27)

Find a service in your church today if you desire to be great.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will go down to go up in God’s kingdom.

ALL THE GREAT MEN IN THE BIBLE WERE SERVANTS

“...and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.”
(*Gen. 18:3*)

Abraham was the father of the nation of Israel. God called, blessed and promised him that he would be a father of many nations. However, this promise would only be made real on condition that he walked with God in obedience. Indeed, when God called him, he obeyed and left to a place he did not know (Heb. 11:8). This simple act of obedience to God yielded him profits. The Bible says “Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.” (*Gen 13:2*)

If you study the scriptures carefully, you will realize that Abraham called himself a servant. One day two angels and the LORD visited him and he gave them a warm hospitality: “*and said, “O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant.*”⁴*Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.”* (*Gen 18:3-5*)

The most interesting thing about the above passage is that Abraham called himself a servant and quickly started acting as one. Servants serve manually. They put their hands to work. Abraham ensured that the feet of the visitors were washed, a custom that is done only by servants in those days for visitors. The servanthood spirit of Abraham pleased the Lord

and thereafter, the Lord promised him and his wife a child: “*They said to him, “Where is Sarah your wife?” And he said, “She is in the tent.”*”¹⁰*The LORD said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.” ...*¹¹*Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah.”* (*Gen. 18:9-11*)

When you serve as a servant, you endear yourself to supernatural breakthroughs. Even when you have birth or job issues and you are a genuine servant of God, God will visit you and break that spell in your life as He did for Abraham and Sarah. Out of Abraham’s service for God, he was blessed with many years and wealth: “*Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.*” (*Gen. 24:1*)

The prophetic writings referred to Abraham as God’s servant: “*O offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones!*”⁴²*For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham, his servant.”* (*Isa. 105:6,42*) If you want supernatural intervention in your life be a servant of God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I humble myself to serve you from today.

SERVICE THAT OPENS DOORS TO OTHERS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

“...and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

(Mat. 20:27-28)

In every organization or nation there are variety of service areas which have corresponding levels of importance and remuneration. The service rendered by a security worker may differ from that of a manager or an administrator. The value of service rendered is calculated on the quantum or value of output of that service in the organization. Rewards are not the same. They differ based on the level of service.

In God's kingdom it is the same. God rewards service rendered according to work: *“...and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”* (Rev. 2:23)

So, let us ask ourselves this question: What is the greatest service in the kingdom of God which yields the greatest reward? The answer to this question lies in the example Jesus set for us on earth. Jesus said that, *“even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* (Mat. 20:27-28)

Jesus' main mission on earth is what we model our lives after. He is the perfect example of a servant in the kingdom of God. So, what did He do? He did not come to be served but to serve in the direction of giving His life as a ransom for many. His death on the

cross was to bring salvation to entire humanity. He served that interest. That accounted for why He had to still go to the cross despite the many miracles He performed. So, the work of salvation is the greatest service in the kingdom of God. It does not mean that others are not important. They are but the one that touches God's heart more is in the saving of souls.

That was why the last instruction of Jesus to the disciples -bordered on salvation of souls and discipleship making. *“¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* (Mat 28:18-19)

This ranks first in the kingdom of God. So, start engaging in services that will bring people to salvation. Singing, ushering, technical, sanctuary keeping, media etc. are important and yield rewards but the greatest reward is from soul winning.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will serve in soul winning.

MOSES, THE SERVANT OF GOD

"But Moses said to the LORD, 'Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue'"

(Exo 4:10)

Great men in Bible times were all called servants. In fact, they regarded themselves as servants. Abraham called himself a servant of God. That is why the greatest people in God's kingdom are servants. Jesus said that if you want to be great in the kingdom of God you must then become a servant.

"But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all." (Mark 10:43-44).

Today, in many churches people vie for positions and places where they can throw their weight around for people to acknowledge and serve them. In the kingdom of God, the measurement for greatness is determined by the degree of service rendered.

I have discovered that one of the great benefits of servanthood is access to the presence of God. Servants are very close to God's presence and they even attain a degree of friendship. God himself testified about Moses that he was His servant and spoke face to face with him *"Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. 8With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"* (Num. 12:7)

Aaron and Miriam spoke against Moses but God intervened to stand with Moses and rebuked them for gossiping and speaking against Moses. Why? It is because God regarded Moses as His servant. Servants of God are shielded by God. God is their protection and judge. You see, God's servants are elevated to a place of being able to speak with God like friends and so it was with Moses: *"Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent."* (Exo 33:11)

It is no wonder that God also referred to Abraham as a friend: *"But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend"* (Isa. 41:8) That is why these servants received God's secrets. God never did anything without telling them. God told Abraham of His intentions to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because He said, *"The LORD said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do'"* (Gen 18:17) God's secrets of life and future will be your portion if you start serving.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I have decided today to be a servant of God.

SERVANTS IN THE KINGDOM PERFORM SIGNS AND WONDERS

“He sent Moses, his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. They performed his signs among them and miracles in the land of Ham.”

(Ps. 105:26-27)

In the world today, many servants in a house are despised and ill-treated. They are made to do all the menial jobs at home without any proper remuneration. However, this is not so in the house of God's kingdom. It is rather the opposite. In God's house, the greatest people are servants and they are those who touch the heart of God. One of the assignments of servants in the house is to carry God's presence accompanied by signs and wonders.

Do you want to enjoy divine presence and signs and wonders? Then give yourself to the service of the Lord. We read in the above scripture that God sent Moses, His servant and Aaron and they performed signs and miracles in the land of Ham, i.e., Egypt. We all know the things that happened in Egypt before Israel became free from the bondage of Pharaoh. There were great signs and wonders.

If you are God's servant and He sends you on an errand to deliver a message, you go in the name of God. Most of the time the people will not believe your message or the one who sent you unless they see miracles, signs and wonders. That was why when God called Moses and sent him, he was reluctant to go because he knew that they would not believe in him. So, God

had to perform signs and wonders and empowered him to do same in order to convince the people that he was sent by Jehovah. ¹⁹*“But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.”* ²⁰*So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.”* (Ex 20:19-20)

It was in the same context that when Jesus Christ came to the earth as a servant of God, He had to prove to the world that He was sent by God to serve humanity with salvation. Therefore, He said, ³⁶*“do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’* ³⁷*If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me;* ³⁸*but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works...”* (John 10:37-39)

Jesus was called a servant (Is. 52:13). He also said He came to serve and give His life as a ransom (Mark 10:45). If you take the place of a servant in soul winning and other things you will see signs and wonders.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to be a good servant in your house.

TRUE SERVANTS ARE ERRAND BOYS AND GIRLS

“These twelve **Jesus sent out**, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans.”

(Mat. 10:5)

A careful study of scriptures shows that it is always servants who are sent. If you want something done which can be handled by your servant, you just give instructions and he carries it out accordingly. So, servants are errand boys or girls. Do you know that all the servants in the Bible were errand men and women?

Take for instance, Abraham who was called and sent from his family house to a place he even did not know. How in the world would you send a servant to a place he does not know to accomplish something for you? Despite not knowing the place he was sent to, he complied and went. That was a good and faithful servant. It was a trial of servanthood. He passed that test.

Take Moses too as an example. He ran an errand for God to leave a strange land where he was comfortable with his wife and children to Egypt to serve God's interest. Moses was an errand boy who obeyed and followed God's instructions to the letter. He was accounted a faithful servant in all things in the house of God: “*Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify...*” (Heb. 3:5)

If you are not ready to be sent you are not qualified to be a servant. That is the truth. Servants are sent to run errands for the Master. Jesus was an errand boy. Check it from scriptures.

Jesus said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” (John 20:21). As a sent one what did we see Jesus doing? We read that, “¹⁸**While walking by the Sea of Galilee**, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Mat. 4:18-19)

We find Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee to execute the Father's business. Have you walked to call people to salvation before? If not, you are too big to be an errand boy for Jesus. The Greek word for “while walking” (peripateo), means he was intentionally walking about or treading around looking for something, in this case souls or disciples. If you do not have time to walk around looking for disciples, you are not a true servant. It was Jesus' habit of walking about in this example too: “**And Jesus went about all Galilee**, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” (Mat 4:23)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I repent for not walking around to look for souls.

SIGNS AND WONDERS CONFIRM THE MESSAGE OF SERVANTS

“These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans.” (Mat. 10:5)

When God calls anyone, he must be ready to walk many times to accomplish God's purpose for his life. We thank God for industrial development and information technology which have given birth to means of transportation and easy communication. However, the same old way of reaching out to people is still relevant today. If you can accomplish your task using the available media, why not?

Many people use the social media to advertise themselves and tell the whole world how beautiful and handsome they look. They tell the world how successful they have become in life. Most of them have no time and space on their media pages to advertise and sell the message of the cross of the Master who has sent us. However, we can use the social media to promote the message of the kingdom of God.

Jesus called the twelve and sent them out with a message. If you do not go out with a message, you are not a servant. In their time, they had to walk or go with boats. Thank God for cars and airplanes today. We can go anywhere with the message of the Master. There is one thing we cannot do without. It is confirming the message with signs and wonders so that the recipients will believe. When Jesus called the disciples to send them, He empowered them to cast demons out and heal the sick as a confirmation of the message they carried:

“And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.” (Mat 10:1,8)

If you humble yourself as a servant of God and go as commanded, you are going to see signs and wonders following your message of salvation. Jesus promised the disciples of working signs and wonders by obeying the command to go as follows: ¹⁵*And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*** ¹⁷***And these signs shall follow them that believe;*** *In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues* ¹⁸*They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” (Mark 16:15,17-18)*

When you believe and go you shall have God's backing with the above signs following you wherever you go. The lack of signs and wonders is a result of believers not going. We do not see miracles of healing and casting out demons and of course financial blessings also because we do not go.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am obeying the command to go immediately

YOUR WAY TO FINANCIAL BLESSINGS

"And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing."

(Luke 22:35)

The greatest need of the world which is what everybody is chasing day and night is financial freedom. Everyone is seeking for their material wellbeing. We all want to do well materially. This cuts across religion, race, colour and creed. The Bible says it clearly that, *"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."* (Eph 4:28)

We work to earn money in order to give to others in need. That is how it works. So, we must engage in profitable work to get enough for ourselves. Jesus came to add another dimension about work which is a spiritual principle that is capable of multiplying our earnings. He said,

³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

³¹Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Mat 6:30-33)

Jesus mentioned the basic necessities of life which everybody needs; food, clothing and shelter. These days, we

need cars and phones too. Jesus came with a certain mind-set about how to get material things and get them more and more. He showed us the principle of putting God first by seeking His kingdom first. He said all these things will be added to anyone who seeks God's kingdom first. "How will they be added?" someone will ask. Please, ask God who said it. However, I have an answer for you. It will come by faith. Jesus said, *³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field...will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*

Little faith people focus on the material. Big faith people focus on the kingdom. If you believe in God that He can provide your needs, then do what He said. Seek His kingdom first. You seek His kingdom by bringing people into it through soul winning.

When Jesus sent the disciples without money, they said they did not lack. It means there was a supernatural provision. Start winning souls as a test case. Be intentional at it. See it as a business deal with God

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I believe your word. I will seek your kingdom first for all my material things in Jesus' name. Amen!

SPIRITUAL INVESTMENTS

“So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

(Luke 12:21)

The word “treasure” in the Greek means, to amass or reserve, to lay up, keep in store, heap treasure together, or heap up. This is similar to accumulation of wealth in what we practice today in banking. When you save a lot of money in the bank you amass or reserve treasure. You can reserve treasures for yourself, others (family) and God. In the above scripture, Jesus narrated a story of a rich man who amassed wealth for himself:

“¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, ‘The land of a rich man produced plentifully...¹⁸And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’¹⁹And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’”²⁰But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ (Luke 12:16, 18-20)

This was a shrewd business man who was visionary and hard working. However, he became a fool because he did not consider God in his scheme of things. It was all about himself. He had much treasure on earth for many years. His bank account was fat and he believed that he would never lack money for the rest of his life. However, he died prematurely without ever spending all the treasures he had heaped up. This is the life of many people today. He saved in an

earthly bank without considering a heavenly bank. When he died, Jesus said, *“So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:21)*. How do we become rich toward God? It is when we invest our treasures into the bank in heaven whose owner and manager is God:

*“³³Sell your possessions...give...Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, **with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail**, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.³⁴For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Luke 12:33-34)*

We must trade in our heavenly bank now. When we practice spiritual investment, we will enjoy supernatural provision on earth. Jesus encourages us to even trade in our earthly possessions in order to have a saving account in heaven which cannot suffer inflation. Whatever we give to God’s work goes to our credit in our heavenly account with interest too.

Jesus believes in savings with interest in the following statement: *“Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.” (Mat 25:27)*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

From today, I am beginning to invest into my heavenly account in Jesus’ name. Amen!

MY SON GIVE ME YOUR HEART

"My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways."

(Pro 23:26)

When a father pleads with his son for something, it shows how important it is to him. Most fathers are reluctant to ask things from their children. The Bible says that fathers make reserves for their children: *"A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous."* (Pro 13:22) *"...for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children."* (2 Cor. 12:14)

In view of this most fathers do not look forward to the wealth of their children. In our key scripture, we see a father asking his son to give him his heart. He did not ask for money or property. He asked for the son's heart. You see, the heart is the man. The heart is the centre of your being; emotions, will, intellect etc. When the heart decides, nothing can change it except God. We are admonished to protect and guard the heart because all the issues of this life come from it: *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."* (Pro 4:23)

In view of the importance of the heart to man, God does not also demand anything from man but the heart. One of the most important things the heart follows after is treasure. Man's heart naturally gravitates towards places of wealth and opulence because these material things are needed to sustain our lives on earth. We need food, clothing and shelter which are made available via money. The heart desires

these things. Jesus said that. *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* (Luke 12:34)

Do you know why God demands your heart? When God gets your heart, your treasures will naturally flow to Him because your heart follows your treasure. If God says, "give me your heart" He knows that other things attached to your heart will follow. When God demands your treasure, it is because He wants your heart so that you do not end up like the rich fool who had so much earthly treasure and lost eternity in God's presence.

If you invest your material wealth in your heavenly bank, your heart will also be in heaven thus making you heavenly conscious, on the principle that where your treasure is, your heart will be there also. We must also understand that treasures are of the heart. *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good"* (Lk 6:45)

The heart decides where the treasure should go. Where your money goes most is where your heart is. If most of your treasure is in God your heart will be in God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will invest my resources in my heavenly bank from today in Jesus' name.

THE VALUE OF GOD'S KINGDOM

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field"

(Mat 13:44)

When a man finds something more valuable than all he has and goes and sells all he has to buy that thing, it shows the value of the thing to him. This parable was given by Jesus Christ regarding the value of the kingdom of God. Jesus is just saying that no material wealth can match the value of God's kingdom. Everything about God's kingdom is more valuable than anything money can buy. For instance, the Bible says that, *"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."* (Rom. 14:17)

Eating and drinking are material things but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit are spiritual kingdom values and virtues. Nothing on earth can buy righteousness. God's righteousness cannot be compared with gold and silver. Many people follow gold and silver and neglect God's righteousness thus making themselves candidates of hell. Jesus said that, *"And Jesus said to his disciples, 'Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.'"* ²⁴*Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."* (Mat 19:23-24)

Many rich people despise righteousness because it is an intangible substance. We cannot see or touch it. Their value for wealth is higher than righteousness

which is needed for eternity. Wealth and riches are good but only for the earth. They have no eternal value, unless they are used to promote eternal things like salvation of souls and establishment of churches. That is the only way they can be of eternal value. A rich young ruler came to Jesus who claimed that he had observed all the laws of Moses from his youth. Jesus then recommended the following: ²¹*Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."* ²²*When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."* (Mat 19:21-22)

That is the problem with many rich people. They find it difficult parting with their wealth to promote God's heavenly kingdom on earth. Why? Their heart is firmly attached to their wealth. They can promote earthly things like funerals, sports, politics, education etc. but not the gospel. They only give to churches to make themselves acknowledged but not from their heart. Their value of the kingdom is low. Where your treasure goes determines the location of your heart. It is your personal choice.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will put value on God's kingdom henceforth.

WHAT YOU VALUE DETERMINES YOUR COMMITMENT

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”
(Mat 13:45-46)

Jesus used many parables to teach about the kingdom of God. Merchants are businessmen and women who travel from place to place looking for things to buy to make profit. They are only profit minded. Jesus likened the kingdom of God to a merchant searching for fine pearls.

The commitment of this merchant to his search is very important. His commitment to the search of fine pearls never stopped until he found only one pearl of great value. What does this teach us? Your commitment to a profession or vocation or any other endeavour is contingent on your value for it. When you see believers who are lukewarm or cold about God's kingdom it shows that they do not value it. Do you know why medical or law students spend time night and day learning and never stop until they complete their course? It is because of the value they have for the profession. They know that at the end of the day it will pay off and the dividends will be much higher than the investment.

Another aspect of the merchant's commitment to the value he had for the pearl of great price is that he went and sold all that he had and bought it. This shows that his estimation of the pearl was higher than all his possessions. What does this teach us? If indeed we hold high the kingdom of God above all our earthly possessions, our commitment to the kingdom will

be higher than that of our earthly profession or vocations and we will deem our commitment to kingdom issues and endeavours more valuable and profitable than our personal endeavours.

Unfortunately, there are many believers who value the profit they gain from their professions and vocations higher than the profit they gain from doing kingdom business and pursuing kingdom agenda. Jesus gave us a clear example of values we place either on earth or on eternity as follows:

²⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? (Mat 16:25-26)

This means that the price of the whole world cannot buy your soul. The value of your soul is higher than the value for the riches and wealth in the world. It means anything you do to enhance your souls' worth is higher than anything you do to enhance the worth of your worldly possessions.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I pledge my commitment to your kingdom from today in Jesus' name. Amen!

SEEKING AND SERVING GOD IS NOT IN VAIN

"I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right."

(Isaiah 45:19)

It is clear from scriptures that nobody serves God in vain. Throughout the Bible all the servants of God who followed God's instructions and served God's interest received rewards. We see in the above scripture God speaking through the prophet that He did not call the seed of Jacob to seek Him in vain. This means that He called them to seek Him for a reward. We read in scriptures that those who believe and seek God diligently shall be rewarded:

*"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that **he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.** (Heb. 11:6)*

God is a rewarder. He rewards seekers. When God called Abraham and he followed God's voice and direction, at the end of his life we read that he was blessed in all things including long life: *"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things."* (Gen. 24:1)

It is not in vain to seek and serve God. Abraham was not only rewarded with blessings in all areas, but the blessings also affected his descendants. God said to Abraham after he went to sacrifice Isaac:

"¹⁷That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand

which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;¹⁸ And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22:17)

When you sacrifice your wealth and pursue kingdom business in soul winning, engaging in church planting, follow up of souls and visitation of members to help their faith, it is not in vain. God promised Israel:

"You shall serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from among you.²⁶None shall miscarry or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days." (Ex. 23:25-26)

These are the rewards for seeking and serving God diligently. He has promised to bless our bread and water. This means our sustenance will be blessed with our businesses. He promised to take away sickness from us. Healing and good health will be our reward. Barrenness and premature death will be broken. These are sure promises.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will commit myself to your kingdom and serve you all the days of my life.

THE CROSS REWARDS

"He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward."

(Heb. 11:26)

The Bible is full of types and antitypes. It means that whatever happened in the Old Testament has its counterpart in the New Testament. We see many types or shadows of things which represented the real things that took place in the New Testament. Scripture says, *"For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near."* (Heb. 10:1)

For instance, the lamb that was slain by the Israelites, whose blood was smeared on their lintels was a type of Christ. It was called the Passover Lamb. The blood of the lamb was a type of the blood of Christ:

*"In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover."*¹³ *The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt."* (Ex. 12:11,13)

The killing of the lamb represents the death of Jesus on the cross. Whatever results or reward the blood of the lamb achieved in their lives, we also in this era can achieve more because we deal with the real blood of Jesus. The blood

of Jesus can cover us so that the evil forces and their plaques will always pass over us. We want to study about the reward we received in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Let us study a type first: *"²⁴By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin."* (Heb. 11:24-25)

Moses chose to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He was a prince in Egypt. He relinquished this and joined his brethren the Israelites who were slaves in Egypt. What was the rationale for Moses' action? We read in scriptures that, *"He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward."* (Heb. 11:26)

So as far back as Moses' time, he saw that the cross could reward better than the fame and opulence he enjoyed in Egypt. He actually looked forward to the reward. Whatever you do for the sake of the cross has a reward.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will hold on to the cross and serve the interest of the cross in Jesus' name. Amen!

WHAT IS THE DRIVING FORCE OF YOUR LIFE?

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”

(Heb.11:26)

How could one brought up and nurtured as a prince to the throne of Pharaoh finally decide to leave all the riches and the throne and opt for suffering? This is unimaginable! Can you imagine a president's son leaving the presidential palace to mingle with people of a low social class in slums and feel that it is a better life? This is exactly what Moses did.

Moses had a very rich and privileged background having been brought up in the king's palace and in the best schools in Egypt. The whole of the book of Genesis and almost all of Deuteronomy was written by Moses. We see the orderly presentation of the history of God's dealing with people, especially, Israel. We see the orderly presentation of the various spiritual, civil and military laws he penned down. This reflects a great learner, an academician and a law maker and judge. Probably he was a professor. The Bible attests to this as follows: ²²*And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.* ²³*And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.”* (Acts 7:22)

Despite that, he placed a higher premium on what He saw spiritually than the many treasures and riches he enjoyed in Egypt. The reproach of Christ is simply the suffering of Jesus on the cross. He compared the

luxurious life of a prince and the life of a suffering slave with his brethren and discovered that suffering like Christ was far better. Therefore, he decided to suffer reproach for the sake of Christ.

The driving force of Moses from the time he decided to suffer reproach was not the extravagance and opulence he enjoyed any more. There was a paradigm shift. He followed the cross. He denied himself of worldly pleasures to take hold of the cross. The driving force was the reproach of Christ; the cross. We see another academician named Saul who had an encounter with Jesus on the way to Damascus to execute his religious plans, arrest Christians and imprison them and probably kill them with the law. Paul said, ⁷*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* ⁸*Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ”* (Php 3:7)

There is something strange about the cross that transforms people's mindset. It changes behaviour. It alters rationale.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

My value for the cross is higher than all.

THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF JESUS WAS THE CROSS

"Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."

(Luke 9:22)

Jesus did so many things in His life when He came on earth. He repaired broken lives by healing them and sending them back to society to be worthy people who could contribute to the development of society. Jesus was a repairer of families. He repaired broken lives. One day, Jesus sent the disciples to Samaria ahead of Him to prepare the ground before touching base. The following ensued: " ⁵³*And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.* ⁵⁴*And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?*" (Luke 9:53-54)

The disciples' reaction to the rejection meted out to Christ was judgmental. They were so furious that they were asking permission from Jesus to call fire from heaven to burn the people of that village in Samaria. What was Christ's reaction? ⁵⁵*But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* ⁵⁶***For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them...*** (Luke 9:55)

Jesus did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. He came to put order to God's creation. He came to seek and save the lost. He went about healing and doing all manner of good to people. The scripture is clear about

His ministry on earth as follows: *"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."* (Acts 10:38)

Jesus did good. Feeding the five thousand and four thousand in different sessions, feeding the poor from His own coffers kept by Judas etc. and many more. Can you imagine the joy and celebration in homes when families had their dead come back to life and their physically challenged siblings, nephews and nieces, mothers and fathers restored to normalcy? This should have been alright and sufficient for Jesus. However, He still had to go to the cross to finish the most important assignment. Hence the greatest feat of Jesus on earth was not healing people and feeding the crowd.

It was the cross, His death on the cross. That carried a higher reward of eternal salvation plus all the physical and material things he gave to bless people, i.e., things that accompany salvation. (Heb. 6:9) If that is the case when we also align our lives to the cross and promote it, all the accompaniments will come to us.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Jesus, I thank you for the cross.

WHEN YOU ARE AFRAID CRY UNTO GOD

“And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD”
(Ex. 14:10)

There are so many things in life that tend to put fear in us. The fear factor is part of life, and it comes to test our faith in God. Everybody in one way or the other entertains fear especially in the face of a daunting task. Some fear when they are about to start a business not knowing how it will turn out.

Others fear when they are about to visit the doctor for a checkup on some troubling situation in their body not knowing what it may be. However, when your fears seem to overwhelm you what is the best antidote? In the above scripture Israel had left Egypt by the mighty power of God and camped in the wilderness. Then the army of Pharaoh began to chase them. When the children of Israel saw them, they were very much afraid and they cried out to the LORD.

When you are afraid your first act of defense is to cry to God in prayer. God is our mighty Shield and help: *“O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.”* (Ps 115:10)

Crying to God in prayer is a sign of faith. It shows that you can trust Him for deliverance. It shows that you need help from Him and that He is the only person that can shield you from the challenges facing you. Sometimes

many people forget to look up to God in their time of fears. When you trust man for help it shows that you do not trust God. God's word says, *“Thus says the LORD: ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. ‘He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.’”* (Jer. 17:5-6)

When you are afraid and in affliction your first point of call should be God. The Bible is very clear about this as follows: *“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray....”* (James 5:13)

Then, as you call on God, He will strengthen your heart to face your fears. You will realize that your fears have soon given way to faith to confront the task ahead of you. As you pray God will then direct you as to what to do. Be alert in your mind and spirit because He will show you what to do.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil for Thou art with me.

BUILDING A CONSISTENT PRAYER LIFE

[*"Pray without ceasing"*

(1Thess 5:17)]

Many believers see prayer as a burden. As a matter of fact, even the thought of prayer puts them off completely. We have a problem to deal with in a church where the members do not have a prayer lifestyle on their own. Prayer must not be endured but enjoyed. Prayer is just having fellowship with God.

In prayer we chat with God on any issue. Why then should prayer be a burden and boring to some believers? One of the reasons this is so is because we do not think about God enough. We are not conscious of God in our daily lives. David said, *"I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken."* (Ps 16:8)

When you set God before you in your mind, you will certainly want to pray. If God is in your consciousness, you will draw near to Him. The Bible says, pray without ceasing. This means maintaining a consistent lifestyle of prayer. Consistency is the key word here. It means always. You must engage in prayer every day. Pray without ceasing means two things; being thoughtful of God and connecting to Him in your mind and spending time daily officially to talk to God in fellowship. Even though Jesus was the Son of God He spent time to be with His father in prayer constantly. He had a lifestyle of prayer. Early in His ministry, He prayed when he was going to be baptized by John: *"Now when all the people were baptized, and*

when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened" (Lk 3:21)

He also went to pray in the wilderness with fasting for forty days and nights (Luke 4:1-2). Jesus had a lifestyle of praying every morning in what we call dawn prayers: *"And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed"* (Mark 1:35)

After the feeding of the five thousand crowd, we read that He dispersed the disciples and the crowd and went straight to the mountain to pray: *"⁴⁵immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray."* (Mark 6:45-46)

You must be able to create time to pray. Time is not on anyone's side. If you love Jesus, you will spend time with Him in fellowship. If God means a lot to you, you will love to meet with Him daily. Start your day with God and the day will be good. Praying before you set off for your daily chores shows recognition for God's intervention in your life.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to love you and spend time with you in prayer in Jesus' name. Amen!

WHAT MAKES PRAYER ENJOYABLE?

"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers."

(Rom. 1:9)

When you make prayer an enjoyable experience, you will never relent in prayer. In fact, when you do not pray, you begin to feel some discomfort. In the above scripture, Paul was invoking God as a witness to the fact that he never ceased praying for the Roman church. We must emulate Paul's example of prayer which was also the life of Christ.

When you see prayer as a fellowship to enjoy between you and God, it always becomes a delight. I discovered from the above scripture that Paul engaged in prayer of intercession most of the time, praying for the saints and the churches. He carried this practice on daily basis. Paul narrated his commitment to the ministry in the following:

*"²⁶In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. ²⁸**Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.**" (2Cor. 11:26-28)*

Paul mentioned so many things he suffered for the sake of the gospel and in verse twenty-eight, he mentioned the care of the churches which he carried daily. The only way to carry the

care of the churches daily is to pray for them. This is called intercessory prayer. Intercessory prayer is what makes prayer very exciting. Intercession means praying for others. Paul's prayer for the Roman church was not an isolated case. He prayed for all the churches as we see in the following examples in the churches at Philippi and Corinth:

"³I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy" (Php 1:3-4)

"⁴I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; ⁵That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge" (1Cor 1:4)

Paul began his prayer with thanksgiving before he made any request for them. When you begin prayer with thanksgiving and worship, you do not feel bored in prayer. I recommend that you engage in thanking and worshiping the Lord more in your prayer sessions and that becomes a platform to change the frequency to intercession. These are the two main features of an effective prayer.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I thank You for Your word. I am going to engage in intercessory prayers from henceforth in Jesus' name. Amen!

KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT PRAYER

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

(Matt 6:9-10)

There are many believers whose prayer life is in shambles because in their prayer session they focus only on themselves. If we decide to be more scriptural on prayer and to know the secret of answered prayer, then we must move from the “me” prayers to “them or others” prayers.

What do we mean by this? We mean that we must move from focusing on praying for our personal needs and rather focus on the needs of others. A careful study of the prayer life of Jesus shows that every effective prayer begins with thanksgiving and worship. Jesus taught us a model prayer in the following: *“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread”* (Mat 6:9-11)

So, we start from a focus on the Father because God is first in all things. God’s place cannot be given to anybody. I believe that thanksgiving, praise and worship are first fruits we offer to God in prayer. It must always be first. You can spend thirty minutes to one hour doing this stuff for as long as time will allow. Remember that it is always God first.

Jesus then moved to the kingdom. This is the mother of intercessory prayer. We pray to advance the kingdom of God on earth which is why Jesus came on earth. Jesus said, *“but he said to*

them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.” (Luke 4:43)

The ultimate purpose of Christ’s coming on earth to die on the cross was to cause us to enter His kingdom. Therefore, the next highest form of prayer apart from worship and thanksgiving is to pray to advance the kingdom of God on earth. The prayer of worship and thanksgiving are different from petition prayers where we ask God for things.

The highest form of the prayer of petition is kingdom advancement prayers. This is where we pray for issues on the kingdom of God. Why would Jesus spend all night in prayer and not get tired? *“In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God.”* (Luke 6:12)

What was He praying for? I am sure He prayed about the kingdom. If you want to enrich your prayer life and be addicted to staying and hanging out in God’s presence relentlessly then adopt a new way of prayer. Focus on intercession.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, stir me up to be an intercessor in Jesus’ name. Amen!

STANDING IN THE GAP

"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

(Eze 22:30)

One of the greatest assignments of the church is to stand in the gap for the world. Standing in the gap is a term used to portray a prayer position where we intercede for people. God told Ezekiel that He was looking for a man to stand in the gap before Him for the land so that He would not destroy the land. Standing in the gap is an intercessory ministry.

Many believers know how to worship and make prayer of petition for themselves but they do not know the power of intercessory prayer. A simple word we can use to explain intercession is intervention. When you intervene, you do so in favour of the one you intervene for. For instance, Abraham had to intervene for the salvation of Sodom and Gomorrah. However, after all the effort He made, he still could not get enough righteous people to save them (Gen 18:22-33). He tried his best.

Another example of intercession or intervention is the stopping of the plague that hit Israel when they rebelled against God in the wilderness. Moses was negotiating with God not to destroy the children of Israel. However, before he could say Jack, God had already begun killing them. Right there, Moses asked Aaron to take a censor and burn incense and stand between the living and the dead.

⁴⁴*and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,* ⁴⁵*"Get away from the midst of*

this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces. ⁴⁶*And Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censor, and put fire on it from off the altar and lay incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from the LORD; the plague has begun."* ⁴⁷*So Aaron took it as Moses said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, the plague had already begun among the people. And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people.* ⁴⁸***And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped.*** ⁴⁹*Now those who died in the plague were 14,700..."* (Num. 16:44-49)

See the number of the dead; 14,700 within a very short time. If Aaron had not been told by Moses to intervene more people would have died that day. This is what believers must do. Our incense is prayer, and we do it to salvage sinners.

"Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!" (Ps 141:2)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to stand in the gap for people for their salvation in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE CROSS OF JESUS WAS THE BRIDGE FOR US

“And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.”

(Eze. 22:30)

God works in collaboration with man to dominate the earth. Man possesses the image of God and that makes it very easy for God to engage man as a custodian and manager of the earth. When man goes against God's will, He expects man to willingly repent and come back to Him.

However, in most cases it is very difficult for man to do so without a mediator. That was why God used prophets in the Old Testament to warn people and stand in the gap for them. In fact, that was why God instituted the sacrificial system in the Old Testament and ordained priests to offer blood on the altar and burn incenses before the ark of God for the Israelites. (Heb. 8:3)

What they did in the Old Testament was only a shadow of what must pertain in the New Testament. Jesus came as the real sacrificial lamb who also doubled as the High Priest who offered His blood in heaven:

“¹¹But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation ¹²he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal

redemption. ¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” (Heb. 9:11-14)

This act of dying on the cross and shedding His blood for us was the way Jesus stood in the gap for us for our redemption. This act of redemption saved us from hell fire and as many as will acknowledge and accept this love gift will have eternal life. Jesus had to mediate for us as man sent to man:

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.” (1Tim 2:5-6)

The cross became the bridge. Today we must also present the cross to the world because the blood of the cross is still pleading for the salvation of man.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I thank You for the cross. I will stand in the gap to present the cross to the dying world.

WE ARE GOD'S HOPE FOR THE WORLD

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2Cor 5:17)

The sweetest and greatest thing that ever happened to man was to become a new creation. New creation is the state of life where man is born again spiritually to possess the nature of God's life which the first man, Adam and Eve, lost in the Garden of Eden through disobedience.

New creation is not an act of man but of God. We are told in scriptures that, *"¹⁷Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

¹⁸And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2Cor 5:17-18)

All things are of God. Our new creation reality is of God. Jesus made this same statement about the author of our new birth as follows: *"¹¹He came unto his own, and his own received him not. ¹²But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:11-13)

You see, Jesus came to the Jews as prophesied through the prophets in the Old Testament. Moses said, *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen"* (Deut. 18:15) In view of this, the Jews were always expecting a prophet

like Moses. It was in this context that Philip spoke about Jesus as follows:

"Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." (John 1:45). Isaiah prophesied about Him that the Emmanuel would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). That was why Jesus started preaching the kingdom among the Jews but they refused Him. However, beyond the Jews, all those who receive Jesus as Saviour immediately become children of God. As the scripture says; *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:13). It is an act of God. We are new creations. After becoming children of God. We are given a ministry to also make sure that others are reconciled to God. *"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation"* (2Cor 5:18)

God has made us mediators or peace makers. We are the hope of the world. Let us bring others to God so they can become children of God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am a new creature. I have the ministry of reconciliation.

WE HAVE RECEIVED GOD'S FULLNESS

"For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

(John 1:16)

Many believers lack a proper understanding of who they are in Christ. This puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to dealing with the devil and his cohorts and of course all other things that confront us in our world. The above scripture says that "From Christ's fullness we have all received grace upon grace." It means we are all that Christ is. This was imparted to us when we became children of God. In order to understand this statement better we need to know a few things God's word says concerning Christ and this will help us to appreciate what He has made out of us sinners. Who is Jesus and what is the relationship between Jesus and God the Father? The following scriptures answer it all:

"¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (Col 1:15-19)

Jesus possesses all that God the father has. Being the image of the invisible God, we see God in Him and see Him as God. No other image can be found

anywhere like God than Jesus. Now in the verse 19, He concludes that "*For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell*"

Therefore, if Christ is in us, then automatically we also possess the fullness of God. This is hard to accept but that is the truth. Here is another scripture to boost your faith more about this revelation:

"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. ¹⁰And you are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power" (Col 2:9-10)

In Jesus the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. It means the body of God fully dwells in Him. Then it continues to say that we are complete in Him. Why are we complete in Him? It is because Jesus in whom dwells the fullness of God also dwells in us.

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." (1John 4:15)

Once you confess Jesus as the Son of God, you are entitled to have God's indwelling presence. That is pure salvation. God dwells in you. His nature is in you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I possess the fullness of God in me because I am a child of God.

HOW TO LIVE IN THE FULLNESS OF GOD

"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And you are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power."

(Col 2:9-10)

We cannot continue to lead defeated lives if we understand the benefits of becoming a child of God. Most of the time, many believers lack a proper understanding of what Jesus did for us on the cross and how by our redemption by the blood we are made to inherit everything that belongs to God.

The key scripture says that in Jesus Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwells in body form. This means that if we want to see God, we must see Jesus because He is the image of God who possesses all that God is. All we must do is to accept this gift of salvation Jesus wrought for us in His death and His resurrection.

This act of God ensures that God comes to abide in us: *"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."* (1John 4:15). How can God dwell in us? We are taught in scriptures that it is by His Spirit because we keep His word: *"And he who keeps His commandment dwells in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He gave to us."* (1John 3:24)

We have work to do on ourselves. We must be conscious of the presence of God in us by constantly walking in His word. That way we assure ourselves that He is right there on the inside of us. Walking in the word is

key to walking in Him which is also key to demonstrating His indwelling presence in us:

"Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving" (Col 2:6-7)

This is the crux of the matter. Many receive Christ but refuse to move on to the next level, which is walking in Him. We walk in Him by obedience to His word. Human beings are made to walk forward not backward. Walking demands taking conscious steps to your destination. Taking steps on your path is about making decisions and taking actions based on the word; *Your Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.*" (Ps 119:105)

Ask yourself whether what you want to say or do is backed by the word of God. This is the way to walk in Him and gradually, you will be expressing the indwelling presence of God in you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, open my eyes to your word so I act by your word in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE MYSTERY OF THE INDWELLING PRESENCE OF GOD

"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power."

(Col 2:9-10)

It is an interesting thing to know that God can dwell in us. Maybe this does not excite you because you do not understand the implication of having the whole creator of the universe dwelling in you. When you read the Old Testament, you will always find out that it has been God's will to dwell among men and to manifest Himself to men. I am sure Adam and Eve saw God because they always fellowshiped with Him at a certain spot in the Garden of Eden. They fled God's presence from that spot because of sin. (Gen 3:8)

God's encounter with the Israelites on the Mount Sinai was a typical example of God desiring to show part of Himself to man (Exo. 19). As if that was not enough, He instructed Moses to make Him an ark (like a box) and put the Ten commandments in it so that He would come and dwell among the children of Israel (Exo. 25:1-8). Then Solomon built a temple and God came down like a cloud like He did in the tabernacle of Moses to signify, as it were, that "I am among you." During the dedication of the temple, Solomon prayed a prayer to attract God's presence to the temple. Among the many things he said was the following: *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven*

cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!" (1Kings 8:27)

The question is; if God cannot be contained on the earth and the universe He made, how can a house or temple contain God? This was the same thought of Apostle Paul in the following: *"The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man"* (Acts 17:24)

However, suffice it to say that, even though nothing can contain God as a person, any human being who receives His Son as savior and Lord can become the dwelling place of God and God is pleased to dwell in him. This is a mystery. This is pure love at work. *"To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Col 1:27)

This is the greatest mystery ever in the entire universe. Finally, God has got a home in humans, not in wood, or a piece of cloth but in his own image. Mysterious!

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Father, I am grateful that you live in me now. Thank you, Jesus.

ENGAGING THE MYSTERY OF HIS INDWELLING PRESENCE

“To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
(Col 1:27)

The mystery of having to become the dwelling place of God is hard to grasp by many. Until we change our mind to conform to this revelation that God can indeed dwell in us, we will not benefit much from His indwelling presence. If we do not catch this revelation, we will walk as mere men on earth with nothing to show. Then the powers of darkness will have a field day dominating every part of our lives. Then we will fear witches, wizards, voodoo and juju, the elementary powers of the earth.

Indeed, the Bible says that, *“Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (Col 2:6-9)*

If we are ignorant of who we really are in Christ and do not walk according to His word we are left to the destructive elemental spirits of the world and they will certainly take us captive through human philosophy and traditions of men. These demons are always there looking for spiritually bankrupt people to devour. God is clear about what we need to do: *“Be sober-minded; be*

watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith... (1Peter 5:8-9)

I have seen some of my family members speaking to the dead in coffins during funeral services of our loved relatives, as though they can hear, making invocations in their distress and sorrow. Pure ignorance! Those invocations can rather attract demons. Many people adhere to traditions about things that had to be done for the dead before they were buried else some evil could happen to the family. This is captivity out of pure ignorance of who we are in Christ. We are admonished to resist the devil steadfast in the faith. Faith comes by the word. Therefore, we must resist by the word. *“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving” (Col 2:6-7)*

We must abide by this admonition to be firmly rooted him and established in the faith because it takes faith to express His dwelling presence in us

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will not be moved. God dwells in me.

YOU CANNOT BE ASHAMED BY REASON OF HIS PRESENCE IN YOU

“To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
(Col 1:27)

Nobody experiences God's indwelling presence and remains defeated. Defeat only comes to the weak. There is a mystery we must engage in, in order to remain champions in our quest for life's destiny. It is the mystery of the indwelling presence of God. The most important thing about the above scripture is that where Christ dwells there is hope. The riches of the glory of the mystery is that “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” In the first place it is a mystery to have God dwelling in us. God the creator of all things is fully in us according to His word:

“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. ¹⁰And you are complete in Him, who is the Head of all principality and power” (Col 2:9-10)

We do not need anyone to be complete in Him. We do not need any philosophy of men to be full of God. We are complete in Him. We possess righteousness, wisdom, sanctification etc. In fact, we are told in scriptures that, *“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1Cor 1:30)*

Everyone who has Christ has a glorious hope because “Christ in you the hope of glory.” That is why it is not acceptable for a believer to lead a defeated life. God cannot lie. Either

we believe the word of God and become what He said we would be or refuse to believe and remain defeated, disappointed and ashamed in life. You cannot have God's indwelling presence and be defeated. If you are walking in defeat, find out where you are missing it. Hear what God says in His word

“God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” (Num 23:19)

If God said that with Christ in you, you have a glorious future, that is what it is. He cannot change His mind about this. You may have been born in a poor home. You may have had a weird past, lost your job, lost your loved ones and felt defeated to a very large extent that you cannot dream again that you could rise up and win your battles. It has no bearing on what God has said concerning those who possess His dwelling presence. You have a glorious future. You better accept God's verdict concerning you and take the challenge to rise up to the word and make it work.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I have a glorious future (10x)

THE EVERLASTING LOVE OF GOD

"Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day."

(Deu 10:15 ESV)

God is faithful to His word and does not fail, and has not failed me before, not even once. If we really do what God says to the letter and the spirit, we will have exactly what God says we will have. Why did God even create us at all? The answer to why God made us is that, He made us to love us.

Jer 31:3 "the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."

An everlasting love is love that has no beginning and end. Everlasting is defined in scriptures as life without beginning of days or end of life. This life is God's life. God's life in the Greek is called Zoë. It has no beginning or end. That is why Jesus is called the beginning and the end. God's love is agape (unconditional love). It is the same in time of its existence; no beginning and end. Read the following about God:

Psa 90:1-2 "A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

It was out of this love that He created our first parents. The first reason why God made us was to love us and share

a loving fellowship with us. He made us to enjoy that divine fellowship with us and take pleasure in us (Rev 4:11). We read that God came in the cool of the day to meet Adam and Eve for fellowship but they were absent that day because they had sinned and fled from God's presence (Gen 3:8-10). It was out of the same love that God called and made a nation called Israel. God repeated several times that He called that nation to love them.

Deu 7:6-8 "The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth."

Deu 7:7 "It was not because you were more in number than any other people... but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers..."

God loves you. God cares for you. You don't have to merit the love of God. You just have to receive it with joy. He didn't create you to destroy you. He didn't bring you into this world to disgrace you. Just understand today that God loves and cares for you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Father, I thank you for your great love for me. I love you too Lord.

YOU WERE CREATED TO TAKE CHARGE

"And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

(Gen 1:28)

God made us to love us. No matter your race, color or creed, God loves you as his creation. That is why it is essential to preserve human life. God's sun shines on both the good and evil. God made this environment for us to survive. That is why people who hate human life are Satan driven. People who kill at random to further their selfish interest are possessed with very wicked demons.

Life is precious and must be preserved and multiplied. God wants more people on earth not less. *Gen 9:7 "And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."*

Out of His love for man came the second reason why we were created. He made us take charge of His creation as managers. What God told Adam and Eve below was the same thing he repeated to Noah in the key scripture above. You and I were made to be loved by God and to manage God's property. That is why we occupy a special place in the heart and mind of God.

We are a peculiar people and a holy nation. We were made to enjoy our world. Life must be good to us. We must appreciate life. Whatever God made in the world was made for our enjoyment.

1Ti 6:17-18 "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be

haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;"

You have the right to enjoy the things of this world. Never feel guilty for getting the best to wear, eat and have. We know that we will leave these things for eternity but as long as we are in the world, we have the right to enjoy our father's creation.

Ecc 2:24 "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour".

This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. When you work hard, you deserve to eat good and live good, no apologies to anybody. It's your portion. Just remember to do good as the scripture says, and also help the poor and set your heart to enhance God's cause and you will be fine.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God made me because He loved me with an everlasting love. I will live to honour the love of God.

WHAT GOD DESIRES FROM HIS CREATION

"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"

(Mat 22:37-40)

God's love was the basis for creating us in His image. He made us to take pleasure in us. He made us to enjoy a sweet fellowship with us: *Rev 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created"*. What is the appropriate response God expects from us? The answer is found in the Jesus' reply to a lawyer who asked Him what the greatest commandment was. Loving God first is the first and greatest commandment. God's place is first. God desires the first fruit in our lives. Giving God a second place is an indictment to His nature. So, when it comes to the issue of love, the first person we should direct our love to is God.

God told the children of Israel the same thing. All He wanted from them was their love. Israel as a nation was the smallest of all the nations around in the then world, but God loved them greatly because He had planned long before the coming of that nation the coming of Jesus Christ. He helped them, blessed them, protected them, fought their battles for them and delivered them from their enemies whenever they were defeated and taken into captivity. All was done by God for

His great love for them. The only thing God desired from them was that they would love Him in return. *Deu 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,*

Many people are tied to so many things in their lives today that divide their allegiance to God. It is very important to understand that it is impossible to love two masters at the same time as Jesus said *"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."* *Mat 6:24*. There are many people who love their spouses more than God. Others love money more than they love God. God's love for us is so great that even while we were sinners He sent Christ to die for us. We ought to love God more than any other thing in the world.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I love you more than any other thing in the world.

LOVING GOD MORE THAN SELF

"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

(Mat 10:35-36)

God wants us to love Him above all. He wants us to put Him first in all things. In fact, the first fruit we give to God is a demand to honour Him as God because He must be our first priority in the scheme of things; business, finances, marriage etc. What did Jesus mean in the key scripture above?

In view of the love of God, families will be divided against one another. We will really have enemies in our families. Why this? It's because in every family some people will turn to love Jesus more than others, creating envy. A son will be so zealous in love for God that his father who is not a believer or much enlightened in the word of God may develop some hatred for him.

This love for God working in a believer must go a long way to the extent that he must love Jesus more than himself. The believer must relegate self-interest to the background and allow Jesus to be in the forefront of affairs.

Jesus continued saying that, *"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."* (Matthew 10:38-39)

Loving God means losing your life for Jesus' sake. This is a very arduous task for many believers because of the love of self. This means that we must love God till death. We must love God even if it will affect our lives. Jesus gave a promise and reward for this kind of love. After all, it is not in vain to kill the self for Christ. *He said, "...and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it"* (Mat 10:39)

This era in the world is seeing the emergence of very wicked Islamic extremists whose aim is to create an Islamic state everywhere in the world resulting in killing people who will not join their movement. Will you stand the threats of wicked men if they put pressure on you to deny Christ and join them to spare your life, or will you be afraid and save your life as you deny Christ?

You need to make up your mind that no matter what, you will die in Jesus. You will die confessing Jesus and not denying Him. Nothing should be able to separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall never deny Christ due to hardships in my life. I love you Jesus.

HOW TO LOVE GOD

"Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations" (Deu 7:9)

Loving God is not by word of mouth. It's not a theory. It is practical. A man can profess love for his wife but may not behave like he really loves her. God Himself has shown us how He wants us to worship Him. He asked the children of Israel to worship Him by keeping His commandments. This is the most authentic way of loving God. Many times, God repeated Himself with the same instruction to Israel to love Him and keep His commandments.

Deu 11:1 "You shall therefore love the LORD your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always."

There are many people in the world who believe in Jesus but don't really love Him. Loving God has become a showmanship. People do so with their mouth but their heart is far from Him. Jesus condemned people who worship God with their mouth only without obeying Him in their heart;

Mat 15:7-8 "You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me"

Keeping the word of God is the foundation for worship because it proves you really love and adore God. I have seen many believers whose lifestyle is directly opposite what they profess as their love for God. Nothing thrills the heart of God more than to

see His children love Him sincerely in their obedience to the word of God.

1Jn 5:2-3 "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."

Many believers think that keeping the commandments of God is difficult. It is not at all. You see, keeping His commandments must be done out of a genuine heart of love for Him. Love is the mother of obedience. You cannot obey someone you don't love. Deep love doesn't feel stress. You don't get tired doing what you really love. I never get tired playing saxophone at church because I really love worshipping God playing my saxophone.

Many musicians rehearse over eight hours a day every day. They love it so they don't feel the burden and stress in playing their instruments for a very long time. Jesus said His commandments are not grievous. If it is done out of love there will be a natural flow to keep what God says in His word. The word of God will excite you because it is about God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I sincerely love you. I will keep loving you with all my heart.

LOVING THE BODY OF CHRIST

"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death." (1Jn 3:14)

Anyone who chooses the way of the Master cannot live without the family of believers, the church, sometimes called the brethren. Our first love after the new birth is directed to the church. Anytime you don't feel like loving Christians and church activities anymore, understand that Satan is very close to you, in fact he has already taken over your life.

The reason why you attend church with zeal when you get born again is that, God's love is shed abroad in your heart, and that love attracts you to where He can be found; in the company of believers. Your attraction tilts to where Christians gather for worship and this shows that you have found a life; eternal life. You can never love God without feeling love for the children of God.

1Jn 5:2 *"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments"*. This love for God will drive you to go to church each time the church is gathering for service. You can never feel love for God without this feeling that you develop for His church. This is supernatural. That is why church attendance should not be a force but a choice you make. A true lover of God will not be forced to go to church. One of the great men of the Bible, David, was a man that loved God so much. He expressed His love for God in so many ways. One of the strong desires of his heart was his love

for the house of God. He expressed this in his psalms. *Psa 84:1 "How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! Psa 84:2 "My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God."*

Because of David's continuous attendance to the house of God, he always experienced supernatural strength all the time. He testified and said, *"They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion."* (Psa 84:7)

Anytime we appear before God in Zion, that is the church, (Heb 12:22) God renews our strength and we supernaturally become strong and healthy all the time. If you really love God, you can never stay and sleep at home when service is in progress. David believed that just one day in the house of God, the church, was more than a thousand days elsewhere.

Psa 84:10 "For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness". Like David, love the House of God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will appear before you for my love for you. I desire to see your power and your glory in the sanctuary.

LOVING AND SERVING THE BODY OF CHRIST

"And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul."

(Deu 10:12)

Anyone who claims he loves the Lord must first and foremost obey his commandments. Love is action. When you love someone, you will do whatever he asks you to do. Our obedience to Christ is proof of our love for Him. The next immediate thing we do when we love God is that we love His children. It is proof that we have moved from death to life. Loving the brethren is actually the second important commandment God gave to the children of Israel. (Mat 22:38-39)

These two commandments, loving God and loving your neighbour are what is expected of everyone who loves God. If you love God, you will extend that love to your neighbour. Actually, a sign of your love for God is when you love your neighbour. *1Jn 4:20 "If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen".*

One way to show love to the brethren is to serve them. Our service to God is actually our service to men. If you connect to God you will connect to men. Your degree of love for God reflects on your degree of love for men. If you cannot relate successfully with men, you cannot relate successfully with God. If you cannot forgive men who hurt you, you cannot be forgiven

by God whom you hurt. It is against this background of loving the brethren that Jesus emphasised the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in the church. No worship or offering is acceptable to God until there is peace and reconciliation among Christians who have fallen out of relationship. (Mat 5:22-24)

Why should a believer be angry with another believer and come to church, lift up his hand to God and worship him when he has not forgiven and patched up with him? Such a service is a filthy sacrifice before God and will not be accepted. Love is the key to offering a successful service to God.

Jesus and His Body cannot be separated. If you hate the Body of Christ, you hate Jesus. If you insult the Body of Christ and say all manner of evil things about the church, you are insulting Jesus. Whatever you do or don't do to the church reflects on Jesus. Let's therefore be careful when dealing with the church and deal with it with respect and dignity otherwise we will incur the judgment of God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I love you Jesus. I love your church. I will serve your church. I will not do anything to hurt your church.

IF YOU LOVE GOD, YOU WILL LOVE THE WORLD

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (Job 3:16)

From the time man sinned against God, God began to make plans for the restoration and redemption of man. Out of His great love for us, He had to send Jesus Christ His only begotten Son into the world, to walk among us like a man, a servant and die for us. Our spiritual state was that of incapacity, inability, weakness to save ourselves. In the depraved state of man, man had no power to live right to please God. Jesus came to solve that problem by living a righteous life, and shedding His blood to atone for the sins of the world. The reason why Jesus' blood is special is that it was His own blood; sinless blood. (1Pe 1:18-19, Heb 9:14)

Why would God the Son come down to shed His own blood for us? It was out of love. 1Jn 3:16 *"By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers"*. If God loved the world and still loves sinners, we must also of necessity love what God loves. That is why we have to get involved in evangelism to save sinners from hell. If sinners die without Jesus Christ, they are heading straight to hell. That is why we must love sinners and preach to them, warn them to repent and compel them to receive the Lord and start following Jesus as disciples.

One of the ingredients of love is compassion. If we really love sinners,

out of compassion we will react to their sinful state and win them for the Lord. It takes compassionate people to win sinners. The church has a responsibility towards the world. You and I must look for souls to save every week; people we can introduce Christ to and win them from the power of Satan. I challenge you to join in to win the drunkards, the prostitutes, and fetish etc. to the Lord.

Let's win those who hate Jesus to Jesus. We shouldn't be like the rich man who became an evangelist in hell wishing that his family would be saved so they don't join him in hell. He wished that father Abraham would send someone to tell the living of how terrible life in hell was. (Luke 16:19-31).

It was too late for him to repent or save or prevent anyone from coming to hell where he was. If you are alive today, make efforts to save your family. If one person is saved, he is saved with the whole family. You are the one God will use to save your family. Show love and win them right now.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please give me more compassion and boldness to win the lost into your kingdom.

IF YOU LOVE GOD, YOU WILL INVEST INTO HIS KINGDOM PROJECTS

"Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance."

(1Ch 29:2)

When Israel left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea into the wilderness, God commanded Moses to tell the children of Israel to build a sanctuary for Him so that He would dwell among them. (Exo 25:1-2,8) The purpose of the sanctuary was for God to dwell among them. He had been coming down like a cloud, moving with them and leading them throughout their journeys. This time, He wanted to hang around His people. Every project the church does is to benefit God's people so that God can dwell among them and fight their battles for them. In this project, Moses took offerings from all the children of Israel to build God a sanctuary.

David wanted to build God a permanent residence where the ark of God would be placed. God refused to allow him to do it and asked him to let his son to do that. Even though he didn't build the house of God, He invested good resources into it. David reserved so much money for the house of God even though the real building process was not under his direct supervision. Why did David do all that for God? We can see the answer in this scripture: 1Ch 29:3 *"Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my*

God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house."

David had affection for God reflecting in his affection for the house of his God. Therefore, from his own proper good, he prepared gold and silver for the building project over and above what he had even prepared previously. If you love God, you will invest resources to favour His cause.

Today, the house of God is in two forms; the church and the church projects. The church is the people and the church projects are missions, evangelism and church planting, church buildings etc. Anything the church decides to do which will affect the salvation of man is a church project. You must invest into it if you love God. The people responded to give as David did with a willing heart and rejoicing. (1Ch 29:90) If you love God, you will invest in his house.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will invest my resources into the house of God. I love the house of God.

DON'T BE A SQUATTER IN THE HOUSE, BE A PARTNER

"For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."

(1Co 3:9)

One of the most important aspects of loving God is loving the church. The church is very precious to Jesus. He bought the church with His own blood. (Act 20:28) Whatever we have, it must be used to edify the church not to destroy it. *1Co 14:12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*

The word edify comes from the word edifice. We know that edifice means a building. So, to edify means to build. In other words, either you are helping to build or do the opposite of build which is to destroy. You can't sit on the fence doing nothing in the church.

The church is likened to the human body. We are the body of Christ and members in particular (1Cor 12:27). As members of the Body of Christ, we belong to each other and are accountable to each other. We must learn to work together in the Body of Christ. In fact, no one member can do all the work of the Body of Christ. Everyone is important in the Body. You are very important. Moreover, the human body has members with different functions. They are not all the same. They have been intentionally created and fixed in the body to perform functions peculiar to their make. You have been given certain abilities peculiar to only you, and have been placed in the Body of Christ

to perform certain tasks to make the Body healthy. Even though we have different abilities and functions we are all one Body. We must therefore learn to cooperate with each other and appreciate each other's functions so that we don't under-rate or despise one another in the Body.

If therefore you understand the dynamics of Body life, then you must find your proper place in the Body and play your role to make the Body very healthy. Do you love Jesus? If yes, then you must love the church. You can never claim you love Jesus and not love the church. Jesus is the Head of the Church and the Church is the Body of Jesus. How can the human body be severed from the trunk? The body will die. So how can Jesus be separate from His Church? You are part of the body of Christ. As a part you are a partner with Christ. You must not be a squatter but a partner. Squatters are not permanent. They are parasites. God didn't intend to make you a parasite in the church. Find your place and play your role well so that when you go to heaven, you can account for the use of your gifts.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will not destroy the Body but use my gifts to make it healthy in Jesus' name. Amen!

SUBMIT TO THE AUTHORITY OF YOUR LOCAL CHURCH

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you”

(Heb 13:17)

God has leaders everywhere, from nations to families, churches, businesses etc. Submission is required from all those who live under the umbrella of these leaders. With reference to the nation, the Bible admonishes us to submit to higher authority. (Rom 13:1-4). In the family, the head is the husband (Eph. 5:22-24). The wife is commanded to submit to her husband, and the husband is commanded to love his wife. In business circles we have the Chief Executive Officer as head of the institution. In a school we have the principal, head master or mistress. In the church, the head is Jesus Christ and his local head is the local pastor.

We have a duty to submit ourselves to the local pastor in all things as the head. There are many believers in some local churches who refuse to submit to the authority of the pastoral board of the church. They are like freelance believers who visit any church they like for a while and keep hopping and shopping from church to church. Such believers never submit to church authority. There are other believers in some local churches who refuse to obey the rules of the church. Churches run on biblical principles, and all administrative work are gearing toward implementing biblical requirements for a healthy church. We are to obey those who rule over us as the key scripture says. Obedience and submission enable

the leaders to do their work with joy. There are recalcitrant believers who flee to other churches when they are corrected. With arrogance they leave the church refusing to take instructions from anybody.

Nobody is bigger than the church, not even the head pastor. The head pastor is a custodian of God's property. We are just stewards accountable to Jesus. When a church member shows gross disrespect to his pastors or church leaders, either he submits himself to render apologies or leave the church because he can never be blessed under the anointing of the pastor with such arrogance. Those who perceive themselves to be well gifted than others portray arrogance and later become uncontrollable. Pride is the hallmark of such people. They cause strife and contentions in the church and if care is not taken, they polarise the church. The best advice is either they repent and submit to authority or they leave the church. They must be sacked to bring peace as the Bible says; *Pro 22:10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will humble myself to my church leaders. I will submit myself to authority.

THE PLEASURE OF STAYING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

*"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy;
At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."*

(Psa 16:11)

Many people love pleasure and want to have a good time. There is nothing wrong with having a good time but it must not be done at the expense of spending time with God. Sometimes on Sunday mornings in the city of Accra, you come across people just enjoying themselves at the beach, and in some parts of the city, you will see lots of people doing physical exercise and playing football without the slightest inclination to go and worship in God's presence at church. God has assured us in His word that in His presence is fullness of joy, and at His right-hand are pleasures forever more. God is capable of giving you pleasures in your life. What many people think are pleasures are not true pleasures. We can enjoy pleasures from God if we obey and serve Him.

Job 36:11 "If they obey and serve Him, They shall spend their days in prosperity, And their years in pleasures". Prosperity and pleasures are all part of the packages in His presence. Staying in God's presence is not in vain. All that we need is in God. As the word of God says, "The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all its fullness, You have founded them." (Psa 89:11)

God is able to favour whom He will. He can favour His favourites. His favourites are those who love Him and do His will. Anyone who loves God will certainly create time to share his

love in the presence of God. There are ways you can enjoy God's presence.

The first way is to spend time with Him each day. Before you ever go out each day, spend time in His presence. There are a few things you need to do in His presence as you share fellowship and your love with Him. You must pray and thank God that you have seen a new day. (Lam 3:22-23). Thank God for His faithfulness to you. Don't be ungrateful.

Secondly, pray and worship the Lord and bless His name. Then pray for the world so that God's kingdom will come and that His will be done in every continent. Continue to pray for God to give you spiritual revelation in His word. You can go on and pray on other issues. End with worship and thanksgiving. When you finish praying, spend some time in the word of God. Read a devotional or some portions of scripture. This is how to spend time in God's presence. This is your personal time. Your second place in His presence is joining the assembly of believers in church regularly. Create time for this too. When you do this consistently God will bless you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*I thank you for your faithfulness
which is renewed every morning.*

DON'T BE AFRAID OF TOMORROW

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows"

(Mat 10:29-30)

One of the greatest tragedies of life is when people fear for what has not really happened. Many entertain phobia for the future, and this phobia tends to dictate their attitudes and pace in their lives. Many live in fear everyday expecting the bad and worst to happen to them. The dangerous aspect of this phobia syndrome is that their decisions in life are almost always controlled and influenced by it.

Someone made a statement that, now, divorces have become so rampant that it is not even advisable to marry because when you marry it will soon break up. This decision not to marry is based on fear. Someone told me that he fears to travel by air because he is afraid the plane will crash and he will die. Fear will rob you of a good future. Fear can cripple you and prevent you from daring into some businesses, making new friends, serving God and believing Him for the best in life. In the life and ministry of Jesus Christ He addressed fear several times in so many ways.

He addressed fear of people and fear for the future. He addressed fear of being neglected and not receiving food, raiment and shelter. He said, *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in*

hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." (Matt 10:28-31)

I chanced on an inscription that says, "Fear man and not ghost." Many people fear people because there are indeed very wicked people on the earth. Jesus said we should not fear the one who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. The reason is that if you have Jesus, and they even kill your body your soul will live on with Jesus safely kept in His arms. (John 14:1-2)

There are many religious extremists trying to enforce their faith by killing people who refuse to join them. They can put Christians to death in the physical but not in the spiritual. Jesus allayed our fear of lack of food and care. He said if God cares for the sparrow, then He will care for you. Your future is great and awesome. Hope for a good future. Don't be afraid

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*I refuse to fear. I can make it in life.
I thank you for my future in Jesus' name. Amen!*

KINGDOM SECRETS FOR SUCCESS (1)

"And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."

(Mat 13:11)

There are mysteries of the kingdom of God that when discovered and acted upon can bring success to everyone. These mysteries are all in the word of God. Jesus taught all the secrets we need to succeed. There are rules for every game. Before you play a game, you are schooled in the various rules and regulations governing it. Once you master all the rules, then you know how to play the game successfully. You know the moves to make and the dangerous one you must avoid. Everyone wants to make it in life. Nobody wants to fail in life. There is what to do and what not to do. In fact, in every area of life, there are rules.

In life, who is the rule maker? Who is in charge of the game of life. We need to know the owner of the rules to know His mind-set about success. To start, we must understand that the one who made the rules of success is the one who made us and brought us into this world. God was the one who made the rules of success. *Gen 1:26 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth".*

God made man and gave him dominion over His creation to subdue

the earth. Since God made creation, He possesses the rules for taking charge of creation. He commanded us to be fruitful, multiply, replenish and subdue the earth. This is why it is very important to connect to God in our effort to take dominion over the earth. Success is taking dominion over any area you have been assigned by God to rule. God has rules for taking dominion. Just before Moses died, God came to Joshua, his assistant and promised to be with him, but He also gave him an instruction about how he would possess the Promise Land and subdue it.

Jos 1:8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success".

Having good success comes when the Word of God is employed in our lives. So, all the laws and regulations governing success are in the word of God. As we explore, we will discover them and apply the principles for our success.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

The word of God is my way to good success. I can succeed in life.

KINGDOM SECRETS FOR SUCCESS (2)

"And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."

(Mat 13:11)

Everybody is pressing hard to make life meaningful for themselves. Success is everyone's desire. There are "do's and don'ts" for success. These "do's and don'ts" were brought into being by God. It was God who pronounced prosperity and success on man when He created him.

Gen 1:28 "And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

You are destined to take dominion and succeed in life. It's part of your make. You are wired by God to succeed. God called Moses and asked him to go and deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt. He succeeded. After Him, his assistant, Joshua took over the mantle of leadership and was instructed by God to do some specific things in order to have good success.

God said, *Jos 1:8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."*

Success is attainable through the word of God. Not just success but good success. There is bad success too. The word of God is our success trump card.

Jesus taught many things about how we can succeed in life. There are many motivational books on success. Some have been written by unbelievers. I believe that the best success book is the Bible. God directed Joshua to the book of the Law. The book of the Law throws light on how to walk in the world and be successful.

We must however explain that true light is the one who came as the light of the world. Jesus is the light of the Lord. (John 1:1-4) Both natural life and spiritual life are all encapsulated in Him. He is the one that makes life possible. Now if you know who Jesus is, you will yield to Him to teach you the way of life. Jesus is described as the Creator (Colossians 1:16-17).

This is the reason why Knowing Jesus and following Him is the best advice for those who really want to succeed here on earth. You can gain the whole world and lose your soul (Matt 16:26), and that is failure. However, you can gain success in the world and gain your soul after death and that is double success.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

With Jesus I have the way of life and the way to succeed. I have the light of the world.

KINGDOM SECRETS FOR SUCCESS (3)

"And he answered them, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.'"

(Mat 13:11)

There are secrets of the kingdom. We have been given the mysteries that will guarantee our success in life. Knowledge is light. Knowledge is power. Jesus is the light of the world.

Joh 8:12 "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'"

We must know the light of the world and receive light to brighten our way in this dark world. The light that Jesus is does not only show us the way to heaven but the way of life; life in the world. People who don't appreciate life don't know the Light of the world. We need to live and live a life of comfort and peace. Comfort and peace are not products of money but of God.

Rom 14:17-18 "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men."

Success goes beyond just eating and drinking. It includes righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. There are many who think success is getting lots of money. Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit are not commodities you can buy with money. Many people have riches and wealth but lack righteousness, peace and joy in life. I found this story on

the internet and I think it will be a lesson to us: *"Thirty-five-year-old Jonathan Wraith — a young British millionaire by virtue of selling his and his father's portable cabin business for £30 million (\$46 million) — was by all accounts a happy and well-adjusted young man. However, in 2009 he picked up his shotgun and shot himself, leaving no suicide note. No clear reason could be found for Wraith's action, but there has been some speculation that he was extremely worried about his father David's recent stroke. It seems that this may have proven too much for the young man to take."*

Riches cannot give us peace. It cannot give us joy. Many rich men and women are bankrupt of peace and joy in life. Jesus, as the Light of the world offers a better way of light devoid of confusion, frustration and a bad end. Jesus said, *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."* (Mat 11:28-30)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Jesus is my only way to success in life in this world.

KINGDOM SECRETS FOR SUCCESS (4)

"That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow."

(Mat 13:1-2)

The parable of the sower is the key to all the gospels of Jesus Christ. It holds the key to understanding the word of God. Jesus taught many kingdom mysteries beginning with this parable. The parable of the sower teaches many things concerning work, which includes planting and harvesting. It means life must be full of sowing and reaping. Right from the time of Noah, the principle of sowing and reaping was established. (Gen 8:22)

When Jesus was interpreting this parable He said, the seed is the word of God. (Luk 8:11) Jesus placed spiritual seed first. We must know that when we allow the spiritual seed of the word of God to be sown in our hearts, the outcome will influence our general life. We will be spiritually, mentally, intellectually and physically healthy. It will impact our business and social life.

What we invest spiritually in our lives is what we reap naturally in our lives. It is similar to farming where what we sow is exactly what we reap. You see, when Joshua took over the mantle of leadership from Moses, God didn't give him military strategies even though he would need them. He only told him to take heed to the law of God, which was spiritual. It is because investing into the spiritual would ultimately

result in prosperity and good success in the natural.

Take time to sow into your life spiritual seeds that will yield prosperity and good success. Everything we need to make it in life is in the Holy Bible. One of the prominent kings of Israel, King David, succeeded in his life time as king of Israel. It was in his days that Israel enjoyed total rest from all their enemies.

David showed us the secret to his success in Psalm 1:1-3 as follows; *"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked... but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."*

You can never uphold to the word of God diligently and fail in life. You are bound to get wealth and riches, and all the blessings promised to the one who fears the Lord and obeys His word.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will meditate in the word of God. I shall prosper by obeying the word of God.

KINGDOM SECRETS FOR SUCCESS (5)

"For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them." But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear."

(Mat 13:15-16)

The teaching of kingdom principles of Jesus Christ began with the parable of the sower. The cardinal principle of the parable of the sower is the value of revelation believers receive. This truth is buttressed in the interpretation of the parable in the following: *Mat 13:23 "As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."*

Understanding the word of God is vital for a fruitful life. The one who understands yields fruits according to the level of understanding. One yields a hundredfold, another sixty and another thirty. This means that the amount of success one will chalk in the word of God depends on the degree of understanding he catches in the word of God.

Not many people who hear God's word understand it. Hearing and assimilating the word of God are two different things. Hearing brings information but understanding brings revelation. Revelation means seeing what God's word says. In order to understand the word of God, we must hear at least twice. *Rom 10:17 "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* When Jesus

was explaining the principle behind the parable of the sower He said, *"For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them".*

Learning to see what God says is what we call revelation. We must hear with our physical ears first and see with our spiritual eyes. It is seeing the word that brings fruitfulness in our work. When we hear twice, then our sight pops up to really see or understand what God said. Revelation in the word of God is the key for bearing fruit in life. Everything we do draws its strength from the word of God. The degree of revelation or understanding we have in the word of God will determine the degree of results we get in anything we do. If you engage in doing God's word, you will prosper. The extent of your success and prosperity is derived from the extent to which you see what God says.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please give me revelation in your word. I receive revelation now in Jesus' name. Amen!

CONTENDING WITH THE FORCES OF DARKNESS AGAINST REVELATION

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also."

(Mat 13:24-26)

Knowing and following Jesus Christ will never plunge you into error. You will never make a mistake when you keenly and diligently follow Jesus. There are two main things that matter in our relationship with Jesus Christ. First of all, we must know Him very well (Phil 3:10). Knowing Jesus is very crucial in our success in life. We need to know Him so well that we know we really know Him and can fully trust Him even in the minute things in life. The second aspect of our relationship with Jesus is doing what He teaches us to do. When Saul had an encounter with Jesus on his way to persecute the Christians, he was given an assignment by Jesus to go and wait in the city. And he obeyed that instruction.

Our perfect knowledge of Jesus comes through our perfect obedience to Him. It is a continuous process. As we obey Him step by step, He reveals Himself little by little to us. Jesus said, "...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Joh 8:31-32) Continuing in the truth is doing what He commands us to do. What He commands us to do comprises of His principles. It is not enough to have revelation. The application of the revelation is what guarantees fruitfulness.

Jesus also taught us in the parable of the sower that there is spiritual warfare involved in receiving revelation. While men slept, the enemy came to sow tares among the good seed that had been sown. (Mat 13:24-26) As we endeavour to receive revelation, we will come into a strong confrontation with the devil. Tares look like wheat. If the devil can't stop the seed from being sown, he will create other ways of disrupting the working of the seed, i.e., revelation in your life. Receiving the revelation of the word is already a spiritual warfare. Jesus said, "*And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.*" (Mat 13:4)

Jesus interpreted the fowls to mean the wicked one who is the devil. (Mat 13:19) Be careful of other things that compete with the revelation of the word and your obedience to it. It is the devil contending against your fruitfulness. Contend fiercely for your right to receive and apply the word and you will succeed.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will contend for the revelation of the word in order to succeed in life.

THE DEVIL TARGETS YOUR FAITH WHICH IS A PRODUCT OF REVELATION

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."
(Luk 22:31-32)

The greatest warfare of believers is centered on the word of God. Once we understand the value the word of God plays in our lives and why Satan fights it, we will never allow ourselves to be cheated by the devil. Jesus told Peter that Satan had desired to have him and sift him like wheat. What did Satan want from Peter?

Jesus explained that He had prayed for Peter so that his faith did not fail. It means that Satan's target was Peter's faith. Now we also know that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom 10:17). Faith is the word (Rom 10:8). So, Satan's purpose is to fight the word of God in our lives.

Now, understand this; Satan is always around wherever the word of God is preached. Why? He has just one mission; to steal the word, misinterpret or misrepresent the word to prevent us from understanding. This is the greatest spiritual warfare for God's people. Eve, the mother of all living was deceived by the devil when Satan twisted the word of God to her.

When the devil went to Eve, his first question was a trick. He said *"Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"* (Gen 3:1) God didn't say that. What did God say? Gen 2:16-17 *"And the LORD God commanded the*

man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"

Think of it and if you can, discuss the difference between what God said and what the devil said. He turned everything upside down. Secondly discuss the last part. God said, "...for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Satan also said, *"...You will not surely die."* (Gen 3:4).

Can you tell the difference between what God said and what the devil said? He totally turned what God said upside down. You must know that anytime you hear the word of God, Satan will come to you to twist the word, put doubt in your mind to disbelieve the word in order to destroy your faith in the final analysis. So, guard the word. Guard your mind. Receiving revelation is a spiritual warfare.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, open my eyes to see your word. Let your Spirit help me to understand and keep the word. I bind the devil fighting my quest for revelation in Jesus' name. Amen!

EVERYTHING BIG STARTS SMALL

"He put another parable before them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'" (Mat 13:31-32)

The word of God is always the best manual for successful living. One of the principles of Jesus Christ that brings success in life is the principle of the kingdom of God which teaches that God's kingdom is like a mustard seed. It is a principle of starting small, just like God's kingdom.

Jesus said, *"It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."* This teaches us that whatever we intend to do in life, we should always learn to start small. If you are going to start a business, begin in a small way. Jesus called it a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds.

Every business must begin like a seed. What begins big ends small, and what begins small ends big. When Jesus came, He began His ministry with twelve disciples. He called them one by one. His first disciples were Simon Peter and Andrew his brother. (Mat 4:18-19) Many men want to start a church with many people. That wasn't Jesus' method. Jesus even recommended a two-to-three-man church. He said, *"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or*

three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Mat 18:19-20

Jesus later had a following of over five thousand and seven thousand people whom He fed for free by a miracle. The early church began with about one hundred and twenty people after Jesus had risen from the dead in the upper room (Acts 2:14-15). Three years of the ministry of Jesus produced one hundred and twenty faithful disciples. After the Holy Spirit had descended on them, they exploded to three thousand one hundred and twenty (Acts 2:41-42) and eight thousand and over (Acts 4:4).

This kingdom began with just two to twelve disciples. This is called the principle of the seed. Learn to start small. If you are called to pastor a church, have a big vision but start small. If you want to start a business, invest small amounts that you can control and grow it to the big business you want.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

My beginning is small but my latter end will greatly increase.

LIFE IS LIKE A SEED, DON'T RUSH IT

"He put another parable before them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'"

(Mat 13:31-32)

There are many people who entertain doubts about how effective the word of God is in directing our lives and providing knowledge and information for living a successful life. They would rather get information from self-help and motivational books rather than from the word. It is important to understand that the bible is a time-tested manual for life management. Many current laws that deal with criminal law, civil law in many countries including Ghana, take their roots from the bible. The word of God created everything. It created business. It created relationships. It created money etc. Real life issues can easily be handled by the word of God.

Jesus taught about how to succeed in life so many times in scripture using parables. As we discover His principles, we will find them very exciting and educative. Among the many principles He taught was the principle of the mustard seed. His teaching was basically that we should learn to start everything we intend to do in a small way, and grow it to a bigger level. God's kingdom is like a mustard seed which is the smallest of all seeds but when it is planted, it grows to become the biggest tree in the forest. It is possible to start life in a small way and end in a big way.

Young men and women must learn to start life with the little they have and not try to compare themselves with others who are about midyear in their life, or are almost at the end of their life. Many young men and women will do anything including cheat, lie and even kill to get what they want as quickly as possible.

Life begins like a seed in the womb. Nobody is born walking or running. We start like a seed, are born as babies and grow over time. Everyone must know his baby steps and the growth pace. Every business entity has a small beginning. There is no rush to making it in life. It's God's idea. Jesus was born as a baby and grew up to be an adult before He began His ministry with just twelve disciples. Yonggi Cho, once the pastor of the largest church in the world began from a house. That is the way of the Master.

Job 8:7 "Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase".

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, give me the strength to grow big time in Jesus' name. Amen!

COMPETING WITH FALSE WORKS

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

(Mat 13:24-25)

Jesus employed several methods to teach us about life, business, family, community, politics, economics, relationship etc. He used parables to teach very important life lessons. One of the parables Jesus told was about a farmer who planted good seeds in his farm. Later another person came and planted bad seeds. They both grew and they all looked similar. The workers asked if they should remove the tares but the master asked them not to do so lest they destroy both the good and the bad together. They were advised to wait until harvest so that they could distinguish between the wheat and the tares.

This means that in everything that God does, there will be counterfeit works engineered by the devil. You know, when you plant good seeds and weeds spring up amongst them, the weeds will compete with your plants for nutrients in the same soil where your plants are. There are counterfeit churches all over the place these days. They are also competing with good churches for souls. They look like true Bible believing churches but they are not. An enemy has planted them. Jesus warned us about false prophets and false Christs (Matt 24:11, 24). When the workers of the owner of the farm asked how those tares were planted, he said the enemy came in the night to plant them. It was a secret attack.

Many of these churches operate as secret societies who dabble in a hidden agenda rather than genuinely furthering the cause of Christ.

The devil is called the power of darkness (Ephesians 2:2; 6:12) and his operations are shrouded in secrecy. That's why he planted those tares in the night. There is another lesson to learn from this parable. There are so many people planted by the devil in the kingdom of God who are there to disturb the successful growth of the kingdom. In most churches you will find very troublesome people who are not ready to repent but commit adultery and fornication, and do all manner of filthy things and lure other innocent and vulnerable souls who want to know the Lord and serve Him into it. They are all tares. At the end of the world, Jesus will separate the wheat from the tares in the same way He will separate the sheep from the goat. Ask yourself this question. Are you part of the wheat or tares? Have you been planted by the devil to stagnate the growth of your church or cause it to grow?

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to be part of the tares. I refuse to be a planting of the devil. I am a planting of the Lord.

GOD TAKES PLEASURE IN YOUR PROSPERITY

"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

(Pro 10:22)

God is working. The works of God are powerful and peaceful. While God is working, Satan is also at work. His works are dangerous and destructive. God inspires His children to prosper and be in health. Satan also inspires his children to prosper and be in health but their health and prosperity always end up in frustration, sorrow and death. The main reason why God will bless and prosper you and help you to be successful is that He wants you to be a blessing. An example of such is the man, Abraham. God said to Abraham *"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."* (Gen 12:2-3)

God blesses us to be a blessing. Anything God gives you must be a channel of blessing to others. The greatest blessing of humanity is salvation. God is interested in your business because He wants you to do His work and get people blessed with salvation. Your prosperity and success are God's pleasure. *"Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant."* (Psa 35:27)

Do you know why God takes pleasure in your prosperity now? It is because

you favour His righteous cause. What is God's righteous cause? It is to bring salvation to the whole world and promote righteousness in the world. *Zec 1:17 "Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem."*

The cities of God represent places where God inhabits. They are places of worship. They are churches; the gathering of God's people. These shall spread. God wants His churches to spread. The way they will spread is through prosperity. When the people of God prosper, they can then become channels of spreading the cities of God. That is why God is interested in the prosperity of the righteous. We are told that God prospers us in order to establish the covenant He made with Abraham: *Deu 8:17-18 "Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day."*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God is interested in my prosperity and success. I am prospering and succeeding in life in Jesus' name. Lord, grant me the power to prosper in Jesus' name. Amen!

CALLED FOR A PURPOSE

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

(1Pe 2:2)

Everything in this world has a purpose. Man was created by God for a purpose. The bible makes it clear that man was created for God's pleasure and to show forth his glory. (Col 1;16, Isaiah 43:7) Trees and plants have a purpose and a role to play in the order of things on the earth. Everything that was needed for the earth to run smoothly and to function effectively was provided for by God in creation.

Trees absorb carbon dioxide through their leaves and turn them into sugars needed for them to grow. They then let out oxygen that is needed by man to survive thus ensuring the survival and effective function of the earthly systems. The human body has several parts and it will interest you to know that every little part including your little toe has a purpose and a role for the proper functioning of the body.

What many believers fail to understand is that, God has a great purpose for them. A very great purpose, so much greater than the majority of Christians have realized. A large number of Christians have got no further in their Christian life than to know that they are saved and to be very glad and rejoice that they are saved. You are not meant just to be saved and get to heaven, to know your sins are forgiven and to have a certain number of blessings which come with your salvation. Your salvation goes beyond that. The bible says that *"But as it is written, Eye hath*

not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him". (1Co 2:9)

Israel was chosen by God as a special people unto Him. Even though they were just a small people, God called them out of Egypt and separated them to Himself. He declared *"I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God."* (Ex 29:45-46)

The importance of being called out must never be underestimated. God reiterated that He brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt so that He may dwell among them. In other words, when the Israelites were still residing amongst the Egyptians and were still slaves of the Pharaoh, God would not dwell among them. Don't ever underestimate your calling. Our calling is connected to our salvation, but does not consist just of that. We are called to faith in Christ, which brings us holiness and the ability to fulfill our God-given purpose.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will fulfill my God given purpose in life in Jesus' name.

OUR CALLING IS THE REASON WHY GOD CREATED US

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

(Ephesians 2:10 NIV)

It is important to note that we are described in the key scripture as God's **handiwork**. When we speak of handiwork what comes to mind is an artisan who skillfully creates and designs a specific object. Please understand that you are a handiwork of God, a masterpiece specially designed by God for a specific purpose. More times than not, we feel like a piece of junk or worthless object. Many people despise the way they were born or how they look. I want you to know that your true beauty comes out when you fulfill your calling because the way in which you were created is linked up to your calling. God told Jeremiah *"Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew all about you. Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you."* (Jeremiah 1:5 MSG) God shaped you for the plans he had for you so don't despise the way you have been made.

Secondly, the key scripture tells us that we have been created to do "good works". You were created for good works and not bad works so you must make a difference on this earth. When God created man and put him in the Garden of Eden, He asked man to take dominion over the earth and to also tend the garden and keep it. That requires taking some action. We were not put on this planet to take up space or simply to be consumers. We

were made to be contributors, to do something beneficial with our lives.

Just like God told Jeremiah, He created us with His calling for our lives already in mind. God makes it explicitly clear to Jeremiah that He created Him and chose to use him before his birth. You and I are not accidents. Your parents might have given birth to you accidentally because they had not planned to have you but you are no accident in God's sight. God had a plan for your life and for mine even before we were born. God didn't make you so you could live a life that brings you great satisfaction. He created you for His pleasure, for His benefit, to fulfill His purpose. So the reason we were put on the earth wasn't to fulfill our plans, but God's. We may have great ideas for our lives and desire to do great things. But even if we achieve those goals, they won't bring us any sense of satisfaction and significance unless they are aligned with God's ambitions and His plans for us. Your calling is the very reason God created you in the first place. Until you find your calling, you will never be fulfilled in life.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Help me Lord to identify my calling and fulfil it.

OUR SINS AND MISTAKES DON'T CHANGE OUR CALLING

“God never changes his mind when he gives gifts or when he calls someone.”
(Rom 11:29 GW)

Salvation is a work of grace. No one qualifies to be saved. The bible says that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. God doesn't look at how good we are to determine whether to call us or not. No matter how much you've messed up your life and no matter how much others may have messed up your life, it doesn't change God's calling for you. He created you and He called you. That settles it. Nothing will ever change that fact.

Paul was the perfect example of this truth. He was a blasphemer who persecuted the Christians in Jerusalem. Indeed he was on his way to Damascus with authority letters from the leaders of the Jews to arrest Christians when he was encountered by Jesus. He said *“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord that he has trusted me and has appointed me to do his work with the strength he has given me. In the past I cursed him, persecuted him, and acted arrogantly toward him. However, I was treated with mercy because I acted ignorantly in my unbelief.”* (1Ti 1:12-13 GW)

Many of us have done some very dumb things in our lives before we got born again. Others still may have even done some crazy things after they got born again and perhaps are still committing those mistakes. This does not in any way take away the call of God on your life. The callings of God are without repentance and God's mercy will

continue to abound for you to get on to the right path. This should not in any way give us a licence to continue to walk in ways that are not pleasing to God. You should be able to turn your life around in anticipation of the fulfillment of the calling of God on your life.

What the Apostle Paul's life shows, and my own experience and that of others confirms that God never wastes anything that happens to us and He fits it all into His plan for our lives. God uses the good, the bad, and even the ugly. Sometimes the mistakes we commit in the journey of life are necessary mistakes that only go to shape us and sharpen us for the ultimate plan and purpose for our lives.

A few detours along the way of life does not disqualify you. It usually is a painful detour as it was in the case of Israel who wandered in the wilderness for forty years but it does not in any way disqualify you. Keep this thought in mind and say it with me: “God has no Plan B for my life.” Even our sins and mistakes are all a part of God's Plan A for you and me

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am called to fulfill a purpose and I will fulfill it in Jesus' name.

YOUR CALLING CONNECTS YOU TO OTHERS

“We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future hope.” **(Ephesians 4:4 NLT)**

Relationship is vital to the existence of Man. God created man as a relational being. The bible is clear that God interacted with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Indeed even when they sinned against God, God came looking for them. Furthermore, when God initially created Adam, he realized that all the other creatures had companions but Adam did not have anyone. So God said “...It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is right for him.” (Gen 2:18 GW)

Eve was supposed to be a helper to Adam. Everyone is a product of someone’s help and you cannot be an island on your own. As a child, your parents took care of you and footed your bills until you were old enough to take care of yourself. Through that connection, you acquire an education and a career. You need to connect to people and allow other people also to be connected to you to ensure growth and fulfilment of your God given purpose.

Our calling and assignment from God is connected to other people. In other words, you and I cannot fulfill our God-intended purpose alone. Calling and community go hand-in-hand. Paul explained this perfectly when he compared the body of Christ to the human body. *1Co 12:14-20 GNB* “For

the body itself is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. ¹⁵If the foot were to say, “Because I am not a hand, I don’t belong to the body,” that would not keep it from being a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear were to say, “Because I am not an eye, I don’t belong to the body,” that would not keep it from being a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were just an eye, how could it hear? And if it were only an ear, how could it smell? ¹⁸As it is, however, God put every different part in the body just as he wanted it to be. ¹⁹There would not be a body if it were all only one part! ²⁰As it is, there are many parts but one body.”

The human body works together as a unit. The individual parts of the body are useless unless they’re connected to the whole. Together, we become something beautiful and valuable in God’s service. It is through our involvement in God’s Church, which is Christ’s Body, that we become connected with other believers and find purpose and meaning: We find and live out our calling, not in isolation, but in relationship with other Christians.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will connect to the church to fulfill my God given destiny.

YOU ARE EMPOWERED TO FULFILL YOUR CALL

“Brothers and sisters, consider what you were when God called you to be Christians. Not many of you were wise from a human point of view. You were not in powerful positions or in the upper social classes. But God chose what the world considers nonsense to put wise people to shame. God chose what the world considers weak to put what is strong to shame.”

(1Co 1:26-27 GW)

Usually when employers are looking for potential employees, they look out for people with certain qualifications and skills that will be required in the kind of job that they will be required to perform. Without the necessary qualifications a potential candidate will not even be selected for an interview. God however does not call us because we are perfect or have all the right qualifications and skills. Whatever God calls us to do, He also equips us to do. God doesn't call the prepared, He prepares the called.

Many times we are encountered with feelings of inadequacy when we are required to perform a particular task especially when it comes to the callings of God upon our lives. We feel like we are not prepared adequately for it or don't have the abilities and qualities to fulfil the task. In fact God's specialty is to choose the unqualified and unworthy to use for His own glory. The key scripture makes it clear that God does not choose those who are wise from the human point of view but He rather chooses what the world considers nonsense to put those who think they are wise to shame. If you feel that you don't have what it takes to fulfill the call of God on your life to perform a specific task, then I want

you to know that you are not alone. Scripture is replete with examples of people who felt they were not capable and yet God used them mightily.

Moses was reluctant to take up the responsibility to lead Israel out of Egypt because he felt he was inadequate and yet God used him powerfully. Gideon was called by God to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Midianites but he reasoned that his family was the weakest in the tribe and he was the least important member of the family so why should God choose him. He was so unsure of the calling that he asked for a sign. God gave him a sign and eventually used him to bring about deliverance for Israel.

I want you to note that God will never give you an assignment that He doesn't give you the power to complete. You are empowered in Christ to complete the call God has for your life. Even in the midst of personal doubts and fears, be encouraged today that God will confirm what he has called you to do.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I trust in the Lord to help me accomplish my life's purpose on earth.

DRIVEN BY PURPOSE

"So they asked him, 'John said, 'I'm a voice crying out in the desert, 'Make the way for the Lord straight,' as the prophet Isaiah said.'"

(Joh 1:23 GW)

Everyone has a purpose and destiny to accomplish on earth. There is a reason for your presence on this earth. You were not born just by chance. God has a purpose and plan for your life. Even if your birth was accidental, God had you in mind before you were born. The Psalmist said *"Your eyes saw me when I was only a fetus. Every day of my life was recorded in your book before one of them had taken place. (Psa 139:16 GW)*

John the Baptist recognized and acknowledged the purpose of God on his life when he declared that he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, thereby quoting what Isaiah had written about him. This destiny is what drove him to do what he did. Jesus came to the earth with the sole purpose of dyeing to save man. He was so focused on that purpose that when Peter tried to oppose his going to die on the cross He said "Get behind me Satan". Jesus derived much strength from this purpose with which His life was bound up. A strong sense of purpose will keep you going strong when all else fails.

When you follow a clear and meaningful purpose, you gather all your energy together and point it effectively in a single direction. Living, thinking and acting with purpose frees you from doing things haphazardly. Purpose brings you strength to rise above the distractions of the moment,

and the will to overcome whatever obstacles stand in your way. Jesus Christ was maintained in God's strength all the way through, because He was dominated by the sense of His mission, because He kept firm His purpose. If we hold fast the purpose of our life we shall be maintained in strength. But if we try to fulfill our own ambitions, if we carry out our own programs instead of focusing on the purpose of God for our lives, there will be no divine resources available for us. Jonah sought to follow his own plan for his life and found himself in deep trouble. Instead of going to Nineveh to preach as he had been instructed by God, He rather boarded a ship to Tarshish. The result was a heavy storm which nearly caused the ship to be shipwrecked.

That is why you need to stay with the plan of God for your life. In God's purpose there is no room for personal interests. Focusing on your personal interest instead of God's purpose will rob you of the needed strength to fulfil your destiny. Walking in divine purpose gives you the strength to overcome all obstacles.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will pursue the divine purpose of God for my life.

AN EQUATION FOR SPIRITUAL SUCCESS

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Neither give place to the devil.”

(Ephesians 4:22-24,27)

Everyone wants to be successful in life. Even in our spiritual lives, we must strive for success. The key scripture above provides us with some key points that will catapult us to a successful life that ensures that the devil stays defeated in your life. The scripture talks about having a renewed mind, putting on the new man, putting off the old man and not giving place to the devil. To really understand this, we need to look at what happened when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command. God had warned that disobedience would result in death (Genesis 2:16-17), but did Adam instantly fall dead? No, he lived to the age of 930 years! And yet, man DID die the very moment he ate the forbidden fruit. Since man is a spirit-being, it was into man's spirit that death entered. This does not mean that his spirit ceased to exist, because spiritual death is not a state of non-existence, but rather a state of separation from God.

When Adam experienced spiritual death in his spirit, his soul and his body also became subjected to the enemy. In effect, God's highest creation was now a child of Satan! John 8:44a *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”* Spiritual death is SEPARATION from God due to SIN. Every human being is born with this

condition. Only SALVATION can cure it! In a SPIRITUALLY DEAD person, the SPIRIT is alienated from God because of sin. Unless he makes a choice to change it, this is an eternal condition! Since the spirit is dead, the SOUL is now in charge. Led by his intellect, emotions and will, this person cannot understand spiritual concepts, for they are foreign to him. His BODY becomes merely a tool for acting out his lusts and passions. This man is truly “mortal,” which means “death-doomed” or “Satan-ruled.” It is therefore not surprising when unsaved people engage in all kinds of unnatural and immoral activities but see nothing wrong with that.

The first step of the equation for spiritual success is to seek Jesus who will put you back in fellowship with God by making you spiritually alive. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). However, by Jesus's death on the cross He has bridged the gap between man and God. Accept Him today if you haven't done so yet.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*I repent and receive Jesus as my saviour.
I am walking in victory over the enemy.*

THE BATTLE FOR DOMINATION IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

(Rom 12:1-2)

Once you receive Jesus your spirit man becomes alive and fellowship with God is restored. Unless you make a choice to change it, this is an eternal condition! Remember that man was created by God as a three-fold being: SPIRIT; the inner man; the part that knows God and the part of man that gets saved. SOUL; the mind; the intellect (thoughts and reasoning), the emotions (temperament, feelings, attitudes and moods), and will (choices, decisions and determination). BODY; the outer man; the external or visible house in which man's invisible spirit and soul reside; the part which operates our five senses.

It is important to note that out of the three parts of man, the only part that goes through a transformation is the Spirit. Jesus told Nicodemus that unless a man is born of the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. (John 3:3-6) So, the spirit of man is recreated in the New Birth or Salvation. What about the Soul and the body then? They remain the same. And that is where the challenge for many believers lies. Since the spirit is alive, the SOUL must not be allowed to be in charge. The soul may be in charge for unbelievers but not for believers. Unfortunately, many believers have failed to allow their born-again spirit

to take charge of affairs. This has unfortunately led to many believers leading lives that are not pleasing to God and walking outside the will of God.

It is important to understand that there is an ongoing war to subjugate the mind and body to God's Spirit now dwelling in the born-again human spirit. The human will, plays a very important part in this process. It is the most awesome feature of the soul, for it determines your DESTINY. Basically, everything that lures, drives, attracts, convinces, persuades or motivates you is generated at the intellectual or emotional levels of the mind (soul). Your decision as to how to react is then made in your mind by the will. That is why it is critical that a believer renews his mind with the word of God. It is your mind that will determine the quality of your service to God. As a Christian, you no longer have to be manipulated by the evil forces in the world. You have Jesus Christ living inside of you! Rise up and dominate your body and soul with your regenerated spirit.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I bring my soul and body under the authority of my spirit in Jesus' name.

WHY SATAN ATTACKS YOUR MIND

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

(2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Satan is powerless as far as the spirit of a man is concerned. He cannot force you to be lost, only you can make that decision. He is occasionally permitted by God to cause us trouble in the flesh but even then, God gives him a boundary he cannot cross. (Job 1:12, 2:6). In the case of Job, God permitted the devil to cause mayhem in his life by killing his children and destroying his wealth but he was not permitted to kill Job. Jesus himself testified to the fact that the devil has no authority to take any Christian out of His hands. *John 10:28 "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* Unless a believer permits the devil or gives him the authority to take him out of Jesus' hands, he cannot do that.

Not only does Satan not have the right to take you away from Jesus or touch you but you have also been given authority over him. After Jesus rose from the death, He met his disciples and said "...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." *Mat 28:18-19.* Jesus has been placed above all principality and power and all things are under His feet for the church.

(Eph 1:19-23). This means the devil is under your feet. You have authority over him. *1John 4:4 "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world".*

The only place Satan is allowed regular access to you is on the battleground of the MIND. Here in the SOUL of man, the battle for the SPIRIT is lost or won. Remember that the soul of man consists of the mind, the will and the emotions. Satan continually wages war against the human mind. He would like to make your thoughts confused and dysfunctional so you don't believe God's word, your emotions discouraged and your will disobedient to the word. Satan is constantly attempting to build a stronghold inside your mind. If you allow him to succeed, he will have access through which he can launch his attacks. He did so in the Garden of Eden when he sowed doubts into Eve's mind about God's word. Don't give the devil place in your mind. Secure yourself by renewing your mind with the word of God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I secure myself by renewing my mind with the word of God.

A RENEWED MIND

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

(Rom 12:2)

A renewed mind is critical to living a victorious Christian life. Without a renewed mind, a believer who is expected to live a life of victory by the standards of God's word will continue to wallow in defeat and be overcome by the devil. What does renewing of your mind mean? Renew means to replace. So, renewing your mind means replacing the old way of thinking with a new way. So, when you hear renew your mind by the washing of the word or renew your mind with the word of God it means to replace the old way of thinking with what the Bible says.

To understand how this works, it is important to note that man is made up of spirit, soul and body. (1 Thess 5:23) The real man is the spirit of man that has a soul and lives in a body. The soul is made of your mind, your will and your intellect. As stated in previous devotionals, the new birth experience takes place in the spirit.

Jesus in answer to Nicodemus' question as to whether a person could enter into his mother's womb and be born again said *"...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". (Joh 3:5-6)*

We are born again in our spirits by the word of God which is also spiritual.

(1 Pet 1:23). What then happens to our bodies and spirits? Our bodies and souls remain the same. If you were short before you got born again you remain the same. Your intellect, will and mind remain essentially the same. Even though the gospel will definitely have some influence on your mind there are many things that you may have learnt in your many years of living in this world that you have to unlearn. Some people may have been brought up in a home where violence is frequently used as a way of resolving disputes. Such a person may see nothing wrong with using violence because he has been brought up to think that it is all right to use violence if you are provoked. There is a need therefore for such a person to go through a process of mind renewal bring him at par with the standards set by the word of God.

Renewing your mind will strengthen your spirit man, make your faith strong and help you to know and fulfil God's will for your life. Strive to renew your mind for a successful Christian life.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall renew my mind for a change of story in Jesus' name.

RENEW YOUR MIND WITH THE WORD OF GOD

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

(Joshua 1:8)

Renewal of the mind is a very essential requirement for every believer that seeks to lead a successful Christian life. Renewing your mind simply means to change your way of thinking. When you get born again, there is a need for you to unlearn a lot of the things that you have learnt in the world. God doesn't want you to think like the world thinks. His word is life and health, full of promises, abundance, healing, and deliverance. This is the life He wants for you. He wants you to change the way you think so you can access everything He has for you. He wants to teach you through His word how to live and be successful.

The agent that is responsible for the renewal of mind for the believer is the word of God. In the key scripture above, Joshua had taken over the leadership of the people of Israel after Moses' death. God's word to Joshua was that he needed to focus on the word in order to be a successful leader. God's word is the manual for the believer to be successful. In order to know what the manual says, you must study it. Going to church on Sundays is not enough. You have to study the word of God every single day, meditate on it and do everything it says. Little by little, the word of God will start

transforming the way you think and the way you think will transform the way you act.

Read a passage of the Bible and write down in a notebook what The Holy Spirit puts in your heart about it. Meditate on the word. Historically, meditation was clearly a Christian practice, but many Christians now associate it with Eastern religion. However, meditation helps greatly to fill your mind with the word. Memorize scriptures. Write it down. Speak the word of God out loud to yourself. Listen to messages and study the word while you listen. The main focus of this exercise is to fill your mind with the word of God. Remember, it is important that you study the word of God every day. Let it tell you how to think, how to speak, and how to act. Pray and ask The Holy Spirit to give you a revelation of His word, He is your helper. Whatever the means, it is important to fill your mind with the word of God for that is key to your transformation.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will study, think and do the word in Jesus' name.

GUARD YOUR MIND

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

The mind plays a critical role in the way a person behaves. Your thinking determines your actions and therefore it is very important to be very selective of what enters your mind. We live in an age of visual saturation, ever-present social media, and pursuing temptation. There are billboards all over the country displaying all kinds of images that can pollute our minds. Various social media sites are rife with images and information that only create fear, panic, worry and confusion in our minds. During the pandemic, when everyone was forced to stay at home, many people stayed glued to their television sets trying to get as much information as possible. As many people spent hours watching this constant barrage of negative news, panic began to set in and many people became anxious and fearful. I took a decision to be selective and limit the news that I watched.

Your mind is a battle ground. The devil is fighting to take control of your mind because he knows that once he gets your mind, he will be able to get you to do whatever he wants. The information we let in, the thoughts we entertain, the ideas we foster, all can direct us to do good or evil. As the IT techs put it, Garbage in, Garbage out. What you put in is what comes out, so don't put things in your mind that will be harmful to you. Stop watching certain movies that generate lustful

thoughts in you. Don't go to places that will ignite your desire for sinful habits that you have managed to overcome. Keep the dirt out of your mind.

Many people think they do not have control over their thoughts. The Bible clearly states in the key scripture that we can take captive or dismiss any thoughts that don't align with the word of God. You are in control; you can choose your thoughts. When something pops in your head and you know that you shouldn't be thinking about that, you can replace that thought with a different one. The bible calls it casting down imaginations.

Your mind is powerful and you need to learn to control it and not let it control you. The way that you control it is by staying away from thoughts that are not a blessing to you and instead meditate on the word of God. That is why the apostle Paul exhorts us accordingly, *“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things”* (Phil. 4:8).

PRAYER & CONFESSION

My mind is stayed on you Oh Lord all the days of my life.

FRAMING YOUR MIND WITH THE WORD OF GOD

“Since you were brought back to life with Christ, focus on the things that are above—where Christ holds the honored position—the one next to God the Father on the heavenly throne. Keep your mind on things above, not on worldly things.”

(Col 3:1-2 GW)

The mind has been our focal point of discussion for some days now because the mind is critical to your ability to function effectively as a victorious Christian. What you feed your mind with determines your way of thinking which in turn determines the actions you take. Not only are you to fill your mind and guard it but you are to frame it as well. By this, I mean that you are to intentionally cultivate, a biblical outlook through which we view and interpret the world. We can acquire this biblical outlook of the world when we dedicate ourselves to constant and continuous intake of the word of God. The intake of the Word reframes our outlook and gives us a foundation to engage life and view the world, and to process all of life from a Christian viewpoint.

Do you watch shows that feed fear and unbelief? Do you listen to music that is not a blessing to your life? Do you read books that bring thoughts into your mind that do not align with the word of God? Do you call yourself a Christian but your mind is of the world? Everything you listen to and everything you watch feeds your mind. So, if you are feeding your mind the wrong kind of food, you will stay stuck with an unrenewed mind. Remember, renewing means to replace. So, you need to replace the old habits, the

old shows, the old music, the old conversations, etc.

It's difficult, I know, but if you want to experience God and everything, He has for you, you must be willing to give up the things that are keeping you from going deeper in your relationship with God. If you want to renew your mind, you need to feed yourself with the right kind of food. Watch shows and listen to things that bring blessings and life. Nowadays we have tons of information available to us 24 hours a day. Be wise and choose the right information, for example listen to bible teachers and pastors, read books that will help you grow, and add value to your life.

By focusing on things that will add value to your Christian life, you train your mind to think biblically about life ranging from relationships to work ethics, sex, marriage, family etc. We must understand that, ultimately, the renewing of the mind is to lead to a renewed person, affecting the totality of our personhood. A renewed mind leads to a changed life and way of thinking. Stay focused

PRAYER & CONFESSION

My mind is stayed on you oh Lord!

FOCUSING ON OTHERS

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

(Philippians 2:3-4)

Man was created for relationship. When God created man in and put him in the Garden of Eden, he reasoned that it was not good for man to be alone as a result of which He created Eve as a companion to Adam. Relationships forms the bedrock of every society.

What's interesting about relationships is that in order to fully enjoy them, we must be focused on others. A relationship that is only one sided with one person just focusing on his own interest and not on others will disintegrate in no time. Unfortunately, however focusing on others is not part of our natural instincts. Each one naturally wants to seek their own interests. In today's world, everyone is trying to get as much wealth as they can. They don't care if they have step and trample on others in order to get to where they want to get to.

Jesus however set a perfect example for us. The scripture says that *"Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality. Instead, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, by becoming like other humans, by having a human appearance. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross."* (Php 2:5-8 GW)

Jesus had all authority and power in heaven but He humbled himself to become a man with all the weaknesses associated with men and suffered death on the cross for man's sake. He was not looking at His own interest but was looking for the salvation of man.

In John 13:15, Jesus sets an example for us to follow. After washing His disciples' feet which was an act of love, humility, and service, He encouraged us to follow His lead and serve one another. He said "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you," Jesus, the Son of God, the Most High King, never placed himself in a position above others. He led by serving, and He loved by serving. He washed feet. He fed thousands. He walked to visit and heal the sick and dead. He stopped to touch and heal a sick woman. He spent time with those no one else cared to spend time with. Jesus lived a life of service. If we claim to be Christians and as such followers of Jesus, our lives must reflect the life that Jesus led. A life of service to the world.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will focus on others and humble myself to serve my generation in Jesus' name.

SELFISHNESS OR SELF-CENTREDNESS IS CONTRARY TO GOD

"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."

(Gen 3:6)

Man was created as a tripartite being. Man is made up of spirit soul and body. (1 Thess 1:23) With our spirits, we relate to God and to the spiritual world and with our souls and body we relate to the physical. While the spirit of man is constantly seeking to know God, the soul and the flesh to a large extent gravitates towards the lusts and the desires of the flesh. Selfishness is a trait that is very common to many people. To be selfish is to be concerned excessively or exclusively with yourself, seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others. One of the reasons why people are selfish is because they allow their senses to overcome and rule over their spiritual inclination. From the key scripture above, we notice that Eve saw that the tree was good for food. (Sense of taste). Having the basic necessities of life like food, clothing and shelter are very important for everyone. However, your life on this earth must not be driven by the desire to acquire these things to the detriment of others or God's specific direction for your life.

Indeed Jesus said in Mat 6:33 that "... seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." A lot of people allow their stomachs to direct them

on the course of action. They will do anything as long as it will ensure that they get what they need to satisfy their appetite. They don't care whether someone is hurt in the process or not.

As long as they get what they want, they are all right. Many African leaders have looted their nations wealth and have purchased lavish apartments and luxury yachts abroad while their people struggle to even have one decent meal a day. All the problems in the world today are the result of selfishness. The problems in our governments and with our economies are all the result of selfishness. The problems in our families are the result of selfishness. *James 3:16 TEV "Where there is jealousy and selfishness, there is also disorder and every kind of evil."*

Selfishness is evil. It is sin. It is contrary to God's nature. Selfishness causes us to think only of ourselves and our own wants. Thinking only of ourselves is not in alignment with the Word of God. Don't walk contrary to the word. Think of others too.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will think about others. Lord, grant me the grace to put others first.

SATAN IS THE PERSON BEHIND SELFISHNESS

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.”

(Isa 14:12-15 KJV)

When you look at society and how it operates, you will realize that the real root of all kinds of evil is selfishness. Timothy also saw this evil in selfishness, and in particular, he saw it in the desire and love for more money. The more money people have, the more they want and they will do anything and all things to get more money. Selfishness of craving for more money brings all kinds of evil.

Do you know that it was because of Eve's selfish desire to be wiser, which caused her to disobey God's commandment in the Garden of Eden? Sure, the bible says that Eve saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes but she also saw that it was desirable to make one wise. The devil had convinced her that she would become like God and she liked the idea of becoming like God.

The very thought of her self-accomplishment to gain more power over the thought of being obedient to God and her husband Adam, created evil within her. Eve however, was not the originator of this selfish attitude. The origin of this selfish attitude was Satan.

The Bible, reports that Satan was perfect in his ways from the day he was created until iniquity was found in him (Ezekiel 28:15). This iniquity is selfishness, the root of all evil.

In the key scripture above, Satan sought to lift himself above the Almighty God. He used the word “I” five times in that scripture. As a result of his sin, God cast him out of heaven. From then until now, the root of evil tendencies, selfish desires, continue to reap havoc among society. And it all originates from Satan.

When the Devil came to tempt Jesus, he promised him kingdoms of the world if he would bow to him. If Jesus had thought about himself alone, and what he would gain from this opportunity, then he would have fallen into the selfish trap of sin. Selfishness is a trap from the devil. Don't fall into it.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I reject very trap of selfishness from the devil in Jesus' name.

PROPHETIC WORD ABOUT SELFISH PEOPLE IN THE LAST DAYS

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

(2 Timothy 3:1-2, 3-4)

The word of God is true and yea and amen. Every prophetic word that has been declared in the word of God shall be accomplished. Scripture says that *"My word, which comes from my mouth, is like the rain and snow. It will not come back to me without results. It will accomplish whatever I want and achieve whatever I send it to do."* (Isa 55:11 GW)

When you look closely at scriptures, several prophecies were made about Jesus' coming and they all came to pass. It was prophesied that he would be born in Bethlehem, betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, and it all came to pass. As believers we can fulfil scripture either negatively or positively by our actions. Judas fulfilled scripture negatively when he betrayed Christ.

In the key scripture above, there is a biblical prophecy about what would happen in the last days. So many events will herald the end of the world and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The events happening in the world today are a sure indication that we are in the last days, and soon, Jesus will come back again. The first thing that is mentioned as happening in the last days is that men shall be lovers of their own selves. The self becomes man's first priority instead of God. Jesus said, "...

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind". Mat 22:37 So our first priority is loving God. However, in the last days, men shall turn the commandment upside down, twist scripture and love themselves first, thus taking the place of God.

Selfishness is a love for one's self to the detriment of all others. This is where all the troubles of the world start from. The identity of evil in its worst state is characterized by self; unequalled and unbridled love for self. The world is where it is today because of selfish and proud leaders who only wish to fulfil their personal desires and ambitions. The war in Ukraine is a senseless war that seeks to fulfil one man's ambition for a greater Russia. The selfish ambition of one man has almost thrown the whole world into a recession and many nations are suffering because of that. Selfishness is of the devil. It is evil. Don't allow yourself to fulfil scripture negatively. Get rid of selfishness in your life

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to be selfish. I shall think about others.

SELF DENIAL IS A CONDITION FOR FOLLOWING JESUS

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

(Matthew 16:24-26)

One of the greatest experience one can ever have, is to acknowledge yourself as a sinner and recognise the sacrifice and the price that Jesus paid for you on the cross and accept him as your saviour. Indeed, there is nothing greater than that. It is important to acknowledge however that, that experience is only the beginning of a long journey of following Christ. From the above key scripture, we learn that the first thing Jesus requires of followers is to deny one's self. This phrase has the connotation of giving up your own desires, personal goals, any ambition for power, dominion or human glory, and putting yourself at the service of others. Following Jesus means more than just identifying yourself as his follower; it is rather submitting to Christ as his slave.

You can't follow Christ when you don't want to deny yourself. The Greek word for deny means to disown or abstain. You must not have a personal desire in yourself except what Jesus wants. The Bible in Basic English puts it this way: *“...If any man would come after me, let him give up all, and take up his cross, and come after me.”* (Mark 8:34) You must give up all you have, your likes and dislikes, your personal interests

and take upon you the likes and dislikes and interests of the Lord. The God's Word Version says: *“...Those who want to come with me must say no to the things they want, pick up their crosses, and follow me.”* (Mark 8:34)

Many people claim to love Jesus but have woefully failed to show their love to Him by clinging steadfastly to their selfish ambitions that are contrary to the word of God. Christianity is not just about having answers to prayers, miracles, joy, peace, abundance etc. Yes, it is about all these but it is also about sacrifice. It is about sacrificing and letting go of worldly interests that are not pleasing to God. You must let go of that relationship that does not honour God. You must let go of the pride that is preventing you from submitting to your leaders. Following Christ requires that you put the self-down. Let go and Let God!

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I let go of every selfish ambition and pride that hinders me from serving God well. Help me Lord!

THE HUMBLD AND EXALTED CHRIST, OUR EXAMPLE OF SELF DENIAL

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

(Phil 2:5-7)

We can never follow Christ without following His footsteps. You can't call yourself a Christian if Christ is not seen in you. From the above key scripture, we see that the mind-set of Jesus was that even though He was in the form of God He made Himself of no reputation. Jesus Christ was God. He did not think it was robbery to say He was God, because He was really God as affirmed by 1 Tim 3:16.

Jesus did not regard this title. He was willing to humble himself to come to the earth as a mere man and die on the cross. Many of us are besotted with our worldly titles and proudly wear them on our sleeves. We see ourselves as high and above everyone else and are unwilling to humble ourselves in the house of God. That is not a reflection of Jesus' life and mindset.

Not only did Jesus humble Himself and put his reputation aside but he also took the form of a servant. He said this about Himself *"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served; he came to serve and to give his life to redeem many people."* (Mar 10:45 GNB)

Jesus served as a healer, preacher, deliverer and provider for the poor. He humbly washed the feet of his

disciples to teach them the servant attitude. Christ's mindset must be seen in us. We must possess a mindset of humility, a mindset of obedience to the word and will of God, a mindset of laying aside our exalted positions in the service of God and humanity and a mindset of seeing ourselves as not more important than others.

As imitators of Christ, we should look not only to our own interests but also to the interests of others. This is the only antidote to the greed and corruption plaguing our nation today. We must look for opportunities to serve rather than opportunities to be served. We should use our positions to serve people instead of using it to enrich ourselves. We should be willing to do anything for the interest of the gospel and people. We have to acknowledge that everything we have comes from God. We must choose humility over pride because it is only by the grace of God that we can do what we do.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord grant me the grace to be a worthy example of your sacrifice and life on earth. I will be a worthy example to others.

FOCUSING ON OTHERS IS REAL MINISTRY AND THE SECOND GREATEST LAW

“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

(Matthew 22:37-40)

A Chinese proverb states, “If you want happiness for an hour, take a nap. If you want happiness for a day, go fishing. If you want happiness for a year, inherit a fortune. If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody.” There is abundant joy and happiness when you provide solutions to other people’s problems and make a difference in people’s lives. In providing solutions to other people’s problems, you also find peace, tranquillity and great reward. Jesus left his reputation and position in heaven and humbled himself to become a man and as a result the bible says that *“God raised him ... to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.”* (Php 2:9 GNB)

A man came to Jesus wanting to know what the greatest commandment was. Jesus said, *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.”* Then He said, *“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”* (Matthew 22:37, 39). Jesus was not interested in just loving God. Loving God is very good and essential for every believer. But it is not enough to love God. He continued by saying that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. This is because it is in loving others that you actually reflect and show that you love God. *“If we say we*

love God, but hate others, we are liars. For we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love others, whom we have seen. The command that Christ has given us is this: whoever loves God must love others also.” (1Jn 4:20-21 GNB)

We can obey the commandment of loving God by serving others. Jesus showed us how to do this. Everywhere He went He helped people. He taught people the gospel. He visited and blessed people who were sick. He helped people who had disabilities. He was a friend to the lonely. By serving others, Jesus did what our Heavenly Father wanted Him to do. Don’t let your life be all about you and your family. Sometimes, just a kind word of encouragement is all that someone needs to face their challenges in life. Just like Jesus, see a need in others and make an effort to meet that need. The more you contribute to others, the less you will need to worry about your situation. Focus on others. That is the greatest commandment.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to focus on others and help others just as Jesus did.

SIGNS AND WONDERS FOLLOW THOSE WHO FOCUS ON OTHERS

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

(Mar 16:15-18 KJV)

Jesus gave an assignment to the disciples after his death and resurrection. In the key scripture above, he commanded his disciples to go out into the world with the gospel of salvation and preach and bring deliverance to the people. He emphasized this point when He said *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you. Then you will be my witnesses to testify about me in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* (Act 1:8 GW) Take note that the preaching of the gospel was supposed to start from Jerusalem, but it was not supposed to end there. It was to extend beyond Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. However, the disciples became excited with the progress they were making in Jerusalem and forgot all about the **others** in Judea, Samaria and the rest of the world.

God is interested in the others. Many believers are excited and happy when they go to their beautiful air-conditioned churches with fantastic sound and decoration. They are not interested in the others who find themselves in brothels, bars, beaches and even walking in the streets

who are slowly edging towards hell. These believers' throng to miracle and prophetic services looking and searching for miracles. However, the bible is clear that miracles, signs and wonders shall follow those who go after others who need Jesus.

When the disciples failed to do as Jesus commanded, the bible says that there was great persecution which scattered them and they were forced to go beyond Jerusalem preaching the gospel. (Act 8:1) As they went signs and wonders followed them. Philip, one of the disciples went to Samaria to preach and many miracles were performed with evil spirits coming out of people and many paralyzed and lame people being healed. (Acts 8:4-8) The bible says that there was great joy in the city. When you focus on others not only do signs and wonders follow you but you bring great joy to people. Stop chasing after signs and wonders and let signs and wonders follow you as you obey the great commission to focus on others

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am set for signs and wonders as I obey the great commission to bring others to Christ.

HOW TO FOCUS ON OTHERS

"So then, as Christians, do you have any encouragement? Do you have any comfort from love? Do you have any spiritual relationships? Do you have any sympathy and compassion? Then fill me with joy by having the same attitude and the same love, living in harmony, and keeping one purpose in mind. Don't act out of selfish ambition or be conceited. Instead, humbly think of others as being better than yourselves."

(Php 2:1-3 GW)

Jesus came to the earth with a mission to save others. While on earth His focus was on others. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, set the demon possessed free and eventually shed His precious blood on the cross to save mankind. In Philippians 2:5 Paul urges the believers to let the mind that was in Christ be manifest also in them. What was the mind that was in Christ? Even though he was God, he humbled himself and came to the earth as man to die to save others. Others should be our focus as believers.

In the key scripture above, Paul sets out certain things that we can do to focus on others. One of the things that Paul talks about is being able to encourage others. Providing comfort and support to others by encouraging them with kind words in their time of trouble is one way of focusing on others.

Compassion will compel you not to say and do things that will cause harm to your brother or sister. There are many believers who don't care whether what they say or do affect others. They feel they must be frank and speak their minds whether good or bad. It is okay to speak your mind but in doing so, remember that love must be

the bedrock and love is not rude or ill mannered.

When you seek the needs of others you try to always maintain unity and oneness in the family of God. Paul said this about Timothy. *"I don't have anyone else like Timothy. He takes a genuine interest in your welfare"* (Php 2:20 GW) Anyone whose focus is on others takes a genuine interest in them and naturally shows care and concern for them. In the next verse after talking about Timothy Paul says *"Everyone else looks after his own interests, not after those of Jesus Christ."* (Php 2:21 GW)

Sadly, that is the story of believers today. They come to church looking for what they can get from God or even the Pastors. We are all seeking our own selfish interests and not that of the church of Jesus. But Paul when he met Jesus on the way to Damascus asked *"Lord what wilt thou have me to do"* (Acts 9:6) How many of us can ask the Lord that question today?

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, what will you have me do? I am ready to do it.

WAYS TO FOCUS ON OTHERS – EVANGELISM

“And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

(Jud 1:22-23 KJV)

Compassion is a quality that every believer must have. The key scripture talks about having compassion on souls that are hell bound. The online dictionary defines compassion as sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others. Having compassion on unbelievers means that we must be concerned about the fact that if these people do not receive Jesus before they die, they will end up in torment in hell. This should energise us to want to do something about it.

Jesus was a man full of compassion for souls. The bible says that *“And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.” (Mar 6:34 KJV)* When you meet your friends and family who are not born again and are on a trajectory towards hell, do you feel any compassion for them? Do you give consideration to the fact that the person you are laughing and joking with could die the next minute and find himself in torment in hell? Don't be selfish. Don't be happy, being the only one saved in your family. Reach out to others who need to find the same sanctuary that you have found in Jesus. We must follow the example of Jesus and have compassion on the lost. Soul winners must feel what Jesus felt. If you feel no

compassion, no sympathy or pity for a lost person, there is little chance that you will win him. Our churches must be evangelism focused. Unfortunately, many churches are inward looking and not outward looking. We are just happy with enjoying ourselves in our nice airconditioned churches. Jesus said *“There are other sheep which belong to me that are not in this sheep pen. I must bring them, too; they will listen to my voice, and they will become one flock with one shepherd.” (Joh 10:16 GNB)*

The church must realise that there are other people who are outside the church whom Jesus died for. These people need to be brought into the fold. Many churches just focus on activities that seek to meet the spiritual and physical needs of their members and neglect the critical mass that is outside the church. Churches must have constant evangelism programs to reach out to the lost. A church that doesn't evangelise has lost its soul. A Christian that doesn't preach the good news has lost his focus. Jesus wants us to focus on the other sheep outside the pen. Let's pray for compassion to go out there and get them all in by force.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, grant me the grace to reach out to lost souls for your kingdom in Jesus' name.

WAYS TO FOCUS ON OTHERS – WORSHIP

“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.”

(Act 15:16-17)

The Tabernacle of David is the name given to the tent that King David set up on Mount Zion in Jerusalem to house the Ark of the Covenant. Instead of the sacrifices of animals, the sacrifices offered at David's Tabernacle were the sacrifices of praise, joy and thanksgiving (Psalm 95:2,100:4). The majority of the Psalms were originally sung as prophetic songs in David's Tabernacle. They account in detail the expressions of worship offered by the Israelites before the Ark of the Covenant. You may have heard of the phrase “Davidic worship”. This phrase simply means worship in the spirit of the Tabernacle of David, that is, worship that is an act of the whole person. The worship of David's Tabernacle included singing, instrumental music, standing, kneeling, bowing, upraised hands, clapping and dancing. The restoration of the Tabernacle of David is a restoration of worship in spirit and truth.

In the key scripture above, the prophetic word was that the tabernacle of David would be restored so that men would seek the Lord. This means that there is a connection between the restoration of the tabernacle of David and men seeking God. It is important to note that every worship service must aim at attracting and seeking men to come to know God. Our worship

services especially our Sunday services must not only seek to feed the sheep but primarily seek to save the lost. That is why it may not be appropriate to have a deliverance service on Sunday as new converts invited by members may not understand it. That is why Paul said *“I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”* (1Co 14:18-19)

The church must have other feeding programs such as discipleship programs, different bible classes and teaching services to help their members grow spiritually and focus their Sunday services on getting the unsaved invited to church by members get nourishment and salvation. Believers must make evangelism a lifestyle. They should be able to get new souls to church every Sunday. New souls that come to church must experience the ultimate Davidic worship. The result of the Church flowing in Davidic worship will be a great harvest of souls.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

As I flow in Davidic worship, I connect to win souls into the kingdom in Jesus' name.

WAYS TO FOCUS ON OTHERS – FELLOWSHIP

“They spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and the prayers.”

(Act 2:42 GNB)

Man is a relational being. God created man for relationship. When God created the world, He reasoned that everything He had created was good but when He created Adam was the only time he declared that something was not good. He said it is not good for man to be alone. All the other creatures had their companions but man did not have anyone, so He created Eve as a companion and helper to Adam. You cannot live in isolation. You cannot be an island. Every one needs someone. We are all a product of someone's help, kindness or generosity.

The church is described as the body of Christ. *1Co 12:27 GW* “*You are Christ's body and each of you is an individual part of it.*” Every individual part of the body is important and significant. As part of the body of Christ, we must have concern for each other. The scripture says that “*God's purpose was that the body should not be divided but rather that all of its parts should feel the same concern for each other.*” (*1Co 12:25 GW*)

One way we can show concern for each other is through fellowship. Fellowship is a friendly association with people with whom you share the same interest or are pursuing something as a group. The church is a group of people with the common interest of loving and serving God. We should as believers show concern for each other by

visiting each other to encourage each other. When you don't see someone in church or a member is unwell, visit them and find out how they are doing and if there is any way you can help them, do so.

Visiting and fellowshiping with others is a way not to be selfish. The early church did this. In Acts 15:36 Paul told Barnabas “*Let's go back to every city where we spread the Lord's word. We'll visit the believers to see how they're doing.*” (*Act 15:36 GW*)

Be interested to know how the new converts in your church are doing. Take up the responsibility to follow up souls that come to church to establish them in Christ. Jesus who is our example went to visit Peter's sick mother-in-law and healed her. When you visit the souls, edify and exhort them and pray for them before you leave. If they are sick, pray for them to receive their healing. Jesus promised that healing is one of the signs that will follow us as we step out to preach the gospel. He has promised that He will be with us always even to the end of the age. (Mat 28:20).

PRAYER & CONFESSION

From now on, I will not be selfish. I will visit and encourage others.

WAYS TO FOCUS ON OTHERS – DISCIPLESHIP

"So wherever you go, make disciples of all nations: Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to do everything I have commanded you. "And remember that I am always with you until the end of time" (Mat 28:19-20 GW)

The command to go out and preach the gospel to people all over the world is one of the greatest commands that Jesus ever gave, it is the heartbeat of Jesus to get as many people as possible saved and delivered from the devil's tentacles. Whenever someone is about to die or go on a long journey their last words are very crucial. The key scripture above is one of the very last words that Jesus spoke to His disciples before He left the earth. This shows that the directions given are very important. Every believer has been given a ministry to reconcile men unto God.

2Co 5:18 GW *"God has done all this. He has restored our relationship with him through Christ, and has given us this ministry of restoring relationships".* Our key scripture continues by saying that we should go and make disciples and teach them everything that we have been taught.

Discipleship is the platform for focusing on others. Many believers have sat in churches for years, always receiving but never giving out. Many of us have become professional pew warmers. We are in church every Sunday listening to different messages after messages. Many others have developed itching ears, always looking for something new and as a result jumping from one church to the

other and from one programme to the other. We are too selfish and are only thinking about ourselves and how we can get blessed. This was Paul's advice to Timothy in the following; 2Ti 2:1-2 *"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also".*

Paul expected Timothy to teach people who will also teach others. It is a cycle that must never end. Where are you in this cycle?

Many of us are still at the receiving end of the cycle after several years of sitting in church and receiving. It is selfishness to always want to receive and not give out. The bible says that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Many Christians are not growing because they are not giving out.

Heb 5:12 GW *"By now you should be teachers. Instead, you still need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word. You need milk, not solid food".* The key to growing as a believer is to focus on sharing what you know with others.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall arise to teach others.

WAYS TO FOCUS ON OTHERS – MINISTRY

“Welcome each other as guests without complaining. Each of you as a good manager must use the gift that God has given you to serve others.”

(1Pe 4:9-10 GW)

There are several misconceptions people have about ministry. One of the most common misconceptions people have about ministry is that the word ministry refers to either a church, a particular department within a local church or a Christian organization. The other misconception people have about ministry is that anyone who works full-time for a church or a Christian institution such as a pastor or a missionary is perceived to be “doing ministry” whilst anyone who is not full-time is not considered to be a minister or to be “in ministry”. Many people feel that those who are paid by the church are the ones who should take up responsibility in the church. They expect the pastors to do all the work and they only have to present themselves to be fed.

Biblically, the word ministry is translated *diakonia* in Greek which means “service” or “to serve”. Therefore, ministry is about the giving of ourselves and our time, talents, and resources to bless and help others. The most important ministry that God has given to believers is the ministry to reconcile people to God by giving them the gospel. (2 Cor 5:18.) This act of service to God is not limited to a selected few such as a pastor, teacher, evangelist or an apostle. It is for all believers. Apart from this basic ministry God has given every believer a gift that can be used to serve others.

Every Christian is a minister of God because every Christian has been given gift(s) by the Holy Spirit to equip believers with the capacity to serve the Lord.

Romans 12:6-8 says: *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”*

What role do you play as a believer in your local church. You may not have a nice voice to sing in the choir or you may not have the gift to play an instrument but there is something you can do to serve others. One's ministry does not have to be limited to preaching, singing in the choir or ushering in a church.

Rather, ministry or service to God can be extended through helping the poor, sharing the gospel to a friend or strangers or even using social media or the Internet as a platform to spread the word of God. Don't just sit in church. Serve others.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will use my gifts and talents to serve others.

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

“Don’t act out of selfish ambition or be conceited. Instead, humbly think of others as being better than yourselves. Don’t be concerned only about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others.”

(Php 2:3-4 GW)

The natural tendency for most people and the way of the world is to be concerned and interested in things that will benefit them or things that will affect them in some way. Most people are not interested if they are not in any way affected. This is the kind of selfishness and inward-looking attitude that was portrayed by Eve in the garden. She was interested in the fruit because it was pleasing to the eye and the devil had convinced her it will make her powerful. On the other hand, however, the key scripture is clear that our focus as believers should not only be with our own interests but we should also be concerned about the interests of others.

Prayer is a platform by which one can enhance helping others. If your prayer is all about yourself and your family then you are shirking your responsibility to be concerned about the interest of others. Many of us only pray for ourselves and our families, without considering the church, the church family, kingdom issues etc. The patriarchs of old were people who had the interest of others at hand. When the Lord visited Abraham and informed him about His intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham began to plead with God to have mercy on them. In his intercession for the city, He pleaded with the Lord to save them if he could find ten righteous people there. His

intercession began with forty-five righteous people until he eventually got to ten but still couldn’t get ten righteous people. Abraham had a strong compassion for the salvation of the people of Sodom.

We can’t continue to focus only on ourselves during our prayer sessions. It is time for believers to arise and have compassion for lost souls that are dying and going to hell on a daily basis. Today, if you organise a prayer meeting calling for people to come and pray for souls and for the kingdom of God, many people will not turn up. Rather, if you call for a prayer meeting to pray for prosperity, cast out the witches and wizards destroying our homes and families and to pray to destroy demonic activities in people’s lives, you will find hundreds thronging to that meeting. They will gladly clap their hands, march up and down casting out these demons and claiming riches and prosperity. Many believers have become so materialistic and selfish. Let us follow the example of our father Abraham. He was concerned for Sodom and Gomorrah and interceded for them. Shift your prayer focus now and pray for others too.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, grant me the grace and mercy to have compassion for others. I will pray for others.

LEARNING FROM THE PATRIARCHS – THE CASE OF MOSES (1)

"Don't be concerned only about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others."

(Php 2:4 GW)

Intercessory prayer is prayer for the needs of others. Praying for others is an unselfish expression of love. Many Christians have not developed the habit of praying for others. We are used to praying for ourselves and our own needs. Of course, that is also important but as the key scripture states, you must also be concerned about others. Why does God want us to pray for others? Because intercessory prayer reflects God's own character of love and mercy. Heb 6:12 admonishes us to follow those who through faith and patience inherit the promise of God. The patriarchs of the bible are a perfect example of people who engaged in intercessory prayer and we can learn a lot from them.

Moses had a difficult time leading the people of Israel from Egypt to the promised land because they were a rebellious people who constantly disobeyed the commandments of God. On several occasions, God had decided to destroy them all but Moses interceded on their behalf. On one occasion, when Moses went up the mountain to receive the ten commandments, the Israelites turned their backs on God and commissioned Aaron to make a golden calf which they worshiped *and claimed was the god that brought them out of the Land of Egypt. God was so angry and said to Moses "...I've seen these people, and they are impossible to deal with. Now leave me alone. I'm so angry with them I am*

going to destroy them. Then I'll make you into a great nation." (Exo 32:9-10 GW)

Being a good leader, he didn't want to see the people destroyed and pleaded with God and said *"...why are you so angry with your people whom you brought out of Egypt using your great power and mighty hand?"* ¹²*Don't let the Egyptians say, 'He was planning all along to kill them in the mountains and wipe them off the face of the earth. That's why he brought them out of our land?.' Don't be so angry. Reconsider your decision to bring this disaster on your people.* ¹³*Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. You took an oath, swearing on yourself. You told them, 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. I will give to your descendants all the land I spoke of. It will be their permanent possession.'* ¹⁴*the LORD reconsidered his threat to destroy his people. Exo 32:11-14 GW*

A good intercessor will pray God's word back to him. Moses reminded God of His promises. When you are full of the word, you will pray the word and you will get answers to your prayer.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, grant me the heart of an intercessor like that of Moses to pray for others.

LEARNING FROM THE PATRIARCHS – THE CASE OF MOSES (2)

“The LORD added, ‘I’ve seen these people, and they are impossible to deal with. Now leave me alone. I’m so angry with them I am going to destroy them. Then I’ll make you into a great nation.’”

(Exo 32:9-10 GW)

Today, we are going to take a look once more at the prayer of intercession that Moses prayed for the children of Israel, when God sought to destroy them because they had abandoned Him and made a golden calf that they worshiped as the God that took them out of the land of Egypt. The background story is that, Moses had been on Mt. Sinai with God for forty days and nights receiving from God the terms of the Covenant. But while Moses was there before God, the people became impatient and demanded that Aaron make visible gods like they’re used to. From their gold earrings, Aaron fashioned, a gold calf that they worshiped and claimed brought them out of Egypt. This infuriated God so much that he vowed to destroy the people and make a nation out of Moses.

Moses' intercession is a clear example of someone who has God's interests and the interest of others at heart. God had promised Moses He was going to make a nation out of him so he clearly stood to benefit from this arrangement but rather Moses appealed to God, interceding for the people of Israel, pleading for mercy rather than condemnation upon them. And in the end God relented and responded positively to Moses' prayer. There are certain elements in Moses' prayer of intercession that are worth noting.

Moses appealed to God that the people of God are God's own people. (Exo 32:11) In a prayer of intercession, you must be able to define your standing in the sight of God. If you don't have a relationship with God, you have no locus in prayer. Furthermore, you need to know who God has made you to be as a believer that gives you the right to stand in his presence.

Moses reminded God that he called the people of Israel His own people. Then he appealed to God's name and reputation. In other words, he sought for the glory to go to God and not to man. Then he appealed to God's promises that He had made to Abraham, Isaac and Israel that He would make their descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. (Exo 32:13) Moses relied on the promises of God to convince God to relent from His anger. As you pray and intercede for others, state your case before God based on his promises. When we pray this way, we pray according to the will of God rather than contrary to it. Pray scriptures back to God for answered prayers.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, your promises are yea and Amen. I rely on your promises for answers to my prayers.

PRAYER STRUCTURE

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”

(Mat 6:9)

There is structure to everything in life. Nothing can stand without structure. When you want to build a house, you will need an architectural drawing of what you want to build. Drawings are important because they are used to communicate the technical details of a project. These drawings provide contractors with an accurate idea about the whole construction materials and other requirements in order to ensure the structural integrity of the project. Some buildings have collapsed because the contractors failed to follow the instructions provided for in the architectural drawing.

Even the human body has structure. The human body is a single structure but it is made up of billions of smaller structures of four major kinds: cells, tissues, organs, and systems. Each part of the body has been meticulously arranged to perform specific functions. If one of the structures falls out of place or fails to function, it will affect the smooth functioning of the body. The bible describes the church as the body of Christ. *1Co 12:27 “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”* Jesus is the head of the church. *Col 1:18 GW “He is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, the first to come back to life so that he would have first place in everything.”* Each part of the body has a role to play. *1Co 12:12 GW “For example, the body is one unit and yet has many parts. As all the parts form one*

body, so it is with Christ.” In the same way that the universal body of Christ has a structure with each part playing its role, the local body of Christ which is the individual churches must also have structure to it.

Every local church must have pastors, leaders, elders, boards to take care of finances, church property etc. As a member of a local church, you must locate yourself within the structure of the church. Churches that are well structured have stability and shall continue to function effectively even when there is a leadership change. The Catholic Church has been in existence for hundreds of years because they have a solid structure that ensures their survival. Unfortunately, some Pentecostal churches have failed to survive their founding fathers because they failed to put up the necessary structures to ensure continuity. What I am saying is that structure is very critical to everything that you do in life. Therefore, when the disciples asked Jesus for how to pray, he revealed to them a structure for prayer which we shall consider in the next devotional. Don't live your life without structure. Structure is key for your survival. Put structure to your life now.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will locate myself within the structure of the local church and function effectively to the glory of God.

BE AN AVID LEARNER OF THE WORD

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."

(Hos 4:6)

I have to conclude that the destruction of many believers is not as a result of the devil, the world, their flesh, or any witch or wizard somewhere. The destruction of the believer is his ignorance in the word of God. It is very easy to blame our failure on many people, things and events that happen in our lives but always excuse ourselves from blame. In the above scripture, God says my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Lack of knowledge is simply ignorance. You can be destroyed by what you don't know. What does God want us to know? The answer is right there in the scripture we read. He said, *"...because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest to Me because you have forgotten the law of your God..."* So God wants us to know His law which is His word.

A lot of problems with many believers would be solved if they only knew the word. Ignorance of the word is killing the church today. You will be amazed at what people will do to get what they want. Many women have subjected themselves to ritual bathing by prophets because they wanted a so-called curse to be removed from their lives and the prophet had declared that was the only way the curse could be removed. Clearly, God's word has declared in Galatians 3:13 that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the

law by becoming a curse for us. But due to ignorance or sheer unwillingness to study and catch a revelation to apply to their lives, these women will subject themselves to the humiliation of going naked before a stranger.

The believer must be an avid learner of the Holy Scriptures in order to master command over the issues of life and the works of God's hands over which He has made us overseers. We must not be ignorant of the word of God. We must study what God says concerning divine healing, supernatural harvest, prosperity, marriage and sex, family life, business, physical life, church ministries, the fruits of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, missions, leadership in the church, kingdom service, discipleship, evangelism, counseling principles, etc. If you decide to study to know, you will not be destroyed by anything. Even in death, you will be smiling because you will learn from scriptures that you will die at a good old age. It's all because we are ignorant, that is why we are destroyed. Be desperate to be an avid student of the word of God today.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will give myself to the study of the word of God.

RIGHTEOUS LIVING PRODUCES PEACE

“The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”
(Isa 32:17-18)

There is a saying that; “there is no smoke without fire.” This simply means that, there is a cause to everything that happens. There are people in the world who are always running away from other people they perceive as enemies. If you want to enjoy the peace of God, you must lead a righteous life. The key scripture says that, “the work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.” This means righteousness will always work out ways and means of creating peace. No matter the issues that may exist between you and another person, if you are righteous, you will endeavor to create a platform for peace.

When God wanted to save us, He created a platform for peace by sending His Son Jesus Christ to come. The Bible says that, “**For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,**” Eph 2:14-15) Jesus made the attempt to create peace. He first of all abolished the main cause of enmity, the law of commandments that condemned us because by the law no one could be justified before God. He dealt a death blow to it and created peace between

us and God, making us one with Him.

In the same way, anyone who is righteous will always take the initiative for peace. You must reach out first even if the other party was wrong. Among believers, the Bible says, “**endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**” (Eph 4:3). To endeavour means to make every effort, strive, struggle, labour etc. It connotes a personal effort to take the initiative to make peace. Once you make this effort, the end result will be quietness and assurance forever. It continuous to say that, “**My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places**” (Isa 32:18) The benefits of living in peace are so astounding and amazing that every one of us must crave for it. You will sleep in peace. You will live in your house in peace. You will work in peace and have total rest in life. You will not live in condemnation all day and all night because your heart will be settled. Your security will be guaranteed. Make every effort to make peace today.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will make peace with my family, friends, and church family and working colleagues.

THE SPIRIT OF JOY IS THE MEDIUM FOR RELEASING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO MOVE

“for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

(Rom 14:17)

I have personally realized, one major way to allow the Holy Spirit to have free movement in our lives and church services is when we meet with joy and allow the joy of the Lord to permeate our lives and the meetings. The word of the Lord above says that *“for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,”* with a strong emphasis on “joy in the Holy Spirit.”

There is power in the kingdom of God. That power is the power of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit flows freely in the spirit of joy. That is why when we meet in the presence of the Lord, we offer praise to Him and dance before Him. When His joy floods our meetings, then the Holy Spirit takes over to speak, teach, heal and perform signs and wonders. The Bible says that *“the joy of the Lord is our strength”* (Nehemiah 8:10) Divine strength is released when the joy of the Lord, which is the joy of the Holy Spirit fills our hearts.

When you study the lifestyle of the early church, you would see this element of joy and gladness in their meetings. They received the word with gladness (Acts 2:41). They ate their food with gladness, praising God (Acts 2:46-47). They received ministers with gladness (Philippians 2:29).

They rejoiced when they received a letter of encouragement from the

Jerusalem church (Acts 15:31). We must see the joy of the Lord in our services, and more especially in our individual lives. It is not how much money we get that gives us joy. It is not how much food we eat that gives us joy. It is how much we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

There is an anointing for joy and gladness released by the Holy Spirit. That is why we need more of the Holy Spirit to flow in the joy of the Lord, and that is also the reason why we must allow joy to rule our lives in order to allow for the free flow of the Holy Spirit.

When the joy of the Lord takes over your life all the time, your shame will change to glory. Anything the devil has planned for you shall be defeated, and double portion shall be yours. (Isa 61:7) The joy of the Lord adds weight to your spirit to enable you bear any infirmity that comes your way because the power of Christ rests upon you to help you bear any infirmity. Allow the joy of the Lord to be your strength in the midst of weakness.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

The joy of the Lord is my strength in my infirmity. For shame, I receive a double portion of glory.

JOY THAT BREAKS WALLS

"For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands" (Isa 55:12)

The above scripture gives us a clear description of how joy can transform our lives and cause our problems to become insignificant. The mountains which stand for challenges in life shall break forth into singing when you are joyful. One of the greatest desires of the devil is to make you unhappy and sad all the time. He comes to steal, kill and destroy. He does these things to plunge people into a state of mourning. God wants us to be joyful as many as trust in Him. *Psa 5:11 "But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee."*

I like the account of the cripple man at the beautiful gate who was healed. It was said of him that, "So **he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them--walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.**" (Act 3:8-9) Whenever people come to church, they come with different kinds of burdens in their lives. They must decide to off-load every heavy burden to the Lord and rejoice. The Bible says that, "**casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**" (1Pe 5:7) A sign that you have off-loaded your burden is when you start thanking Him by faith that it's over. You do so with joy and gladness. Joy will cause God's desire to be performed in your life.

God is interested in your prosperity. When we exhibit joy and gladness, God becomes magnified. Our prosperity magnifies Him so He prospers us through our joy in Him so that He will take the glory. *Psa 35:27 "Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, "Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."*

Our joy and gladness change our situation and leads to our prosperity by a supernatural intervention. When Israel was going to fight against Jericho, God taught them how; with a joyful praise, they would bring down their enemies without much fight. Their shouts of Joy brought the walls of Jericho down. Your rejoicing will bring down the financial walls standing before you. Your rejoicing will overcome all demonic forces marshaled against you. Whatever you desire for in life, rejoice over it and sustain the joy. It shall be divinely delivered to you. Your joy is your triumph card for unlimited victory in Jesus' name. Amen!

PRAYER & CONFESSION

The joy of the Lord is my strength. I am joyful in the Lord God my salvation. My joy shall break down all the walls in my life in Jesus' name. Amen!

WALKING IN THE JOY OF THE LORD BRINGS HEALING TO THE BODY

"A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones."

(Pro 17:22)

Disease of any form is a curse which was introduced to the world through sin. However, God made provision for us by sending His son to take care of our health problems. *"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.'"* (Mat 8:17) That is why Jesus came to heal the sick and restore the diseased. Our healing will come by faith in His redemptive work. He finished all when He said, "it is finished." We need to believe the word of God of all that it says we have, we are and can do, and we can be.

One of the channels of healing in the bones and in the flesh is to learn to always walk in joy. The word of God says that, *"A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones."* (Pro 17:22). When your spirit is broken you can't bear any infirmity. *"The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, But who can bear a broken spirit?"* (Pro 18:14) Your spirit is very crucial to being sustained in infirmity and receiving your healing. When your heart or spirit is merry, that merriness is like medicine. There are so many sick people who need some joy and merrymaking in their hearts to be healed.

A merry heart is one of the keys to healing of the bones. A broken spirit dries the bones. That means when your spirit or heart is depressed, it creates

diseases in the bones. Arthritis, bone ache, body pains etc. could be the result of depression or a broken spirit. Do you know why some men and women are taken to the psychiatric hospital after disappointment in relationships with their spouses? They get a broken heart which is also called depression. The anti-dote for a broken heart or depression is a merry heart which is an expression of joy. Every joyful or merry heart produces cheerful countenance. *Pro 15:13 "A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, But by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken".*

It means when your heart is making merry, it reflects on your countenance. You become cheerful. How do we know that someone is cheerful? A cheerful person becomes happy, jovial, gleeful and lively. In fact, people like that are optimistic and positive. They are always in good spirits. They are not discouraged about anything they encounter in life. Learn to stay cheerful. Be praiseful. Be grateful to God always. Put on a cheerful outlook all the time no matter the circumstance. You will be healed. There is balm in Gilead, and your health can be guaranteed. Go to church and praise God with joy.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to be sad. I refuse to be depressed. I am healed now by a joyful countenance. Amen!

CONTENT PEOPLE ARE JOYFUL

"But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You."

(Psa 5:11)

Many people worry about not having so many things in life. It is very evident that money can never satisfy the person with the greatest need in the whole world. No matter how much one gets, one still wants more. The Bible says that *"He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity."* (Ecc 5:10)

An Ancient fable tells the story of three merchants crossing a desert. One moonless night as they came to a dried-up creek bed, they were startled by a voice speaking to them out of the darkness. It commanded them to pick up stones and then journey on as far as possible before stopping again. The travelers were also told that when daylight came, and they saw what they had gathered, they would be both happy and sad. Without hesitation they obeyed the instructions. When the first gray streaks of dawn appeared in the eastern sky, the men eagerly looked into the bags where the rocks had been placed. Instead of stones they discovered precious jewels. It was then they understood the meaning of the strange yet significant words, "You'll be both happy and sad." They were glad because of their enrichment through the possession because of such valuables, but they were sorrowful to think they had not picked up more! —Tan Lee's Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations.

One of the things that create sad moods and moody swings in many people is discontentment. The mere fact that you don't have that one particular thing that others have in life can put you in a position of dissatisfaction with life. This can also lead to annoyance and anger. We better heed the word of the Lord that says that: *"Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."* (1Ti 6:6-7)

Genuine godliness is replete with contentment. The mere fact that you came naked but at least you are clothed should give you a cause to be grateful and joyful. Gratefulness leads to joyfulness. Grateful people are always cheerful. If you want to increase your joy in the Lord, then learn to appreciate the many blessings He's been bestowing on you. Whichever way God blesses you, just be grateful and joyful over it. Whatever you have at your disposal, enjoy it with a grateful heart and sing unto the Lord. Praise Him with a dance and let Him know that you appreciate the life He's given you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I am grateful to you for the gift of life. Whatever I have and am, I owe it all to you.

ACCOMMODATE PEOPLE NO MATTER WHAT

“Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.”

(Rom 15:7)

One of the ingredients that help believers to appreciate themselves and accommodate each other is when we understand that we belong to the same family of God. The Bible makes it very clear that we have one faith, one Lord and one Father. (Eph 4:4-6) There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. You are not better than your brother or sister. To those who have an air of self-importance and feel they are better than others, this is what the word of God has to say to you: *1Co 4:7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*

What you have today was not what you came into the world with. What you are today is not what you were when you landed on the surface of the earth. You have come very far, and there is someone behind your perceived success; God. What someone is today is not how he will be tomorrow. The one you refuse to accommodate today will not be the same at the end of his life. A change will come. So learn to accommodate everybody the way they are today. Beloved, God deals with people in His own way. The one you perceive to be poor today may change

tomorrow. The one you perceive to be unholy today may change tomorrow. It is God who deals with us individually and personally. You must stop playing “God” in people’s lives. Accept people the way they are. Love them the way they are. Relate to them in a humble way. Never look down on anybody because of your personal notion about the person.

Stop criticizing people. Appreciate people’s effort and applaud them. Celebrate them. When David went to visit his brothers at the war front against the Philistines, he encountered Goliath. Later his big brother criticized him for being inquisitive. (1Sa 17:28) Was it not the same young brother David who killed Goliath? He was criticized but, in the end, it was his decision to stand firm and fight that got Israel the victory. He was belittled but he brought the trophy home. He was despised and rejected but he delivered the whole Israel from shame and the derogatory treatment from the foul-mouthed Goliath. The one you despise today and refuse to accommodate could be your savior one day. Don’t despise anyone. Respect and accommodate all.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will respect everybody. I will accept people the way they are.

MAINTAIN YOUR INNOCENCE

"Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life."

(Pro 4:23)

Wherever God places you in life, maintain your initial innocence. There are many people in life who come from a very humble background and through hard work and the manifold grace of God are lifted up to places of influence and high office. Sometimes, such people who previously were very humble and gracious begin to put up airs and abandon friends and colleagues who have been there for them throughout the years. There are some children who start rubbing shoulders with their parents because of wealth and opulence. There are others also who feel they know more than their bosses in the company where they've been employed and start showing signs of insubordination.

When you start seeing too many faults with your wife or husband, that's when you start looking for other alternatives. A husband who has children with his wife said to me some time ago that his wife had a bad smell and therefore he couldn't relate with her in bed. I was taken aback. Wasn't this the same man who took vows with this woman to have and to hold for better and for worse? Why such a sharp turn around now? He had now lost his innocence. The Bible says that, *"keep your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life."* So many things can affect one's heart if it is not guarded. There are some people who neglect their family and friends because of elitist mentality. They feel they have been to college. They have become noble

academicians. They are high profile politicians. They now feel the class of friends they have cannot match their newly found status in life. Watch such people carefully. Their fall is on the way.

No matter where you rise to in life, don't forget where you were taken from. Don't forget how you got to where you are now. Don't forget the people that have made inputs into your life to make you what you are today. *Pro 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall"*. When pride sets in people's lives, it changes their behavior. It changes their circle of friendships. It changes their talk. Make sure you maintain your innocence despite your promotion to fame. Humble yourself and take instruction. Don't despise your wife who has helped you this far. Don't demean your husband for the immense sacrifices he has made over the years in your life and the relationship. Maintain your innocence. Be the original you that you were at first. Maintain a low profile. Walk in humility. God resists the proud and gives more grace to the humble. Stay cool. Stay collected but strong in spirit. Stay blessed.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will maintain my innocence. Father, help me to love you and keep myself humbled for the rest of my life.

INCREASE YOUR SPIRITUAL CAPACITY THROUGH LONGSUFFERING

"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."

(Col 1:11)

The ability to be sustained in any infirmity depends on the spiritual capacity of your human spirit. The Bible says that *"The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?"* (Pro 18:14) The state of your spirit therefore is crucial for gaining the capacity to bear with problems and challenges that confront you. One of the ingredients that help your spirit to increase spiritual capacity is longsuffering. Longsuffering comprises of two words joined together: long and suffering. It therefore means; suffering long. To suffer means to hurt, agonize, ache, or feel pain. So, in order to gain spiritual capacity, you must go through a long period of pain of waiting for the materialization of your vision in life.

This time of waiting is a time God makes some spiritual inputs into your life as you suffer long. You may suffer unmet needs within that time. You may suffer a measure of lack during that time. You may suffer insults from friends and family for still believing God for the miracle you so desperately want. You may go through pain for a long time. Prepare your mind to go through it till the end, no matter the size of the problem. As you suffer long, God is working resilience in your spirit. He is hardening your spirit for future higher challenges. He is training you to cope with life in the face of pressing challenges. Do you know that God also suffers long for His children?

Sometimes we become so disobedient and rebellious that God has to suffer for several years to mold us into the vessel He needs to use for His glory. We disappoint God many times, and that creates pain in the heart of God. Or do you think our waywardness doesn't grieve God? For our sake God suffers long. As a matter of fact, longsuffering is part and parcel of God's character. A lot of things grieve God but He suffers long for our sake so that He can get the best mold from us. God is longsuffering among other virtues, as He proclaimed to Moses: *Exo 34:6 "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, **longsuffering**, and abundant in goodness and truth".* Moses interceded for Israel to be spared from death for their rebellion, and made reference to God as one who is longsuffering: *Num 14:18 "The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression..."* If you inculcate the ability to suffer long to contain situations and people, you will gain spiritual capacity to be able to contain greater pressures of burdens and infirmities in life. Learn to suffer long now.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am gaining spiritual capacity by longsuffering. I will wait till my breakthrough comes.

BRING BACK THE CROSS

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

(1Co 1:18)

The pivot of the Christian faith is the message of the cross. The cross embraces the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This is the message that brings eternal life to the believer. (1Co 15:1-4) Today, the message of the cross has been watered down in many of our churches. It has been referred to as a message for unbelievers and probably a primary doctrine for new converts. Today, we hardly hear preachers teach about the cross and the power of the cross in our churches. We can devote a whole week teaching about financial empowerment and not spend one whole day in our services talking about the cross and the finished work at calvary.

Why do we try to teach other so-called higher doctrines using human philosophy and creations of men rather than the simple message Jesus left with us in the word? If there is anything we should know more, it should be about Jesus Christ our Saviour, Father and Founder of our faith. Who is a better writer than Apostle Paul? Who is more anointed today than Apostle Paul who was taken by the Lord to the third heavens and heard unspeakable words? Wasn't he the same Apostle that wrote about a third of the New Testament? What was Paul's greatest prayer request then?

He said, *Php 3:10 “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection,*

and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death”

If this man's main request was this, then there is something about knowing Jesus and His sufferings on the cross that has to do with our lives here on earth, our destinies and eternity. There is something about His sufferings we should discover and embrace and teach. Today in many nice-looking churches, the devil is really having a field day harassing people's lives with diseases, and other demonic attacks. They listen to nice messages in their churches and yet are impotent in dealing with the devil.

We acknowledge the devil is around but we simply ignore him because we regard him as totally impotent. Of course he is totally impotent to cause you harm if you appropriate the power that is available to you as a believer by the power of the finished work of the cross. The power of God is made manifest through the preaching of the cross. That's where it all started from.

The Great apostle Paul said that, *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”* (1Co 1:18)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I overcome every power of darkness by the finished work of the cross.

SATAN WAS DEFEATED AT THE CROSS

"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it"
(Col 2:15)

Do you know that Satan's defeat began at the cross? It is clear from scripture that he lost a major battle on the cross. Col 2:14-15 *"having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it".* Whatever condemnation the Law of Moses spelt out for us as a result of our disobedience of just one law, was crucified by Jesus Christ on the cross. You see, there are consequences for disobeying the Law of Moses. The consequences were premature death, sickness, disease, poverty, attacks from enemies around them etc. (Deut 28:15-58)

Let me give you a few of the curses that will follow breaking the law as in the following scriptures: Deu 28:59-61 *"then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues--great and prolonged plagues--and serious and prolonged sicknesses. Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the Lord bring upon you until you are destroyed."*

All these Jesus took and nailed on the cross. The word of God says, Jesus took it out of the way and nailed it to the cross. Whatever was contrary

to you, and was documented in the form of an ordinance was nailed to the cross. If we can only know the things that Jesus accomplished on the cross, we will stop worrying too much about petty things. He nailed our diseases and sicknesses on the cross. He nailed the poverty on the cross. He nailed the plagues of death and premature death on the cross. He nailed barrenness on the cross. He nailed hatred and unforgiveness on the cross. Didn't Jesus say, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do?" He showed love instead of hate on the cross. That is why relationships which form the bedrock of society can be better enhanced when the message of the cross is brought to bear in our lives. We need to come back to the cross where our salvation was accomplished.

The word of God says that He stripped the principalities and triumphed over them on the cross. It's all about the cross; that's where the victory began from. Col 2:15 *"Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."* To disarm means to make powerless. The devil is powerless to harm you. That is the power of the cross.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I have victory over the devil by the power of the cross.

YOUR VICTORY IS ASSURED IN THE CROSS

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

(Col 2:15)

The cross is clearly one of the most important elements of our salvation. Without Jesus' death on the cross, we would still be under the dominion of the devil doing his bidding. The key scripture lets us know that Jesus spoiled principalities and powers. Whatever is spoiled is also ruined, damaged, decayed, or wasted. It means the devil has no power any more. The New Jerusalem Bible says, (NJB) *"and he has stripped the sovereignties and the ruling forces, and paraded them in public, behind him in his triumphal procession."*

Jesus stripped the devil of all his ammunition as is done in the disarmament of defeated soldiers. It is done publicly and shamefully because of their defeat. When an army is defeated and held captive, they are all disarmed and kept as prisoners of war. This is precisely what Jesus did to Satan. It all started from the cross and ended at the resurrection and His glorification on the right-hand side of the Father, far above all principalities and powers.

When the church gets to know this truth, the devil will really be in trouble because He will find it tough in dealing with believers anywhere in their lives. That was why Paul prayed for the believers in Ephesus to be enlightened to know this truth. Eph 1:15-17). He prayed that they would know the following: Eph 1:19-23 *"and what is the exceeding greatness of His power*

toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

All the power Jesus had was transferred to the church. We are far above all principalities and powers in heavenly places and the world. No more fear of witches and wizards, no more fear of curses from occults, no more fear from fetish etc. There were so many things happening to the church of Corinth but when Paul addressed them, all He wanted to know among them was whether they knew Jesus and Him crucified.

It is very clear that if you know the crucified Christ and what he has achieved for you by that crucifixion, you would not allow the forces of darkness to ruin your life and make life miserable for you. Your victory is assured in the cross. Take hold of it.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am walking in victory.

THE CROSS IS OUR GLORY FOREVERMORE

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified"

(1Co 2:1-2)

Paul was a very well learned man. He studied under the great legal teacher called Gamaliel, where he was educated strictly according to the Jewish law. He was very knowledgeable but he considered his knowledge to be of very little importance as compared to the crucified Christ. He said he didn't want to know anything except Christ crucified. Corinth was a major trading center and many wise people of the world were in the church. I guess there were philosophers, and professors and academicians in the church. The main message He wanted them to know was the Jesus who was crucified.

1Co 2:4-5 "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

Paul did not focus on all the worldly wisdom he had acquired. His focus was on Christ and Him crucified. I think that too much plausible words of man's wisdom have bedeviled our pulpits in these contemporary times. People's faith in Christ is more centered on human wisdom than godly wisdom and wisdom imparted by the Holy Spirit, thus relegating the power of God to the background. The power of the cross must come back to our churches. We must start

preaching and teaching it. I have met very nice knowledgeable people who are ignorant of the many devices of the devil and are being harassed by him. All I needed to do was to introduce them to the Holy Spirit, and the cross. If there is any boasting of any achievement by any man of God in the world, that boasting should be about the cross. Paul acknowledged this and said, *"But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..." (Gal 6:14)*

No matter the many things you may have achieved in life, remember the cross. Our shame was crucified on the cross. He took our shame and gave us glory. He took our grief. Whatever He suffered for us, we are not permitted to suffer anymore. *Isa 53:4-5 "Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; ... But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."* Now the cross is our glory forever more. Receive your glory in your marriage now. Receive your glory in your business now. Receive your glory in your ministry now.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I receive my glory in the cross in Jesus' name.

HEAR THE INSTRUCTIONS OF A FATHER

"Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, And give attention to know understanding."

(Pro 4:1)

I was watching a documentary on American history, and how the ancient fathers of the land enacted laws to govern the country. They proved that the American constitution was founded on the Bible. They say with regret that today, Americans have destroyed the ancient land marks that made America the envy of nations. They have sidelined God and carved their own way of life. They alleged that this has accounted for the down fall of America to the extent that nations like China have overtaken them in wealth creation. This is very sad.

What is the best legacy a father can leave for his children? Is it money or wealth? I believe that the best legacy a father can leave to his children is the legacy of the fear of God bundled in instructions and understanding regarding life. When you leave your children with money without instructions regarding life, they will certainly mess up. However, if you leave them with good instructions and understanding without money, they can make the money they need and have a decent and beautiful life.

Every child must look up to the father for instructions. That is the best a father can do for his children. Many children are looking for monetary gains from their parents, just like the prodigal son. The prodigal son didn't listen to his father's advice to stay but insisted on leaving. He therefore took his portion of his father's inheritance. He was more inclined to the present

physical benefits rather than the immaterial spiritual advice that could have shaped his future.

The writer of the book of Proverbs, Solomon, was endowed with wisdom from above. He advised children to hear the instruction of their father. Why? This is because fathers have experience in life, especially those who are in the Lord. When David was praying for God to intervene in a matter, he made reference to fathers. He said, *"Our fathers trusted in You; They trusted, and You delivered them."* (Psa 22:4) If God delivered our fathers, and we the children trust in our fathers' God, we know that we will also be delivered. That is why fathers are very important. A father will advise you based on his personal relationship with God, and tell you where he missed it, where he trusted God and made it, and how you can also avoid some loopholes and dangers in your life. Listen to your father. Get understanding from whatever he tells you. Fathers are responsible for blazing the paths for the next generation. They set standards from one generation to the other and keep improving on them. As the scripture says *"Do not remove the ancient landmark Which your fathers have set."* (Pro 22:28)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*I will listen to my fathers' instruction.
I will not disobey fathers. By their
guidance I will succeed.*

WE MUST KNOW THE GOD WE ARE SERVING

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

(Isa 9:6)

The Bible is the source of the Christians' faith in the existence of God. It is not easy to think that this book of the Bible is human generated. Look at all other books. They are totally different from the bible, the most ancient book ever written. All the writers lived in different generations and yet they seem to articulate the same thing pointing to God and a Saviour. One of those powerful books of the Bible is the book of Isaiah. Isaiah was a prophet of God. A prophet is one who sees supernaturally into the past, the present and is privileged to see into the future. Long before Jesus Christ was born, Isaiah saw him. He said, *"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

How do we know that it is about Jesus Christ? We know this because we have both man and God in the scripture above. A child is born. The sex of the child is also stated. He is a son. Just as names are given to children when they are born, the son was given a name. Now guess His name. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and finally, His name will be called Prince of Peace. How can an ordinary son be

called Mighty God? Not only is He called Mighty God, He is also called Everlasting Father.

You are not following a vain God. You are not worshipping Jesus in vain. He is the God-man. He is equated with the Father in heaven even though He is a Son. One day He said, *"I and My Father are one."* (Joh 10:30). Be confident in Jesus as a Christian. He is the one revealed by the Father, and He is the one who reveals the Father because He had been with the Father.

Joh 1:18 "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." Once you know who Jesus is, it raises your confidence level in worshipping and serving Him. People worship whom they don't know, so they don't have a relationship with whatever it is that they worship. You must know whom you worship so that you can relate to Him and celebrate Him. That's when He will also come through for you. Stay blessed.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Jesus, I believe that you are the Son of God. You are the Mighty God and Everlasting Father.

HE FEELS FOR YOU BECAUSE HE'S BEEN WHERE YOU ARE

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

(Heb 4:14-15)

Jesus can empathize with all your weaknesses. Jesus has been where you are right now. He was tempted as a human being but didn't sin. From point zero to point one, and from one junction to another junction, and from one mile to a thousand miles, He has travelled the same journey you are on right now. That is why He is able to help you.

We all read about Jesus Christ born of Virgin Mary. Sometimes, we associate Jesus Christ more with His humanity than His deity just because He was born in the flesh. This makes many people lose grip of the fact that Jesus is God. To help you balance the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, let's look at what the Bible says, *Mat 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."*

Here is another clue to believe that Jesus was not just an ordinary human being. The above scripture says "and they shall call His name Immanuel." Immanuel is translated "God with us.". When you are in the storm, He is with you. When all hope is gone and no one seems to be caring for you, He is with you. When it seems like you are dying, remember that God is with

you. Jesus is right where you are. Call upon Him and He will come through for you.

He was born a human being so that He would feel like we feel and have compassion on us. Whatever baffles you in life is not a big deal at all for Him. When Peter was walking on the sea and saw a storm, and was sinking all he did was to call Jesus. *Mat 14:30-31 "But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"*

Are you sinking now? Even if it is your fault, there is hope for you. Peter doubted. It was his fault but when he called on Jesus, He stretched out His hand and caught him. Just cry to Jesus like Peter cried. Pray and say, "Lord save me." Yes, cry. Call upon Him and Immanuel will act for you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Deliver me from the waves and boisterous waters. I trust you Lord Jesus. You are with me.

YOU ARE PART OF THE WONDER FAMILY

"Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion."

(Isa 8:18)

When you know who you are worshipping and serving and what He's capable of doing, you relax when the troubles of life strike. It is satisfying to know that the one we Christians have chosen to worship and serve, unlike others is the creator of the world and maker of man and giver and preserver of life. Who is this Jesus that we are so boastful and emotional about? Many prophets spoke about Him before He was born, and they gave a precise description of Him. Unless of course you don't believe in the Bible as the devil has made many people think. How can different people, living in different generations and many centuries apart prophesy about the same thing unless God is the engineer of such? The prophet Isaiah said, *"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* (Isa 9:6)

Wasn't Jesus born by a virgin? Was He a baby boy who grew to be a son, and of course, the Son of God? Didn't He do wonders as His name imports? Therefore, the bane of our argument is that, no matter what you think of the bible, the one the bible spoke about did precisely what was spoken about Him. His name will be called Wonderful. No wonder, wonders were associated with His works and ministry on earth when

He mingled with people and walked among men. If you accept Jesus as your Lord and Personal Saviour, you have automatically been ushered into a family of wonders. That is why when Isaiah was prophesying again, he said, *"Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion."* (Isaiah 9:6) He was prophesying about Jesus Christ. Jesus said, Here am I and the children whom the LORD (Jehovah) referring to the Father God, has given me.

Our association with Jesus is an association for signs and wonders. Why? This is because His name shall be called wonderful. The name of a person identifies the nature of the person. Even if we agree that these are the titles of Jesus, aren't titles descriptive of a person's functions and capabilities? So, calling Jesus Wonderful, shows how wonderful His life would be and how we should expect wonderful things from Him. You are a wonderful being just because you belong to the family of wonderful people. Take your wonders now.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am wired for wonders. I am designed for wonders. My everyday life is a wonder.

GOD WILL APPROVE YOU WITH GENUINE WONDERS AS HE DID WITH JESUS

“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.”

(Act 2:22)

Do you know why we must see many wonderful things in our lives? It is because we were born by a wonderful God. His wonder genes are in our spiritual blood. We must know whom we worship and serve and what He is capable of doing and what He has made out of us. Many believers live everyday cheated by the devil because they are ignorant of whom their God is and who they are.

The name of Jesus is Wonderful. If Jesus is in us, we should also be called wonderful. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, He made reference to a very important aspect of Jesus’ ministry on earth as far as the father’s backing was concerned. He said, *“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know”* (Act 2:22)

Let’s look at something strange here: “...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God...” This is talking about Jesus as a man who comes from a place called Nazareth. It emphasizes the humanity of God. Even though He was God, He became man but distinguished among men by God’s approval of Him. Now how did God approve of Him? We are told that God approved of Him

among men by miracles and wonders and signs. God can also approve you with miracles and wonders and signs. Don’t forget that the Bible says that, *“Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders...”* Isa 8:18

Jesus and the children (us) are for signs and wonders. God will not contradict His word. He is ensnared by His word to perform (Pro 6:2). You are for signs and wonders. If He approved Jesus, He will approve you. You can also rephrase the Bible and put your name there as follows; “George Ayiku, a man approved by God among men with miracles and wonders and signs...” Yes! Put your name there and claim your right. If God gave birth to you, His wonder genes are in you. You can materialize this by believing what God’s word says concerning you. It takes faith to make it real. Tell that storm to cease now. Lift up your head and be the person that God has made you. Stand strong by the word, for there shall be a performance.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I have a wonder gene in me. I belong to a family of miracles, wonders and signs.

KNOW YOUR GOD TO DO EXPLOITS

“Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits”.

(Dan 11:32)

The Bible says that “but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.” Strength is very crucial in every warfare. Strong men are needed in every society. It is very important to build national strength in security etc. Why is it that many nations spend so much on security? It is because every nation must be strong not only financially but in the area of security in order to provide internal security for her citizens, and also to defend her territorial frontiers.

From the above scriptures, we understand that those who know their God shall be strong. This means it takes knowledge to gain strength. Knowledge is strength. *“A wise man is strong. Yes, a man of knowledge increases strength”* (Pro 24:5) Knowing God is the key to doing exploits. One day, the Syrian army came against a man of God called Elisha. Elisha woke up one day to see that he was surrounded. His servant became alarmed at what he saw and became terrified. Elisha calmed him and said *“...Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”* 2Ki 6:16 The servant had no answer to the great army of Syria but Elisha knew His God. He knew what happens in the realm of the spirit. Everyone who knows his God is not terrified by circumstances hurled against him. Anyone who knows his God is not moved by what happens

in the realm of the physical but tunes his heart and faith to the realm of the spirit. God is a spirit. Those who know Him will be strong against the tidal waves of life, and secondly do exploits.

Elisha did something spiritual. He prayed. “And Elisha prayed, and said, *“LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.*” (2Ki 6:17).

This is what we call exploits. This was the end of the story. Elisha prayed a prayer and blinded them and led them straight into the hands of the king of Israel. (2Kings 6:18-23) You are powerful in the Lord Jesus Christ. You carry great ammunition in you that no man can fight and conquer. However, you need knowledge. You need to know the God of wonders who has made you so. That is why you must imbibe God’s word. You must study and know so that you can perform exploits.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall perform exploits. I know the God I worship. I take authority in the realm of the spirit and subdue every enemy in Jesus’ name. Amen!

YOU NEED ADVICE FROM THE GREAT COUNSELOR

“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”

(Pro 11:14)

Life is a long journey. Everybody is pressing into it to make it meaningful. Counsel is therefore very important. Nobody can make it without it. The Bible says that where there is no counsel, the people fall but in the multitude of counselors there is safety. No matter where you have reached in the ladder of life, you will fall if you lack advice in certain major decisions you must necessarily make. Children need to be advised. When babies are born, they are like computers that must be programmed. Their environment, family, will all help to shape their future. It takes mature people to speak into their lives in order for them to know their left and right in life.

In the same way, all new converts need counseling and mature Christians to speak into their lives to show them how to worship the Lord, pray, lead a holy life, win their lost friends to the Lord, give tithe and many more. We lack counselors in many churches. That's why many new converts are not able to stay longer and grow and soon go back into the world. We need committed and devoted counselors. We need to have counselors in our churches that are passionate about souls and love people in general. Effective counselors are agents of church growth. They are agents of change in the lives of those they guide. They provide shelter for new ones. If you cannot sing or usher or clean, maybe you are a counselor.

There are wonderful sisters and brothers in churches who are gifted with discernment but are sitting down doing nothing. More so, there are some elderly people with quite an amount of experience they can share with new and up-coming believers to make life much easier for them but are more concerned with their personal welfare.

Everybody needs counseling. When you are stuck and confused, not knowing what to do, you must look for advice. Against this background, I first of all recommend the Great counselor to you. Jesus is called the Counsellor. *Isa 9:6 "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace"*. Jesus can advise you. God is a great counselor. He does so by His Spirit. The Spirit of God can whisper something into your spirit to guide you. You may be tempted to take several ways to solve your problems but trust the Spirit of God. God's counsel will stand as against all the other plans you may have. "There are many plans in a man's heart, Nevertheless the LORD's counsel—that will stand."

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*Lord, show me the way I should go.
Teach me what to do in the midst of
my frustration.*

EFFECTIVE COUNSELING REDUCES AND ELIMINATES FRUSTRATION

“Without counsel, plans go awry, But in the multitude of counselors they are established.”

(Pro 15:22)

Almost everybody has a vision or purpose to accomplish in life. The bible as a guide to us says in the above that without counsel plans are disappointed. You may have a good plan; perfect of course. You may have the zeal to move to start implementing your plans. However, if your plans are not backed by proper direction and advice, your zeal towards implementing your plans will be a fiasco. I met a woman some time ago in Virginia when taking a stroll with my wife. She asked us for some dollars to take a bus to her destination. She was a Ghanaian. I guess she saw us in a kind of dress that looked Ghanaian. Then while waiting for the bus she said she had regretted coming to America. If she had known the truth, she wouldn't have come at all to be facing all the troubles she's been going through now.

Many people are just waiting to travel to America and Europe and other places while sitting down doing nothing productive with their lives. They need to be advised on several issues. Travelling abroad is not evil, but it is not the ultimate solution to the hydra-headed problems of life. The Amplified Bible says, (AB) *“Where there is no counsel, purposes are frustrated, but with many counselors they are accomplished.”* (Pro 15:22).

This simply means that frustration in life is as a result of lack of counsel. Many people are frustrated in several areas of their lives because they took

certain major steps without wise counsel. The Message Translation says, *“Refuse good advice and watch your plans fail; take good counsel and watch them succeed.”* (MSG). Success is linked to good counsel. The same Bible reference above also means that there can be great accomplishment with good advice. I have seen several people end their marriages because they didn't adhere to good counsel from the onset. They proposed to the wrong people. Yes! Marrying the wrong person can make a difference between success and failure in life.

When you remember Jesus, don't forget that He is also called a counselor. He is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. He can also be called Wonderful Counselor. His counsel is wonderful. If you want to be guided by God, He will do it by counsel. If you want a glorious future, you need to be guided by God. God's word says that, *“You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.”* (Psa 73:24). Don't refuse wise counsel. Its adds value to your destiny.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Your counsel will guide me and give me a glorious future. I will adhere to wise counsel from you in order to be successful in Jesus' name. Amen!

HOW TO ACCESS GODLY COUNSEL TO SUCCEED IN LIFE

*“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful”*
(Psalm 1:1)

God has reserved blessing for all of us. However, that blessing is locked up somewhere. We must locate the place where our blessings have been locked up so that we can enjoy God's blessings in our lives. The man who is blessed is the one that doesn't listen to and implement or obey ungodly counsel. Godly counsel is found in the association of godly people who meditate in the word of God. Check where you sit to chat or play. Whom do you associate with? What then is an ungodly counsel? It is an advice that is opposed to God. You may ask a question like this: How do we know that a particular advice or counsel is opposed to God? We can discern an advice that is opposed to God when we measure it with what God's word says in the Bible. Now let's continue from where the key scripture ended, i.e. verse two. It says, *“But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.”* (Psa 1:2)

When you take delight in the law of the LORD, and meditate in it, you will certainly be guided by the law of the LORD. The law of the LORD is the word of God. Any counsel you receive which is not in consonance with the word of God is called an ungodly counsel. You will never be blessed and you will never prosper and succeed. We can find godly counsel

among godly people. This therefore means that if you want a godly counsel, you can access it in the word of God. God's word is the major source of advice. That is why we are admonished to meditate in it day and night. You must delight in it more than any other thing in the world. It holds the key to a glorious future. The bible says that if you meditate in the word of God, our source of godly counsel, you are likened to a fruitful tree: (Psa 1:3) Whatever you do shall prosper.

If you align your life to a bad and ungodly advice, your life will be terminated and you will suffer shame for the rest of your life. Successive verses in the book of Psalms says that, *“The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.”* (Psa 1:4) Let God's word influence your judgment. Let God's word influence your actions. Let your steps and decisions be guided by the word of God, and with such counsel, you will never fail in life.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will receive godly advice so that my life will be ever green. I refuse ungodly counsel from now in Jesus' name. Amen!

TAKE YOUR CASE TO GOD AS HANNAH DID

“And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.”

(1Sa 2:1)

Hannah was married to Elkanah and was barren. Her rival kept teasing and harassing her because of this. They all went to Shiloh year by year to offer sacrifices. On one of those visits, she kept herself away from food and decided to groan in prayer. Later, God visited her and she conceived and gave birth to a boy named Samuel. She showed appreciation to God in a Song set out above in the key scripture. Hannah said “my heart rejoices in the LORD, my horn is exalted in the LORD...” Horns are weapons of war for certain animals. Cows, bulls, sheep, goats etc use their horn to fight each other. The stronger the horn, the better they are able to overcome their enemies. Sometimes, when such animals lock horns together, the one whose horn would break becomes the loser and mostly either dies instantly or is killed by its opponent. Horns are very crucial in the animal kingdom.

Hannah used it as a similitude to her situation to show how God had exalted her and made her stronger and a winner. After she gave birth to Samuel, God made her stronger than her enemies and especially her rival who thought she would never be able to give birth. Hannah said, “my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies.” This shows that Hannah’s mouth was narrowed and almost closed by reason of her situation and the many insults and insinuations cast on her

by her rival. She couldn’t talk back when they talked against her. She lost her boldness. Then she began to pray and believe God. She took the case to God in prayer; intense prayer. When people say all manner of things against you, don’t defend yourself. No matter how much you talk, they will not stop talking. Take the case to God in prayer as Hannah did. (1Sa 1:9-12)

After this prayer, God blessed her with Samuel. She believed in only God and not any other. She said, “*for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.*” (1Sa 2:2) Then, here comes the bullet. “*Talk no more so exceedingly proudly and let not arrogance come out your mouth.*” (1Sa 2:3) This means her rival was talking proudly and arrogantly, until God shut up her mouth. Her pride and arrogance dissipated into thin air by the occurrence of Hannah’s miracle. That is how yours will be. God will shut up those who speak swelling words against you. He will perform a miracle for you and quiet your enemies. Hope will appear and help will be your portion.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

My helpless and hopeless state shall be turned into a state full of help and hope.

CHANGE HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO LOOK TO GOD ALONE

"There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God."

(1Sa 2:2)

Everybody in the world believes in something. Atheists are people who don't believe that there is God. Even, the stand they hold that there is no God is a faith in something. The Bible is clear on those who say there is no God. *Psa 14:1 "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good".* Fetish and voodoo people believe in gods whom the Bible describes as demons. Most religions of the world have a strong link with demons. *1Co 10:20-21 "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."*

We also know that there are people who believe in the occult and enchantments. All these fall within the category of Satan worship. If everybody has a kind of God they worship and pay reverence to, you must also have one. So, the question is: who is your God? Hannah believed in God and none else. That was how come she prayed and said, *"There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God."* (1Sa 2:2) There are some Christians who still visit shrines when

they are hard-pressed. Hannah didn't shake in her faith. The only God she worshipped was God the creator of heaven and earth. She saw God as a rock which could never be moved. She saw none like God.

The prayer of Hannah is likened to the song of Moses after God had parted the Red Sea into two and they passed through it on dry ground. *"Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"* (Exo 15:11) The principle or lesson behind the prayer of Hannah and the song of Moses is that, one should not look up to any other god but only God. Until you get to this state, you will never experience the God of wonders. When Israel faced the barrier of the Red Sea, the God of wonders came through for them because He was the only God they knew. Hannah had a shift from barrenness to fruitfulness. She looked to God alone. Some try to use one eye to look up to God and the other to look up to another god or source of help. This is impossible. Change only comes to those who are focused on believing in God only.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I trust you. You are my only God. I refuse to turn elsewhere for help.

DON'T FRET BECAUSE OF EVIL DOERS. GOD WILL VINDICATE YOU.

"Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.."

(1Sa 2:3)

The world is full of problems and challenges. Don't expect to live a life that is free of challenges and problems. The challenges will always come but your ability to overcome these challenges will depend on the person in whom you put your trust. Hannah was persecuted by her rival due to her inability to conceive and bear children. Anytime they went to Shiloh to sacrifice, her rival would hurl insults at her. There may be people in your family provoking you in the same manner Hannah was provoked, probably because you are not married now even though you have reached the flower of your age, and even gone past it.

I know that many women above thirty years who are still single face a lot of challenges from their parents and relatives because they are not yet married. In some instances, they are advised by parents and sometimes friends to just have a child with any man at all because if they don't they might never have one. The level of anxiety reaches its peak when they are getting to forty years old and other siblings or relatives of the same family are getting married. This is where your faith is being tested. You must remain calm and keep believing. Don't ever open your mouth. Let God fight for you. Let your actions be that of faith. Let not your heart be troubled. Don't

fret either. Hannah's rival provoked her to fret but she didn't. The Bible says, *"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."* (Psa 37:7)

Fretting means being worried or anxious due to a lack of something or wanting something that others have that you don't have. It always leads to comparing yourself with others. The antidote to fretting is trust. You can never fret and trust at the same time. God weighs actions whether they are fretful or trusting.

Psa 37:1-3 "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed".

God is about to silence all those who persecute you and say all manner of things against you. Just be patient and increase the momentum of your trust and He will vindicate you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I refuse to fret. I refuse to compare myself with anyone. I trust you in my situation that you will come through for me.

GOD DESTROYS SATANIC WEAPONS AND STRENGTHENS THE WEAK

"The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength."

(1Sa 2:4)

There are so many people who trust in their strength and skill when it comes to dealing with the affairs of this life. Many use their strength, knowledge and skill to bully others to get what they want. Most of the time, it is the righteous that suffer. However, God will not forget the righteous. It is clear from the Bible that God will fight the cause of the righteous. *Psa 20:7-8 "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright."*

Chariots and horses are means of transportation and weapons of war. An army of chariots will have more advantages over foot soldiers in a given warfare situation. However, God is saying that even those who trust in chariots and horses will fail when God is fighting for those who trust Him. They will be brought down but those who trust in God will rise and stand upright. God can destroy the weapons of the mighty and make them impotent against the righteous who has no physical weapons.

In life, it is possible for somebody to be favoured by others for promotion, job opportunities, etc while some other people will simply have to put their trust in God for any intervention. The supernatural shift is that, those who start disadvantaged are capable of ending up with greater advantages

than their counterparts because God is on their side. The Bible says; *There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. (Psa 33:16)*

An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. (Psa 33:17)

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put our hope in ourselves and man. God does not depend on our capabilities to move us forward. In war, numbers count a lot. The more an army is, the better their chances of winning. However, this is not applicable in the realm of God. God can save with few. For with God, even mighty men fall in the face of weaklings, just like Goliath fell with all his armour against the little armourless David with five smooth stones and a sling.

When there is a divine shift, the strong becomes weak and the weak becomes strong, the fallen rises up and those standing strong fall down. Hannah was weak, barren and silenced but God turned the tide round and she got the opposite. This shall be your portion in Jesus' name. Amen!

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I trust in the name of the Lord. I believe that my tide will change. I am stronger and stronger now. My turn is at hand.

THE FULL WILL BE EMPTY, AND THE EMPTY WILL BE FULL

"They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble."

(1Sa 2:5)

Whenever God decides in His power to move upon anyone believing Him for a miracle, sometimes, He ends up creating a very humorous situation. He initiates a shift to the favour of the believer and to the disfavour of the unbeliever. One must enjoy while another must suffer. It is like a swap of positions in social standing, wealth etc. Hannah was barren. She prayed to God and God heard her prayer. She conceived and gave birth to a baby boy named Samuel. From the prayer of Hannah, we can deduce that several things went on before she finally had her miracle. For instance, she said in her prayer that, *"They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble."*

Those who thought they were secure in their financial standing and never lacked anything later lost all and began selling themselves for food. They became slaves in order that they may eat. This means that after all, having money in abundance cannot provide everlasting security because one could lose all at the flip of a button. It's divine humour that those who were previously wealthy will lose all and those who are poor, will amass wealth. This is a supernatural shift. God turns the tide to favour the righteous. This

is in the Holy Scriptures to the effect that God takes from the unbeliever or the wicked and transfers it to the righteous.

Job 27:13 "This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty. Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver."

The wicked is destined to heap up treasure so that eventually the just shall enjoy it. This is a divine shift of wealth. Wealth can really change hands by divine appointment. All that the righteous must do is to position himself in a way that will enable him to receive wealth transfer when God decides to move. How does the righteous position himself? He must yield himself as a channel of God's blessing. He must pay tithe to support God's kingdom. He must invest into kingdom projects and also help the needy. Then God will look at such a heart condition and bless him.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God is able to give me the wealth of the wicked. I can enjoy supernatural wealth transfer.

WE MUST BE SENSITIVE TO THE VOICE OF GOD

"And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden."

(Genesis 3:8)

It is not easy to figure out who God is but it is made easy when we figure out God in the image of man. God made man in His image after His likeness. So, man is a replica of God. This means that whatever features man has, God has the same. Man is a person. God is also a person with all the characteristics of a person. God can see, speak, hear, feel and taste. God can walk. It is no wonder that Adam and Eve heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

God speaks. Adam and Eve heard God's voice. Man can hear the voice of God. You can hear God speak to you and give you clear directions about your life, family and business. All through the bible, men heard God speak and give them clear cut directions. For instance, when God was about to destroy the generation of Noah, He found Noah to be the only righteous person, so God spoke to Noah in precise terms about His intentions to destroy the earth with floods. (Gen 6:13) God asked him to construct an ark to save as many as would believe his word of warning.

God gave precise measurements for everything in clear terms (Gen 6:14-16). God speaks. If only we can hear the voice of God in clear terms we will avoid many problems we face.

When Moses was navigating through the land of promise, the voice of God came to him in a clear language with precise direction. Gen 12:7 *"And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him".*

When Abram was called by God to leave his family and nation, he was accompanied by Lot, his nephew. Along the line, there was conflict between his herdsmen and that of Lot. In humility, Abram gave Lot the opportunity to choose between the fertile Jordan crescent and the rocky part of Palestine. Just when the conflict was resolved and the two of them were separated from each other, He heard the voice of God again. (Gen 13:14-17) The voice of God that came this time was decisive, clear and precise and more assuring. This time, the very site God had allotted for him was shown to him as though a friend was talking with him. Let's learn to hear from God. He can speak to you as He did in time past.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please speak to me. I long to hear from you. Please direct my footsteps.

IT TAKES A CLOSER WALK WITH GOD TO HEAR FROM HIM

"Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?"

(2Ch 20:7)

The relationship between friends can sometimes be likened to that of brothers. Sometimes some good friends are even closer than brothers (Pro 18:24).

Many times, Abraham has been referred to as a friend of God. We have to find out how a man could be a friend to God. I wonder how God could come to the level of Abraham to be His friend. Well, this shows that God is not too far away from us. It also shows that God is willing to come to our level and fellowship with us. Moreover, for Abraham to be a friend of God it means that anybody who learns Abraham's secret can also flow with God.

Moses grew in his relationship with God such that he spoke to God face to face. *Exo. 33:11 "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend..."* Isaiah was a great prophet of God but he saw the relationship between God and Abraham as a superb friendship. Abraham was therefore popularly known as God's friend. *Isa 41:8 "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend."* What does it take to come to that level of relationship with God? It takes closeness to God in prayer, study and reading of the Holy Scriptures, and a life of holiness and obedience. There is no cheap way. You need to be addicted to prayer so that you can keep

the communication lines between your spirit and God's spirit clear and unobstructed.

Let's look at practical things Abraham did in his prayer life. Wherever Abraham journeyed and sojourned, he erected an altar there. Wherever he had a strange encounter with God, he made sure he put up an altar there so that he would constantly pray, worship and call on the name of the Lord there. An altar is a place where man meets God for a supernatural encounter. Abraham went to the altar constantly to pray and sacrifice to God.

Many believers only pray at church. When they travel beyond the church they belong to they lose touch with God. We also have many Christians who see prayer and worship as a bitter pill. They pray only when they are in trouble. How can you become a friend of God and hear His voice with this prayer-less lifestyle? Build a prayer altar in your life. Be addicted to coming before God's presence constantly and as you do that your spiritual senses shall be sharpened so that you can hear when God speaks and directs you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me from today to be more sensitive to your Spirit in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE VOICE OF GOD IN THE LOGOS AND THE RHEMA

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

(2Pe 1:20-21)

The Bible is the voice of God enshrined in vocabulary. All the prophecies of the prophets of old were inspired by God. The voice of God in the Holy Scriptures is called Logos. It is the general word of prophecy to the world and the church. If you want to know the will of God concerning a situation, the Bible has spelt out conditions under which certain things should be done. For instance, the word of God is clear about a marital union between a believer and an unbeliever. God actually warned the people of Israel not to give their sons and daughters to the sons and daughters of the people of the world who worship idols etc. You don't need to pray for God's will about this. It is already spelt out. Just walk by it. We can't be equally yoked together with unbelievers (2Co 6:14)

The Logos contains God's will for our general life on earth. Logos is the spoken word in written form. However, there are some specific actions that need to be taken in certain situations that you can't find the answer directly from the Logos. It may only pop up from the Logos as a rhema, which is a specific word to a specific person for a specific situation within a specific period of time.

The rhema will either come to you as a revelation from the written word or

through the voice of the Holy Spirit. In the Acts of the Apostles, God revealed Himself and spoke directly to people about specific assignments He wanted them to undertake. That was rhema. When Paul was going to persecute the believers in Damascus, God spoke to him directly and showed him what to do (Acts 9:3-6). That was Paul's first encounter with Jesus.

Jesus revealed Himself to a disciple named Ananias and had a conversation with him like friends concerning Paul. Jesus sent him to where Paul was to pray for him to receive his sight after he got blinded in the encounter with Jesus (Acts 9:9-16). This was rhema, direct from the Lord. The Spirit of God spoke to Philip when he saw the Ethiopian Eunuch coming from Jerusalem after he attended a worship service there. *“Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.”* (Acts 8:29)

All these examples are to inform you that God is still in the business of speaking today. We can walk with God as friends and hear Him speak to us for specific directions.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Please open my spiritual eyes and ears to hear you.

THE POWER OF INFLUENCE

"He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

(Mat 13:33)

Influence is defined as the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour of someone or something. A person with influence can change circumstance, events and situations. The above is another parable of Jesus teaching us the power of influence. He likened God's kingdom to a leaven (Yeast) which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour till it was all leavened. This means that a little yeast when put in flour can bloat it to a greater size above its original size. It shows that wherever God's kingdom goes, it acts on people, things, issues etc to magnify them into giants.

If you want to burn a whole forest, all you need to do is to light a small fire in the forest and see it spread across every place. God's kingdom when put into economics can magnify it and make it very big. God's kingdom can influence things. It takes time for the kingdom of God to affect many places but eventually it will. There is some power of influence in the kingdom of God that affects society positively. One genuine believer placed in a business entity or group of people can be a good influence over the rest until they become like the believer.

The word of God influences us like leaven. When it gets into the heart it affects every area. If somebody is smoking, stealing, engaging in an adulterous relationship, proud, etc.,

just one message of salvation which results in him allowing Jesus to come into his heart is enough to rid him of all these habits. That is the power of influence.

Pro 4:18 "But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day".

A perfect life starts with a spark of light which keeps shining and bringing its influence to bear until the level of perfection is attained. Once the influence starts in a small way it will end up with a perfect finish. When He starts it, He will continue to work in us till the end.

Php 1:6 "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

The kind of friends you keep can have a bearing on who you are or who you become. It is the power of influence, the leaven, which is brought to bear on you. The Bible says, *"Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."* 1Co 15:33

Be careful the kind of friends you choose.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will be careful not to be influenced by any wrong doctrine, false brethren and friends with bad character.

HOW MUCH VALUE DO YOU PLACE ON THE KINGDOM?

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."

(Mat 13:44)

Jesus placed a high value on the kingdom of God above every other thing. God's kingdom is like a treasure. It means we must treasure God's kingdom. It is hidden to the natural eyes but very precious. It was so precious that a man found it and had to go and sell all that he had for it. If the man had hundred houses, he sold all for it. If had investments in gold, he sold it for it.

Jesus said the man sold all that he had to buy the field. By this parable Jesus is teaching us that nothing can be compared to the value of the kingdom of God. It should be placed first and foremost. We should trade in everything we have in order to gain the kingdom. This is also called the principle of the first priority. Jesus said, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."* (Mat 6:33)

This parable also teaches us that we should place spiritual things first, invest into spiritual things and things concerning the kingdom of God because God's kingdom has the power to offer us all the things we need in life. Jesus met a young man who wanted to follow Him. Jesus asked him to obey the commandments. He replied that he had obeyed all from his infancy. Jesus said he lacked one thing. Let's read the following: *Mat 19:21-22*

"Jesus said to him, 'If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

Jesus' condition for following Him was for the rich man to sell all he had in order to have treasure in heaven. It means the kingdom of heaven should be valued higher than any other material thing. Jesus considered it to be the most important priority in all the earth which demands everything we possess. We shouldn't trade in the kingdom for earthly treasures. It should be vice versa. We shouldn't allow any material possessions to hinder us from entering the kingdom of God.

The most valuable thing that you have ever possessed is what you received when you got born again. It is more precious than anything you have ever had. Value it, preserve it and at the end your master will tell you, well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into my rest.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will not trade the kingdom for anything. Not my marriage, business, wealth etc. I will give all I have for your kingdom.

SEPARATE YOURSELF FOR A BETTER VISION

“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.”

(Gen 13:14-15)

God is still in the business of speaking. Just when Abraham and Lot parted company due to friction between their servants, God spoke to Abraham and showed him the land which He had given to him. Sometimes (not all the time) God favours a positive separation. God may be waiting on you in a particular situation for you to separate yourself from what is not His will for your life before He speaks to direct your life. Please be careful not to take this word out of context to mean that you should even separate yourself from a genuine profitable business partner or company, a marriage partner or church family. If you are married and you have problems in the marriage, stay and pray for God's intervention while you do well to perform your part of the marital duties.

In some instances, a separation is necessary for a reunion later. Some spouses have died in their marriage because they did not take the step to separate in the face of death threats and physical abuse from their spouses. Anyway, the point is that anytime a genuine separation takes place, God sets in to set the parameters of destiny straight. You may need to separate yourself from some friends who are a bad influence on you so that you can

fulfill your God given destiny. It was only after Abraham was separated from Lot that he began to see what God had for him. It's time to lift up our eyes to see what God has for us. God will only give us what we see. What you can't see you can't have. As far as you can see is as far as you can have.

What do you see God giving you as your destiny? See big. One of the greatest problems with many people is their perception of smallness. We build small buildings, have small businesses, plant small churches, etc. The reason we always give is that there is no money. Our chicken mentality does not permit us to build giant churches, giant businesses, giant industries and a giant nation (Ghana and Africa in particular) as we see in the developed countries. The extent of our success or performance is contingent on our ability to perceive in sizes. The success story of Abraham cannot be written without the principle of vision God Himself taught him. Begin to see now. See clearer and bigger. If you trust God for it, it shall be done.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I see success and victory in all my endeavours in Jesus' name. Amen!

SEE BEYOND

“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed”

(Mat 7:9-10)

When God called Abraham, He promised to bless him and make him great. God also said, “and thou shalt be a blessing.” The purpose of God’s blessing in his life was so that he would be a blessing. God pronounced this on him from the very onset of his encounter with him. When God called Abraham, He was seeing a nation in him not just an individual. God said, “And I will make of you a great nation.”

You see, when you see beyond yourself, then God comes in to take over. He wants you to see beyond yourself. He wants you to see a nation in you. God continued to echo this several years after the death of Abraham. He said to Isaiah, *“A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.”* (Isa 60:22)

God inculcated this vision in Abraham before he set off to do business with him. I believe that we should start life thinking beyond our immediate environment. Our starting is always little but we shouldn’t keep harbouring this little mentality forever. It should grow into a nation. Every church must not just affect their immediate environment. They should affect the whole nation. They should have branches across the whole nation just like political parties who have representatives across the nation. They should preach Jesus nation-wide. If

every small church reaches far and wide across the nation, we will end up swallowing the whole nation.

Moreover, every Christian businessman or woman must dream of affecting the whole nation with their products. It is possible to set up branches across the whole nation. The size of a business is in the mind-set of the proprietor. It is possible to have a nation-wide coverage.

Take note of Abraham’s blessings. He was blessed to be a blessing. You can be a blessing to the whole nation. Break out of I, me and myself mentality and extend your horizon beyond where you are now. When God came to Abraham after he had parted company with Lot, He said *“...Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward”* (Gen 13:14)

Look beyond from where you are. From your small table top business, look up beyond. There are great national opportunities awaiting you. See beyond! You are a nation.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

A little one shall become a thousand. I am a thousand. A small one shall become a nation. I am a nation. I am blessed to be a blessing.

BE CAREFUL OF FEASTS AND CELEBRATIONS

"Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, 'What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?'"

(Job 11:56)

It is amazing to discover that a lot of evil people suffer almost always happens either within the time of celebration, before or after the celebration. Feasts are times to celebrate love, joy, peace and friendship. However, it has the potential to cause you to fall into the devil's trap if you are not careful. Do you know that despite how powerful Jesus was, it was during the season of the feast of Passover that He was arrested and molested? They planned their attacks to coincide with that feast. Even though the Passover was ordained by God (Exo 12:1-14), Satan took advantage to bruise the feet of Jesus as foretold by God in the Garden of Eden.

In the time of Esther, king Ahaseraus made a feast to showcase his wealth. (Esther 1:1-4) It was during this feast that he commanded his wife to showcase her beauty to the people, and she refused. Queen Vashti lost her throne as a result of refusing to showcase her beauty before the guests at the Feast. When you read the background of the account you will discover that the king was drunk when he asked for Vashti. Many people make wrong decisions during feasts, especially when they are full of food and wine. They are driven by their stomach and heightened emotional pleasure. Be careful of celebrations like Passover (Easter), Christmas, etc. They are good but can be used by the devil

to trap you into sin if you don't focus instead on the spiritual aspect of the celebration.

I know many girls who fall prey to men before, during and after a party or a major celebration. Many love feasts contain many blemishes as the bible says in the following: *Jud 1:12 "These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots."* A lot of contamination goes on during celebrations. I once was told that a few members of our church family were engaged in drinking alcohol during a funeral celebration. A woman confronted me on that issue later. I got to know that there are a few stubborn drunkards in the church who are very good friends. Their ministry of drinking comes alive during such functions. *2Pe 2:13 "and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you."*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will maintain spirituality during occasions of feasts and celebration. I will keep myself pure in Jesus' name. Amen!

WHY SOME CHRISTIANS ARE UNABLE TO ACCESS GOD'S PRESENCE

"LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill?"

(Psalm 15:1)

One of the greatest assets of every believer is to walk in this world with the abiding presence of the Lord. God is everywhere. That much, we all know. Everybody can have access to God by faith. He is not partial. He is for all. *Rom 10:11-13 "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'*"

God loves all of us and wants to bless all of us but not many are able to access God. It takes faith to come to God. The Lord is rich to all who call upon Him. I have also discovered that there are ratings among Christians. We have cold Christians. We also have hot Christians and lukewarm Christians. (Rev. 3:13-16). Even though we are all Christians we are not all the same in terms of spiritual ratings.

The word of God classifies Christians as gold, silver, brass etc. Please read the following: *2Ti 2:20 "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor".* Those with gold rating are nearer God's presence than those with silver rating and wood or clay ratings. They are not just nearer the presence of God but attract God's presence. We have to ask ourselves this question: Upon what basis were the ratings made?

Psalm 15:1-5 gives us how a person who is rated as gold and qualified to access God's presence looks like:

1. He walks uprightly and does what is right.
2. He speaks the truth in his heart.
3. He does not backbite
4. He doesn't hurt his neighbor or raise accusations against his friend
5. He despises abominable people.
6. He honours those who fear the Lord.
7. He honours his oath and vows to the Lord.
8. Gives freely without interest
9. He doesn't take bribes.

If you want to have access to the presence of God and attract His presence all the time, then the conditions have been laid there. You can rate yourself now. Are you gold, silver, wood or clay? When you are able to access God's presence, it is always to your advantage. Why do many believers lead a defeated life and blame it on witches in their families, demons harassing them etc without looking at themselves? Most probably it's your own fault.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Father, I long to be in your presence. I yield myself to a holy and righteous life from now on in Jesus' name. Amen!

HOW TO HAVE A GOOD LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS

"For 'Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.'"

(1Pe 3:10-11)

What are the main things human beings need to be happy in the world? We see so many people struggling to be rich or at least make ends meet, come out of some kind of sickness or disease, and lead a happy life in the world. It's a real struggle for many people. Why is it that many people find life very hard and tough, and then resign themselves to a certain life that they don't really like? Why is it also that those who are very rich are not satisfied with riches but stress themselves still with the desire to get more, and yet are still not happy in life?

Sometimes, people who see themselves as failures end up their lives in shame because they think they can't make any good thing come out of the life they are currently leading. We must be able to solve this puzzle. What is the essence of life? The above scripture says that *"Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit..."* (1Peter 3:10).

This actually means that there is the possibility to see good life and good days. We can enjoy life and live long on the earth and die happy. This is for everyone who desires it. It is not for a selected few. "Whoever..." is an open invitation for everyone. The Lord

spoke through David the same words in the following: *Psa 34:12 "What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?"*

That is why it is up to individuals to decide on the life they really want. There are things to do and not to do in order to enjoy a good life and see good days. If you choose the life you want, that is what you will have. Solomon, the third king of Israel, and successor to his father decided intentionally to find out the meaning of life and how to really be happy in this world.

According to him, *"I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine—my heart still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life."* Ecc 2:3

So, we have a vast reservoir of knowledge to learn from regarding life and how to be happy and fulfilling. When you follow God's word and the manual he has for you in life, you will make it.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will have a good life and see good days.

WE ARE GOD'S HOPE FOR THE WORLD

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2Cor 5:17)

The greatest thing that has ever happened to man was to become a new creation. New creation is the state of life where man is born again spiritually to possess the nature of God's life which the first man, Adam and Eve, lost in the Garden of Eden through disobedience. New creation is not an act of man but of God. We are told in scriptures that, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. **And all things are of God,** who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation"* (2Cor 5:17-18)

All things are of God. Our new creation reality is of God. Jesus made this same statement about the author of our new birth as follows: *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (Joh 1:11-13)

You see, Jesus came to the Jews as prophesied through the prophets in the Old Testament. Moses said, *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen"* (Deut. 18:15)

In view of this the Jews were always expecting a prophet like Moses. It was

in this context that Philip said about Jesus *"...We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."* (John 1:45). Isaiah prophesied about Him that the Emmanuel would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). That was why Jesus started preaching the kingdom among the Jews but they refused Him.

However, outside the Jews all those who receive Jesus as Saviour immediately become children of God. As the scripture says; *Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:13).

It is an act of God. We are new creation. After becoming children of God. We are given a ministry to also make sure that others are reconciled to God.

*"**And all things are of God,** who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation"* (2Cor 5:17-18) God has made us mediators or peace makers. We are the hope of the world. Let us bring others to God so they can become children of God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am a new creature. I have the ministry of reconciliation.

THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD

"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; for it is written, 'He takes the wise in their own craftiness.'"

(1Cor 2:19)

There are so many things in the world which seem right in the sight of men but which are fully contrary to the things of God. The way of living in the world by many worldly people who do not know God may look good and attractive but under the lenses of scripture they are foolishness. I chanced on a man from a certain traditional set up in Ghana who said that in their tribe a man does not marry a woman until she is pregnant with his baby. This means he must have an affair with the woman and make sure she takes seed before they marry. This is the wisdom of the world. The wisdom of God says that, *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."* (Gen. 2:24-25)

This means that no one should see the nakedness of a woman he wants to marry until her parents have given their consent. The reversal of this Godly wisdom has given birth to so many problems in marriages and relationships. We think we are wiser than the one who instituted marriage.

The Banyankole tribe in Uganda has another interesting culture. The auntie prepares the bride for marriage through counseling and also makes sure that the groom is sexually potent by sleeping with him to ascertain his potency before the marriage. This is

another worldly wisdom. The wisdom of God is far different. The wisdom of God works differently from how the worldly wisdom works. God's wisdom says that two shall become one flesh and this one flesh union is between the husband and wife who are not ashamed of their nakedness. *"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."* (Gen. 2:25)

So, the wisdom here is that once another person sees the nakedness of either the bride or the groom, that person becomes the legal spiritual spouse. They establish a one-flesh union. So spiritually they are one flesh. So, after the real marriage of the proposed couple is celebrated and they come together, instead of two becoming one flesh, three or more will become one flesh because of the multiple sexual partners. So, if marriage is a covenant relationship between two people and sex is an endorsement of the covenant, we can conclude that all sexual unions are covenants. It means that a man who sleeps with two or three women has established three spiritual covenants with them. This constitutes spiritual marriage. This is where many problems in marriage begin.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will operate in the wisdom of God.

THE WISDOM OF AVOIDING PREMARITAL SEX

“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”

(1Cor 7:1)

The world's wisdom sounds reasonable sometimes but it has many pitfalls. Today, the rate of divorces is higher than in years past. The rate at which people marry is almost the same as the rate of those who rush to the divorce courts seeking separation or divorce. If you want to build a house make sure that your foundation is very strong.

I received a request from one of our churches in the Northern part of Ghana to help roof their building. Some weeks later, the building collapsed. The pastor was so discouraged. I also received a picture of the broken building. I was thankful to God that nobody was in the building. Some of the blocks I saw in the picture had really been broken into pieces and I realized that they were very weak and fragile. Can you imagine if this building had been completed and this disaster occurred?

Many would have been wounded and even be killed. I encouraged the pastor to think this way and be thankful. The point is that, the structure was not strong hence giving way to the storm that hit it. That is how it is with every relationship. If the foundation and the structure is weak it will be exposed one day to storms of life that will completely break up the relationship. So, the right foundation must be built.

The above scripture says that it is good for a man not to touch a woman but to avoid fornication every man must have his own wife and every woman must have her own husband.

The power point for discussion here is not to touch a woman. This phrase is used in reference to the bed. Touch is very powerful. Every time touch is employed in any relationship certain chemical reactions in the body are being stirred up. This is not spiritual. It is biological. We are admonished not to engage in touching each other before marriage; “touching” in the context of sex. This is divine wisdom. If a man and a woman are not able to wait for the right thing to be done, they can also not do the right thing when they marry. If we don't do the right thing now, we will not do the right thing when we marry. That is why it becomes very easy for couples to break up because they have laid the wrong foundation for a fragile relationship right from the word “go.” Keep yourself holy. Do not touch when you are not ready.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will keep myself from immorality and lay the right foundation for my life.

WHY NOT? LET US DO IT. WE SHALL BY ALL MEANS MARRY

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."

(1Cor 7:1)

Life's challenges are myriad and one of the most difficult areas in life is marriage and relationships. The reason is that nothing makes one happier than a comfortable and peaceful relationship. Money is important but not a panacea for success. Many rich people do not have successful relationships because they put all their hopes in riches. God is a God relationship so when we miss it in that area, we become very miserable in life. There are many mansions in many towns and cities with no life in them. Sometimes such mansions may have only a divorced man or woman with security guards. It is sad! It is all because the sanctity of marriage is not handled well and folks mess up. The Bible says that, *"Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel."* (Pro 20:17)

Sometimes persons who intend to marry entertain certain thoughts which are not biblical. One of the things they say is that, "since we shall by all means marry it does not matter if we engage in sex." This is a great illusion. Many of such men and women who engage in premarital sex end up not getting married at all or even if they get married, they break up within the shortest possible time. There are many reasons for this. I will attempt to provide a few.

Sexual feelings do not last long and after the first time you would want it over and over again. The initial sexual fantasies are temporary. When it is over, you ask yourself whether that is all that marriage is about. Infatuations are deceptive. They can lure you into sex only for you to realize that it is soon over. That is why we do not marry because of infatuation or feelings but because of love. Love endures forever.

Another reason is that they always feel guilty for doing it and the guilt even continues after marriage. Sometimes, the so called "elation" or arousal you gain in premarital sex is not the same in the real marriage setting. "Something is wrong." You are wrong.

Another reason which is even more serious is that you establish a spiritual covenant outside the context of the word of God. Anytime you operate outside the word you are in the realm of darkness. Premarital sex becomes a door way for demons to infiltrate the marriage causing misunderstanding, fighting, strive, hate etc. Say no to premarital sex.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I repent of every premarital sex I have engaged in. Save me Lord.

IT PAYS TO BE GUIDED BY GODS' WORD

"The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

(Ps 19:8)

Having served God from when I was twelve years old, I can vouch on the authenticity of the word of God that it works and that there is no flaw to it. If you find yourself not benefitting from God's word, then it means that you do not apply it or you probably apply it wrongly. The above scripture says that the statutes of the LORD are right. They cannot be wrong. What are statutes? Statutes are decrees, acts, laws, rulings, edicts, bills, orders and so on. Statutes when flouted have very severe consequences.

When Israel was redeemed from Egypt, that was when they became a nation. In the wilderness they needed laws to govern their lives. Therefore, God gave them spiritual laws concerning their services to God, civil laws to govern civil life and relationships and military laws. All these together form statutes. God is never wrong. He saw their plight and gave them laws to guide their lives in their era for their good.

These statutes when meditated on carefully rejoice the heart. Just try reading the scriptures and apply them to your situation. It enlightens the eyes. When you meet people who behave weirdly in the way they talk and act, you can tell whether they are civilized or not. Civility is a product of enlightenment. When you are enlightened, you do not just take arms and begin to shoot anybody you meet

on the street. You see, when you are enlightened, you relate to everybody peacefully and with respect. It does not matter which tribal, cultural or religious divide they come from. A civil life is a life of good neighborliness. People with diverse faiths must be able to live together peacefully without anyone taking arms against the other. God said to love our neighbours as ourselves.

It is a known fact that the people of the Bible have a certain level of civility that outclasses many others. Why? God teaches us to love one another. He teaches to love even our enemies and do good to those who hate us (Luke 6:27). He teaches us not to revenge but leave vengeance to Him (Heb. 10:30). Those who abide by God's statutes are always rewarded sooner or later. It may look difficult but in the end it pays. The Bible says that, *"Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."* (Ps 19:11) If God warns against premarital sex, avoid it. It will pay later. If God says forgive those who trespass against you, just comply. You will see its fruits later. We cannot be wiser than God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will abide by your word no matter how difficult it may be.

THE WISDOM OF ACCOMODATING EVERYBODY

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.”

(Heb. 10:24)

One of the triggers of conflicts in relationships, nations, business entities is the lack of tolerance for people we perceive as threats or our enemies. There is a way to handle people so that conflicts can easily be eliminated in families and groups. There is so much wisdom embedded in the capacity to accommodate and tolerate everybody no matter the spiritual, social or economic background. For instance, if a pastor adds Doctor to his many titles, I should be able to call him Rev. Dr. so and so the way he wants it without asking many questions. That way we avoid the conflict of not according him his due respect the way he wants it. By the way, what will I lose if I mention all his titles? We should be able to acknowledge people and accept them the way they are and the way they will feel loved and acceptable. This is wisdom.

Our key scripture says that, *“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works”* What does that mean? It means we should plan to provoke one another in such a way that people have no choice than to love and exhibit good works. Even if someone does not think of loving another, by our stirring and provoking the person to love, he will be forced to love. I like the King James Version which says that, *“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works”* (Heb. 10:24)

This also takes the subject to another dimension. “And let us consider

one another...” has a meaning of accommodating one another. It means I must consider you in my scheme of things, think through and ponder about you in love so that the steps and decision I take and make will be out of love and good works. I must consider to do you good. To consider means to contemplate or ruminate like how goats or sheep that eat grass sit down, regurgitate or vomit the food back into their mouths and chew it again before swallowing it. That is what ruminants do. I must take time to ponder, meditate and think through and through about ways of showing love. It may take time but will yield benefits of good works later. This is wisdom.

How should a husband or wife accommodate each other in order to provoke themselves unto good works? Indeed, nobody can claim perfection in behavior. There is a “but” somewhere in everybody’s life. However, we have to consider everybody with their “but.” There must be a high level of tolerance in order to be able to live together and find a level playing field to flow. If you complain about everything and everybody you are not being wise. Wisdom makes accommodation for peace.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please touch my heart to accommodate everybody in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF WISDOM WAS FOUND ON THE CROSS

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..."

(Luke 23:34)

Everybody has a natural response to stimuli. When you feel threatened by an enemy there is a natural defense mechanism placed within you that will fight back in order to protect yourself. I watched National Geography some time ago and saw how porcupines fight back against predators like lions and tigers. Porcupines have some thorn-like skins which they release to pierce their predators. Every living thing was made with some form of defense mechanism. We are no exception. The greatest wisdom I have ever come across is where a person decided not to use his defense mechanism. This was on the cross where Jesus was crucified. Nobody in his right senses will wish his enemies well. In fact, everyone will have a death wish for his enemy. Enemies or predators try to break all your defensive mechanism so that they can destroy you. With Jesus, He prayed for His enemies when He was crucified.

*"And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. **Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.** And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."* (Luke 23:33-34)

Forgive them? My enemies? No! However, that was the case with Jesus. He asked for the Father to forgive them because they did not know what they

were doing. Can you honestly forgive the one who slaps you and pierces your hands with nails while in pain? If you study the life of Jesus very well you will discover that He had all the power to defend Himself. Jesus had the power to calm the storm at sea (Mat 8:26). When he was going to be arrested by the soldiers and He informed them that He was Jesus, they went backward and fell. *"They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he.... As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, **they went backward, and fell to the ground.**"* (John 18:5-6)

So, if a simple answer could push the soldiers to the ground, then a strong prayer to God to send heavenly artillery was also possible. In a similar account Peter took a sword to fight the soldiers but Jesus stopped him with these words: *"Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"* (Mat 26:53-54) Let us be like Jesus. Let us not fight. Let us forgive and have a high level of tolerance. That is how to love those who hate you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will forgive my enemies and pray for them.

GOD IS REAL

"And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place".

(1Sam 5:3)

The story of God's dealings with the children of Israel was not concocted by man. All the stories in the Holy Bible were real life situations that really happened several years ago. In fact, the history books and archives of many countries bear testimony that they were real. For instance, Israel was a real nation God gave birth to through Abraham. Israel is the descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In Israel their archives exhibit their past. We know that Israel became slaves in Egypt and served the Pharaohs. They built the pyramids where Egyptian Pharaoh's were buried. Today in Egypt most of the Pyramids are still there as witnesses of their past experiences. So, the Bible contains real life's issues about How God dealt with Israel and the nations around the then world. For instance, Babylon with their great king who ruled the then world still exists in southern Iraq. We heard some time ago that the late Saddam Hussein wanted to rebuild Babylon. God's word is not fake. The history books show that God had preserved Israel as a nation from of old.

Now, coming to our subject, the above scripture shows that God exists and He is very powerful. Israel became disobedient to God because of the sons of Eli the priests. They defiled God's offerings and slept with women at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting (1Sam

2:12-17). Despite many warnings from their father to stop they did not. Therefore, God allowed the Philistines to molest them. They lost a crucial battle and lost the Ark of God. The Philistines took the ark of God and placed it in the same place with their god, Dagon. The next day, Dagon had fallen in a bowing posture to the Ark of God. They did not understand it. They thought that probably it was a mistake so they put him back. We read that, *"But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him."* (1Sam 5:4)

This is not a myth. It was real. You see, this shows that God's presence was indeed in the Ark of God constructed by Moses under God's command. This is a great assurance to us to believe that anytime the forces of evil come into contact with the power of God, the forces of evil must certainly bow willingly to God's power. Have Faith in God from today.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God is real. He is more powerful than the Satan and demons. My faith in God is strong.

THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

(1Cor. 2:2)

Sometimes we worry ourselves too much about the many doctrines in the Bible. A lady came preaching on our street one early morning and all she was saying was that God will judge fornicators and adulterers and adulteresses. I felt very bad because that was not what Jesus brought to us. Jesus did not come to condemn sinners who are already condemned.

The bible says that, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”* (John 3:16-18)

Was this not the preaching that Jesus brought to us? Was not Christ's gospel a message of love? Why then do many preachers and believers miss it and do not present the real gospel message? I guess it is ignorance and a holy and sanctimonious attitude. The real gospel makes people smile and draws them to God. The real gospel does not harden sinners but breaks their defenses so that they can feel lovable and return to God. The key scripture says that *“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”* (1Cor.

2:2). All we must endear ourselves to know is the saving power of the cross where Jesus was crucified. Only one thing matters; the cross. That was all the Apostle Paul determined to know among the Corinthians who were battling with personalities. If we read previous verses, we will understand their problem:

“For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1Cor 1:11-13)

Today many believers compare apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the church. Who is more powerful? Who has the biggest church? Who should be called papa or father of the land. In as much as these are not bad, the main issue is the cross. When we focus on personalities, we bring division to the church. Our focus should rather be on how to allow the cross' effect to affect us to be more productive in God's kingdom.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will allow the cross to drive my life in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE POWER OF THE CROSS

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

(1Cor. 1:18)

Until we come to grips with the understanding that the only way to make impact on our world and to touch the hearts of men is to introduce to them the power of the cross, all our efforts in winning the world to God will be an effort in vanity. The cross of Jesus does not really make sense to many a believer.

In fact, the Bible keeps emphasizing that the preaching of the cross to the unbelievers is foolishness. They do not see how a man could be saved through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Many religions denounce the cross. As a matter of fact, even secular humanist groups in the world do not believe in Jesus as the Son of God. They claim that there are many other Jesus' in the world who possess the power of God which Jesus of Nazareth used to heal and do miracles. They also teach that God is fake and Jesus is not real and that they are concocted stories written to cower men, especially, Africans into submission.

I had a friend who was once a believer who backslid through the reading of many books. Be careful the kind of books you read because these days Satan is using literature and social media strongly to propagate antichrist ideas and ideologies. Through the reading of strange books, he got confused and became a secular humanist who believes that Christianity and the Christian Bible were made by the

whites with the purpose of making us submit to their rule. The preaching of the gospel to such people is foolishness. The most serious part of their doctrine is that they do not believe in hell or heaven. Despite their resistance to the gospel, we must still preach the power of the cross. It is the wisdom of God. Paul's standpoint on the cross is this: *“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”* (1Cor. 2:2)

All knowledge (no matter how beneficial it may be to humanity) that seems to condemn the cross is antichrist and must be strongly rejected by believers in Christ. The knowledge of Jesus and Him crucified is the greatest power, to save and deliver from the bondage of Satan. That is why we must preach it without shame. Paul said, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* (Rom 1:16)

Let us go on and preach the cross. We do not and cannot save anyone by ourselves. It is the power in the gospel that saves.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am not ashamed to preach the gospel of the cross.

THE LOVE MESSAGE

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

(Joh 3:16)

The whole Bible is a story of God's love and plan of salvation for man. Right from the book of Genesis to Revelation we see how God orchestrated the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth to redeem fallen man from sin and the power of death. The moment man sinned against God He reached out to man with His love and initiated the coming of Jesus to die on the cross. We see this in the following scripture: *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* (Gen. 3:15)

The enmity was to be between the devil and the woman and devil's seed and the woman's seed. These two levels of enmity are what make the world so evil. The seed represents descendants of an ancestor. The nature of an ancestor runs through the blood line to the second, third, fourth generations and beyond. Women do not produce seed. Naturally it is men that produce seed. If the woman was mentioned by God as producing seed, then this will be against the natural laws God set in place. It was part of the package of love God had for man. How could this be? The prophet Isaiah gives us a clue about this supernatural production of seed by the woman in the following scriptures: *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* (Isaiah 7:14)

The son of this virgin shall be named Immanuel, which according to the Hebrew language means God with us. This scripture was quoted in fulfillment to this prophecy when Mary conceived Jesus in the following: *"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."* (Mat 1:23) It is important to understand that this seed of the woman Mary, was not produced by Joseph because when Joseph discovered later that Mary was pregnant, he planned to leave her quietly but the Lord revealed the whole thing to him in a dream (Mat 1:19-22).

Luke revealed that the Holy Ghost came on Mary and put the seed in her womb supernaturally (Luke 1:35). So, God the Son had to take on human flesh supernaturally in order to restore man's lost image and bring man back to God. This is a whole love affair. That is why we read in scriptures that, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

God loves you super. No greater love than this.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Thank you Jesus for loving me.

ABUNDANT LOVE

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

(Job 3:16)

Do you know the measure of love God has for you? I will attempt to explain how much God loves you. The scripture above says that, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” When the term “so loved” is used, it shows the extent of love God had for the world. The Son of God is Jesus. He is the eternal Son of God, not born but given. God gave Him.

This scripture lines up with what Isaiah the prophet saw about seven hundred years before Jesus came to live among men. *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”* (Isaiah 9:6) In the scripture above we learn that **a child is born**. This refers to the day Mary gave birth to Jesus. It is commonly referred to as incarnation; God became flesh as the Gospel of John says in the following: *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”* (John 1:14)

We learn another important lesson in Isaiah that **a Son is given**. This given Son is what John 3:16 talks about that, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” This Son is eternal. He is God the Son,

without beginning of days or end of life. This Son metamorphosed into the realm of man in a human form and lived among us. Can you imagine or understand that? It looks quite complicated. How can God become flesh? The human mind is too small to understand this. That is why it is a love affair. It takes only love to drive God to live among us in order to bring salvation to us. Compare God’s glory in heaven with the earth. Despite the vast difference, He still chose to come down. Why all this?

He made us to love us. This is the simple but complicated truth. We were loved long before we were even created by God. The Bible says, *“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”* (Jer 31:3)

Everlasting means no beginning or end. This carries the idea that even before we were made, He loved us and He will continue to love us without end. The truth of Christ’s coming was to restore us to God, and make us walk in God’s original intent.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I thank you Jesus for loving me so much.

EVERLASTING LOVE

“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”

(Jer 31:3)

When we understand the ways of God and His heart beat towards us, we will sit up and get close to Him and of course behave well too. Many people do not understand or know God. In fact, many of the clergy who are supposed to know and teach God's word do not understand the degree of love God has for man. Most preachers are always on the road to condemn people for their sins but that is not exactly what God preaches.

The above scripture says that God has loved us with an everlasting love and because of that He has drawn us to Himself with His loving kindness. This is very deep. God's love has no beginning and end. Why? It is because God Himself has no beginning and end. Furthermore, we are taught in scriptures that God is love. *“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love**; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”* (1John 4:16)

The age of love is determined by the age of God. The nature of love is determined by the nature of God. The size of love is determined by the size of God. The power of love is determined by the power of God. We cannot understand God fully in the same way we cannot understand His love fully. God's love and God are both everlasting. The Apostle Paul caught this revelation and said, *“Blessed be the*

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Eph. 1:3-4)

Here is the point in verse 4. God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world so that we should live in holiness and without blame in Him in love. Love is the basis for our effort to live holy in Him. He loves us and expects us to live in love with holiness because we were in His plan before we were even born. You were made by love and for love and in love to walk in love. See how much He loved us. Our response to God's love is to love God.

The Bible says, *“We love him, because he first loved us.”* (1John 4:19) That is why we cannot go and condemn people as sinners. God wants sinners back to Himself. Jesus Himself said, *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”* (John 3:17)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I thank you for loving me just as I am.

LOVE WITHOUT CONDEMNATION

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

(John 3:18)

God's love for the world is so much that He wants the world back to Himself. Sending Jesus Christ to come and die on the cross is a very important way of reconnecting man back to Himself. He made us in His image. We lost the image through the devil's deception. He came to the world through His Son to restore us back to His image. He cannot look on helplessly while His image is being destroyed by the devil. This is the crux of His love.

In the context of His love for us Jesus came not to condemn us but that we should rather believe in Him and be saved. That is why it is unscriptural to preach and condemn people who are not yet saved. Jesus made it clear that He did not come to condemn: *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”* (John 3:17)

Salvation rather than condemnation was His mission. Love saves. Hate condemns. Life saves. Death condemns. Jesus brought to us a ministry of life not death and the New Testament which was enacted by Jesus and His blood is a ministry of life contrary to the ministry of Moses and the law which spelt death: *“who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit*

gives life. Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end” (2Cor 3:6-7)

That is why we cannot win the world with words of condemnation. When we preach judgement, it is still in the context of love. We preach and warn sinners that if they reject God's love then they yield themselves to God's judgment. Once in the world, sinners are already condemned. Preaching condemnation to sinners worsens their plight. They are already drowning. We cannot keep pushing them to drown the more.

Secondly, we must also encourage sinners who have come to Christ to keep the faith without feeling condemned after missing out on a few things in their walk with God. Certainly, it will take time to grow out of certain habits. We must keep encouraging. *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* (Rom 8:1) We are free from condemnation. We are saved. Satan will try to bombard you with your past sins but he is just too late.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am not condemned. I will not condemn. I will preach God's love.

MOTIVATED BY LOVE

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.”

(2Cor. 5:14)

This is one of the most important revelations in the Bible concerning the love of God. The love of Christ constrains us by virtue of the one who was also constrained by love to die for all. What motivated the early believers to live totally for Christ was the kind of love they saw in Christ. They were witnesses of His life on earth and saw how much He poured His life into humanity in His ministry.

Writing about Christ on the island of Patmos after Christ's resurrection, John said, *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us”* (1John 1:1-2)

Indeed, they witnessed Him and referred to Him as life. When they were with Him, they knew that they were with God's life. When they conversed with Him and ate ordinary food with Him and also shared the communion together at home, they saw Him as Life. They experienced that life literally. They saw that life pray a difficult prayer concerning His death and how if it were possible the cup of sufferings should pass from Him and that even though it was a difficult moment for Him, there was

a motivating force constraining Him to go to the cross. They saw how He could have delivered Himself from the soldiers who came to arrest Him and fell down flat by a single word, but refused to fight back for His freedom. They saw that life arrested. They saw that life assaulted and butchered. They saw that life hang on the tree. They saw that life die and was buried. Then surprisingly they saw that life rise again from the dead just as He promised.

After His resurrection they saw that life show them His side and feet where He was pierced with nails and sword. They heard many encouraging words from that life and saw that unbeatable and undying life ascend to heaven. This was the life they saw and handled. They saw love at its peak. The love that constrained Jesus was the love that constrained the early apostles and believers.

“and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (2Cor 14-15) If this life did all that for us, then what we owe Him is our life and all need to be constrained by same love.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will not live for myself any longer but for Jesus who died for me.

CONSTRAINED TO WIN SOULS

"For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel."

(1Cor 9:16)

A curse is laid on those who disobey the law of Moses. Nobody could obey the law of Moses. So, Jesus came to crucify the law on the cross because it kept accusing and condemning those under the law. Curses come on those who commit certain crimes and abomination. Achan was cursed for stealing the holy things dedicated to God when Israel fought against Jericho. He and his whole household were stoned to death. (Joshua 7:20-25). The word "woe" means distress, anguish, wretchedness and misery. Woes are curses.

The apostle Paul ascribed woe to himself not because he had committed a crime or broken the law of Moses. Paul's woe was because necessity was laid on him to preach the gospel. He said, "woe is me if I do not preach the gospel." This is a constraining love. A love to preach Christ even if it was not his will. There was a constraining force. That is why in a letter to the church of Corinth he said the following: *"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him..."* (2Cor. 5:14-15)

Whoever is controlled by the love of God cannot withhold preaching the

gospel to sinners in the same way God could not withhold or spare His Son from coming to this earth to die for sinners like us. God's word says that, *"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"* (Rom 8:32)

Something inside of you will reject a life that does not promote the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You will feel uncomfortable to see sinners die and go to hell and not be moved to say a word of God's love to them. You will feel guilty for not making any effort to share the gospel with them.

Jesus felt compelled to go beyond where he was to preach the gospel to others and could not stay at one place even when the people tried to stop him from going: *"And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, but he said to them, 'I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.'"* (Luke 4:42-43)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, let your love control me.

A CONSTRAINING LOVE TO PRAY FOR GOD'S KINGDOM

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."

(2Cor 5:14)

I have learnt by experience that whatever you have love for draws your attention all the time. Nothing satisfies you until your passion is executed. The greatest power in the world that moves everything and everybody is the power of love. This is so because God, the creator of the universe is love. Love moves everything and everybody.

In the above scripture we learn that the love of Christ is actually what constrains us to do everything in the kingdom of God. It was the love of Christ that constrained Him to come all the way from heaven to die on the cross. Everything that Jesus accomplished for us was done on the basis of his love for us. I believe that what must constrain us to pray is our love for God.

As a matter of fact, we were made for fellowship and God draws us to Himself by His love: *"The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."* (Jer 31:3)

If we love God indeed, nobody will force us to go to His presence in prayer daily. You will make prayer your first duty in the morning before stepping out. One of the things God cares for so much is His kingdom. He puts His kingdom first. Jesus came to teach us about the importance and priority of God's kingdom when He taught the

disciples about prayer as follows: *"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven'"* (Matt 6:9-10)

So, after addressing God our Father in heaven and giving Him worship our next very important prayer point is to pray for His kingdom to come on earth. It takes a constraining love for God and His kingdom to pray for His kingdom to come. This is the most important aspect of prayer. It is something we do until Jesus comes or we die and go to heaven. How many hours do you pray for yourself? How many hours do you pray for the kingdom? Your answer shows where your love lies.

Why should everything be about us and not about God and others who need God? We live in a very selfish generation where everything is about us. God broke through that attitude by thinking about us and sending His Son to die on the cross for us. Praying for God's kingdom is a way to break the selfishness in our lives. This kind of prayer makes you stay in God's presence longer than when it is all about you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please give me passion to pray for your kingdom in Jesus' name. Amen!

TRADING IN THE SECRETS OF GOD

“He said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables...”

(Luke 8:10)

There are secrets of the kingdom of God. These secrets are only revealed to some people. Not everybody can have access to the secrets of God. As I read through the book of Job, a man who suffered in life; he lost his children and wealth in one day and he suffered boils and sores all over his body. This man possessed some secrets.

I read about Job that he was the richest man in the east in the then world. *“He possessed 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 female donkeys, and very many servants, so that **this man was the greatest of all the people of the east.**” (Job 1:3)*

Jesus said to his disciples in the above scripture that to them it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God. It means those qualified for these secrets must attain the position of disciples. Job was a great follower of God. We read about him that he feared God and turned away from evil (Job 1:1) The extent of Job's wealth could be likened to the richest man in the world today. If the secrets of God made Job that rich, then we have to explore these secrets.

Job stated that, *“Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; **As I was in***

the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle” (Job 29:1-4)

Job spoke the above when he was now old and was suffering severely from satanic attack. He lost everything in one day and was longing to go back to the days of his youth when the secret of God enriched him so he would be restored again.

When you get to know the outcome of the secret of God that Job possessed you will be amazed to understand that, indeed, God's secret can bring wealth to an individual. He made reference to some secrets that he had that brought him to that level of material blessings. The succeeding verses give us a portrait of Job's wealth:

*“When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; **When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil” (Job 29:5-6)*** Butter and oil are symbolic for riches and wealth. When God promised Israel to take them to a land of milk and honey (Exo. 3:8) and other things including olive oil (Deu. 8:8) He meant that they would be rich.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, show me your secrets.

THE SECRETS OF GOD THAT MADE JOB RICH - THE GOD FACTOR

“As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle”
(Job 29:1-4)

We are exploring the life of Job that ended him up becoming the richest man in the then world in the east. How did Job become the richest man in the world? What did he do? From his own testimony we learn that God preserved him. *“Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me”* (Job 29:1-2)

I believe that Job attributed his riches first of all to God's preservation of his life. We cannot tell exactly what God preserved him from. However, when you read the scriptures carefully about Job's era you will discover that Job's life predated the law since he did not mention the law and priests in his writings and so many theologians place him as a contemporary of Abraham, Lot and Isaac. Preservation however, is an act of grace equal to the preservation of Noah and his family from the flood. Job mentioned that God preserved him. He enjoyed favour from God to be able to live in his era. The act of preserving one's life is in itself an act of God.

Every good life starts with God and the acknowledgement of the existence of God and His active involvement in our lives. When we ignore this fact of life, riches and wealth will mean nothing. There are many other rich and wealthy people in the world who live miserable lives and are heading to destruction

where their soul will perish in hell forever. A life without God is headed for destruction. It is full of misery and pain notwithstanding one's riches. In all of Job's life He acknowledged God. When he lost all his children and wealth, He did not accuse God at all. Rather He worshiped God. All the bad news, especially, the loss of his children made him bow in worship to God:

“And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” (Job 1:19-22)

This is the life of Job. He was someone who feared God. He attributed his wealth and acquisitions to God. God was the starting point of his riches and wealth. One of his secrets was the God factor.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I acknowledge that you preserve my life and I am grateful.

THE SECRETS OF GOD — MAXIMIZING YOUR YOUTHFUL DAYS

*“Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head... **As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.**” (Job 29:1-4)*

One of the secrets of Job was that He engaged God seriously when he was a youth. We read in the key verse about how the secret of God was on his tabernacle in the days of His youth. This means that he began prospering from the days of his youth as He led a devoted and committed life. Indeed, youthful days are days we are admonished to serve God; *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them”* (Eccl 12:1)

I believe that Job’s acquisition of wealth was not instantaneous as it is with anyone who acquires wealth. He started from somewhere as a youth and progressed over the period. We want to look at the spiritual things which Job engaged in as a youth in the light of scripture. What are the things expected of every youth?

We can get a few of them in the following scriptures: *“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. **Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away***

***evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.**”* (Eccl 11:9-10)

From the above scripture we learn that as a youth we must put away sorrow from our heart and evil from our flesh. These are very powerful gems. We must disconnect from things that hurt the heart and the flesh. As a youth what do you allow into your heart that has the tendency to create sorrow?

David gives us an idea about how the heart is affected from our youth: *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”* (Ps. 119:9-11)

The way to keep your heart from sorrow and sin is to keep the word of God in your heart. This is what Job did as a youth. He determined not to sin against God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will store your word in my heart so that I will not sin against you.

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — AVOIDING YOUTHFUL LUSTS (1)

“As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.”

(Job 29:1-4)

There are secrets of the kingdom of God that have the capacity to make people who are interested in them rich and wealthy. Jesus said, that, “...to you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables...” (Luke 8:10) This means that God’s kingdom operates on secrets. Until we are able to unlock the secrets of the kingdom, we will not be able to make any meaningful impact in our lives and that of the world. When Peter confessed Jesus as the Son of God, Jesus said to him that, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Mat 16:19)

There are keys to the kingdom of heaven that are given to people to unlock the secrets of the kingdom. In the time of Job, as a young man growing up, he engaged in the secrets of God that made him the richest man in the then east. Job said, “**As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle**” (Job 29:4). So, by this scripture, we catch a revelation of how Job made it from his youth. He engaged God from his youth. There are pertinent things the youth must do in order to walk with God. David was once a youth. He was a youth when he was called to stand in the office of the President and he

volunteered to fight for Israel against Goliath: “And Saul said to David, *Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: **for thou art but a youth**, and he a man of war from his youth.*” (1Sam 17:33)

What did David do to succeed in the war against Goliath? We see this admonishment from David as inspired by the Holy Spirit in the following: “*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. **Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.***” Ps 119:9-11)

David kept God’s word in his heart in order not to sin against God. As a youth Job did the same. In Job’s time they did not have a Bible but he chose to serve the God he knew from his fathers with purity. Youthful days are full of lust and sin but he avoided all of them:

“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2Tim 2:22)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will hate sin and follow righteousness.

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — AVOIDING YOUTHFUL LUSTS (2)

“As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.”

(Job 29:1-4)

Youthful people in the Bible who made it to the top in the prime of their lives had a clear life's pattern they followed, just like Job. This was one of the many secrets of Job who became the richest man in the east. (Job 1:1-3)

This shows that the God factor is a major key in wealth creation and Job acknowledged God as the one who gives and the same one who allows wealth to vanish into thin air. When he lost all his wealth, he acknowledged God as the giver and the one who permitted his wealth to go.

“And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” (Job 1:21)

Job acknowledged that he did some things in his youthful days to arrive at where he was: ***“As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle”*** (Job 29:1-4)

As youth, we must allow God's word to shape our lives so that we can live in purity. Joseph was another young guy who was sold as a slave in Egypt. Following the traditions of his fore fathers and worshipping the God of his fathers, when he was tempted to fall into fornication by the wife of Potiphar, his master, he refused and fled:

*“And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife... There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: **how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?** And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.” (Gen 39:7-12)*

At a point in time in the life of every youth, some form of temptation will come your way. Issues concerning the lust of the flesh will confront you. Just flee like Joseph did. Job, the richest man in the then world was not immune to youthful lust. We read that, he was blameless and upright and feared God and turned away from evil. Young Hebrew boys had a lifestyle of purity. That was Job's secret right from his youthful days. This made him wealthy and rich.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to commit fornication and adultery.

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — RECEIVING LIGHT (1)

“Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.” (Job 29:1-4)

Job had a secret which catapulted him to a place of honour in society. We have the records that he was a great man in the gates of society. Job recounted his youthful days in the following: *“Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; **When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness;** As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up.” (Job 29:4-8)*

Job had encounters with God to make him what he became. One of them was that God's candle shined on his head. What do we mean by God's candle shining on his head? Candle is used in the scriptures to refer to the human spirit: *“The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.” (Pro 20:27)*

Man is a spirit, possesses a soul and lives in the body. The spirit of man is

what God uses to lighten our paths in this dark world. What is the essence of a candle? It produces light. Any time you want to have spiritual light you must engage your spirit because God lightens it for your benefit. The Bible says, *“For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.” (Ps 18:28)*

Anytime you seem to be groping in darkness about your life's difficult choices, just connect to God to light your candle. Years ago, when I was about to enter full time ministry, I had to forgo my university education to respond to the call. It was a very difficult moment for me. Should I continue or respond to full time ministry? During those times pastoring was not attractive at all. However, as I kept praying God illuminated my spirit. He lighted my candle and I perceived that I had to respond to the call. It has paid off greatly. This is what Job engaged in. His spirit was lighted for exploits.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*Lord, light my candle in Jesus' name.
Amen!*

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — RECEIVING LIGHT (2)

“Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.” (Job 29:1-4)

One of the difficult moments of life is when you do not know which way to go. It is really a decisive moment. If you are not cautious and you take the wrong step, your whole life and destiny will be gravely affected unless grace locates you. I remember a time when our church was about to take a major decision concerning how to manage the growth of the church. The place we were meeting could no longer contain our numbers. We decided to move out to another place so we started looking for a place. Then the owner of the place we were meeting offered to sell the place in which we were meeting to us but we did not have enough money to buy.

Right there and then, the Lord lightened my candle. He said give me your car. I had then received a fairly new Ford Explorer which had been with me for about three to six months. I humbly yielded to the leading. It was sold for so much and we got so much to add to what we had to purchase the place. Today that divine guidance has paid off. More churches have been planted and we have bought a much bigger facility and we keep going forward.

We must understand that when the candle of the Lord is lighted, we receive divine inspiration to help us navigate

our way through the dark moments of our lives. Job received such candle-lighting experience. It means he plugged himself to divine guidance. He said, *“When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness”* (Job 29:3) So divine guidance was one of Job’s secrets. He traded in divine guidance leading to the creation of his wealth. It is possible for God to guide us into prosperity. God can lead us beside the still waters. We read about God’s ability to lead us to our profit in the following:

“Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.” (Isa 48:17) Those guys in those days believed and accepted the fact that there is a spirit in man which receives inspiration from God for exploits: *But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*” (Job 32:8) Let us sit up and receive inspiration from God for our marriages, businesses, ministries etc. God can lead us.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord guide and lead me for exploits in Jesus’ name. Amen!

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — RECEIVING LIGHT (3)

"Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle."

(Job 29:1-4)

One of Job's secret for prosperity is that God's candle shined upon his head. We have established the fact that the candle of the Lord is our human spirit. (Pro 20:27) Anytime you need urgent guidance from God it will come from your spirit. God will lighten your spirit as we do a candle. He will give you precise direction about your situation; from business to marriage to ministry and family. Nothing is too hard for God. This is how Job made his fortune from his youth. The secrets of God upon his tabernacle included divine guidance. Biblical records show that he was the richest man in the then east (Job 1:3).

Now we have to ask ourselves how we can access the secrets of God in order to enjoy divine provision. One of the ways to access divine secrets is to have a revelation of them: *"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."* (Deu. 29:29)

There are revelations meant for us for our benefit. Praying for the church of Ephesus Paul said, *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what*

is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Eph 1:17-18)

We need revelation in wisdom, knowledge and understanding to access the secrets of God in order to actualize the riches of the glory of His inheritance. This comes from the word of God. So, our first step to accessing God's secrets is from the word of God:

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith (Rom 16:25-26)

The above scripture confirms that revelation of mystery is made manifest by the scriptures. The scriptures contain the secrets of God. That is where it starts from. Begin to develop love for the word to access divine secrets as God lightens your candle.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, show me the secrets in your word.

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — RECEIVING LIGHT (4)

“Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.” (Job 29:1-4)

One of the ways God's secrets comes to man is through the lighting of our human spirit in the Scriptures. The Bible contains the secrets of God for enriching our lives on earth. David caught the secrets of the holy writings and said in the following: *“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. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”* (Ps 1:1-3)

Giving ourselves consistently to the meditation of the word of God guarantees the release of divine secrets for prosperity. Job enjoyed divine secrets to make him the richest person in his days. Those days, they did not have the scriptures. However, God lighted the candle of their spirit, thus leading them to be successful in life. By God's grace all their encounters and experiences with God have been documented for us to learn and meditate in them in the Scriptures, and by doing them, be rewarded: *“The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment*

of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. “Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” (Ps 19:8,11)

When our eyes are enlightened, it is equal to God lighting our candle. Then we are informed and by keeping God's commandments we receive a great reward. The problem with many believers is that we are not diligent in reading and studying the scriptures. We want prophecies, laying on of hands, anointing oil and many other short cuts to succeed. In as much as we do not condemn these spiritual experiences, the key for accessing divine secrets cannot be replaced or exchanged. We must spend time in the presence of God to access His mind concerning issues. As we read and meditate in the word of God, He will illuminate our minds and hearts about the right way to go which when heeded to carries success for life's toughest journey. God's word is not Mills and Boon or Shakespeare which contains no inspiration. God's word is anointed and life-changing. It has life.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please enlighten my spiritual eyes in your word and give me access to divine secrets in Jesus' name. Amen!

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — RECEIVING LIGHT (5)

“Moreover Job...said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.”

(Job 29:1-4)

The issue of God lighting our candle is very true. We have other true stories in the Bible to substantiate the fact that indeed, God makes his people shine out of darkness to become prosperous. Whatever is hidden from our eyes is in darkness. No one can make it walking in darkness. Until a secret in darkness is revealed, we shall wallow in ignorance and desolation. The only one who can reveal secrets is God. Secrets are in darkness until they are brought to light. *“He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.”* (Dan 2:22)

Daniel was one of the Hebrew boys in captivity whose candle was lighted to receive divine secrets. When a dream was difficult to understand and explain, it was Daniel who saved the situation from the king's wrath.

“The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.” Because of this the king was angry and very furious, and commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be destroyed. So the decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.” (Dan 2:11-13)

When Daniel heard this, he consulted God who reveals secrets, dwells in light and is light. The secret came out eventually. It was this same light that Joseph used to interpret Pharaoh's dream that changed his destiny overnight from prison to be a prime minister. *“And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.”* (Gen. 41:37-41)

Joseph was set over all the land of Egypt by reason of light. We can access divine secrets to break through in this world. Business and academic secrets leading to inventions and innovations can be accessed through the light of our candle.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Father, please enlighten me for exploits in Jesus' name. Amen!

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — PRAYER

“Moreover Job...said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.”

(Job 29:1-4)

One of Job's secrets that made him become the richest man in the east was a devoted life of prayer. In fact, Job was prayerful. There are many instances in the story of Job that show that the man had a closet life of prayer. At the tail end of his misery, God spoke to his friends who condemned him to go to Job to be prayed for. Job was an intercessor: *“Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept...”* (Job 42:8)

When you see a man of prayer you can tell by the things he does for God. For instance, Job interceded for his children anytime they had a party because he felt that probably they would sin against God. *“And his sons went and feasted in their houses, everyone his day... And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.”* (Job 1:4-5)

Scanning through the book of Job's sayings we discover phrases and sentences that show that he believed

in prayer. Job 5:8-9 *“I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number.”*

The secret place of prayer is very crucial to accessing the secrets of God. I also discovered that Daniel who accessed divine secrets was a man of prayer who prayed three times a day: *“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”* (Dan 6:10)

David who engaged divine secrets also had a prayer closet lifestyle. He said, *“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”* (Ps 91:1). He prayed three times a day: *“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”* (Ps 55:17)

For divine secrets make prayer your lifestyle.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will stay in your presence in prayer.

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — CARE FOR THE POOR, WIDOWS AND FATHERLESS

“Moreover Job...said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.”

(Job 29:1-4)

We are always in a hurry to break through without looking at what it takes to breakthrough. All those who broke through and prospered in Bible times followed a certain pattern designed by God. One of those who made it was Job. From Job's own testimony he cared for widows and the fatherless: *“Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him...and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.”* Job 29:12-13) We cannot deny the good works of Job. His motive for being rich was to be a blessing just as God told Abraham, his contemporary. The overall purpose of prosperity and God's blessing is to be a blessing.

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 12:1-3)

It is like a covenant between God and the one who is blessed. Once you fulfil your part, God has no problem fulfilling His part. When you catch this revelation and begin to position yourself to be a blessing, you become a candidate for prosperity. Job said he delivered the poor that cried. He

may have paid school fees, medical bills, given money for food and many more. He also delivered the fatherless and him that had none to help him. Indeed, there are many people who have nobody to help them in life. Do not envy the rich if you do not have any idea how they became rich.

Job said, *“I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.”* (Job 29:16) *“Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?”* (Job 30:25)

He used his money to help the poor and the helpless. He wept for those in trouble because he felt the way they felt. This was one of the secrets of Job's prosperity. Do not forget that he said, *“When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle”* (Job 29:1-4)

When your candle is lighted by God you will understand the secret of being a blessing to the poor, fatherless, widow and helpless.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, enlighten me about being a blessing.

EXPLORING THE SECRETS OF JOB'S LIFE OF PROSPERITY — KINGDOM PRIORITY

“Moreover Job...said, Oh that I were as in months past... When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.”

(Job 29:1-4)

Studying the life of Job who became the richest man in the then east reveals the fact that he traded in divine secrets to be elevated to where he attained in life. One of the secrets he caught when God shined his candle on his head was that he saw that being a blessing to the poor was a major high way to riches and wealth. He engaged in that and made it. Recounting his own story, he said *“Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.”* (Job 29:12)

How can we make Job's story relevant to us in our days? God's word does not change. It works in all generations. When Jesus came, He also engaged in ministry to the poor. We are told in scriptures that Judas was the treasurer in Jesus' ministry and he kept the money bag. *“This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.”* (John 12:6)

“For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.” (John 13:29)

Jesus cared for the poor so much that he had a special account for the

poor. So, we see that what Job did was exactly the same as what Jesus did. There is something about helping the poor that opens the heavens, touches God's heart to unleash His blessings on those who do it. Jesus did not leave out the poor in His ministry. As a matter of fact, Jesus had a purpose for the poor. His first major assignment to the poor was to preach the gospel to them. Why? It is because helping the poor is not an end in itself. It should be a means to an end which is salvation and eternity: *“The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”* (Mat 11:5)

As if this was not enough, Jesus included the ministry to the poor as part of His mission statement: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor”* (Luke 4:18) The gospel is Jesus' first priority when it comes to the poor in line with kingdom priority

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, enlighten me to understand the ministry to the poor in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE SECRET OF INVESTING INTO KINGDOM BUSINESS

“Moreover Job...said, Oh that I were as in months past... When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.”

(Job 29:1-4)

When you know the outcome of an action it is better to take the right action for the better. One of the secrets of Job is that he knew how the end of his life would be in eternity. When you study the book of Job carefully, you will discover the statements he made about eternity and learn that he lived his life on earth like someone who would continue beyond the grave. He was bedeviled with sores all over his body. He was in pain. Despite that he did not give up. He even knew that when he died, he would one day live again. His friends mocked him so much that he opened his mouth to tell them to pity him and to declare to them what his ultimate end would be should he die:

“Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” (Job 19:21-27)

Studying through all these and the things Job did for widows, fatherless, orphans and the helpless, we can safely conclude that Job was motivated by an eternity mind-set. Eternity influenced his actions. His investments into the lives of people was part of enhancing God's kingdom in their lives. God made his candle to shine to unravel this secret.

Jesus made it very clear that we should seek God's kingdom first and all things shall be added to us (Mat 6:33). This means seeking the salvation of people. It means investing resources of time, talent and treasure to this vision of soul winning. It means creating a place where the saved souls can gather and worship the king in a place called church. It means promoting kingdom agenda through giving and preaching the gospel.

If Job were living in this time, he would be advancing God's kingdom with his riches. This is a kingdom mystery and those who endear themselves to this revelation become candidates for God's blessing.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I determine from today to be a kingdom promoter.

THE SECRET OF SACRIFICE (1)

“Moreover Job...said, Oh that I were as in months past... When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle” (Job 29:1-4)

Job was a youth when he encountered God. This encounter with God resulted in him making becoming rich and great. Job accepted the fact that it was not his doing but the doing of God who shined His candle on his head to access the secrets of God. We are told that he was the richest man in the then east. (Job 1:3). We are trying to unravel the secrets Job traded in to arrive at where he did. One of them is a life of sacrifice. The Bible's record of his continuous sacrificial life is as follows: *“And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.”* (Job 1:5)

Job offered burnt offerings according to the number of his children. It shows that he believed in sacrifices. Eliphaz, one of Job's friends recommended that Job should make a vow to God in his discourse with Job as follows; *“Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.”* (Job 22:27) Since they were friends and had the same faith in God we could

safely conclude that they all believed in the act of sacrifice as a worship to God. This was one of Job's secrets that God showed him in his youth which also became one of the stepping stones to his prosperity. Sacrifice is key to the many breakthroughs we need in our lives. Check out all the great men in the Bible and you will discover that sacrifice was their main lifestyle in their relationship with God. Noah sacrificed (Gen 8:20-22). Abraham raised altars of sacrifice wherever he went:

*“And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: **and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: **and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.**”*** (Gen.12:7-8).

Isaac sacrificed (Gen 26:25) Jacob sacrificed (Gen. 33:20) You cannot walk with God without sacrificing to Him. It is the greatest secret for prosperity.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will engage the secret of sacrifice from today.

THE SECRET OF SACRIFICE (2)

“Moreover Job...said, Oh that I were as in months past... When his candle shined upon my head...As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.”

(Job 29:1-4)

The act of sacrifice as worship is a secret of many a man of God in Bible times. Job caught this secret in his youth and became wealthy. Actually, it was a known practice. Not many believers have caught the secret of sacrifice even though they are believers. Many believers hear about giving all the time but not many have caught its secret and that is why it is very difficult for them to give. There are many who have a challenge parting with their first fruits and tithes because their spiritual eyes are not yet illuminated. Even though sacrifices were part of the then worshipers, Job just jumped into it by revelation and reaped the benefits.

Why is it that God only appeared to Solomon when he offered a thousand bulls to him? If he had not sacrificed, God would not have appeared to give him such powerful promises of making him the wisest and richest man in the world. We read that; *“And Solomon loved the LORD...And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.”* (1Kings 3:3-5)

God’s appearance changed Solomon’s destiny and this became a platform for

his exploits in riches. In a conversation with God, he asked for wisdom but God gave him more. God said, *“behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.”* (1Kings 3:12-13)

All these promises were brought about by his sacrifice. There are many things in the heart and mind of God for you but will only be revealed by sacrifice. There is a word of prophecy concerning your destiny which is in the secret place but can only be unveiled by sacrifice. Sacrifice does not benefit God. It rather benefits you. After this encounter with God through sacrifice the following happened:

“Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind.” (1Ki 10:23-24)

Get set for a supernatural encounter with sacrifice. It works.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, show me the secret of sacrifice.

THE SECRET OF SACRIFICE (3)

“Moreover Job...said, Oh that I were as in months past... When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.” (Job 29:1-4)

We are studying the secret acts of Job which caused him to do exploits and become the richest man in the east. He did certain things that made him the richest man in the east. One of Job's secret we are exploring is the life of sacrifice. All the patriarchs were men of selfless sacrifice. We must tread the old paths of our fathers. Job was made rich by just following the paths of previous generations. He sacrificed on altars.

He sacrificed for his sons and I am sure he did same for himself: *“And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, ‘It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.’ Thus Job did continually.”* (Job 1:5)

We know of Abraham who was a contemporary of Job. Abraham was asked by God to give his son, Isaac as a sacrifice. God tried his faith. Abraham did not withhold Isaac from God but went ahead to sacrifice him as demanded by God;

“After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer

him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.” (Gen 22:1-3)

The highest level of test for our faith is sacrifice; our readiness to sacrifice our best to God. Apparently, God had already made provision for a lamb to be used as the sacrifice:

“He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.’ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.” (Gen 22;12-13)

Until you are ready to sacrifice your best, God is not ready to give you your best.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I promise to sacrifice my best to God.

WHY SACRIFICE IS SO IMPORTANT TO GOD FOR EXPLOITS

"Moreover Job...said, Oh that I were as in months past... When his candle shined upon my head... As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle"

(Job 29:1-4)

The subject of sacrifice dated back to the time of Adam and Eve. We read that their sons, Cain and Abel went to sacrifice to God and God accepted the sacrifice of Abel and rejected that of Cain. (Gen 4:3-5) Let us ask ourselves a few questions to understand the subject under discussion.

Where did Cain and Abel learn this act of worship where they had to sacrifice to God? We can have two main answers; the first one is that their parents may have practiced it and taught them to do same. The second answer is that they may have received it by revelation from God. Now if Adam and Eve practiced and taught them then how did they learn the act of sacrifice? The answer is that they may have received it from God as a revelation.

Adam and Eve sinned against God. God may have taught them to worship with sacrifices on altars to foretell the coming of Jesus Christ on earth to die as a sacrificial lamb to atone for the sin of mankind. We read in the Old Testament that Jesus the Lamb of God was slain before the foundation of the world:

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not

written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8)

This is the only clue we have about why God took so much interest in sacrifices. The worship of God in the Old Testament was completely composed of sacrifices:

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9:22)

Therefore, the reason why God showed much interest in sacrifices is that all sacrifices pointed to the cross. It all pointed to the shedding of Christ's blood. Any worshiper who buys into sacrifices touches the heart of God. We are told that God Himself gave His only son just as Abraham gave Isaac. (Heb 11:17). When you sacrifice your wealth, you plug directly to the altar of the cross. Now if God sacrificed His only Son, He is also able to give anything to those who sacrifice: *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"* (Rom 8:32)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will live a life of sacrifice from today.

THE FIRST FRUIT AS SACRIFICE TO GOD

"When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness."

(Job 29:3)

You can walk through the dark moments of your life if you receive the light of God. David did. Long before he became king, the devil eyed him to kill him through king Saul. He walked through darkness but God was with him and delivered him from the hands of Saul. He did not escape the devil's threats either after becoming king. He was attacked by his own son Absalom, who rebelled against him and David had to flee to the wilderness, sleeping in caves. There are dark moments in everyone's life. Probably you may be going through one. Job said, *"when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness."*

We need God's light to walk in darkness. This light shines in our hearts to show us the right way to go and the right things to do. Job knew that. One of the secrets of the light was that he learnt to sacrifice to God. Sacrifice was a major key to wealth creation. God accepts our sacrifice when it is the best. Can and Abel sacrificed to God but God rejected Cain's sacrifice and accepted Abel's: *"In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard..."* (Gen 4:3-5)

Abel gave God his first fruits but Cain gave God just any fruits. The first fruit represents the best. The first is God's position in the universe. Number one is God's number. The Bible says of Jesus as follows: *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last..."* (Rev. 1:8,11)

So, a sacrifice of first fruit is an engagement of God's character and name. He cannot fail. It is not easy to sacrifice the first fruit. In fact, God made a law to Israel to give their firstborns to God as a first fruit of the womb (Exo. 13:1-6) Jesus is called the firstborn. (Rom 8:21; Col 1:15,18). So as a matter of fact, and revelation, your first fruit represents Christ. Your first fruit is your first income of the year: *"And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD:"* (Ne. 10:35)

When the first fruits go to God, He guarantees that you never lose subsequent fruits. More fruits will show up. That is how you receive more.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, show me the secret of first fruit in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE TITHE AS A SACRIFICE TO GOD

"When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness."
(Job 29:3)

Job enjoyed total blessings from God and we know that Satan acknowledged that too. He was blessed on every side making him the richest man in the world. The blessing of God can make a difference in our lives. Job was blessed. We see that in the following scripture:

"Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD." Job 1:9-12)

Job's problems began when the devil was allowed by God to touch his body and his assets but not his life. Eventually he overcame and was restored. Job narrated how God blessed him and among the many secrets he traded in was the act of sacrifice as it pertained to his contemporaries. Abraham and Job were contemporaries. Abraham paid tithes and was multiplied by God:

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram

of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." (Gen 14:18)

Rockefeller was once the richest man in the world. He was a giver and also a tither. There are many people who fight against the paying of tithes. They propound many arguments against tithing saying that it was an Old Testament practice. The tithes as with the first fruit was not given as a law but came from revelation. Abraham paid tithes before the Law on tithes was enacted by God through Moses; *"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD."* (Lev. 27:30)

Jesus said that, here, men, that is, the Levites and of course pastors, receive tithes but at the same time we give the tithes Jesus also receives them in heaven: *"And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth."* (Heb. 7:8) Honour your tithes and see God work for you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Thank you Lord for showing me the secret of tithing.

THE SECRET OF SACRIFICIAL TITHING

“And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.”

(Heb. 7:8)

There are kingdom secrets which many find it difficult to understand. Sacrifice of any kind in the kingdom of God is an expression of the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross. All the offerings and sacrifices of the Old Testament were nothing but the cross in a type and shadow. That is why any form of giving triggers heaven's blessing because giving originated from God. Before man was created, God had already prepared the earth for him. God prepared the Garden of Eden with everything that man needed. God handed over creation to man. God is the greatest giver. We cannot outwit God in giving.

Do you know what it means to give your own Son as a sacrifice to sinners? Would you dare give your son to armed robbers, prostitutes, fetishes and occultists? It is really a hard thing to do. However, God willingly gave His Son to die in our place and take the penalty of our sins. When it comes to giving, I do not think we should complain at all. Look at the suffering of Jesus on the cross and feel the way the Father felt when Jesus said, *“My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?”* (Mark 15:34). So how much can we give to compensate for the death of Jesus on the cross?

Let us come back to the issue of tithing. Tithe is one-tenth of all that God blesses you with. The tithe operates on the principle of sowing and reaping.

It postulates that we do not have to eat every harvest but leave some for sowing against the next season. There is always a part that must be put into reserves for the next season. The tithe is like that. The tithe also functions on the basis of landlord and tenant relationship. Every farmer pays the owner of the land with some amount of fruit from the farm in the same way every tenant pays rent to the landlord.

The work of our hands is God's land and the income we receive is the harvest. We must pay our LandLord for the mercy and grace of giving us our gifts, talents and life to work and produce fruits. God only demands one-tenth. This tithe is used by God to redeem the ground to produce more. God cursed the ground for man's sake when Adam sinned (Gen 3:17). Tithe blesses the ground.

God promised to open heaven's windows to pour blessing on us and also rebuke the devourer who devours our work. (Mal. 3:8-11) Job's secret for becoming the richest man in the world included sacrifice. Test God by your tithe. Sacrifice it and see the outcome.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, open my eyes to the secret of tithing in Jesus' name. Amen!

GOD APPEARS BY SACRIFICE

“At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.”

(1Kings 3:5)

Whenever I read this scripture something on the inside of me tells me that sacrifice is the best way to have an encounter with God. The above scripture says that the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night. What triggered the appearance of God to Solomon? Let's read from the following: *“And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, “Ask what I shall give you.”* (1Kings 3:4-5)

This means that anyone who engages sacrifice will certainly have an encounter with God in one way or the other. In this case God appeared to Solomon in a dream. God will appear in your business and ministry. He will appear in your family. He will appear in your finances. He will appear to give clear directions for your life. Whatever be the case God will still appear. I found out again that when Noah sacrificed after the floods, God appeared. He always appears by sacrifice. *“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart*

is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.” (Gen. 8:20-21)

God appeared here to avert a curse with a vow. In the time of Solomon, he sacrificed a very great amount of oxen and the LORD appeared again: *“Solomon offered as peace offerings to the LORD 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.”* (1Kings 8:63) After this event we read in subsequent verses that the LORD appeared to Solomon again as he did the first time: *“As soon as Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king's house and all that Solomon desired to build, the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.”* (1Kings 9:1-2)

In the same event when Solomon finished praying during the dedication ceremony, fire fell on the sacrifices: *“As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.”* (2Ch 7:1) Dare to sacrifice no matter how painful it is for God will appear in your situation.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will sacrifice to God.

A LIFE OF SACRIFICE

"Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all."

(Php 2:17)

A journey into Job's life shows that he gained secrets from God for his exploits. Among the many secrets he caught was a life of sacrifice. We read that he continuously offered sacrifices to God on behalf of his children: *"And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, 'It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did continually."* (Job 1:5)

What interests me is the last sentence: "thus, Job did continually." This shows that he was addicted to a lifestyle of sacrifice. This is how serving God should be. It must be a continuous lifestyle. It should not be a one-time event as we see in many churches where during a special program, we see many members participating and after that everyone coils into their shells waiting for another great event.

Our commitment to God must be on the altar of sacrifice on a daily basis. Apostle Paul served God and suffered for the cross. Getting to the end of his life he made this statement which carries a lot of weight; *"Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all."* (Php 2:17)

Paul saw himself as a drink offering being poured out as a sacrificial offering. This he did for their faith. It means that in his effort to get them to believe in Jesus Christ he had to be a sacrificial offering. In the case of Jesus, He was killed as a sacrificial lamb as Isaiah prophesied concerning him; *"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth"* (Isaiah 53:7)

Paul did not compare himself with Jesus. He only referred to himself as a drink offering poured out. He gave all he had for the faith of others. What are you pouring out for the faith of others? How many people have you spent your time, talent and treasure to bring to the faith? Are you pouring them out as a drink offering?

Do you spend to save souls? Hear this: *"I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."* (Rom 12:1)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, from today I will pour out myself as a sacrifice for your service.

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE DIMENSIONS OF JOB'S PROSPERITY

"And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.'" So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD"

(Job 1:12)

Serving God is not as cheap as many believers think. The reason is that serving God is a spiritual warfare. Satan is our strong adversary in our effort to serve God. He will do everything possible to make sure that we do not serve God. The story of Job is a typical example of how expensive it is to serve God against the backdrop of satanic assaults and accusations. We read about how Satan went to God with an accusation against Job, seeking permission to bully him to see whether indeed he was serving God well:

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, 'From where have you come?' Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.' And the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?' Then Satan answered the LORD and said, 'Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and

he will curse you to your face.'" And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.'" So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Right after Satan had been permitted by God, Job's life took a new turn. Enemies raided his servants and killed them and took all his livestock away. Lightning struck and burnt the sheep and the servants. Some other raiders killed his servants who were caring for the camels and took the camels away. A hurricane also blew and hit the house where his sons were having a party and killed all of them. All these events happened in one day. He lost his entire livelihood and family in one day. Do you think serving God is easy?

Even though most of the catastrophes were caused by human and the natural elements in the world, yet the remote and root cause had a spiritual dimension. It was just because Job was God's servant. You will be attacked but be resolute.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will be strong in spirit to serve you despite the attacks on me in Jesus' name. Amen!

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE

"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

(Job 1:22)

I had a friend in the Scripture Union who was so committed to the Lord. She came for every meeting. We had a students' group that used to go out for evangelism during vacation. She was very committed there too. After a while we did not see her involvement in meetings again and so I went to visit her. She said bluntly to me that "God has disappointed me." I was like, how? I mean how can God disappoint you to the extent that you stop serving Him. We have to understand that God is too faithful to fail. God cannot fail. He said, *"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."* (Deu. 31:6)

Are you really serving God with your heart? Are you serving God for blessings? Yes! God can bless you when you serve Him. God said something to the children of Israel and I think it is worth making reference to it: *"I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right."* (Isaiah 45:19)

God has not called us to seek Him in vain. Anyone who seeks God finds Him and those who seek and serve Him have promises of rewards to enjoy. For instance, God said in the

following: *"If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures."* (Job 36:11)

It means there is a reward for serving God: prosperity and a good life. All those who served God in Bible times were not disappointed. God said again that, *"You shall serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from among you. None shall miscarry or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days."* (Ex. 23:25)

These and many more are what God has promised to do for those who obey and serve Him. However, should you lose all these things will you keep serving God? This is where Job came to. Job's secret for his wealth was that he was ready to serve God whether he had possessions or not. When the devil tempted him and took everything he had away, God's word says that, *"In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."* (Job 1:22).

He did not backslide. His commitment to God was for better or worse. This is one of the hidden secrets God lighted in the spirit of Job.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will serve God with or without wealth, in joy and in pain.

SPEND AND BE SPENT

"I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?"
(2Cor 12:15)

Spending for the sake of God's Kingdom was one of the secrets of Job that catapulted him to be the richest man in the east. (Job 1:3) Do you understand what it means to be the richest man in the east? Let's travel to the east and fast-forward Job's life to today. Prince Al Waleed is the richest man in the middle east, worth \$21.3 Billion. However, we should also understand that the then world was centered in the middle east. So, in fact Job was actually the richest man in the world. Now what is the worth of the richest man in the world today? As at 26th March 2022 Elon Musk was reputed to be the richest man in the world with a net-worth of \$256 Billion. If Job were living in these days that would be his net worth.

One of the secrets of Job's accumulation of wealth was his ability to spend on the needy. He earned and spent. He spent and was spent. In the above scripture Paul is quoted as saying that "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?" Indeed, Paul spent his life winning souls. He spent his own money on missions. He invested monies earned in tent making to promote the kingdom of God (Acts 18:1-3). Giving to the poor puts us on a favourable platform to increase our wealth as God opens more financial

doors to us. The Scripture says that, "*Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.*" (Pro 19:17)

That was the reason why Job was so much blessed. He always lent to the Lord and received it back with supernatural interest. He did not just give to the poor. He defended them. Job said, "*I was a father to the needy, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know. I broke the fangs of the unrighteous and made him drop his prey from his teeth.*" (Job 29:16-17)

Job went ahead to take care of the fatherless and the widow and made sure those hungry were fed and the naked were clothed. We see this from the following: "*If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, 17or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it (for from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow) if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering*" (Job 31:16-19)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will follow the way of Job and meet needs.

A LIFE OF HOLINESS

"I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?"

(Job 31:1)

The above statement was made by Job during his long period of testing. This was one of the secrets of Job which ensured he had a rich and fulfilling life. He found some secrets from God early in his life as a youth and lived by them: *"Moreover Job continued his parable, and said, As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle"* (Job 29:1,4)

In the days of Job's youth, he made a covenant with his eyes not to defile himself with a virgin. He decided not to allow his eyes to lead him to sin. One of the things that attract men is the beauty of women. In fact, every man is aroused by what they see. That is why most women who want to attract men dress in such manner as to expose themselves. Solomon fell victim to many women in his life, marrying seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. His wives turned his heart away from God:

"And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites." (1Kings 11:3-5) If only

Solomon had stuck to one wife, he may not have turned away from God. All these wives came from idol worship background and in order to please them he followed them to sacrifice to their gods:

"Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods." (1Kings 11:7-8) It was this same Solomon who advised by inspiration that one ought to look straight: *"Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee."* (Pro 4:25)

If you want God's blessings in your life, learn to keep your eyes away from strange women and men. Do not look on their beauty because sustained looking will attract them to you. Jesus said, *"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."* (Mat 5:27-28)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I covenant with my eyes today not to be fatally attracted into lust.

HOLDING FAST THE COMMANDMENT

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food"

(Job 23:12)

The greatest desire in the heart of every man is to have a life free from lack. We want to acquire wealth to make life easy for us. This is very good. In fact, this is a good direction in life. Everybody must be free to enjoy life. One of the Bible figures under study is Job. He was the richest man in the east (Job 1:1-3). According to him, God lighted the candle of his spirit to catch some secrets that helped him to be where he was. (Job 29:1-3). One of the secrets he was enlightened by God about was the value of God's word. In the key scripture above he said, *"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."* (Job 23:12). Job gave preference to God's word more than his own food. He placed a high premium on the word. The word taught him how to make it in life and he indeed, made it big time.

Do you value God's word? How often do you take the Bible to read? In the time of Job there was no Bible like we have today. He heard directly from God like Abraham and the patriarchs. Whatever God told him was to him the best he needed to make life meaningful for himself. God spoke to that generation through dreams and visions: *"For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not."*

In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. 18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword." (Job 33:14-18)

God still speaks to us in dreams but primarily by His word as found in the Holy Scriptures. Job made a covenant with his eyes not to allow any virgin to attract him because of God's commandments to him which he upheld with diligence (Job 31:1). In the time of David and Solomon the Law of Moses had been written down to guide their lives. Solomon said, *"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life"* (Pro 6:23) This is what kept Job from adultery and fornication. David was inspired to say that, *"How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* (Ps 119:9,11)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will keep your word in my heart to avoid sin.

THE DEVASTATING EFFECT OF IMMORALITY

“For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life to preserve you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.”

(Pro 6:23-24)

Any serious minded man or woman who is serving God with all his/her heart, soul and body will heed to the word of God in order to be preserved from evil women or men. If you really want your life to be preserved, then the answer is in the word of God. God's word teaches us reproofs of discipline. This, according to the scripture is the way of life. If you are not disciplined, your life will be miserably devastated. One of the disciplines of life God's word teaches us is to avoid immorality. For men, we are admonished that keeping the commandment will preserve us from the evil woman with a smooth tongue. Job kept his covenant to avoid virgins (Job 31:1)

Adulterers have oil mouths. They speak to lure their prey. Read what scriptures say about them: *“Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes; for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread, but a married woman hunts down a precious life. (Pro 6:25-26)*

The value placed on such women who only want to catch a man prey for a night is equal to a loaf of bread. Bread is supposed to be the cheapest and commonest commodity in the world. It means such women are very cheap and too common. Why should a man endear himself to a life of prostitution?

Many women who have jeopardized their lives with immoral living keep looking for vulnerable men to woo into an adulterous relationship. Man, do not be stupid. You are not the first to engage her in immoral sexual intercourse and neither will you be the last.

In the writings of Solomon, he recounted a simple man who could not tell his left from his right and how being lured by an immoral woman, he ended his life: *“and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense, passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness. And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart. All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life.” (Pro 7:7-10, 22-23)*

Death is the ultimate result for such immoral actions. Man, be wise and avoid fornication and adultery.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will live a holy life from now on.

PRAYER STRUCTURE – RELATIONSHIP IS KEY

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name”

(Mat 6:9)

Prayer is something that is done in almost all religions. It is a critical requirement in many forms of worship. Believers are also required to pray. In fact, Paul encouraged the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing. (1Thess 5:17)

In the key scripture above, the disciples of Jesus asked Him to teach them how to pray and Jesus gave them a model for prayer. In that model, prayer begins with addressing God as our father. Before you can pray effective prayers, God must be your father. This means there must be a father son relationship which you acquire when you accept Jesus as your saviour and get born again.

Relationship is vital for the existence of man on the earth. God believes in relationship. When God created Adam, he said it was not good for man to be alone. So, he created a help mate, Eve, to be a companion to Adam. Four of the Ten Commandments deal with our relationship with God while the other six deal with our relationships with people. But all ten are about relationships. A relationship is defined as to have a connection or involvement with someone. You have a connection with someone when there is a common thing that ties you together. A man is connected to his wife because of the marriage vows that they make to each other. A brother or a sister is connected to each other because of the shared blood that ties them together.

As a believer and a Christian, you begin a lifelong relationship with Jesus when you accept him as your lord and saviour and ask him to come and live within you as a result of which you are born again. The church is described as the bride of Christ. As a bride you are in a relationship with the bridegroom who is Christ. (Rev 21:2-4, Rev 19:7-10) How is your relationship with your master and Lord Jesus Christ? Some men when they get what they want by marrying the woman of their dreams, they then neglect her and fail to continue doing all the wonderful and nice things they were doing before they got married. There are a lot of believers who only use God to get what they want. Someone said that people use God as a light switch. When they need Him, they put Him on. When they are done using the light, they put it off. I want to assure you that real prayer doesn't work that way. Without a consistent and vibrant relationship with Christ, you will not have a very effective prayer life. Which father would be happy with a child who completely ignores him and does not do what he tells him but only comes to him when he needs something? Revolutionise your prayer life by developing a constant and vibrant relationship with your Lord.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Prayer is about relationship. I will enhance my relationship with God for an effective prayer life.

BEGIN PRAYER WITH PRAISE AND WORSHIP

“And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.”

(Luk 11:2)

Prayer is an essential tool that every Christian must use to enhance their relationship with God and also to build themselves up spiritually. One of the disciples of Jesus asked them how to pray. In the model prayer that Jesus gave to them, the first thing he required of them to do in prayer is to worship and praise God. You connect with God in prayer when you begin by praising Him. Praise is simply thanking God for who He is. It means to esteem Him, to value Him, to acknowledge who and what He is. Or another way of thinking about it is that praise is simply bragging on God. “God there’s no other God like you! You’re so good, faithful and merciful.” It is very important for us to begin our prayer with worship and praise because when we do that we shift the focus off ourselves and focus on God instead.

In Ghana you cannot go to a chief’s palace without a gift. Everyone is expected to carry something as a form of appreciation of who he is. Sometimes even before you address the chief a linguist will first extol the praises of the chief setting out his various titles and achievements. If this is done for earthly kings who are mere mortal men and die, how much more the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The bible is very clear on this issue as stated clearly here; *Psalms 100:4* “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his

courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!”

There are several examples in the bible of people who began prayer with worship and praise. When Moses and the people of Israel came out of Egypt in the Exodus, they sang this song in Exodus 15, which begins: “*I will sing to YHWH for He is highly exalted, the horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. YHWH is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise Him ...*” (:1-2) In 2Chronicles 6, Solomon’s long prayer at the dedication of the Temple, opens in verse 14 as follows “*O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no god like You in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart, who has kept with Your servant David, my father, that which You have promised him ...*”

After Paul and Silas were thrown into prison, they prayed and sang praises to God. (Acts 16:25) Let us follow the model Jesus has set. Begin your prayer with praise and worship.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will praise the Lord my God. He is good and His mercy endures forever.

YOUR FIRST REQUEST IN PRAYER MUST BE KINGDOM BASED

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

(Mat 6:10)

Prayer is the lifeline of every believer. If you don't pray as a believer, you are slowly draining your lifeline away. Paul admonished believers to pray without ceasing. (1Thess 5:17). Prayer must be a constant thing in your life. Jesus while he was on this earth led a life of prayer. Before He even began His ministry, He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness on a forty day fast. On various occasions while He was with His disciples, he left them and separated Himself for prayer. *Luk 5:16 “And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.”*

Luk 6:12 “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”

Prayer was so important to Jesus that He gave his disciples a model for prayer. We have studied in the previous devotional that the opening request for prayer must be to worship and praise God. The second request in prayer is to pray for God's kingdom to come and for His will to be done on earth. What does it mean for God's kingdom to come. The word, “Kingdom” used here in the key scripture is the Greek word “*basileia*”, which means “rule”, or “reign.” So, when we pray for the Kingdom of God to come, part of what we are praying is that the “rule” or “reign” of God would be extended in the world. How can the reign of God be established on this earth?

Matthew 4:23 says that Jesus went about, “preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom.” He was spreading the Kingdom. How was He spreading the kingdom? By preaching. God's Kingdom is not a kingdom like the other kingdoms of this world. His “kingdom” is in the hearts of people, as His gospel is preached and His word is spread. The will of God on earth is to have His kingdom established in the hearts of men. Jesus said that “...*My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*” (*Joh 4:34*). God's will is that all men should be saved.

1Ti 2:4 “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

There is a tendency for Christians to focus their prayer on their needs instead of focusing it on the kingdom. It is somehow understandable because we are all under some kind of pressure to acquire certain necessities of life. Understand however that when you make God's kingdom your priority, He will take care of your needs in life. (*Mat 6:33*). Align your prayer model to fit into God's model and see the positive results you shall receive in prayer.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, may your kingdom be established on this earth and in the hearts of men in Jesus' name.

PRAYING FOR THE KINGDOM

“Pray on my behalf, that utterance would be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel”

(Ephesians 6:19)

Establishing the kingdom of God on earth is the main reason why Jesus came to the earth. We studied in the previous devotional that the kingdom of God, unlike the worldly kingdoms is established in the hearts of men. This is what Romans 10 describes: *Rom 10:9-10 KJV "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

So the Kingdom comes into hearts as they hear the word of God. But as Romans 10:14 goes on to say, “How shall they hear without a preacher?” God’s Kingdom spreads in the world as pastors, missionaries, and church members share the gospel of the kingdom. So praying for the Kingdom to come would include praying for your church, preachers, and missionaries and all of those who are spreading the gospel of the Kingdom, and advancing His Kingdom’s work here on earth.

In Luke 10:1 Jesus said “... *The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. (Luk 10:2).* Praying for God to raise preachers must be a constant prayer of every believer. Indeed as you pray for God to raise preachers, he will raise you as a preacher. This

kind of prayer enriches your prayer life and prepares you for God to use you greatly. We see examples of this kind of Kingdom prayers in the New Testament.

Peter and John went to the temple at the hour of prayer and met a lame man at the gate who was healed by Peter. As a result of this healing many people gathered and they took the opportunity to preach the gospel to the gathering. The priests and the Sadducees, unhappy with what was happening had them thrown into prison. They were eventually threatened and released. When they came to the gathering of the believers they prayed and said: “*And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence ...*” (Acts 4:29) Verse 31 says “*And when they had prayed, the place where they had prayed was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.*” The Apostle Paul himself was devoted to Kingdom praying. He said in the key scripture above that He wanted the Ephesians to pray for God’s kingdom to spread through his witness. Be a kingdom promoter through your prayer.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I dedicate myself to praying for the kingdom in Jesus' name.

GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT

*"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth,
that shall he also reap"*

(Gal 6:7)

One of the most important Kingdom principles that you will ever understand are the laws of the harvest. That is, you will get what you sow. If you plant okro, you will not have a harvest of ripe tomatoes. God established this principle after the floods and declared that seed time and harvest shall never cease. So as long as you exist you will have to sow and harvest. What you harvest is based on what you sow. GIGO (garbage in, garbage out) is a concept common to computer science and mathematics. The quality of output is determined by the quality of the input. So, for example, if a mathematical equation is improperly stated, the answer is unlikely to be correct. In the same way whatever you sow determines the kind of harvest you receive.

When you look at the early church, after Pentecost, they went about sharing the gospel of the kingdom. Not only were they reaping the harvest of souls but they were also reaping the harvest of blessings. *Acts 4:33-34 "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold".* When you seek the kingdom of God first, you will always reap. Some of us are chasing certain things in this world so much we don't have time for

God. The more you chase them the more they seem to be running away from you. You think you are doing all you can working and trying your best but you are not making any headway. Maybe you should consider the kind of seed you are sowing.

The best seed you can ever sow is a seed into the kingdom of God. You shall never lack when you make God's business your business. *Mat 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you".* Sometimes the issues we go through are as a result of our own undisciplined actions. Many have various health issues because of bad eating habits and lifestyles. Many financial problems are related to undisciplined spending, impulse buying, and unbridled spending. Many in rocky marriages and rocky relationships are reaping from years of spouses not honouring each other. You can't continue to keep planting the bad seeds and expect a good harvest. No one can bypass the laws of the harvest! If you want to change what you are reaping, then you need to change what you are planting. Plant good seed to reap a good harvest.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am planting good seeds for a good harvest.

TARES IN THE HARVEST

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

(Mat 13:24-25)

Everyone who plants a seed expects to reap a harvest. Harvest time is a joyous time for everyone. *Psa 126:5-6 KJV* "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him". However, there are times in life when you gain the harvest but amidst that great harvest, there may be tares planted by the enemy. Tares are weeds that look like corn when they are young. Tares are obstacles to the harvest. Know that even after you have planted the seed there will be challenges. There will be obstacles that will seek to destroy your expected harvest. Indeed, the key scripture above says that while men slept the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. The devil will constantly seek to destroy your harvest. He will put impediments in your way to stop you from reaping.

In your determination to sow into the kingdom of God you will encounter challenges. The apostles encountered loads of opposition in preaching the gospel. They were beaten. They were imprisoned and many of them were killed. But they kept on preaching. Your way to the harvest will not be smooth sailing. It is good to sow but don't go to sleep when you sow. It was while men slept that the enemy sowed tares in the harvest. The greatest

enemy to your harvest is the devil. The bible says that "*The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.*" (*Joh 10:10 GNB*) Because the devil constantly seeks to destroy our harvest, we must be vigilant to protect it.

As you seek to engage in kingdom business expect to face stiff opposition. However, remember that *Isaiah 54:17* says "*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*" So don't let the presence of tares in your life and in the Church cause you to want to throw in the towel and quit! Consistency is key in everything that you do. Continue to pay your tithe even if you don't seem to see the dividends immediately. Continue to follow the narrow path, even if your friends make fun of you for it. Tares don't mean failure. They simply are pointing to a harvest that is also taking place. You shall overcome.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am more than a conqueror. I have overcome in Jesus' name.

SHORT CUTS ARE DANGEROUS

"He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them."

(Matthew 13:28-29)

Driving in Accra can sometimes be very stressful. Especially when you are caught up in a long traffic when you are late for an appointment. On many occasions, I have tried to avoid the traffic and found myself in a much more difficult situation. The traffic ends up being worse on the short cuts that I try to use. I end up spending much more time than I would have spent if I had stayed in the original traffic on the main road. It's a lesson I never seem to learn and I keep finding myself in the same situation over and over again because of impatience. Many of us are impatient in life. The world we live in is a fast moving world where everything is on a fast track. We want everything now. We can't wait. Patience is not a virtue that today's generation cultivates. We want things quickly and now so when we encounter challenges we panic and make the wrong decision which affects us negatively ultimately.

Short cuts can be dangerous. Scripture gives us several valid examples of this kind of thing. God had promised Abraham that he was going to be the father of many nations. However, when the fulfilment of this promise seemed to be delayed, Sarah advised Abraham to go into her maid Hagar and have a child by her. Abraham heeded to Sarah's advice, disregarding

the word he had received from God and had Ishmael by Hagar. That was the beginning of the conflict between Israel, the descendants of Jacob the ultimate promised heir of Abraham and the Arabs, descendants of Ishmael. Don't be in a rush in life. Wait on God for every promise declared in your life to be accomplished.

Naomi and her family fled a famine in Judah and went to Moab. She was still in Moab when she heard that God had blessed Judah. She decided to go back to Judah but she went back with nothing having lost her husband and children in Moab. Don't rush for short cuts when things get difficult. Moses tried to help God in his flesh and murdered a man and it put him on a 40-year detour. God doesn't need your help. Focus on what he says you should do. Obey God. Follow His plan for your life by being obedient to His word. Do your part and hold your peace while God does His part. Be patient. Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord!

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I let go of my own way of living and allow God's will and purpose to be accomplished in my life.

GOD DETERMINES THE TIME FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE TARES

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

(Matthew 13:30)

Sometimes when we are inundated with issues in life, we rush to try to deal with the issues without really talking to God or seeking God's direction in the matter. We are in a hurry to get what we want when we want it. Know that all things work together for good to those who love God and who are called according to His purpose. Have you been called by God into His kingdom. If your answer is yes then know that all things will work together for your good. Jesus gave a parable in the key scripture above about a man who sowed seeds in his field and later found tares growing amongst them. When the servants asked whether they should remove the tares, the master asked them not to do so but wait for the harvest to remove them. The time for the removal of the tares was determined by the master. He knew the tares were there, but he determines the season for it to be removed.

I want you to know that the season belongs to God. God sets the time for the harvest so the season belongs to Him. The tares and the wheat were both dependent on the season. That means that neither of them controlled the season, God was in charge of the season. When the time is right, the tares are going to be gathered, bundled up, and burnt in the fire. So don't

worry yourself about the tares. Don't let the tares choke you. Don't let the tares destroy your faith. Don't let the tares push you to bad choices. Don't let the tares destroy your courage. Don't let the tares cast down your vision. Joseph had a clear vision of how his future would be like and yet the circumstances immediately began to contradict that which had been revealed. To him. He was sold into slavery and put into prison for something he did not do. But in all that he went through he did not give up. He was faithful to his God and did not stray even when he was tempted by Potiphar's wife.

God can set things in such an order that He will put your enemies under your feet! Don't be upset that they aren't under your feet right now. Give it some time, the season is coming and God will settle it all out. *Psalms 18:3-38 "I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet."*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

All things are working together for my good in Jesus' name.

SERVE GOD WHILE YOU ARE YOUNG

"And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."

(Jos 23:14)

One of the popular characters of the Bible is Joshua. Joshua, an assistant to Moses took over the mantle of leadership soon after the death of Moses. He led Israel to most of the battles during the wilderness period. His first battle was against Amalek: (Exo 17:9&10) Joshua was a very young man, strong and energetic. He assisted Moses in so many ways. It is a good thing to have strong young men and women who can tirelessly do God's work. Joshua never departed from the tabernacle, which we will call the House of God today. (Exo 33:11) It means he served continuously in the House of God even after Moses the leader, had encountered God and gone back to the camp. We need young men and women who will not rush home immediately after church but can stay on and take up more responsibilities. They can continue to pray, counsel people, do evangelism etc. We need the Joshua generation in our churches today.

Joshua led Israel for many years from a very young age. He led Israel to fight many battles. The best time to serve God is when you are young. Solomon was one of the wisest men in the world. He had this to say: Ecc 12:1 GW "Remember your Creator when you are young, before the days of trouble

come and the years catch up with you. They will make you say, "I have found no pleasure in them." The fact is that as you grow up, you will begin to realize that there are limitations to your ability to serve God the way you want to. The body begins to weaken as you prepare yourself to go meet your creator. Let your youthful days be vibrant and full of service to God and man.

At the end of Joshua's life he reflected on God's faithfulness to Israel. He cautioned them to serve God and remain faithful to Him. He reminded them of the things God had done for Israel and how God never disappointed them. When it is time to go the way of all the earth we begin to reflect on life. Joshua was one of the twelve spies sent by Moses to spy the promise land. (Num 14:6-8) He was then a young man. We must ponder over this and apply wisdom. We will not be young forever. Age will catch up with us. A time may come when you will certainly look back. What will you praise God for?

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will commit my life to you while I have my strength.

PREACH THE KINGDOM

"Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

(Mar 16:14-16)

While Jesus walked on this earth, there was one thing that He constantly harped on. The kingdom of God was the main focus of all His messages. His mission on earth was to establish God's kingdom on earth and to get more people into the kingdom. One of the first messages that Jesus preached was about the kingdom; *Mar 1:14-15 "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel"*. It is the same in Matthew: *Mat 4:17 "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

So Jesus began His ministry preaching the kingdom of God and repentance. There is a reason for that. It is indicative of the reason Jesus came to the world. It shows the importance He attached to His mission on earth. When we also read the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, we will discover that the last preaching of Jesus was an admonishment to the church to preach the kingdom and repentance for salvation. Let's look at the following:

Mat 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is

given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

This declaration was made after Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead. He commissioned the church to make disciples of all nations. That's the only work He assigned the church. Why should we concern ourselves with things other than what Jesus commanded us to do? In Luke 24:46-49

Jesus began his message with the kingdom and repentance, and ended on the note that the same should be preached by the church. The church is you and I. Don't look elsewhere. How many lives have you touched with the gospel since you got saved? Take the gospel today and fulfill the commission Jesus gave to us.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*I am going to save souls from today.
I am touching lives from now on in
Jesus' name. Amen!*

WHY ARE WE CALLED?

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh"

(Rom 1:1-3)

The issue of being called by God is something that a lot of believers totally misunderstand. Many Christians think that it is only pastors, prophets' teachers, apostles and evangelists who are called by God. As a result, many believers feel that it is the duty of these people to propagate the gospel. They think their duty is just to go to church and worship. I want you to understand that every believer is called. Paul said *"Brothers and sisters, consider what you were when God called you to be Christians. Not many of you were wise from a human point of view..."* (1 Co 1:26 GW) Every believer has been called and translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. (Col 1:13)

So why have we been called? So many believers don't enquire about the purpose of their calling. Many believers don't even know the reason for their existence in the world. The key scripture is about the Apostle Paul. He referred to himself as one called to be an apostle separated unto the gospel of God. Anyone who claims he is called must have a foundation in the ministry of the gospel of God. If we want to understand the gospel, then let's read what Jesus Himself said before He ascended up into glory as follows: *Mar 16:15 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, **and***

preach the gospel to every creature. Mar 16:16 *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."*

What is the gospel? We know from scripture that the gospel is about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ which brings salvation and forgiveness of sins to those who believe. (1 Cor 15:1-4) This is the message we preach; His death, burial and resurrection. This is what brings salvation.

According to the scriptures, when people believe this message, they will be saved. (Rom 10:9-10) Anyone who claims to have been called by God must first of all ask himself whether he is preaching this gospel. Whoever claims he has an apostolic ministry or prophetic ministry etc. and has not won just a single soul for Christ is heading for disaster. No call is higher than the call to preach the cross of Jesus and save souls in it. There is no better ministry anywhere than the very foundation of it; the passion for the lost.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please give me passion for the lost. I commit myself to winning souls for you today in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE BASIS FOR OUR CALL TO CHURCH MINISTRY

“And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.”

(Mar 6:7-9)

As a believer, you must be actively involved in some kind of ministry in the church. This will help you to grow in Christ and also help establish you in the church.

When I was growing up as a teenager in the church of Pentecost, all I knew was prayer and soul winning. I was introduced to prayer and soul winning early in my Christian life. I was zealous for prayer and evangelism. In my early years both at elementary and secondary schools, I had the zeal to stand before my class mates to preach and make altar calls for my friends to receive the Lord.

That was the foundation for what I am doing today. The call to full time ministry was founded on the zeal to win souls and pray for the salvation of souls. This is the main call of God on our lives. Everyone who feels called by God to work for God either as a lay minister or full time minister must of necessity catch this spirit. You can never be successful in any ministry of the church until you catch this spirit to bring the unsaved to the Lord. What is the ministry of the church? The church exists to be the light of the world. Men must see the light of Jesus in the church and come for direction. (Mat 5:14-16)

If you are a believer, and you can't shine out of darkness and bring those in darkness to the Lord, you can never have a successful ministry anywhere in any church. I have personally discovered that those who are successful in church ministry are those who have a certain level of burden for the lost.

Many people delight in being given high recognition but are unproductive in the House of God. No one can become an effective minister in any capacity without first responding to the call to preach the gospel to the unsaved. That burden is foundational. You can't be a productive worshiper, musician, usher, camera man without responding to the call to preach to save souls. If you have not won a soul for the past one year in your life, it means you lack the passion in your heart.

Passion for the lost is the basis of a successful ministry in any capacity. It's not about titles or church hierarchy. It's being at the grassroots of the ministry. It's the souls of men.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to win more souls for you in Jesus' name.

GOD'S AGENDA FOR THE WORLD

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

(Rev 11:15)

The establishment of the kingdom of God on earth is God's utmost priority. When Jesus came into this world, He said He was sent by the Father to do the Father's will. He repeatedly declared that He was not doing His will but the will of the Father who sent Him. (Joh 5:30) Jesus expressed the will of the Father in the Lord's Prayer. He said, "*When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.***"

God's kingdom is the agenda of God. God's kingdom embraces the entire will of God for man. Kingdom means a king over a domain. A king, we know rules over a certain realm or territory. God wants to rule in the hearts of men. God is a spirit. Therefore, His domain must of necessity be a spirit. The spirit of man is also the heart of man. That is where God wants to rule. The centre of man's life is his heart. All our emotions, feelings, inclinations, inner movements are all centered in the heart. Therefore, when God rules the heart, it means He also rules our purposes, movements, feelings, inclinations, etc.

When God captures the heart, He captures the entire being of man. That is why God wants His kingdom to prevail in the heart of man.

The more people receive God's kingdom in their hearts, the greater His domain becomes. God's territory of rule expands with the number of people that embrace His kingdom. God wants entire nations to embrace His kingdom. In fact, His plan is that, one day, all the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom Christ His Son. That was the reason why when Jesus came into this world, His first message was about the kingdom of God. *Mat 4:17 "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Jesus wants us to take up this responsibility of spreading the message of His kingdom. He commissioned the disciples to do it. This is the main duty of the church. Ask yourself: Am I connected to pursuing this divine agenda? When you connect your life and plans to God's agenda, you will become successful and prosperous in life. You see, God will only provide the resources to accomplish His agenda, and if you become a partner with God, He will release resources into your hands for that purpose.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am following God's agenda for the world. I am an agent of God's agenda.

KINGDOM PRIORITY

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

(Mat 6:33)

God has a priority. When we discover God's priority and follow it, we will be led to achieve the best God has for us in life. Everyone spells out his priority based on defined purposes. It means that our purpose is the foundation for writing out our priority. If our purpose is contrary to God's purpose, He may overturn our purpose to establish His purpose for our lives if we really love God (Rom 8:28). That is why we must define God's purpose before drawing out our priorities. Let's look at the following scripture to explain how God's priority and ours converge.

*Psa 33:8-11 GW "Let all the earth fear the LORD. Let all who live in the world stand in awe of him. **He spoke, and it came into being. He gave the order, and there it stood.** The LORD blocks the plans of the nations. He frustrates the schemes of the people of the world. The LORD's plan stands firm forever. His thoughts stand firm in every generation."*

When God speaks, it comes to pass and no one can overrule it. We must also understand that each time God speaks; He utters His very purpose. He utters what He wants done. He utters His priority. When God speaks, it overrides the purposes and plans of nations and people. He frustrates the schemes of people. He blocks the plans of nations. He makes their devices of none effect. Their schemes are rendered powerless so that God's plans and schemes will be established. Finally,

the scripture says that the Lord's plans stand firm forever. His thoughts stand firm in every generation. God's plan can never be annulled by any man in any generation no matter what. *Pro 19:21 "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."*

That is why God's kingdom being the first priority of God cannot be destroyed. When we seek the interest of God's kingdom first, God will also seek our interest. When we align our priorities to God's priority which is His kingdom, He will align circumstances to our priority for success. Let's repeat what Jesus said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matt 6:33)

All things will answer to the one who seeks God's kingdom first. Make the kingdom of God a priority in your life. Align your business, your finances, your family to the kingdom of God. God's purposes and plan never fail. As long as you align your plans and purposes to God's plan, you shall never fail.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will seek God's kingdom first. I will align my priorities to God's priority. I am walking to fulfill God's priority from today.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS A MUSTARD SEED

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

(Mat 13:31-32)

The mustard tree is a very huge tree and yet the seed is so tiny that you can hardly hold it with your fingers. It can easily slip through your fingers and get lost. Because the mustard seed is so tiny, it is so easy to disregard it and consider it as insignificant, yet out of that little seed emerges a huge tree that has great usefulness to mankind. Jesus compared the kingdom of God to the mustard seed in the key scripture above. The mustard tree, whose seed could easily be despised because of its size, has great benefits for man. The tender leaves of the tree are a good source of nutrition for man. The bark of the tree can be used in brushing the teeth and of course the tree is also a source of shade for people.

This tree grows mostly in North Africa and the Middle East where the sun is hot and therefore serves as a source of shade for people who want to hide from the scorching sun. It is amazing that a tiny seed like the mustard seed can produce such benefits for man. Such is the kingdom of God.

Jesus said *"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father*

knoweth that ye have need of all these things. (But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Mat 6:31-33

Many fail to recognize that their prosperity is tied to seeking first the kingdom of God. People are chasing wealth and riches and yet the more they chase it, the more it seems to elude them. According to the above scripture, God knows our need for the basic necessities of life. Unbelievers and some believers are constantly chasing after these things. But as heirs to the kingdom, we must make the kingdom our priority and all these things we are chasing will come as a benefit for our service to the kingdom.

Make God's kingdom your priority. Give to enhance the spread of the gospel. Contribute to the growth of your church by evangelizing. When you seek His kingdom first, then all other things you seek for shall be added unto you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to focus on your kingdom. In Jesus' name! Amen!

DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF TO ANYONE – USE YOUR GIFTS WISELY

“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.”

(2Co 4:17)

In the above scripture, Jesus likened the kingdom of God to a man traveling into a far country. He shared talents among his servants expecting them to engage themselves in various profit yielding businesses. He gave five to the first person two to the second and one talent to the last person. He expected them to give account to him on his return. The first and second persons traded with their talents and doubled their talents. The last person branded the master as a hard man who expected more than necessary from his servants. Secondly, he confessed his fear of using his talent. Thirdly, he decided to hide the talent in the ground. (Mat 25:24-25)

This servant felt he had been cheated by being given only one talent instead of two or five like his colleagues. He was comparing himself with the others. That was why he imagined the master to be a hard man. Many believers feel that they have not been given enough talents or spiritual gifts by God to use in His service. Rather than identifying their gifts and maximizing their use, they compare themselves with others and despise themselves and the gift they have. You can never reach your full potential if you compare yourself with others. Many people are not able to fulfill God's dream for their lives because they live their lives trying

to be like others. For not being able to use their spiritual gifts fully, they blame everybody around them just as the wicked servant accused his master of being a hard man. These believers accuse their pastors and church leaders for not being allowed enough room to use their spiritual gifts. They compare themselves with others in the same church or other churches, belittle themselves and their church leaders thus resolve to sit on the fence. Such people can become very poisonous in the church if they are not quickly identified, counselled or rebuked. They can poison innocent believers and create a bad image for the church, its leaders and the church as a whole, ultimately causing them to leave the church. People's views about their pastors, church leaders and congregation can either be an incentive or a disincentive to them in the discharge of their duties and the use of their spiritual gifts. Stop accusing your pastors, the church or fellowship leaders and put your spiritual gifts to use because eventually, you will give an account of it to God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will not compare myself with anybody anymore. I will maximize my spiritual gifts to your glory in Jesus' name. Amen!

DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE YOUR GIFTS

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey"

(Mat 25:14-15)

Jesus gave a parable of a master who went on a journey. He gave gifts to three people; five talents, two talents and one talent. When he returned from his trip, he demanded accountability from them. The first two traded with their talents and gained extra five and two respectively.

The last person gave excuses for not using his talent. This servant labeled his master a "hard man". He compared his talent with those who had more. His perception about his master didn't help him to deliver. Secondly, he said he was afraid to work with the talent. There was a fear factor. Many people are sitting in the church not doing anything to help promote the things concerning the kingdom of God because of fear. Why do people fear to use their spiritual gifts to promote church work?

Probably because they think they can't deliver to the best of their ability. No one is perfect. We are all striving to do something for the kingdom of God. When you allow fear resulting from imperfection to become a hindrance, you will not put your hand to anything in the House of God. From the pastor down to the sanctuary keepers, singers, ushers, technical men, I.T etc., none is perfect enough. We are able to do it because we love God, and we keep going on despite the mistakes we keep

committing. By so doing we polish our talent to serve all. So find your gift and use it. Perfect practice of your spiritual gifts and skill will bring out the best in you.

Why are people afraid to use their gifts? Because they fear that people will laugh at them if they commit a mistake. They are afraid of failure. We all commit mistakes. We all fail. No one has it all from the beginning. The many mistakes we commit, sharpen and shape us to move towards perfection. If we don't commit mistakes or fail, we will never be able to learn the right thing and succeed. People eventually fail in life because they fail to use their gifts for profit due to fear of failure. Don't be afraid of failure.

Don't be afraid that folks will jeer at your effort and performance. Don't be intimidated by anybody. Just start off anyway anyhow. Be bold to deploy your skills and God will help you to accomplish it in the final analysis.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am not afraid to use my skills to glorify God. I am launching out boldly to use my talent in the name of Jesus Christ.

THOSE WHO DON'T USE THEIR GIFTS
ARE WICKED AND LAZY

"His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury."

(Mat 25:26-27)

The Parable of the talent told by Jesus has many lessons to teach us. In the parable, two of the servants traded with the talents they were given and brought back profit but the third person kept the talent and did not use it, returning it back to the master with excuses. However, the master perceived that the reason the servant did not use the talent was because he was wicked and lazy. Wickedness can be seen in many believers in the church today. Though they are anointed and gifted, they will never do anything to help build the church. The servant was bent on doing nothing so as to hurt his master. There are people who work with others and because the business does not belong to them, they engage in practices that eventually bring the business down. Those who don't want to put their gifts to use in the church don't wish the church well.

The other bad trait the master saw in the servant was that he was a slothful man. There are many gifted and talented believers in many churches who cannot use their gifts because they are lazy. For instance, many good singers don't join any of the choirs because they are lazy and don't want to attend rehearsals. Those who don't use their gift because of slothfulness are a great

waste. *Pro 18:9 GNB "A lazy person is as bad as someone who is destructive".* If you are in an organization, and you know you possess an ability to better a particular aspect of it, and you sit down unconcerned, you are wasting God's gift in you. Many people sit in the church and instead of putting their gifts to use, they criticize every activity and yet they don't want to play any role with their talents. They are great wasters.

Let us not be slothful but wake up to use our God-given talents to build the house of God. Let's not be mischievous and naughty to our church leaders when we have to deploy our talents to help church work. It's a blessing that God will bestow on us at the end of the day with such words as, "...Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, forgive me for being lazy and mischievous in using my spiritual gifts in your church. I promise to use my spiritual gifts from today in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE WISDOM OF AVOIDING WASTE

"His lord answered and said to him, Evil and slothful servant! You knew that I reaped where I did not sow, and gathered where I did not scatter, then you should have put my money to the exchangers, and coming I would have received my own with interest."

(Mat 25:26-27)

God has given everyone gifts and talents that ought to be used for the benefit of others. The parable of the talent told by Jesus is very instructive for how we can put these gifts to use. In the parable, the master gave his servants talents and left for a journey. On his return, he required accountability. The first two servants doubled theirs while the last one hid his talent in the ground giving various excuses. The master reprimanded him and commented that he should have put his money in the bank to at least earn an interest. By this teaching, Jesus was saying that God does not entertain waste. No money or gift should lie waste at all.

Jesus practiced this principle of avoiding waste himself when he fed the five thousand people. After everyone had eaten, the disciples collected twelve baskets of leftover food. I am sure that they did so under instruction from Jesus. Jesus hates waste. As a church, we must never allow the resources that God has given unto us to be used wastefully. Church property must be well maintained and not misused. In the same way, every gift God has given to the church must be put to good use. Everybody is endowed with some spiritual gifts by God. Whether you feel it or not,

there is something you have been given by God for the profit of the church. *1Co 12:7 "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to **every man to profit withal**".* The Holy Spirit manifests in various forms for the profit of all. You must identify His manifestation so you can deploy it to profit the church, and of course yourself.

Rom 12:6-8 tells us that we have gifts that differ according to the grace that is given to each person. Your gift must be used to profit the church. It must not lie idle. If you fail to use your gift in the church, you are wasting your gift just like the one who hid his talent in the ground. As a good steward, you must put the gift to profit.

1Pe 4:10 "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God". We must minister our gift to one another. Your gift should be put to use for profit. Somebody needs a touch of love from you with your gift. Discover it and use it to profit the church and to the glory of God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will use my gift to benefit the kingdom of God.

YOU ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR GIFTS

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

(1Co 4:1-2)

A steward is someone who is engaged to look after someone's property. Every steward is bound to render accounts to his master on the day of accountability. It is very important to understand that, all of us are stewards of God's manifold grace He has bestowed on us. (1Pe 4:10)

Every believer is a minister in the House of God. God gave to us spiritual gifts from the day we got born- again. God expects us to even use our natural talents in His House to promote His kingdom. Anything we use to make a living is a gift from God. It could be the work of our hands. We are still stewards of all these natural gifts and abilities we possess.

Jas 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning."

There is nothing we possess that we didn't receive. As the Bible says, *"For who makes you to differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"* (1Co 4:7)

The parable of the talents where the travelling master gave five talents to a servant, two to another servant and one to the last servant, was an illustration of how God has distributed various

gifts and abilities to all believers with the expectation that we will all render account to Him one day. In the parable, we read that the master returned after a long time and took account of the servants: (Mat 25:19)

This is the reason why you must be up and doing. Many believers abandon their gifts and abilities because of criticisms. Are you serving the interest of your critics or the one who called you into His kingdom? Are you required to render accounts to your critics or to God? Are you going to sit on the fence because someone annoyed you in the church?

Some believers retire from active service in the Lord because they are busy with their personal wealth creation than the welfare of the kingdom of God. In as much as our personal work is important, we should not use that as an excuse to cheat on the kingdom of God. The day of accountability will come and I believe God will not accept any excuse for neglecting His House.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

From today, I will contribute to the growth and welfare of my church with all my gifts, abilities and talent in Jesus' name. Amen!

STEWARDS MUST BE FAITHFUL

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

(1Co 4:1-2)

Everyone called by God into His service is a steward. The scripture above says that “...it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.” The theme for most of the parables of Jesus Christ, especially, in the parable of the talents, what the master required faithfulness from those he gave talents to. In the parable of the talents, both the one who received the five talents and the one who received the two talents received the same commendation from the master even though they had different results. The common denominator that determined this reward was faithfulness. He said, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things...”

God expects us to be faithful in whatever we do for Him. God is interested in us using the spiritual gifts, abilities and talents we have to profit the church. He is interested in what He has entrusted us to do. He doesn't compare us with others and so we should not compare ourselves to others. He gave us just what He knew we would be able to handle and He expects us to account to Him based on what He has given us. He expects faithfulness in the execution of our assignment. Be faithful over the flock even if you are handling a church of ten people. Many pastors desire to pastor big churches but are not ready to be faithful to the few members they have now.

They start comparing themselves with others and disqualify themselves, and eventually give up. If you are faithful over this little flock, praying for them, preparing good messages to feed them, and loving them from your heart, God will add more to you, and it is only a matter of time that the flock will grow.

Be faithful in whichever capacity you are serving in the church. God is watching how you handle that work. Your promotion from God will stem from your faithfulness to your assignment. Deliver it with joy. Another word for faithfulness is loyalty. Be loyal to your church family. Be loyal to your pastor. Be loyal to your departmental leader in the church. Don't ever despise your ministry. Don't ever despise your spiritual gift. Be faithful. We are all looking forward to the day our Master Jesus will shake our hands in heaven and make the same declaration to us:

‘Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord’.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will remain faithful to my call. I will focus on my call and maximize my area of gifting.

GIVING GLORY TO GOD

“Let them give glory unto the LORD, and declare his praise in the islands.”

(Isa 42:12)

Every manufacturer has a specific purpose for which a particular product is made. Usually, all products come with a manual that tells you what the product is supposed to be used for and how it can be used. Man is God's creation and God has designed man for a specific purpose. One of the most important reasons why God created man was to glorify God. Isaiah 43:7 says *“Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”* What does it mean to glorify God. In simple terms, to glorify God is to make Him look good, as He truly is. In the Old Testament, “glory” carries the sense of splendour or majesty. In the New Testament, “glory” carries the sense of dignity, honour, praise, and worship. Man's main purpose on earth is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. It is important for man to understand that everything that he does on earth must aim at giving glory to God.

Glorifying God means to acknowledge His greatness and give Him honour by praising and worshiping Him, primarily because He, and He alone deserves to be praised, honoured and worshipped.

1 Chronicles 16:28-29 says “Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength! Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the LORD in the splendour of holiness;”

No one else but God deserves our worship and praise. When you consider the works of His hands and the intricate and complicated way in which the earth and the planetary system operates, no one needs to tell you that whoever created this is indeed great.

Secondly, we need to glorify God because we are who we are today because of Him. *Psalm 100:3 says “Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his;”*

Usually, when someone saves you from a dangerous situation, it is normal to feel so much gratitude towards that person and we tend to hold that person in high regard because of what he or she did. Sometimes we say “I don't know how I'm ever going to repay you!”.

In the same way, we should realize that God has not only saved us from the enemy and from certain death but He has translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son. (Col 1:13). Man did not do anything to deserve this favour. Acknowledge that God is completely and totally worthy of all glory that is due to his name, and his name only. Glorify God in everything you do. Ask yourself each time you are about to do something. Does this glorify God?

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will live my life to glorify God always.

NEVER TAKE GOD'S GLORY FOR YOURSELF

"I am the LORD; that is my name. I will not give my glory to anyone else or the praise I deserve to idols"
(Isa 42:8 GW)

One of the most important reasons why God created man was to give Him glory. It is very difficult to sometimes describe what God's glory really is. That being said, there are places where Scripture attempts to define the hugeness of the glory of God in simple human language. Indeed the prophet Isaiah, gives us a little glimpse of God's glory when he writes *"Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?"* (Isaiah 40:12).

Isaiah continues: *"[He] has weighed the mountains in a scale ... Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket [to him] ... [He] stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in"* (Isaiah 40:12, 15, 22).

The prophet is using these earthly descriptions to allow us to see the hugeness of God's glory. Yet, even these very colourful and helpful descriptions fall miserably short of capturing the awesome glory of God. In simple words, God's glory encompasses the greatness, beauty, and perfection of all that he is. Every part of God is glorious in every way possible; there's nothing more to be said. And because God is glorious in every possible way. He alone stands in this vast universe as the only One who is worthy of the worship, surrender and love of every human heart.

There is a tendency however for human beings to ascribe glory to persons other

than to God. When the devil tempted Jesus after His forty day fast, he promised to give him all the kingdoms of the earth if He would only bow down to worship him. The devil's greatest ambition is to take God's glory. God however, does not share His glory with anyone. Sometimes, we are prone to take credit for things that are completely due to grace. The gifts and talents we have been given are as a result of grace.

The Corinthians were boasting in their spiritual gifts. Paul rhetorically asks them in 1 Cor. 4:7, *"What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"*

All that we have spiritually is because God was gracious to us. We were dead in our sins, children of wrath, when He graciously raised us up to new life. (Eph 2:1-7) If you meet with a system of theology which magnifies man, flee from it as far as you can. Here is a test for you to apply. Does it glorify God? Then, accept it. If it does not, if it glorifies man, then flee as fast as you can.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall give all the glory and honour to God. May the name of the Lord be praised for evermore.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF TAKING GOD'S GLORY

"On a chosen day Herod put on his royal robes, sat on his throne, and made a speech to the people. "It isn't a man speaking, but a god!" they shouted. At once the angel of the Lord struck Herod down, because he did not give honor to God. He was eaten by worms and died"

(Act 12:21-23 GNB)

God has declared in His word that He does not share his glory with anyone. He jealously guards the glory that belongs to Him. The Glory of God simply refers to His beauty, His greatness, His majesty, His splendour, His goodness and the perfection of all that He is. As people who have been created by God, we glorify God by loving Him, by obeying Him, by trusting Him and walking with Him. We honour God when we have faith and trust in Him, when we love Him, and when we truly desire to know Him, obey Him and please Him in all that we do. We were created to glorify God, enjoy Him and walk with Him.

When man however fails to give God the glory that is due Him, there are serious consequences that might befall him. When Herod attempted to take the sovereign divine glory of God for himself, there was a great price to pay, and he paid with his life. In the story in the key scripture above, at a feast in honour of the Roman emperor, Herod, dressed in all his splendid royal robes appeared to make a speech and the people in awe of him, referred to him as a god. Obviously, Herod accepted this appellation because the angel of the Lord struck him with a disease from which he eventually died.

When God lifts you up to a place of honour acknowledge God as the source of your upliftment. It is true that you may have used your skills as well but recognise that there is nothing that you have that was not given to you by God.

In Acts 14 Paul and Barnabas went to Lystra where they healed a lame man. When the crowds saw what had happened, they began to shout and proclaim them as gods and they wanted to sacrifice to them. But Paul knowing the consequences of taking God's glory ran to the middle of the crowd and shouted *"Why are you doing this? We ourselves are only human beings like you! We are here to announce the Good News, to turn you away from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them. (Act 14:15 GNB)*

Men will always try to celebrate you when you do great things but stay humble and remember to give the glory to the one who holds all things in His hands.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*I give all the glory to the king of kings
and Lord of Lords.*

DON'T TARNISH GOD'S GLORY AMONG UNBELIEVERS

"Wherever they went, they brought disgrace on my holy name, because people would say, 'These are the people of the LORD, but they had to leave his land.' That made me concerned for my holy name, since the Israelites brought disgrace on it everywhere they went."

(Eze 36:20-21 GNB)

God is proud of the people whom He has saved. He wants them to shew forth His glory wherever they go. As believers, the Bible says that "... we are like a sweet-smelling incense offered by Christ to God, which spreads among those who are being saved and those who are being lost." (2Co 2:15 GNB) As believers we are supposed to exude a sweet smelling incense amongst believers as well as unbelievers because it is through us that the world will get to see the glory of God. 2Co 4:6-7 GW *"We are his servants because the same God who said that light should shine out of darkness has given us light. For that reason we bring to light the knowledge about God's glory which shines from Christ's face. Our bodies are made of clay, yet we have the treasure of the Good News in them. This shows that the superior power of this treasure belongs to God and doesn't come from us."*

The world will not see God's glory except through us. When we fail through our actions to show forth God's glory, we deny God of His deserved glory. When God threatened to destroy the grumbling Israelites in the wilderness, Moses intervened in prayer, arguing that if the Lord did that, the pagan nations would conclude that He wasn't able to bring them into the land. Num 14:15-16

"Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, 'Because the Lord was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.' His prayer prevailed and the Lord pardoned the sinning people for the sake of His name and glory."

But finally, after centuries of Israel's sins, God raised up the Babylonians to destroy Jerusalem and take the majority of the citizens captive into Babylon. By their sin, Israel profaned God's name among the nations. We should never do anything that would give unbelievers a basis for taunting God. It is especially tragic when pastors fall into sin and are exposed in the press. The world mocks us and our God. If we claim the name of Christ, we must not do anything that would tarnish His glory among unbelievers. 2 Sam 12:14-15 *"However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die." Then Nathan departed to his house".*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will show forth God's glory by my actions.

TO GLORIFY GOD, AVOID ALL IDOLATRY

"The idols of the nations are made of silver and gold. They were made by human hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak. They have eyes, but they cannot see. They have ears, but they cannot hear. They cannot breathe. Those who make idols end up like them. So does everyone who trusts them."

(Psa 135:15-18 GW)

The psalmist launches into a satirical attack against idolatry. According to Easton's Bible Dictionary, Idolatry is "image-worship or divine honour paid to any created object." Paul describes idolatry in Romans 1:21-25. *"They knew God but did not praise and thank him for being God... They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for statues that looked like mortal humans, birds, animals, and snakes... These people have exchanged God's truth for a lie. So they have become ungodly and serve what is created rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen!"*

Idolatry comes about as a result of man's misguided sense of wisdom. Instead of honouring the creator, men chose to honour the created beings instead. They exchanged the truth for a lie and chose rather to worship man made objects. There are various forms of idolatry such as Fetishism, or the worship of trees, rivers, hills, stones, etc. Nature worship, the worship of the sun, moon, and stars. The worship of deceased ancestors, or of heroes. In the key scripture the psalmist mocks these gods that "They have mouths, but they cannot speak." They can't reveal truth to us. They cannot give us comfort. "They have eyes, but they cannot see" (115:5). They cannot see you in your circumstances. What good is a blind god? "They have ears,

but they cannot hear" (115:6). They cannot hear the prayers of those who cry out to them. The prophets of Baal cut themselves and shrieked at the top of their voices all day long, but their idol could not hear them. It is sheer lunacy to worship idols!

Most of us don't bow down to literal idols. But there is still a principle of idolatry that we must constantly fight against, namely, the sin of putting anything or anyone in the place of God alone. What do we put before God; marriage, children, husband, money, work etc. Also, at the heart of idolatry is using the idol to get what you want. You agree to placate the god in some way, but your aim is to manipulate it to get something. I find many professing Christians do the same thing. They try to use God to get what they want and then they put Him back on the shelf. They are not living daily in submission to His lordship. They are not devoted to Him in worship. They're just using Him when they think He might work for them. That is really just idolatry. It does not glorify God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I remove every form of idolatry from my life in Jesus' name.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO GROW SPIRITUALLY?

“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

(1 Cor 11:1)

Spiritual growth is a basic tenet of Christianity. Every true Christian is expected to grow in the faith. When we talk about growing spiritually, what do we mean? Simply put, spiritual growth is the process of becoming more and more like Jesus. So simple, right? That's right!

It is not something that is so mystical and above and beyond what you can do and achieve. Everyone can grow spiritually. When we receive Jesus as our Saviour, the Holy Spirit begins the process of making us more like Him, conforming us to His image. When salvation takes place, spiritual growth begins. *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”.* 2 Cor 5:17-18

When a person gets born again, the old nature is replaced with a new one. Not only does God give us a new spirit, but he also puts His Spirit within us to help us begin the process of change and transformation (Eze 36:26) If you allow the spirit of God within you to guide and lead you, He will lead you through the process of growing from a spiritual baby to an adult. Spiritual growth is a life-long process that depends on our study and application of God's Word and our walk in the Spirit. You don't get born again and within the next few days you are spiritually mature. It is a lifelong process and therefore requires time and patience.

God desires for us to grow spiritually, and He has given us all we need to experience spiritual growth. 2 Peter 1:3-8, tells us that by God's power, we have “everything we need” to live a life of godliness, which is the ultimate goal of spiritual growth. However, you are responsible to make the choice to grow. It's your decision. *Heb 5:12-13 “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food”.*

At a time when these believers were expected to be matured spiritually, they were still babies. The writer said they “ought to have been teachers”. It means they were expected to grow from being children into adults, but they did not. When you get born again, you are expected to grow spiritually and eventually become a teacher to teach and feed other babies. However, there are many believers who have refused to grow and continue to demand milk like babies. If you don't desire to grow, you will remain a child forever. Take the necessary and required steps to grow spiritually in order to possess what God has in store for you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall allow your word and your spirit into my life, to take me to my next level of growth. In Jesus' name. Amen!

ESSENTIAL STEPS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH – THE WORD

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"

(2 Tim 3:16-4:1)

Spiritual growth is not automatic. It does not depend on how long you have been born again. Learning how to grow spiritually is a life-long journey which occurs as you read and apply God's Word to your life.

In order for spiritual growth to occur, we must be taught, rebuked, corrected, and trained through God's Word. Then we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work. This is the essence of spiritual growth. Some Christians do not want to be corrected by the word. They fight with the Word that comes from the pulpit. If you want to grow, you must allow yourself to be taught the word. Allow the word to rebuke you. If you make a mistake and you are corrected, accept it and move on. It's all part of the growth process. As a tree grows, it sometimes becomes necessary to prune it so that it can grow better.

The purpose of the fivefold ministry of Pastors, Teachers, Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists is to teach the body of Christ to grow into maturity. (Eph 4:12-15) When you grow into maturity, you become more and more like Christ. You cease to be a child who is easily deceived. The main aim of the devil is to deceive you and to cause you to abandon your faith. The more mature you are as a believer, the more difficult it will be for him to get you.

Adam and Eve failed to take the word as given to them by God. Instead, they listened to the devil and were deceived into destruction. The devil is seeking for your destruction. The only way you avoid destruction is to grow in your knowledge of God and the word of God by studying the scriptures. If you don't, you will be prone to being led astray by every new and clever lie of the devil.

When the devil came to tempt Jesus after his 40 day fast, Jesus got rid of him by quoting scripture. Each time, He told the devil; "It is written" until he finally left Him alone. You don't scare the devil by the number of years you have been in the Lord, or by how many pastors and prophets you know. What scares the devil is the word of God in your heart. Develop a habit of reading the Bible daily. Growing spiritually is a process and will take time. Stick continuously to your daily study and prayer and you will experience fantastic growth and maturity.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*Lord, I desire to grow and be like you.
I will focus on your word and let it
guide me daily.*

ESSENTIAL STEPS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH — PRAYER

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.”

(Jude 20-21)

Prayer is a vital part of spiritual growth. You can't live as a Christian without prayer. Spiritual growth requires developing a real and vibrant prayer life. Prayer ought to be something that we cannot help but do because we firmly believe in its power. It should be something that we enjoy doing because we love the Lord and we want to communicate with Him each day. When you love someone, you want to talk to them daily and let them know how much you love them. Prayer builds you up spiritually, especially when you pray in tongues.

1 Cor 14:4 “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church”. When you speak in tongues you edify yourself. Edify also means to build up. So, when you pray in tongues, you build yourself spiritually. You develop the spiritual muscles to stand against any power of the enemy.

Before our master Jesus began His earthly ministry, he separated himself and embarked on a 40-day prayer and fasting. As soon as He was done with the prayer and fasting, the devil came to tempt Him, but He overcame him, and afterward angels came and ministered to Him. (Matthew 4:1-11). When you build yourself in the spirit through prayer, you will be no match for the devil. Every arrow that is thrown by the enemy shall be diverted by your prayer. Jesus told his disciples to pray that they do not enter into

temptation. Your prayer will save you in the day of trouble. When Jesus came back after the 40 days fast, He began to preach the gospel, and signs and wonders characterized His ministry. If our master Himself found it necessary to pray, then how much more we, His followers who are following in His footsteps. You shall experience the miraculous when you spend time in prayer.

You must learn to pray all kinds of prayers. Pray in an unknown tongue, pray in the known language, pray the prayer of faith, prayer intercessory prayers, pray a prayer of thanksgiving. You must make prayer a daily part of your life. Don't live a day without prayer. If you want to grow spiritually, learn to pray. Prayer is simply having a conversation with God. You don't have to use big words. There are no right and wrong words. Just be yourself. Pour your heart out to God. Give thanks to the Lord daily for your salvation. Pray for others in need. Pray for direction. Pray for the Lord to fill you daily with His Holy Spirit. There is no limit to prayer. So begin to make prayer a part of your daily routine and you will grow spiritually.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*Thank you Lord, for the gift of prayer.
I commit myself to prayer and to the study of your word.*

ESSENTIAL STEPS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH — FELLOWSHIP

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

(Heb 10:25)

The purpose of gathering together as Christians is to worship God, for teaching, fellowship, worship, communion, prayer and to build one another in the faith. Constant fellowship builds you up and makes you stronger. Fellowship is fundamental to your spiritual growth as a believer. Fellowship is the translation of the Greek word, “koinonia.” This Greek word is derived from the root, “koinos,” which means “to hold something in common.” When believers come together in fellowship, they come together as one common unit; the body of Christ. When the body comes together in fellowship, each part of the body supplies the other parts and the whole body is in turn nourished. (Eph 4:15-16)

Every part of the body is important. Don't think that if you decide not to go to church on one Sunday it will not have any effect. You are very important. No one is insignificant in the body of Christ. The newly born-again believer is as important as the greatest apostle that ever lived. Consider the human body for example. When you look at the body, you will think that certain parts of the body are not important. For instance, someone may ask, “what is the use of the eyebrow”? It does not serve any purpose in the body. However, if you shave off your eyebrow and you sweat, the sweat will drip directly into your eyes. The eyebrow prevents the sweat from entering your eyes. Even something as little as the

eyebrow has a purpose. Some people feel they are insignificant and not important to their church so they don't mind missing worship services. There is another group of people who are church-hoppers and non-participants. They think the church can make it without them. Therefore, they hop from one church to the other not establishing themselves anywhere. 1 Cor 12:14-18 makes it clear that every single member of the body is necessary for its proper functioning. Because of the importance of fellowship, no one has the right to amputate themselves from the functioning body of Christ; the local church.

Each time you decide to stay away from fellowship, you are depriving yourself of nourishment, and you are preventing someone else from receiving edification from you. You will grow stronger when you fellowship with the brethren. But you will grow weaker and weaker till you die spiritually when you neglect to fellowship with the brethren. As it was with the early church who met on daily basis, let your feet constantly be in the house of God and you shall experience exponential growth.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall grow stronger each day as I fellowship in the house of the Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen!

ESSENTIAL STEPS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH
— MINISTRY

"If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority."

(John 7:17)

One way by which you can grow as a Christian is to get involved in ministry work in your church. Most churches offer small groups and many ministry opportunities. These ministry opportunities are fertile grounds to increase and enhance your spirituality. In the above key scripture, Jesus said that those who are willing to do God's will can know if a doctrine is, or is not of God. How can they know? Clearly, we can see that there is a connection between doing the will of God and being able to judge and know sound doctrine, a trait which is evident in the life of people who are spiritually mature. *"But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil". (Heb 5:14)*

The more you engage yourself in the work of God, coupled with a prayerful life and a word filled life, the more your relationship with God deepens and this will lead to greater revelations of truth and exciting spiritual growth. Get involved in a ministry in your church if you want to grow spiritually. Join the evangelism team, counselling group, be a discipleship class teacher, follow up a new soul, pray for people to receive the Holy Ghost baptism. As you exercise yourself in these spiritual activities, you will also find yourself growing spiritually. Sometimes, people get discouraged and give up on their ministry work, when they encounter

challenges or face opposition from other members. The church like any human institution has its own challenges. People may offend you in one way or another. People may say things about you that may not be pleasant. Don't give up on your quest to serve God because of that. Even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself was abused, rejected and despised in His quest to do the will of Him that sent Him. Why do you expect it to be any different for you? The devil will do everything and even use fellow believers to prevent you from doing the will of the Father. However, don't be moved. Be focused on the task ahead of you and forge ahead towards your vision.

Sometimes, you may try a ministry that does not seem to fit in with your peculiar gifts. Don't get discouraged if the first thing you try doesn't seem to fit. Try something else, and keep on trying until you find one that fits you perfectly. As you respond to this call to serve in the House of God, you shall experience a spiritual closeness to God and spiritual growth that will transform your life.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I live to do your will on earth. Let my life be a living sacrifice to you. In Jesus' name. Amen!

THE SECRET OF INTERCESSION

“And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before”

(Job 42:10)

Intercession means standing in for others. It means intervention and mediation. Anytime you stand in for someone to plead their case, you are in the process of intercession. You are therefore called an intercessor or mediator. One of the secrets God revealed to Job in the early stages of his life as a youth was the need to pray for others. Job became the richest man in the east in the then world. He traded in divine secrets by divine enlightenment. Job said, *“Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle”* (Job 29:2-4)

A life of intercession is born out of compassion for people and the heartfelt need to help people out of their predicament. That is the foundation for intercession. Job had that heart for people. We read that he pleaded the cause of the poor, fed the hungry and took care of the fatherless and orphans. *“If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it (for from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow) if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering”* (Job 31:16-19)

Having established the needed heart condition for the needy, he could easily pray for others. Job was subjected to very severe suffering by the devil as permitted by God. His three best friends ridiculed and blamed him for his sins. God plagued the friends with incurable diseases and asked them to go to Job for prayer. Even though they insulted Job during his ordeal, Job was not hesitant or reluctant to pray for them. Rather he pleaded to God for them and they were healed.

This prayer of intercession for his friend also turned his captivity round. Job was healed and restored. He received double of all he lost: *“And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends. And the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.”* (Job 42:10)

This was one the secrets of Job's wealth and success. Do not focus on yourself and family only. Jesus was an intercessor. He ended up in heaven on the right hand of God. Enter into the business of intercession. God will use that to turn your life around for your good.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, please give me a heart of intercession.

A LIFE OF CONTENTMENT

"But he said to her, 'You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips."

(Job 2:10)

We all want to make it in life and be successful. We dread challenges that try to make us fail. However, there is nothing like victory without a fight. We have a popular saying that, "there is no crown without a cross," and it is true in life. Anything we set ourselves to achieve in life, there is certainly going to be a challenge. Some challenges will cause us to have an interim failure but as we endure and persevere, we are able to surmount greater challenges that lead to success.

One of the serious things that happened to Job was that he lost all his assets in one day. Thereafter, he started suffering from boils on his whole body. It was very scary and deadly. Due to his ailments, his wife advised him to curse God and die. Job gave her a deserving answer in the following discourse:

"Then his wife said to him, 'Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.' But he said to her, 'You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips." (Job 2:9-10)

Job had a mindset that says that "I am ready for the good and the bad. I can live with little or much." Job's mindset meant that, at any rate and condition he would be content just like the apostle Paul said, "Not that I

am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need." (Php 4:11-12)

Therefore, Job saw his wife's advice as a foolish one coming from a foolish woman. This was one of the secret principles of life God taught Job in his youth. Based on the above analysis, we can conclude that Job was not in a rush to get money as many young people of today are. He lived by the word of God that says that, "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice." (Pro 16:8)

There are many people who will cheat and steal to make wealth. They are discontented with their status quo and are in haste to be rich. The following scripture is true about them: "Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it." (Pro 13:11)

Contentment does not mean complacency. It simply means being satisfied and happy irrespective of financial circumstances.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am content in Christ.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU ARE HUMAN

"Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble. He comes out like a flower and withers; he flees like a shadow and continues not."

(Job 14:1-2)

No matter how great you become in life, know that you are still human. No matter how rich and wealthy you become in life, never forget that your life on earth is short-lived. It is likened to a flower that withers.

This is one of the secret principles of life that Job learnt in his life while going through a period of turmoil. There are many rich and wealthy people who never think that they will one day leave all their wealth behind. Sometimes, it seems like they have eternity on earth to unleash their wickedness on people and bulldoze their way through life without regard for anyone else.

However, when you read the life of Job, the richest man in the then east, you will discover he felt and lived as a human whose life on earth was short. He described himself as a man born of woman who had few days. The few days Job lived on earth was some years plus the one hundred and forty years which God added to him after he had been restored.

"And after this Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, four generations. And Job died, an old man, and full of days." (Job 42:16-17)

Biblical scholars are of the view that Job may have lived for about two hundred and ten years. That was pretty higher than Abraham who died at the age of

one hundred and seventy-five (Gen 25:7-8). The point is that no matter how many years we live on earth we will soon pass away like vapour. This must sink into our hearts as it did Job so that none will boast with his riches on earth. That is why Job came down to everyone's level.

As a man, he made mistakes. He was not flawless. We read that Job was an upright man and feared God (Job 1:1-3). However, he made some mistakes. For instance, many times he longed to die during his ordeal even though his time of death was not due:

"Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, who long for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures" (Job 3:20-21)

"...so that I would choose strangling and death rather than my bones. I loathe my life; I would not live forever..." (Job 7:15)

Sometimes, when we go through challenges, we wish to die rather than live but all too soon God sets in and changes the equation. God will help you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to know that I am human.

BEING HUMAN, JOB ENTERTAINED FEARS

“For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, but trouble comes”

(Job 3:25-26)

One of the most common experiences of life is fear. Fear has very devastating effects on its victims. At one point in time in a man's life, one will come into direct confrontation with fear. However, our response to fear is what matters. We read of very powerful men in the Bible and we think by the way God dealt with them, they were flawless. No please!

Every one of the Bible characters had a dent in their walk with God and the Bible did not hide their short comings. Abraham conceded that Sarah could not give him the promise child and accepted her proposal willingly to sleep with her maid, to raise their first born. God refused Hagar's son, Ismael as an heir. David became king of Israel and committed adultery with the wife of his army lieutenant and schemed his death in a war. God forgave him and still used him.

Now here is the point. Job became the richest man in the east and we read that he was an upright man and one that feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1-3). However, he entertained one of the deadly things in life that allowed the devil to infiltrate his life to his detriment. He feared. This demonstrated the weak side of his walk with God. After all, he was not as perfect as what we thought.

In the above scripture he testified that, *“For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me (Job 3:25).* This shows that before his troubles came upon him, he feared and what he dreaded was the precise thing that happened to him. In spite of all his righteousness and worship, this is one weakness that dented his life. We must understand that as loving and honest as we are to God and as committed as we are to His things, we are not immune to trouble. Why? Any follower and worshiper of God becomes an automatic enemy of Satan who has vowed to destroy the work of God in all its various facets. It does not matter how blessed or needy you are. This fight is inevitable. This is where Job missed it.

Satan uses the instruments of fear and doubts to fight God's people. This is exactly what he did. He sought permission from God to test Job's integrity. (Job 1:6-12) and he began by putting fear into him about what he dreaded might happen to him. Fear is the entry point through which Satan enters to destroy us.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*I resist the spirit of fear in Jesus' name.
Amen!*

THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF FEAR

“For the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, but trouble comes”

(Job 3:25-26)

We cannot under estimate the devastating effects of fear. We must understand that the fear factor is not just an emotional expression as a result of the issues of life that confront us. Fear is a spirit.

We are told in the scriptures that, *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”* (2Tim 1:7)

Job was a God-fearing person in his generation and was so upright. Despite his loyalty to God, he was still attacked by the devil through fear. The above scripture was an expression of Job’s personal encounter with all that befell him. He attested to the fact that he was afraid that those things would happen to him, and they did happen as planned by the devil because the later had a leeway into Job’s life through fear.

Satan would try to attack you through fear and I am going to show you how. A careful study of the scripture shows that Satan’s fighting ground against believers is their mind. He uses thoughts and imaginations against God’s knowledge in us:

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalareth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every

thought to the obedience of Christ”
(2Cor. 10:3-5)

Strong holds are places or territories used against an enemy. The strong holds of the devil are located in the thoughts and imaginations of people. He sends pictures and images of evil things that are likely to happen to you. They do not seem real to start but as you keep imagining and thinking about them, their reality starts dawning on you. When they find their resting place in your heart, now accepted as real, the next thing you should expect is their manifestation in the natural.

Every thought and imagination is real. It becomes materialized through the medium of fear or faith. Fear when it is from the devil. Faith when it is from God’s word. Any time the devil wants to afflict you with something very bad, he will first of all attack your mind with a bad thought in the form of imagination. This thought is first of all false. He will tell you that you are sick and you will die. You are poor because of your present predicament. This thought will keep coming until you concede that it is true. Then it begins to become a reality. Therefore, guard your thoughts.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse the negative thoughts from the devil. I am what God’s word says I am.

WHY WE FACE CHALLENGES IN THIS WORLD

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

(Job 16:33)

There are many people in the world who don't believe that there is a God somewhere because of many reasons including the many problems we see and go through in the world. They ask questions like, "why are there many wars and killings all over the world if God is alive?" Others are; "If God is really alive and in charge why does He allow so much evil in the world?" They continue to ask, "Why does God not stop evil people or eliminate them completely from the world so that we could have peace and tranquility in the world"? We have to understand people's sentiments because they have reason to ask all these questions. However, there is no question in this world without an answer. Every problem has a solution while every question also has an answer. The reason why man has been able to invent so many things to make life easy is that someone once asked a question, and in an attempt to answer, solutions evolved. The invention of the airplane, phones, touch phones, internet, medical facilities etc. are all products of an attempt to solve problems. So, questions about why we have so many problems and challenges in life are laudable.

Questions about the sciences, motivates scientists to try to draw their answers from science and nature. There are special gifts given to men to solve scientific problems. The same applies to questions about the arts. We

thank God for such wonderful gifts God has given to the sons of men. However, in answering questions regarding spiritual matters, we must consult with a spiritual book, and therefore, our only authentic source of hope is the Holy Scriptures. There are many religions in the world with various kinds of books that seem to address the spiritual problems of man. As believers, God's word, is the only one that we can use to address these issues. Why therefore are there so many problems and challenges in the world that seem to suggest that God is not in control and probably doesn't exist? If He does then why all these problems? The Bible begins with God. *Gen 1:1 "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."*

Creation is an attribute of God. Everything we see and don't see owes its existence to God. God is perfect and holy. So certainly, His creation would not differ from Him. God made everything by His wisdom, and the wisdom of God is good and has no evil in it: *Jas 3:17 "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere."*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God made me and all His creation good.

BETWEEN THE PERFECT AND THE IMPERFECT WORLD

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

(Gen 1:1)

God is so perfect that He would not create an imperfect thing. God is good. Anything evil is not from God. The Bible says of God as follows: *Deu 32:4 "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he."*

When He created the earth and all that was in it, it was described as very good. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." (Gen 1:31). The question we have to ask ourselves is; how come in verse two of Genesis chapter one, we read that, "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep...?"

Something went wrong between verse one and verse two. Everything He made was perfect. Then the next time, there was a world without form, that is, shapeless, and void, that is empty. Moreover, darkness was covering the face of the waters. This description of the earth is not pleasant at all. It fitted to be called a waste.

Jeremiah prophesied about it as follows; *Jer 4:23-46 "I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. "I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all*

the hills moved to and fro. I looked, and behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the air had fled. I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the LORD..."

The above description shows that there was a prior creation, an earth with cities and it was a very fruitful one until something went wrong. We don't have further explanation of this. However, we have glimpses from scripture to prove this. When God made Adam and Eve, God said, *Gen 1:28 "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over..."*

Replenish means fill again. This same word is used for Adam after the flood: *"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."* (Gen 9:1).

So God made a perfect world that was destroyed. We must find out how it was destroyed. Meanwhile, know that you were made by a perfect God with a perfect plan.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God is good with all His creation; with a perfect plan for me.

THE TROUBLER AND DESTROYER OF THE WORLD

"Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble"

(Job 14:1)

When babies are born, their first reaction in the world is to cry. Sometimes we humorously say they cry because of the world of troubles they have been born into. Yes! We have all cried as babies before only to be comforted in the cosy arms of our mothers.

This comforting of mothers does not stop the troubles we encounter later in our lives. It was against this background that the Bible described our days on the earth as full of trouble. Why should we cry because of the troubles in the world? As innocent as children are, every one is subject to face the world's trouble. Some babes die in the womb before they are born, while others suffer grievous rejection, hunger and death. Who is the cause for all these? Certainly not God! Let's look into scriptures about the root cause of all our challenges and troubles:

Isa 14:12-17 "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee,

and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?"

We need to digest the above scriptures in a few words. Lucifer was an archangel in heaven created by God with the gift of music to head the worship ministry in heaven. However, he became arrogant, ambitious and wanted to be like God who is incomparable. God cast him to the earth and created a pit for him called hell. Now consider the verse 16 which says, "...Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms..." Satan causes trembling and shakings of the earth and nations. This is called confusion.

In verse 17 we read that He also "...made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof..." This is the cause of our problems. The troubler and destroyer is here. If you are born of God, you have overcome this destroyer and should not be afraid of troubles, by virtue of God's image in you.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am more than a conqueror!

WE CAN OVERCOME THE TROUBLES OF THIS WORLD

"But man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. "As for me, I would seek God, and to God would I commit my cause, who does great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number: he gives rain on the earth and sends waters on the fields; he sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn are lifted to safety" (Job 5:7-11)

Life is full of exciting adventures when you perceive it from the perspective of the Bible rather than that of human philosophy. Those who don't know God view life as fate. Fate says that whatever happens is by chance, and if it is evil, one's life's fate cannot be altered. The Bible's perspective differs from such perspectives. The Bible says that, God is a God of purpose and therefore plans everything in line with His plan for us. All the troubles of the world can be attributed to Satan. We know that he was Lucifer in heaven and that he rebelled against God's authority and was cast to the earth: *Rev. 12:12* "Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

The heavens must rejoice because the confusion engineer had been cast to the earth. The earth must mourn, and of course be ready to engage woes because the devil has come down here with great wrath. His coming to the earth brought chaos and anarchy, and ever since, the world has been plunged into darkness of evil, wars, killings, armed robbery, suicide bombings,

etc. This state of affairs on the earth is described in Genesis as follows: *Gen 1:1-2* "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." The difference between verses one and two is that, God created a perfect world because God is perfect, but when the devil was cast to the earth after his rebellion, he brought confusion which resulted in a shapeless and an empty world with darkness covering the surface of the waters. God subdued this confusion by His Spirit and the Word. He caused His light to shine in the dark. That light is Jesus. That is why believers in Christ are ordained to overcome the world as light of the world.

1Jn 5:4-5 "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?"

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am an overcomer in the world.

JESUS OVERCAME THE WORLD TO BE OUR EXAMPLE

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

(Job 16:33)

Jesus assured the disciples that they would have trouble in the world but calmed their hearts with the comforting words that despite these troubles they should be cheerful because He has overcome the world. As believers, we don't see troubles of the world as problems. We see them as challenges that come to make us stronger in the Lord. The Scripture says that all things work together for good to those who are the called, according to His purpose. (Rom 8:28). Whatever challenge you may be going through right now is not meant to destroy you but to build you up to overcome more challenges. God will use your challenges as a spring board for your promotion.

The greatest example we must look up to in overcoming life's challenges is Jesus Christ. God saw Him through all. After His birth, Herod sent the wise men to search for Him and bring back report. His intention was to destroy baby Jesus. However, after seeing baby Jesus, God warned them to take another direction and also revealed it to Joseph to escape with Jesus from Herod's wrath: *Mat 2:12-13 "And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother,*

and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." God will always preserve and keep you through all the attacks of the devil against you. You have survived much already by the mercies and grace of God, and He will make you escape all until His purpose for you is accomplished if you keep leaning on Him.

Jesus escaped many threats of death from the religious people of His time until He gave Himself up for death in the Garden of Gethsemane on His own volition, because that was why He came. Jesus knew that He would suffer. *Luk 9:22 "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."* The good news is that He would die and rise again. This is our example. We will go through it but in the end, we shall live and come out victoriously. We see our troubles or challenges as platforms for promotion, so we don't give up. Since Jesus overcame the world, we should cheer up because that victory is ours. Don't be discouraged. The victory is yours.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I have overcome the world by Jesus' victory.

WHEN YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND TO ENDURE TROUBLE, YOU WILL STAY STRONG

“Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble.”

(Job 14:1)

Job is an example of suffering. The above statement was made by Job in view of the severe suffering he was subjected to. Man is full of trouble. Just make up your mind that challenges will come your way by all means in any endeavor you find yourself in. When your mind is made up, you will not be taken by surprise. We know that he who makes life very difficult for us is the devil and ourselves. We all have one challenge or another. Everybody is thinking about how to pursue their vision in life and accomplish it. This is not an easy task having regard to other responsibilities that one may have including family, ministry, etc.

There is a story about how Satan attacked Job and made his life miserable, making him lose everything he had acquired in life in one day. When you read Job chapter one, it narrates all the encounters of satanic attack against Job's family and business. He lost all his children and his businesses. Satan didn't end it there. He went on to inflict him with boils on his whole body. Most of his friends and acquaintances deserted him while the two close friends who were left questioned his integrity and made pronouncements to suggest that it was because of his iniquities that he was going through all that trouble.

If your friends and family desert you because of your challenges, know that Jesus went through the same. All the

disciples deserted and rejected him. When you know what to expect, you don't worry when they occur. *1Pe 4:1* “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin” Our thinking must be that, we will go through challenges because Jesus our Master went through same. This settles my heart. *Heb 12:2-3* “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”

If Jesus endured shame, hostility etc, we should train our minds to also endure every suffering we may be going through. It is possible to curse or blame God for all you are going through but Job didn't curse or blame God. *Job 1:22* “In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.” Don't blame God, your parents, your pastors, your friends or anybody. Look up to Jesus trusting that He will turn the misfortune into a blessing as He did for Job.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I trust you Lord to see me through every hardship.

LIVE YOUR LIFE ACCORDING TO GOD'S PLAN FOR YOU

"Here are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."

(Pro 19:21)

Most people have plans and purposes for their lives. Plans are very good and necessary but you must ensure your plans don't rob you of God's intended plan for your life. It is therefore important to know exactly what God wants you to do in life. There are many devices in a man's heart. Devices are strategies and procedures. However, we are told from the above scriptures that the counsel of the LORD is what will stand. Even though we may devise our own purpose and way to handling life, it is always God's purpose and way that will succeed. That is why it is important to handle life from God's perspective. If we decide to do what everybody wants and implement everybody's point of view, we will make very grievous mistakes.

What precisely is God's will for my life? Once I am able to define it, then I can move on to how that purpose can be accomplished using God's strategy and not man's. Abraham was called by God with a promise of a blessing and becoming a great nation. (Gen 12:1-3). The fulfillment of that promise was delayed. Then, his wife made an offer to raise children through her maid. Abraham didn't refuse the offer. He may have doubted that the promise would come to pass or he wanted to please his wife. In any case, he did what his wife suggested and gave birth to Ishmael.

Gen 16:1-2 "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai."

God refused to use Ishmael to bring His intentions to pass in the life of Abraham. Abraham's strategy failed. God had His own purpose and plan. When God confirmed His promise, Abraham's focus was on Ishmael but God refused him: *Gen 17:17-19 "Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" God said, "No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him."*

Let's allow God's purpose and strategies to prevail in our lives. Ours will always fail. God's purpose and plan will always win.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will walk in God's purpose and plan for my life.

BE CAREFUL OF ATTRACTIVE OFFERS. THEY MAY BE BAITS TO YOUR DESTRUCTION

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

(Pro 14:12)

Many believers have lost their destiny in life because they were enticed with very attractive offers by some business entities, and when they accepted the offers, they soon realized that they could not serve God well again, and their entire lives changed.

Many believers have backslidden because of this. The scripture says that there is a way that seems right to man, but its end is the way to death. The devil always offers us very enticing offers. Do you remember the case of Eve? When God had said that they would die if they ate the forbidden tree, Satan said they wouldn't die.

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.''" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Gen 3:1-5)

The devil deceived them into thinking that if they ate, they would become like God. That was an attractive offer

anybody would like to embrace. Being like God was not a big deal because they were already like God, made in the image of God. Anytime the devil wants you to fall, he will put before you a very attractive offer. One of our young pastors left one of our branches to follow another pastor because he received a good offer with promises to make a lot of money. He was convinced to go and he later regretted and came back to beg his branch pastor because he realized that it was not as rosy as he thought initially.

One lady was offered a good job with fringe benefits but with the condition that she accompanied the boss for a trip with the ultimate purpose of having an affair with the boss. The offer was good but I warned her and she refused the offer. What a big trap! It may seem right from the start but the end would be death.

There are many married sisters and brothers who have regretted marrying their spouses because they followed beauty, money, flamboyant promises, etc. and were disappointed. Be wise.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, guide me in the right way in Jesus' name. Amen!

YOUR FIRST STEP WILL LEAD TO MANY MORE STEPS

"And Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus."

(Mat 14:28-29)

Life is like a ladder. When we understand life in the context of the word of God, it makes it so stress-free. Like a ladder we climb it step by step until we reach the top. Every step leads you to the top. That is very important to know. When Jesus came walking on the water, it surprised the disciples who were struggling in the boat due to the storm. Then Peter requested Jesus to give a command so he could walk to Him on the sea. Jesus commanded him to come. On that note, he stepped out. Pause a minute. Do you think it was easy for Peter to step out of the boat into the water? It wasn't. His confidence to walk on the water was built on the command from Jesus to "Come." He actually stepped out and stepped on the Word, "come." He began taking one step after another only to realize that he was walking on the water. If he hadn't taken that first step, he wouldn't have taken extra more steps.

Your first step represents your mustard seed. (A mustard seed is one of the smallest seeds ever) It is a small step. It is a step of faith. Whatever God has assigned you to do may be very big but take a first step. Begin that project as a mustard seed. It will grow to become very big one day. Do you know that every human being came into the womb as a seed? Secondly, nobody

is born an adult, neither do we see bearded babies drop out of the womb. Flee if you see one. Your baby business will grow into an adult. Your baby idea will become fruitful if you take that first step. Until you take your first step, you will not be able to bring to pass all that you have been dreaming to become. That first baby or mustard seed step is crucial for materializing your God-given dreams. Our church began under hired canopies with our first meeting recording sixty-five people. Today, by His grace, we have not just grown and built our own ultra-modern auditorium but we have planted about one hundred and eighty branches.

You must learn to start a small business and expect it to grow from smallness. When you start big, can you handle it with all the administrative challenges? It is better to start small and grow your leadership to control it overtime. Any church or business entity that starts like the end of another company or church will not last long and stand the test of time.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Though my beginning is small, my end will be big.

THE LAW OF CONCENTRATION

"But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

(Act 6:4)

A time comes when you must of necessity concentrate on what you do to maximize its effects on your life. Concentration is the action or power of focusing all of one's attention on something. The Cambridge English Dictionary defines it as the ability to think carefully about something you are doing and nothing else. A time came in the life of the church in Jerusalem when they had grown so much that squabbles and bickering sprang up to disturb the smooth shepherding of the church. This demanded quick attention. So the Apostles came out with a brilliant idea: *Act 6:2-4 "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."*

What the disciples did was delegation of authority for concentration on their assignment. They had to set their priority right. Was it to serve tables and stop praying, studying and teaching the word? This means dividing their attention between serving tables and their main assignment. Which way were they to go? They chose concentration on the main assignment and delegated authority to others to serve tables which was also an important aspect of ministry. We must

focus our attention on what we have been called to do and not divide it across many things.

If you discover your first step, concentrate on it and grow it as far as the sky. Your first step could be your small business venture you are undertaking, a small church you have planted, or the seed in your womb. Pull all your weight behind it to make it work. Give it your time, energy and the resources it needs to succeed. Paul sent a message to a minister of the gospel with the following advice: *Col 4:17 "And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."* Fulfilling your life's dreams will sap you literally; spirit, soul and body. Stay focused. If it is marketing concentrate on it. Paul advised Timothy to focus on his life. *1Ti 4:16 "Focus on your life and your teaching. Continue to do what I've told you. If you do this, you will save yourself and those who hear you."* (GW)

Sometimes, we forget about ourselves and try to remove specks in other people's eyes neglecting the log in our own eyes. Some pastors criticize other ministries and churches, forgetting that they also have problems and blemishes. Stop criticizing others and concentrate on your calling.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will concentrate on my calling and fulfill it.

DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF WITH ANYBODY

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."

(2Co 10:12)

One of the dangerous things in life is when we begin comparing ourselves to others. Do you know that God made us differently? We are people of diverse skin colour, race etc. Why would a black person want to bleach his or her skin to be white? And why would white skinned people tan their body to look black? Today, there are many men who are changing their masculine nature to become feminine by taking all kinds of drugs or undergoing surgical operations, and vice versa. The gay lifestyle is one that is born out of comparison with one another. The moment you change who you really are originally it shows your essential dissatisfaction with yourself as a result of comparison to others.

We are being admonished in the above scripture not to compare ourselves to others because it is an unwise act. For some people, when they see their friends for instance riding in a limousine, they begin to envy them and will do everything possible to get one even if they have to use illegitimate and illegal means to get it. In other words, they have to get one by hook or crook.

When you start a business, ask yourself whether it is necessary to buy a car or take public transport until the business grows. If you spend all your resources on just a car, your capital will be used up thereby slowing down your business. Some families compare

themselves with other families and try to do what they don't have the resources for. Sometimes, professionals also envy each other because of comparing themselves with each other. Maybe you are a singer with a low tone alto voice, and someone in the choir has a soprano voice. Play your role with your strength instead of envying the soprano who is always given the microphone to lead. Understand that we have varying levels of gifting from God, and we can't all be the same. Appreciate who you are and move on in life with all the gift and abilities embedded in you.

Sometimes, church members compare themselves with each other about who dresses better. Members even compare the pastors preaching to create an unnecessary competition among them. "That pastor is more anointed than so and so pastor" they say. Ushers compare themselves with themselves about who is smarter and cute. If we compare ourselves as a church with bigger churches ahead of us with giant facilities, we will give up. Let's love ourselves and work. It is only a matter of time and effort that God will take us there.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I accept myself the way I am in Jesus' name. Amen!

ENGAGE THE HELP OF GOD

"Song of degrees. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."

(Psa 121:1-2)

There comes a time in one's life when the only person that can help you is God. There may be many members of a family around, and of course friends and neighbours. However, there comes a time when it is only God that must take the singular honour for helping an individual because no help will come from anywhere. David, the second king of Israel prayed the above prayer for help from God. He knew that the only place his help would come from was from the LORD who made the heaven and earth. Standing in the office of an armour bearer, He encountered the wrath of his master and was threatened with death. He had to look up to only God for deliverance.

He had to face Goliath, the one who defied the armies of Israel. Goliath had been a champion of war, and all the nations around Philistine knew him as a great warrior. When David dared to fight him, he trusted God to help him defeat this champion. God indeed helped him. We must understand that in life, we need God. We may try to achieve results in our various professions and occupations but without God, it will be futile. *Psa 127:1 "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."*

I heard a testimony of one of our

precious pastors who was invited to Brussels to help solve a problem that an international corporate business entity had. All the parties involved were present to deliberate on how to solve that bothering problem. There was no solution after almost a week of conferencing. The day before his departure, according to him he prayed for help from God, and while praying the Holy Spirit whispered the answer to him. In the morning, he went to the office to try it and it worked perfectly. Such is the help from God.

As you try to build your life, engage God in it. He is the maker of heaven and earth. He has the blue print for your life. A time came in the life of Israel when they faced very severe famine, to the extent that people were killing their children for food. A woman asked help from the king and below is the king's reply:

2Ki 6:26-27 "Now as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, 'Help, my lord, O king!' And he said, 'If the LORD will not help you, how shall I help you? From the threshing floor, or from the winepress?'"

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Oh Lord, help me to succeed in Jesus' name. Amen!

ACKNOWLEDGE GOD, THAT HE GIVES RICHES

"Yours, O Lord, is the strength and the power and the glory, and the authority and the honour: for everything in heaven and on earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are lifted up as head over all. Wealth and honour come from you, and you are ruler over all, and in your hand is power and strength; it is in your power to make great, and to give strength to all."

(1Ch 29:11-12)

One of the most successful kings of all the earth is King David. David was not as perfect as we expected him to be. Sometimes we judge people based on their acts and performances. Of course people are known by their fruits. David rose to power as a servant in the palace of King Saul. As a matter of fact, he was given the job description of a skilled musician who must play music to cast the evil spirit that tormented Saul at times. With time he won the favour of the king and he became his amour bearer. When Saul died through war, David was the immediate successor as prophesied by Samuel the prophet.

David committed a few major blunders that dented his rule as the king of Israel. He coveted the wife of his army officer, and slept with her. She became pregnant, and in order to conceal this heinous crime, he orchestrated the death of her husband, Uriah by name. Then she took to wife the soldier's wife named Bathsheba (Sam 2:1-27). Later the secret was revealed and David prayed the Psalm 51 for forgiveness. Despite all this wickedness, God still loved David and fought all his battles for him until he died. David was the only king who led Israel to have total peace.

Among the many things David did which attracted God's favour was his heart of acknowledging God as the God of all the earth and the owner of all. He said that strength, power, glory, authority, honour and wealth come from God. It is God that gives wealth. The wisdom and skill you have to enable you make wealth comes from God:

Ecc 5:19 "Every man to whom God has given money and wealth and the power to have pleasure in it and to do his part and have joy in his work: this is given by God."

As you keep working day after day, remember that you owe your life to Him as the source of everything. You must acknowledge God as your whole life. You can lose everything in one day as in the case of Job, and even lose the life you have. Therefore, involve God in your work and life. Let Him be your Chief Executive Officer, and General Manager and you as His lower rank staff and steward.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Oh God! I acknowledge you as the source of my life.

MOTIVATED BY LOVE

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

(1Co 13:1-3)

There are many rich men and women in the world who are not happy at all. I heard the news about a popular Hollywood actor who committed suicide. Most of these celebrities just put-up appearances that is entirely different from what goes on inside them. As a matter of fact, a lot of them are on the verge of death. What is the motivation for all we do in life? Is it money, fame or what? If what we do in life is just to make ends meet then it is not worth it.

The Holy Bible gives a perfect description about the vanity of everything we do if there is no love in it. Spirituality which involves praying, seeking for knowledge from the Scriptures, faith and more is useless without the main essential foundation of love.

In other words, love must be the main motivation for every activity we undertake on earth. Do we prophesy because we feel like it or are just anointed with that gift? Do we have faith to do great things because it lies in our ability to do so? Do we teach people the word of God for name or fame? Whatever you are gifted with, remember that love must be your motivation for using it. Whatever profession you find yourself in must

be founded on the basis of love. There are so many professionals whose main inclination is to make money. They are not interested in people. If you don't have money, you cannot engage their services. Such people are in to make fast money without regard for anything or anyone. Such money does not last long:

Pro 13:11 “Wealth quickly got will become less; but he who gets a store by the work of his hands will have it increased.”

If love is the motivating factor in whatever you do, you don't mind helping people who may not have money but need your services urgently. You don't mind serving in any capacity in your church as long as you are needed. You don't get tired meeting people's needs because it is your greatest joy to see that people are blessed with your service. You don't complain if your work will demand extra hours to accomplish a particular result. Be motivated by love instead of fame, opulence and wealth.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will always allow love to motivate my actions in Jesus' name. Amen!

ENGAGING GOD IN YOUR BUSINESS AFFAIRS

“And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch”
(**Luk 5:4**)

There are many believers who don't know that God is very business-like. They think that God is so high, holy and lofty that He does not concern Himself with man's business affairs. On the contrary, the Holy Bible is full of instances that prove that God is very interested in the business affairs of His people. We are going to look at God in business. The background to the above scripture is that Jesus used Peter's boat as a platform to preach the gospel to the crowd. When he finished, he asked him to let down his net for a catch. Peter's response to Jesus' command showed that he didn't think that any good result would come out of the action. *Luk 5:5 “And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”*

Simon Peter had been a fisherman all his life time. He had lived virtually on the sea, knowing where and when the fish were biting. Nobody shows an old fishermen new tricks of fishing because by virtue of the craft they can even smell where they could get fish. In fact, they can tell by the movements of the current the presence of fish. Peter's answer to Jesus indicated that they had done everything possible as a professional fishermen to catch fish that night but had not been successful. Obviously, they were very hardworking because they had toiled all night. “All

night” implies that they might have started fishing in the evening, probably around 7pm to the following day. I am sure they might have engaged in about eight to ten hours of hard labour and yet produced no results.

They had to find an alternative solution. This time, they had to follow a directive that eventually led them to catch a bumper harvest. Their nets also started breaking. That was Jesus in business. He knew where the fish were biting. He was a super professor of fisheries. When the natural procedures and principles failed, the last resort was the Master's engagement. His ideas were enough to net a bumper harvest.

God is interested in our business affairs and desires that we consult and partner with Him in our business dealings. I believe that if we really partner with Jesus very well, we shall not lack financially. Business is all about making good money. Peter had a bumper harvest because he acted on the word of direction spoken by Jesus. He said, “...Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word....” So we need a direction from Jesus. We need a word from the Lord. At His word, we shall succeed.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

At His word I will be rich.

JESUS' IDEA FOR INCREASING THE HARVEST

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

(Mat 9:37-38)

Jesus lived in an agrarian community. That was why most of His proverbs and sayings were taken from vegetation and animals. Jesus likened the saving of souls to the harvest of crops. The harvest truly is plentiful but the labourers are few. This is a business idea. It means that when the harvest of any particular crop is ripe and large, we need to employ more hands to do harvesting before the crop goes bad. If your business is big and has the potential of making more money you need to get more workers to help. Jesus had this idea imported into spiritual business. He was saying that there are many people who need salvation but those who must go and preach to save them are few. So, we need to pray to God, the Lord of the harvest to send more labourers or soul winners to win souls before they perish.

Jesus' ideas about the quantum of work that need to be done and the quantum of labour force needed to be employed for the work is an indication that He was very business-like. He was not interested in wasting the harvest. He was bent on doing everything possible to stop a good business from going stale. People's businesses may be good but the kind of labour force they employ may have the tendency to destroy those good businesses.

In some cases, every good business man must employ one or two hands

to help reap in a harvest but because of selfishness, many business men reap only a little harvest when they can get more. There are too many lone businessmen and women in town struggling to work hard. Some seamstresses and tailors have many clients to attend to but refuse to employ extra hands because they want the money all for themselves. When Peter brought in the bumper harvest, he had to partner with other fishermen to haul the fish ashore:

Luk 5:6-7 "And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink."

We need to learn how to partner with people in business for maximum profit. We need the same thing in church. We need to get more people involved in the work of soul winning in order to achieve maximum results in the kingdom of God. God's business is serious business that can help our secular business.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me in your business and my business in Jesus' name. Amen!

JESUS CANNOT BE WRONG

“Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel: Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?” (Jer 2:4-5)

When God directs you, He will not make any mistake. We have to understand and accept the fact that God cannot make a mistake. Whatever He says is perfectly correct. He means what He says and says what He means. When He says no, He means no and when He says yes, He means yes. That is why He can be trusted. God has no character flaw. He is God. He is holy. His word is holy. He is also precise. He is not crooked. Many people are crooked in their ways. In fact, man born of woman is inherently crooked until he finds his maker. Because Satan was crooked, man also became crooked when he obeyed Satan and disobeyed God.

The scriptures refer to the devil as the crooked serpent: *Job 26:13 “By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.”*

Isa 27:1 “In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.”

The serpent is a symbol of Satan because Satan capitalized on its smartness to outwit man in making him disobey God. That is why man exhibits some forms of perverseness. Because man is not straight forward, we sometimes think about God in the

same way. The Holy Bible says that, *“God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” Num 23:19*

God cannot be wrong. Peter toiled all night and caught nothing. When Jesus used his boat and finished speaking, He directed him to cast the net into the deep. Even though Peter showed a little bit of doubt, he still relied on the word of Jesus, cast the net and the result was an astounding miracle of fish harvest. Jesus could not have made a mistake in telling him to cast the net at a certain spot.

That is why when you connect your life and business to Jesus, and you obey His word, you will have the precise thing God has promised in His word. We cannot question God on His faithfulness. If He promised to bless you, He is precise. If He directs you to do something for some outcome it will be exact. There are no mistakes with God. He is always right.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God is true to His word.

YOU WERE NOT MADE TO BE ALONE

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

(Gen 2:18)

Man was not made to be alone. It was for this reason that God made woman as a companion to man. Based on this same premise, it is not good that we walk alone and do things alone. If you are single, you haven't sinned. However, to make life pleasurable and easy for you, you must learn to connect to others in friendly relationships.

There are dangers in living alone. A man who was not very well connected to family and neighbours, died in his room without anybody knowing about it until several days later. They broke through the door and found him dead. His body had started decaying. This is one danger of being alone.

When you refuse to relate with people, who can help you in time of your dire need? We need people around us when the unexpected happens. Even in ministry, we still need to collaborate with helpers in building a solid church. Moses once complained to God that he could not bear the burden of the Israelites alone. He was receiving so many complaints and he didn't know how to deal with it.

He became depressed and said, *"Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor*

in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness." Num 11:13-15

What did God do about this? He counselled him to bring others so that He would impart part of his anointing to them to help him carry on his duty as a leader and prophet:

Num 11:16-17 "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone."

Ministers of God are not ordained to work alone. Loner's mentality should give way to cooperative mentality. God Himself involves us in the scheme of things in running His kingdom. So how dare you walk alone? The Bible says, *"For we are God's fellow workers..."* (1Co 3:9).

If you are a member of a church, show yourself as a true member. Belong and connect well.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to walk alone. I am a member of God's family.

YOU CAN'T BE WISER THAN GOD

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”
(1Co 1:25)

The world is classified into two categories of people spiritually. We have the wise and the fool. Who are the wise?

Psa 111:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!” Those who believe the existence of God and live by His dictates are wise. The Holy Bible says that “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...” So if you have reverence for God and everything concerning Him you are wise.

Job 28:28 “And he said to man, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to turn away from evil is understanding.’”

Who is he that is a fool? The fool is the one who does not believe in the existence of God and therefore lives anyhow: *Psa 14:1 “...The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.”* So, these are the two main kinds of people in the world. Nobody can be wiser than God. God's ways are far different from man's ways. If we can discern the ways of God and walk in them, we will be wise in the world. However, most often than not, our ways are far from His.

Isa 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are

my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

God's ways are all found in His word. Anybody who wants to be wise will do well to imbibe God's word and walk accordingly. It was in this direction that Jesus gave a parable about the wise and foolish builder:

Mat 7:24-27 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

God's wisdom is hearing the word and walking in line with it. Then you become wise like the builder who built on the rock, otherwise, you will be a fool. Better heed God's voice because you can't be wiser than Him.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will walk in line with God's word to be wise.

CLASSIFY YOUR WORDS AND DEEDS WITHIN WISDOM AND FOOLISHNESS

“A wise man’s heart inclines him to the right, but a fool’s heart to the left.”

(Ecc 10:2)

The heart of man dictates his words and deeds. As a matter of fact, everything we say or do is a product of the condition of the heart. *Pro 4:23 “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”* Your heart produces all the issues of life; what you see, think, do, etc. Your heart is the engine that moves everything.

A wrong heart condition is likely to produce wrong moves. The scripture we quoted simply means that, the heart of the wise man moves him to the right direction in life while that of the fool moves him in the wrong direction. The right side or right hand is symbolic of power and authority. Right therefore means the right place. Jesus rose again from the dead and sat down on the right hand of God. (Mark 16:19). We use our right hands to shake others, and the left hand to clean filth.

When Jesus gathers us together for judgement, the sheep will be on His right hand but the goats on His left. Those on the right shall be received into eternal glory but those on His left hand hell fire: *Mat 25:33, 41 “And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.” “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”*

It therefore means that a fool’s heart which inclines to the left also inclines

to hell and destruction. Either you are wise or foolish. Anything you say or do is either wise or foolish. Any place you go can be judged to be wise or foolish place. Any friend you choose can be a wise or foolish friend. A wise friend will advise you to love God and serve him but a foolish friend will lead you away from God. He will take you to places of evil, sin, immorality etc.

The very words of your mouth can be classified as wise or foolish. Those who are wise weigh their words in scales of wisdom. Foolish people talk by heart without ever sitting down to reason its impact on hearers.

Pro 15:2 “The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.”

The ability to hear instructions and directives and apply them to life is in itself a way of the wise. There are many people who will not hear and heed to ways of wisdom until disaster strikes one day: *Pro 15:5 “A fool despises his father’s instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.”*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will be careful of what I say and do in order to be wise.

YOU CAN'T CONTINUE TO LIVE IN SIN

"My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

(1Jn 2:1)

The greatest obstacle in life for many believers is sin. It is actually a big challenge for many believers to really sever off from their old life to live the new life they have found in Jesus Christ. The scripture is clear about our new found life in Christ which makes us a new creation:

2Co 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." So why are believers still caught up in this old way of life? Many think that once they are saved, they have enough grace to cover them. Yes, we know that we are saved by grace.

The Bible says that, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* Eph 2:8-9

Grace is already covering us in order that we would walk in righteousness by the same grace given to us. His grace is sufficient for us in everything we do including trusting God to be holy. In view of the grace work wrought in us, many believers continue to sin and confess, sin and confess, knowing that when they confess, they will be forgiven by grace.

We cannot say that because we have grace we will continue to sin. That is why the Bible says, *"What shall we say*

then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Rom 6:1-2

The question above must be answered. How can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? When Jesus died, we were reckoned to have died with Him. When He was buried, we were buried with Him and when He rose up again from the dead, we rose up with Him. This is the principle underlying the new creation. Eph 2:5-6 *"even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."*

Now if we really died to sin, then the argument is that we cannot continue to sin because sin no longer has dominion over us. Grace therefore is available in our new found life to live victoriously over sin. What then is the problem? Renewing the mind. Eph 4:22 *"to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds."*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I can live above sin.

EXPLORING THE GRACE OF GOD

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth"

(Joh 1:14)

Grace is an unmerited favour of salvation to those condemned to death (hell). *Rom 5:8 "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

Grace is the provision of mercy and favour in the midst of judgment towards death and condemnation. Grace brings strength in weakness, hope in hopelessness, and something out of nothing. Jesus Christ brought grace to us when we were still sinners and couldn't save ourselves. When you study scriptures carefully, you will discover the immeasurable level of grace Jesus brought to us. Man was totally depraved because of sin. There was no way we could have saved ourselves. We were rendered totally impotent in our ability to save, so God came in human flesh to perform that work of grace to save us from spiritual death and eternal condemnation by His death. Grace always spares an individual from destruction.

A typical example of such saving grace is found in the life of Noah and his family. The spiritual state of man was so degenerated that God decided to destroy the whole earth. However, he found Noah and spared him:

Gen 6:5-8 "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had

made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD."

Anytime something evil is earmarked towards people, there is always a "But" towards one or two people who are spared. In the case of Noah, He even preached and extended grace to all the people to escape destruction. *2Pe 2:5 "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly"* How did Noah qualify for this grace bestowed on him? Grace is bestowed but must be received by faith. So, when God warned him of the impending destruction and the salvation plan through the ark, he believed it and moved with reverence to implement God's will: *Heb. 11:7 "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I thank you Lord for your grace.

HOW TO ACCESS THE GRACE OF GOD

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

(Heb 11:7)

Grace is the favour bestowed on people to escape destruction. The whole world was destroyed in the time of Noah but Noah found grace in the sight of God. He obeyed God to construct the ark of salvation which saved him and his family. Even though he preached God's grace to his generation, they didn't believe in him to enter the ark of salvation.

What brought favour to Noah to be saved from the floods? It was his faith in God. *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house..."* Even though Jesus has offered so much grace for the world, there must be a human response to this grace by believing and receiving Him. We don't pay anything for this grace. The only price is our faith in Him.

Eph 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"

Faith is needed to access this grace. As it was in the time of Noah, so it is with this generation. There are many people who still don't believe that Jesus is today's 'Noah's ark'. Jesus made a beautiful analogy using Noah's ark to demonstrate the callous human nature which causes him to disbelieve in God: *"But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven,*

nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man". (Mat 24:36-39)

The Old Testament does not give us details of the lifestyle of those in Noah's generation. It only summarized it in the following words: *Gen 6:5 "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*

Jesus was the one who gave us details of their lifestyle. He said they were eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until Noah entered the ark, and were taken unawares. It means they completely ignored the grace given to them. They didn't believe to receive grace for escape. Let's believe and receive grace.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I believe to receive grace in Jesus' name.

FAITH USHERS US INTO GOD'S GRACE

"Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God".

(Rom 5:2)

The grace of God is for everybody. God is not partial. All people from all nations can access the grace of God. Nobody can blame God for not receiving this grace. We can gain immensely from this universal grace of salvation.

Tit 2:11 "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people" All you need to do is to believe. The key scripture above teaches us that we can obtain grace and have peace with God by faith. Faith is our platform to escape destruction and satanic onslaught against the church. *Rom 10:11-12 "For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

Why is it very difficult for people to believe and receive this grace? We must understand that faith though easy is a war. Many people have to fight against forces of darkness in order to break out from the spirit of unbelief in order to believe God for His grace.

2Co 4:3-4 "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light

of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

People cannot believe because of the influence of the god of this world on their lives. The devil knows that when we believe in God, we move out of his dominion into God's realm. Those in the world who find it tough believing God to be ushered into His grace are under the influence of Satan. If we succeed in outwitting the devil and his influence on them, they will be able to believe and be saved. Everything is made available for our benefit when we believe and are ushered into the grace of God. That is why believing God is a real fight. *1Ti 6:12 "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life..."*

You must understand that the devil will always fight your faith because faith is the key that opens the way into the grace of God. Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail:

Luk 22:31-32 "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*My faith will not fail in Jesus' name.
Amen!*

GRACE FOR ALL THINGS

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”

(2Co 9:8)

The grace of God has no limit. In fact, the grace of God is in measures but cannot be limited and confined by geographical, racial, academic, political barriers etc. God is able to give grace to all people at all times for all purposes. God's grace is sometimes called abundant grace. *2Co 4:15 “For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.”*

We need to increase in every good work. God can give you grace for your work. Whatever you do for a living can be boosted up greatly when you allow the grace of God to take its place in it. I was wondering why the Apostle Paul declared boldly that *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13)*. Yes! All things! He previously declared the following: *Php 4:11-12 “Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.”*

There is nothing we can't do. We can be content in any state. We can also live in plenty as the grace of God dictates. There is grace for everything. *“...God is able to make all grace abound toward you... may abound to every good work” (2Cor 9:8)*. All grace can also

mean all kinds of grace. There is grace for everything you decide to do. Grace for serving God, grace for winning souls, grace for being committed and loyal to God and your church family, grace for giving for the propagation of the gospel, grace for healing the sick and raising the dead, grace for missions and church planting, grace for leadership in your work, grace for making progress in life, etc. There is grace for everything. God is able to provide all grace for all things so that we can abound in every good work.

By this revelation, I now understand that I can abound in God's work too because it is a good work. I can abound in church planting and church growth by the grace God provides. I can abound in love toward people. There is also what is called the manifold grace of God. The Bible says, *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1Peter 4:10)*

Manifold means many folds or facets. It therefore means that the grace of God is divers. You can receive what is relevant to your field.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, give me more grace for my life's purposes.

BELIEVE GOD FOR THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

(1Pe 4:10)

The term "manifold" contains two syllabi; many and fold. It means multiplication. So, the manifold grace of God means multiplied or increased grace. This agrees with the Hebrew derivation, "rabab" which implies to multiply by the myriad, be more or, multiply, ten thousands. This shows that God's grace for us is unlimited and can increase in our lives. Grace can be more or less. *2Co 9:14 "And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you."*

The above scripture speaks about the exceeding grace of God. It means God's grace can exceed our wildest dreams. It can go beyond our expectation. God can release grace at any given time to beat His own grace record bestowed on an individual, a group or a nation. Wherever you are in life by the grace of God, that record can be broken because God can give grace that exceeds that. Jesus Christ is the one who bestows such grace. We are qualified by faith into the exceeding grace of God through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This is the greatest feat won for us in Christ.

Eph 2:6-7 "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ

Jesus." We identify ourselves with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus to qualify into the exceeding riches of His grace toward us. Salvation is our gateway into the exceeding riches of his grace. So, there is no limit to where we can go. We function from where we sit with Jesus in heavenly places on the basis of the finished work of the cross. If we believe Him for the best, we can be the best. If we believe Him to be on top, we can be on top. If we believe Him to make us excel in our various fields of endeavour, we can be so by the exceeding grace bestowed on us in redemption.

The Greek word "poikilos" means varied in character. This implies that the manifold grace has to do with different kinds of grace available for different tasks. It is available for anything at any time. You can receive exceeding grace to face any given task in your business and ministry. Any character of challenge will be met with a corresponding, and of course an exceeding character of grace to cope and overcome.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

*I pray for an exceeding grace to perform excellently in Jesus' name.
Amen!*

GRACE THAT MAKES YOU ESCAPE EVIL AND WORLDLY CORRUPTION

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it"

(1Co 10:13)

I have met people who face many challenges in life and business and fall flat in defeat. When you inquire why they fell, they will tell you that they were human and therefore weak. This is not scriptural and spiritual.

The above scripture says that we can endure every temptation because God is faithful enough to provide us a way of escape. There is always an escape route provided by God through grace. Every level of challenge has a corresponding level of grace to endure it. God will not allow anything above the grace He has given us to come our way. However, even if something seems greater than and beyond our perceived strength, He gives extra grace to endure and win.

2Pe 1:4 "by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."

The grace of God imparts God's nature that enables us to escape worldly corruption. So, we can count on God's grace at all times. David fought against Goliath and won because he counted on the Lord in that battle. He knew he was not experienced enough to face Goliath but by virtue of his experience with God in the wilderness in being

able to kill a bear and a lion, he was confident that the same God would deliver him from Goliath:

1Sa 17:34-37 "But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

Believe in the grace of God by which you can escape certain bothering situations in your life. You can overcome.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I receive the grace to escape every corruption in Jesus' name. Amen!

ISRAEL ESCAPED DESTRUCTION BY GRACE

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

(Exo 12:12-13)

We have to understand the work of grace in our lives. By the grace of God, we can escape destruction. Noah escaped destruction by the flood because of the grace he found in the sight of God. There is so much power in grace to escape death threats from enemies. Do you know that Jacob also escaped death by his brother Esau? He prepared a gift for his brother to appease him, and he found grace in his sight, and was spared Esau's anger that he incurred for stealing his blessing:

"Jacob said, 'No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.' Thus he urged him, and he took it." (Gen 33:10-11)

There are things we do by faith to receive grace in order to escape death. One of them is sacrificial giving. Israel had served in the land of Egypt as slaves for four hundred years and over. It was time for them to leave but Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused to let them leave. God had to intervene with many miracles. The last miracle was the Passover.

The Hebrew word for Passover is "pasech" which means exemption or to be spared. God commanded them to sacrifice a lamb each in every family and smear the blood on their door posts and lintels of their windows so that in the night of destruction by the angel of death, homes with the blood sign would be spared. That sacrificial lamb became their means of escape from the angel of death. They were exempted from death by the blood of sprinkling.

We can receive grace to escape every element of destruction from the devil's camp through the blood of the lamb. The Passover is the communion table we partake today. By the communion table, we can escape death and other demonic attacks in our lives. Grace is always available when we approach the Lord's Table.

We reinforce our redemption each time we partake the communion for a definite exemption from evil.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I invoke God's grace by the blood for exemption from demonic attacks in Jesus' name. Amen!

GRACE OPENS THE GATE TO ANSWERED PRAYERS

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”

(Heb 4:16)

God is always willing to hear us in prayer when we find grace in His sight. God cannot say no when we appear before Him through the blood of Jesus Christ which is our eternal covenant platform for grace. The throne of God is called the throne of grace. We enter the throne of grace by the blood of His cross so that we can find grace and mercy to help us in time of need. We can draw near the throne of grace by the blood of the lamb, and God is ready to hear our prayer:

Heb 10:19-22 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

Moses used the platform of the grace he found before God to claim God's presence in their journey in the wilderness. God heard him and promised him His presence and other fringe benefits of His presence:

Exo 33:12-14 “And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and

thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.”

Anytime we are in dilemma, we should just take hold of the blood of his cross and enter the presence of God with boldness. God is committed to answering our prayers if we are committed to coming into His presence by the blood. Jesus' death and resurrection offers us the privilege to enter God's presence by His blood. He promised to hear us in whatever we ask of Him from Jesus' own words in the following:

Joh 16:23-24 “And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I come to you by the blood and receive answers to my prayers in Jesus' name. Amen!

GRACE WILL PROMOTE YOU

“And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.”

(Gen 39:1-4)

Joseph's story is not a fairy tale. It is not a fable. The story about the life of Jacob is something that really happened. From a point of disadvantage as a slave in a strange land, he rose to become the Prime Minister of Egypt, a position reserved for only nationals. How did all this happen? Grace! Grace!

Verse 4 of the above scripture attributed Joseph's prosperity and acceptance in the house of Potiphar to grace. It says *“And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.”* Who gave him the grace in the sight of Potiphar? Verse 2 says, “And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.” The Lord was with Joseph. Therefore, it is clear that God gave this grace to Joseph to work and prosper in the house of his master.

God is capable of giving you a job of your choice, or a job of His own choice. I believe it wasn't Joseph's wish to work as a slave. However, under the circumstance, he had no choice but to

accept what was available to him at the moment. As a slave, he must work to please his master if ever he was going to survive. There are many believers who find it very difficult to adjust to circumstances they find themselves in. If they apply for a job and don't get what they want, but are offered others, they completely refuse it. They won't accept anything that they consider to be below their status in life.

Sometimes, when we allow God to mould our lives, He permits us to do some other jobs in order to train us for higher responsibilities. If Joseph had decided to be a rascal in the house of Potiphar, he would not have attained the place God had prepared for him in his quest for a definite divine destiny. Be ready to serve and work in any capacity until God's purpose for you is accomplished.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to adjust to your will.

GRACE WILL LIFT YOU

"And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand."

(Gen 39:4)

There are many young people who are hurriedly working their way up by any means possible, even if it is by hook or crook. Their main inclination is to make wealth within the shortest possible time. Many of them forget that getting wealth through wrong means renders the wealth a vanity. It has no permanence. God's word says, *"Like the partridge that gathers a brood that she did not hatch, so is he who gets riches but not by justice; in the midst of his days they will leave him, and at his end he will be a fool."* Jer 17:11

When we depend on God to make us, we receive wealth that stays with us permanently. Joseph was promoted in the house of his master by grace. I believe that there were other people in Egypt, probably in the house of Potiphar before Joseph arrived. He could have been one of the many slaves in the house. However, something distinguished him to prosper in his service to his master. The word of God says, *"...and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand."*

A slave who just arrived has been made an overseer over the whole household of this Egyptian officer, even over those who were there before he arrived. Grace will always distinguish you. Grace will take you to places where you will not be able to go using your natural or academic qualifications. Joseph was not just an overseer of the

house but an overseer of the wealth and property of Potiphar.

Can you imagine Joseph being in charge of the various businesses of the man and all the workers as well? Can you imagine Joseph signing a cheque on behalf of Potiphar for various business transactions? Potiphar put all that he had into his hand. When grace locates you, there is no limit to where God will take you. Grace promotes! *Psa 75:6-7 "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."*

If promotion does not come from the east, west nor south, then certainly, it does come from the north. We know from scriptures that the north is God's sitting place. *Psa 48:1-2 "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."* God can make you an overseer. He can lift you up to where He has destined for you. Might and strength will fail.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I'm counting on your grace in Jesus' name. Amen!

HAVE THE MIND TO SERVE

“So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.”

(Neh 4:6)

One of the greatest assets in life is the mind to work. Work mentality is a platform for fruitfulness. No one who has a work mentality will ever be poor in life. The main cause for low productivity and poverty is slothfulness. *“How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.”* (Pro 6:9-11)

When Nehemiah was stirred in his heart to go and rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem, one of the advantages he had was that the people, i.e. the Jews had a mind to work. They possessed the work mentality. So, in spite of the opposition from their enemies, they persisted and worked all day and all night. To appreciate the quality of work they engaged themselves in, let's read the following: *“So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out...”* So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand.” (Neh 4:21-23)

With this work mentality why wouldn't they achieve results? They built and finished it. The work mentality is what makes poor nations and poor people

rise to influence others. Joseph's life is a typical example of what work mentality can achieve in people's lives. We read about how Joseph went from the pit, to prison, to the position of a Prime Minister, and we get fascinated about it. One of the many attributes of Joseph was his work mentality. He didn't just work under Potiphar but he served. We need workers who serve; workers with servant mentality. We must not just work to make ends meet. We must learn to serve wholeheartedly wherever we go. It is the service mentality of Joseph that made him use the grace of God maximally to be promoted as an overseer in the house of Potiphar.

Gen 39:4 “And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over.” We must learn to serve. Work as a servant in any business, whether it's your own business or for others. The way to the top is service. Jesus, our Lord and Saviour said, *“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* (Mar 10:45)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I will learn to serve wherever I go.

DON'T ABUSE THE GRACE

"Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain."

(2Co 6:1)

God's grace can be received in vain when we don't create a place for it to function. The above scripture says "Working together with Him... not to receive the grace of God in vain." This means grace without work renders the grace a vanity. There are many fine believers in many churches always believing God for miracles which never happen. Miracles do not just happen. They are products of divine and human roles. God is always there to help us. However, there is something we must do to tap into that grace. It's faith. Faith does not operate in a vacuum. It operates towards a given goal. Salvation is free but only accessible to those who believe in their hearts and confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord (Rom 10:9-10)

Faith without works is dead (James 2:27). True faith finds something to do with the hands which act as a point of contact for God's blessings. God's word says, *"The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."* (Deu 28:8)

When God pours blessings on us, they look for the hands which are working. God's blessings locate the hands of a working person. In actual fact, the miracle you need is in your hand. The word of God says, *"And by the hands of*

the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people..." (Acts 5:12)

So, God will give you miracles, signs and wonders by your hand. The question is? What has your hand found to do? He will work on them through you. There is grace for work, otherwise we frustrate the grace of God. *"I do not frustrate the grace of God..."* (Gal 2:21)

The grace of God is lying idle in the lives of many believers, waiting to burst forth with unimaginable exploits. The apostle Paul took advantage of the grace of God upon his life and worked very hard such that he could testify that he worked more than all the apostles of the Lord by the grace bestowed on his life. For him, the grace was maximized. It was not in vain *1Co 15:10 "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."*

When we engage in profitable ventures with the grace of God, we will make a great difference in our lives and that of others.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will not take the grace of God in vain but maximize it.

WALKING IN DAILY EXPECTATION

"And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so."

(2Ki 2:9-10)

When Elijah the man of God was about to be taken to heaven by a whirlwind, Elisha followed him with expectation. Indeed, Elisha followed Elijah until the time was near for him to go then he asked Elisha to ask for anything. Elisha then asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit. Elijah made a promise that what Elisha had asked for could be done on condition that he saw him being taken away.

The prophet Elijah said ***"only if you see me being taken, it shall be done"***. It means you must be alert and vigilant. Your eyes must be on him every second, every minute and every hour of the day. It means staying close to him. So many Christians lead loose lives thinking that once God has said something in His word, He will do it. If we don't take His promises and change our attitudes towards his word, nothing will happen. If you know what you really want from God's promises in His word, you will be vigilant, and not give God any breathing space. If you have an expectation, you must be vigilant to manifest that expectation in your life. People who are hopeful have a serious attitude towards God. They take their prayer and word life seriously. They take their fellowship and giving life seriously.

Elisha had to be vigilant to receive the mantle from Elijah. How did he receive it? He saw Elijah being taken away. How did he know where the mantle fell? He saw the direction in which it fell as Elijah was being taken up to heaven. The wind could have blown it somewhere into the bush but he saw it because he was alert otherwise, he could have missed the mantle, the impartation and the blessing. Vigilance is important in bringing our desires to pass. When you pray for something, you need to watch out for the answer.

Eph 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

Don't pray and then forget about it. The answer may come any time after the prayer and if you are not vigilant, the answer may come but you will not be able to identify it.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall be vigilant. I am living in daily expectation. My eyes are open to receive my visitation now in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE POWER OF YOUR WILL

"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Mat 3:1-2)

God made us in His image. When you look at man, you will realize that God made us with the power to make choices. We were made with the power to think. God made man as a tripartite being of spirit, soul and body. *1Th 5:23 "Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

The real man is the spirit. The soul gives us self-consciousness and comprises of the will, emotions and intellect. The will enables us to make choices. The emotions express our feelings and the intellect is the thinking part. God cannot impose Himself on us because He made us as free moral beings to control our environment and make good choices for ourselves. It was against this background that God gave man some specific instructions in the Garden of Eden. Man had to choose either to obey God or the devil. Man was deceived and he used the power of his will to choose to obey the devil instead of God. God didn't stop them from disobeying Him because He made them with the power of choice.

If man used his will to choose the wrong way, man must use the same will to choose the right way. When John the Baptist began his ministry, his main message was, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matt 3:2).

The word "repent" in the Greek means change of mind. Man's mind is very crucial in his salvation. Why? It is because, man used his mind to fall from grace and will still need the mind to rise into grace. It is a matter of choice.

The world of Noah's generation was destroyed with floods because man used his will to commit very wicked atrocities such that God regretted for making man: *Gen 6:5-6 "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart."*

Man's wickedness is an intentional act of choice. Man can use his mind for good or bad, for creation or destruction, for building or demolishing society.

Even if you don't love God, or are not a Christian, you have the right to choose good or bad. Sometimes we attribute all evil to the devil and blame him directly for every evil that happens in society. However, we can stop the devil if we think and choose right.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will think right and choose right over wrong.

CHANGE OF MIND IS YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

"The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

(Gen 6:5)

The thoughts of man come from his thinking faculty called the mind. This is where a lot of decisions and choices are made. In the time of Noah, the very intention of man was evil. Man was always thinking about how to perpetrate evil in society. The only way to reverse this situation is a change of mind. When Jesus came, He preached the message of repentance to his audience as a sequel to John the Baptist's preaching.

This was after the death of John the Baptist: *Mat 4:17 "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*" Jesus had brought the message of salvation to the kingdom of God, and the only responsibility lying on man was to change his mind from his old ways and receive the gift of salvation brought by Jesus. If man could change his mind and follow Jesus, he would be saved.

The reason why God had to send prophets was that He had a better way of life for us, and until we change our mind from our old way of living, we will not be able to walk in the ways of God. Change of mind is a personal responsibility.

Isa 55:7-8 "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly

pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD." God is calling the unrighteous and the wicked to forsake his ways and thoughts and return to God's ways and thoughts. This is something committed to individuals. It is a personal choice. God will only show us the right way and thoughts and it is up to us to use our will to make a choice.

Jer 7:13 "And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them."

Our response to God's call is crucial for our salvation and peace. We attend church regularly to hear the word of God. How much of God's word affects our living? Do we change our thoughts and ways for God's after hearing His word? The onus of repentance is our choice and not God's.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I decide to change my thoughts and ways for God's.

HAVING A READY MIND

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

(Act 17:11)

Since our mind plays an important role in our salvation and the choices we make in life, it is necessary to know certain mental states people possess which are either complimentary or detrimental to their lives. Here are a few examples: We can have a readiness of mind. This means being eager to receive the word of God. The Bereans were eager to receive the word and therefore they were described as nobler than the believers in Thessalonica. This class of believers in Berea were more curious to know the revelation of the word than any other thing. Many believers are more excited about material things than God's word. They meet to talk about dresses, the latest make-up in town and gossip about other people.

The believers in Berea were different. They were more engrossed with the word of God and were eager to know whether the things taught by Paul were true. They studied the word. They did intense research. The Berean church looked more like a Bible study group. Many believers hate Bible studies. Some churches have it before the service begins and very few people will attend it. The Berean's deep hunger for the word of God made them nobler than other churches. The quality of a church is determined by her word life. The spiritual quality of a believer is determined by the level of desire they have for the word and the extent of

impact the word of God has made in their lives.

In a letter to the pastor in charge of Philadelphia, Jesus said, *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: 'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens.' 'I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.'"* (Rev 3:7-10)

Jesus recommended the church of Philadelphia for keeping the word of God and not denying His name. Therefore, she would be preserved against the time of trial. Jesus recommended Mary for sitting at His feet for the word, as against Martha who was more concerned with the material (Luke 10:38-42). When you possess a ready mind for God's word, and express hunger for it, God will be attracted to you and help you in time of need.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I thirst for your word.

THE WILLING MIND

“And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.”

(1Ch 28:9)

The willing mind is the mind that has a desire to please God without being forced to do so. The willing mind is possessed by people whose mind is made up to serve God irrespective of external influences. The above scripture is about David talking to his son Solomon and advising him to serve God with his whole heart and with a willing mind. According to David, God searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought.

The very thought to serve God cannot be kept secret from God. There are many people who serve God for monetary or material gain. God is watching and judging their thoughts. People with a willing mind are not moved by what others say or do. Nothing stops them from rendering their services to God in their church and their mind is firm on serving God for better or for worse. There are people with a willing mind who plan to give generously for God's work. Paul admonished the church in Corinth on giving willingly without being forced to do. *2Co 8:12 “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”*

When you are willing to give you don't take into account what you have or

don't have. Many times, in our church, my wife and I have pledged to give certain amounts beyond our ability not because we have it. The money is not in physical cash but is immaterial, in our hearts. Then, with time after the pledge, God supplies. People who are willing to give need not be coerced to give. It takes a willing mind to give. *2Co 9:7 “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*

People with a willing mind do not grudge within themselves when they are giving. Giving is not a burden on them. Rather, they give cheerfully. Willing minds are cheerful hearts and generous hands. When you give with pain and reluctance, it means you are not really in the right mood to give, or are not really willing to give. We must come to a point in our lives when giving is a joy and delight. It is the joy and cheerfulness in giving that determines how much we give.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I have a willing mind to give. I am a cheerful giver.

A WILLING MIND TO BUILD THE HOUSE OF GOD WITH MATERIAL WEALTH

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass."

(Exo 25:1-3)

Our mind plays a major role in our service to God. In fact, without the use of our mind nothing will move. Whatever goes on in the mind is what comes out in our body or actions. Our choices and decisions are most of the time issues of the mind. God gave us the power of choice when He created man. That was why God didn't descend immediately to stop man when he was deceived to eat the forbidden fruit. We have the power to choose either to serve God or Satan. God will always present us with the right thing to do, but He give us choices. God presented a choice to the children of Israel to build a tabernacle so that He would dwell among them: Exo 25:8 *"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."*

God instructed Moses to throw the challenge to them to bring Him an offering *"...of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart..."* (Exo 25:2). That shows that God does not force us to give. This giving was to build a sanctuary for their benefit. What was the benefit? So, God would dwell among them. Every project of God is for our benefit. It makes God draw closer to us. Before then, God came down on Mount Sinai in a thunder and lightning and flames of fire. This sight

scared them so much that they pleaded with Moses to tell God not to come in that manner again but rather speak to Moses so they would hear from Moses. God wanted to stay close to them, and this He did by the construction of the tabernacle of Moses and the Ark of God.

The call to give in pursuit of this project was a free one. Whosoever decided to give with a willing heart was welcome according to their ability; gold, silver, brass etc. Exo 35:4-5 *"And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying... Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass".*

Giving for church projects is the same. It must come from a willing mind and heart. Nobody should feel despised, peeved, cheated, forced or deceived because he has been asked to give for God's projects. It must always be done with a willing mind. This draws us closer to Him.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am willing to give to build the church.

FREE WILL GIVING IS A FUNCTION OF THE HEART AND A WILLING MIND

“And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD’S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD.”

(Exo 35:21-22)

It is amazing how many believers find it very difficult to offer certain offerings to God. Many find it very challenging to give without complaining in their hearts. When Moses announced to the people of God to bring an offering to build Him a tabernacle, the response of the people was overwhelming.

From the above scriptures we see that everyone whose heart stirred him up, whose spirit made him willing brought the LORD’S offering. It is a matter of the heart; of course, a willing heart. Their willing heart caused them to bring so much that Moses had to stop them from bringing more: *Exo 35:29 “The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.”*

Exo 36:5-7 “And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the

offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.”

When people possess a willing mind and heart, they are not forced to give. They give without limit. They give without much external influence. The influence comes from within, and that makes it more of a personal decision than a group influence. Anyone who gives because others are giving does so out of external influences (probably to avoid disgrace) as though they are under coercion to give. Willingness to give to God is irrespective of how much one has. Someone’s giving may be considered to be little because he has very little but it will attract God’s favour much more than someone who gives more but his giving, in comparison to what he has, can be considered as insignificant. *2Co 8:12 “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will be willing to give according to what I have from today.

A WILLING MIND TO WORK FOR GOD

"So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work."

(Neh 4:6)

The greatest asset to every organization is to have people who are ready and willing to work. So many people apply for job positions only because of what they think they will get out of it.

There are many young men today who want to be pastors or prophets not with a willing mind to work but for the gains of ministry. When Nehemiah went to rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem, he faced very stiff opposition from certain men. He organized the Jews to work day and night despite the opposition. They could have given up on the work due to the opposition and the mockery they encountered.

Neh 4:1-3 "Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, 'What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?' Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, 'Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!'"

How would you feel if the small business you just started was referred to as nothing and something that would fall soon? How would you feel

if people laughed at your wife and children as you build your family and say that you will amount to nothing in life? How would you feel if the building project you just started was mocked by your neighbours saying that you could never finish that project? You will be discouraged. That is what happened to Nehemiah and the Jews. However, because they had a mind to work they didn't give up but continued building until they finished:

Neh 4:6 "So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work".

The mind to work is the platform for great accomplishments in life. It's a firm decision to work till you succeed at it. When you make up your mind to succeed nothing can stop you. In fact, the more you face opposition and mockery the harder you push. In other words, you are not moved by what you hear, what you see and what you feel.

You are only moved by what God says, and the joy of accomplishing your task. Just make up your mind to serve God. Make a firm decision now.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I have my mind made up to serve God.

THE MIND TO BUILD GOD'S HOUSE

"Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel. And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God."

(1Ch 22:6-7)

When you wake up in the morning, what is the first thing that comes into your mind? For most people, where to go to make ends meet is the first on our priority list. Our prayers are all full of requests for ourselves. Nothing clicks in our mind that we must build the house of God. That is why we have so many selfish and backslidden believers who are lukewarm in the things of God.

For such people, attending church regularly is a burden, prayer is a bitter pill, giving is an anathema to them, evangelism is a term from a strange land, and even attending small group fellowship of the church in a home is a great bother. When you study the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, one thing stands out clearly; the kingdom of God. That was why when Jesus came, He gave us a clear path to a peaceful and prosperous life on earth. He said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Mat 6:33)

The struggles of many believers in many churches are as a result of blatantly disobeying the word of the Lord to seek God's kingdom first. Many are worrying about marriage, business, finances, future destiny etc. There is only one key Jesus gave us to

meeting all these. He said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

The "but" presupposes that we can be inclined to seek other things first. David had it in his mind to build the house of God. He really had the mind to build. He was intentional about it. Therefore, he prepared so much resources to build the house of God according to his own testimony:

1Ch 29:2-3 "Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house."

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I decide right now to have a mind to build God's house.

THE WICKED MIND

“The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?”

(Pro 21:27)

God looks at the various sacrifices we bring each time we appear before Him. The Holy Bible is clear about not appearing before God empty: *Exo 23:15 “Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)” Deu 16:16 “Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty”.*

Unbelievers are not expected to give to project God’s cause. They are referred to as wicked. God says, *“The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination...”* (Pro 21:27) It is not in line with the Bible for Christians to give envelopes to unbelievers to build the house of God. They are already called children of the devil, and we know that God will not need other children to build what is His. God is more than able to build His own. He expects His household to take care of household chores. We are the household of faith and therefore must be responsible to God our father with regards to what happens in the house.

Gal 6:10 “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

So, in the first place, it is wrong to solicit help from unbelievers. Secondly, we who are the members of the house must take responsibility by giving to better the life in the house. We must give to help the house grow through evangelism. We must give to build the physical structure where we meet and worship our God. We must do everything possible to keep the house going; cleaning, mopping, washing, painting, decorating, etc. It is our responsibility.

However, there are some members of the house who possess a wicked mind. They think like unbelievers. The see giving to keep the church going as a waste of money and as cheating or robbing them of their resources. They enjoy music but they don’t care to know that the musical instruments are bought and maintained with money. Every equipment, from fans to air conditioners and the church offices are all maintained with money. The pastors are paid to equip the saints to do ministry work (Eph. 4:11-12). The church pays power, water and refuse collection bills.

It is therefore unfair to come to church and enjoy the church facilities without contributing anything to its upkeep. Please sit up and change your wicked mind. Don’t appear in church empty.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse the wicked mind set. I will give.

THE HARDENED MIND

"But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will."

(Dan 5:20-21)

Nebuchadnezzar was blessed by God as a great king over all the nations in the then world. The elevation to authority and fame produced in him a proud mind. In fact, the scripture describes him as having a mind hardened in pride. So, there is what is called a hardened mind. When one's mind is hardened in pride, one becomes stiff-necked in receiving any meaningful and helpful advice. Every hardened mind is a product of pride and arrogance. Pride is caused by many factors such as spiritual, social and political status, divinely endowed gifts and abilities, and superiority and inferiority complexes.

Nebuchadnezzar was hardened in his mind because of his political status. He felt like there was none in his kingdom like him. The false impression that his might and ability were what made him what he was made his mind and heart elated above the expected limits. People who attribute their success to their shrewdness, skill and abilities hardly give God the glory for everything. Rather, they become very proud in their achievements. When they are going off-track in their quest for power, opulence and wealth, they don't listen to wisdom.

King Herod became a great king in the Roman Empire. He began to mount up persecution against the Christians. He killed James, the brother of John with the sword and caught Peter to do same. However, the church prayed, and God sent an intervention from heaven. He felt so proud in his days. Then one day the worst happened: *Act 12:21-23 "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. , And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."*

Pride always goes before a fall. A hardened mind will not listen to wisdom until the worst happens. He doesn't listen to reason because of an undue air of importance he entertains. Sometimes people like that entertain the notion that they are above all others and can do whatever they wish. Hardened minds soon fall with ease.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will soften my mind in humility.

THE RIGHT MIND

"And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid."

(Mar 5:15)

It is amazing how sometimes certain people in society possess a deviant behaviour. A deviant behaviour is an attitude that falls short of societal expectations. It is also referred to as divergent or non-standard life. To summarize a deviant behaviour we can use the word abnormal. Jesus met a man possessed with demons with a deviant behaviour.

He is described in the following terms: *Mar 5:2-5 "And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones."*

No human being in his right frame of mind would have his dwelling in the tombs and do what this man did then. He possessed a supernatural strength that enabled him to break all fetters and chains he was bound with. Moreover, nobody could tame him. When Jesus met him, He cast some demons from him and he came back to his senses. After the deliverance session all who came to him saw that he was clothed and in his right mind. This

presupposes that when he was under demonic oppression and possession he was not in his right mind.

We can possess a right or wrong mind set. We can think rightly and think wrongly. The man had a wrong mind set because he was under demonic influence. When the demons were cast out, he had the right mind set. We must therefore understand that there are unseen forces that have the capacity to control the way people think. It is very important to know that people's mind-set dictate their behaviour. *Pro 23:7 "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."*

We are what we think. We do what we think. We speak what we think. Every behaviour is controlled by a mind-set. If God is able to affect our mind, we will lean toward God and act in ways that are godly. If Satan affects our mind, we will lean toward him and act in ways that are satanic. The said man in the tomb had a satanic influence on him to act abnormally. We must check and screen ourselves to see if our mind-set is influenced by God or Satan.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse the mind-set of Satan.

AVENUES OF THE MIND

“For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.”

(Luk 1:44)

The mind is a room with doors and windows. When we are born into the world, we come with no evil in our mind. Babies are lovely and harmless. Well, every baby has a mind of their own. They think. We cannot really tell what goes on in the minds of babies. Babies really start thinking right from the womb.

I read a story about Mary and Elizabeth when they shared greetings and the baby John in the womb of Elizabeth leaped for joy at the greeting of Mary: *Luk 1:39-43 “In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?’”*

The scripture says *“For...when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in her womb leaped for joy.”*

This means the baby responded to sound. We know that our mind controls our actions. So, what activated the baby was what he heard that stimulated his mind. So, we can identify the ears as doors or windows of the mind. As harmless as that baby

was in the womb, he heard something that put his feet to dancing for joy. The baby John leaped in her womb: *Luk 1:41 “And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb...”*

So, babies possess a mind. They always come with something in their mind. When they arrive in the world, their parents, environment and society also make inputs into their mind. The lifestyle of young men and women are formed by these interactions mentioned. If the interactions make positive inputs, they grow to become good in society and vice versa. So, the end of life of adults is a product of the inputs they allow in their mind in their growing years. One avenue of the mind is your ear. Everything that goes into the mind passes through your ear first. Another avenue is your eye. Whatever you see enters straight into your mind.

The Bible says, *Job 31:1 “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?”* We think of what we see, then we act or react. So, we must be careful of what we hear or see. They are avenues into our mind.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will protect my mind from today.

EFFECTS OF WHAT WE SEE AND HEAR ON OUR ACTIONS

"And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)"

(2Pe 2:7-8)

Many good believers have backslidden from the Christian life because of their inability to discipline their ears and eyes. Since the devil is aware that what we see and hear can impact us, he uses these avenues to his advantage. Most Television and Radio Stations bombard society with all sorts of materials that are unhealthy to the ears and eyes of man. Nude pictures, violence, drugs etc are what dominate our screens in many nations. The rising spate of armed robbery, kidnappings, gun violence, serial killings, etc are all products of films young people watch.

Lot was Abraham's nephew. A time came they had to separate from each other because of the magnitude of their wealth. Abraham gave him the opportunity to choose where he preferred. He chose the Fertile Crescent of the Jordan River in the neighbourhood of Sodom and Gomorrah; cities of immorality. Our scripture above says that he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds, seeing and hearing their filthy conduct. When you live in a certain environment for a long time, it affects you in many ways. You then accept the status quo; this is the life here, this is how things are done here, this is the way I must speak and carry about myself. Even if you are very righteous, you need to

protect yourself from the filth around in order to stay on top of your spiritual life. Those things you see and hear bombard your mind and can become topics for meditation rather than focusing completely on the word and work of God.

Our associations can also have a remarkable impact on our lives because, we see and hear what our associates do. The old adage holds true that "birds of the same feathers flock together." The Holy Bible says that, *"Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals."* (1Co 15:33) A little rot among grains has the tendency to spread across a large spectrum, and if not checked can destroy the whole grain. *"Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"* (1Co 5:6). We are advised not to keep company with evil doers. Be careful of the company you associate with. If you make gossips and murmurers your company, when trouble falls on them, you will not be exempted. When God deals with them, you will never escape. It happened to a group of Levites who murmured against Moses and Aaron (Num 16:1-11) God killed them (Num 16:31-32).

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I refuse to join company with evil friends in Jesus' name. Amen!

INDOCTRINATING THE MIND

“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: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest” (Heb 8:10-11)

God knows the power of the mind. If He could ever affect our lives, He would go for our mind. Just when the Israelites arrived in the wilderness, God gathered them to give them laws to govern their lives. One would ask: why the Laws and Commandments? God gave the Laws and commandments to guide their lives. The laws could be divided into spiritual, civil and military. When the mind is influenced by the ways and laws of God, attitudes would also be shaped by same. That is why we need the word of God in our minds to guide our walk on earth. In the New Covenant, God said He would put His laws into our mind and write them in our hearts.

The devil, also knowing that this works perfectly, when the mind is captured, also infiltrates people's mind with the wrong stuff. We have what is commonly called seducing spirits, which are responsible for peddling wrong doctrines in the world culminating in the formation of false religions: 1Ti 4:1-2 *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron”* The Holy Spirit has already indicated

the possible emergence of such spirits. Their doctrines are called doctrines of devils. They teach what could be a slight deviation from the original gospel handed to us by the Lord Jesus Christ through His apostles. Apostle Paul was worried about this, when he addressed the churches in Galatia as follows: Gal 1:6-8 *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”*

Those who pervert the gospel of Christ are called cults. They preach what seems to be very similar in content to the gospel to but is false. Understand that almost the truth is not truth but a lie. Once people believe in them they fashion their lives according to those doctrines and are headed for hell. We advise you to love God's word and not follow any other gospel.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will stick to the word of truth and be saved.

DOUBTFUL MIND

"If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind"

(Luk 12:28-29)

The greatest setback and tragedy for believers is when they entertain a doubtful mind. A doubtful mind is a one that cannot believe God's word. His mind cannot accept the reality of the word. Jesus was establishing a divine law which would be the way for prospering His people in the key scripture. He found out that many of God's people worry like the unbelievers do. Our main worry bothers around what to eat, wear and drink, which form the basic necessities of life. Over time, there have been other things added which are also considered necessities. They are a place to live, a means of transportation, cell phones etc.

Jesus referred to those seeking these material things at the expense of the things of God as having little faith. Little faith people worry about material things and go all out seeking for them, not able to believe that when they follow God first, He will supply their needs. Jesus showed them the law as follows: *Mat 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

A doubtful mind and a little faith person will not seek first the kingdom of God, but seek other things first. He places his own needs first before the needs of the kingdom of God.

For instance, he would rather sleep in on a Sunday morning if he feels tired rather than go to church. Such people seek self-gratification rather than the edification of the church. It means they don't believe that when they put God and all things about His kingdom first, all things they seek shall be added to them.

The devil succeeds in convincing believers that it is a waste of time praying, reading the Bible, attending church and small group meetings, evangelising etc. Somehow, there are many believers who are lukewarm in very serious things concerning the kingdom, and follow their own plans and purposes for their lives. They don't believe in Jesus. They possess a doubtful mind. Doubtful minded and little faith people entertain fear that they will fail if they only seek God's kingdom first as it happened to Peter when he began to walk on the sea: *Mat 14:30-31 "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will seek the kingdom of God first.

DOUBLE MINDEDNESS

“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

(Jas 1:8)

The difference between a doubtful minded person and a double-minded person is that the doubtful minded person is flat in his faith towards God's provision but the double minded person is confused as to whether God will answer him or not. In essence both are the same because both categories of people will never receive anything from the Lord. A double minded person is actually divided in his opinion about God. He is unsure of God's promises to heal, bless, prosper, promote to greatness, provide our needs etc. He wavers in his faith. The Bible is clear about him in the following: *Jas 1:5-7* “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”

A double minded person is tossed to and fro because he is not stable in Christ. Unstable believers can never receive anything from the Lord. Every wave of life tosses them anywhere. Sometimes, they are even tossed by false doctrines. Many run around looking for instant miracles from prophets. They are unstable in God's word and in their local churches. Such double minded unstable people are also referred to as children in the faith: *Eph 4:14* “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of

doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”.

They are deceived by reason of their double and shallow mindedness. Paul warned the believers of Corinth to be careful of ministers of the devil who transform themselves into ministers of God whose only business is to deceive: *2Co 11:13-15* “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

Double minded Christians endanger their lives by their unstable nature in their faith and the church they belong. They end up with nothing, only to start all over again. Paul expressed fear for such people because their mind is easily deceived: *2Co 11:3* “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” You need to strengthen your faith with the word of God. Let your mind be affected by the Word so you will be toughened enough to resist wavering.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to be stable in my mind and in your word. Amen!

CORRUPTED MIND

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

(2Co 11:3)

A sister who was coming to church regularly just stopped without informing anybody. All the pastors went following her up. She didn't come back. Later it was heard from her friends that she was browsing the internet and connected with a group on the web who taught that there is no need to attend church. They teach that you can have church in your room. In fact, a lot of such religions even teach strongly against giving and paying tithes. These teachings corrupted her mind thereby influencing her to stop attending church.

The devil targets people's minds, especially believers, to woo them back to him so he would have many people to accompany him to hell. A corrupted mind is one which has an original hold of the truth but turns against the truth due to false teaching from false brethren. There are religious people called false brethren. The Apostle Paul fell among them during his missionary activities: *2Co 11:26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen,... in perils among false brethren"*

The objective of false brethren is to bring new believers, and of course unstable ones, who don't know their rights in Christ and the truth of the word of God, into bondage. They try to spoil the mind of people concerning Jesus Christ, the church, their pastors etc.

People with a corrupt mind are also able to corrupt innocent ones easily. They divide friends and the company of good people by peddling false news about them. They are gossips and tattlers. We have been warned sternly about them in the Bible: *1Ti 5:13 "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."* They go from house to house, brother to brother and sister to sister speaking lies and painting good people black. They are called busy bodies. Their busyness is destroying people through gossip. They corrupt church members against other members of the church and the entire organization. What we witness in our churches today didn't start today. It began in the early church. Paul faced that problem and addressed it to his pastors: *Tit 1:10-11 "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."* To subvert means to destabilize or sabotage. We must be careful of saboteurs in our churches. When they leave, they continue to speak evil of their church. We must stop their mouths.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will close my mind to members of corrupt minds.

READINESS OF MIND (1)

“And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so”
(Act 17:10-11)

Marching orders are vital for the preparation of people to act. All around the world soldiers are called to parade with marching orders. Marching is aimed at getting the attention of the soldiers. It's all about readiness to combat. It is to make sure that they are ready for war. Readiness must first be seen in our mind because when the mind is very ready, the body will respond automatically. Apostle Paul went to a place called Berea on his missionary activity. He met some disciples there who received the word of God with all readiness of mind. The Greek word “prothumia” for the phrase “readiness of mind” means forwardness of mind, alacrity and willing mind.

These believers were willing to learn. The term readiness of mind portrays a state of eagerness, enthusiasm and keenness. It shows an attitude of promptness and speed. It was like, they were in a hurry to grab everything Paul taught them. In view of this, the Bible says, they searched the scriptures daily, whether those things which Paul taught were so. There are many believers who are bored with the teaching of the word of God. Many really hate group Bible study much less when they are left alone. They are never excited when a church declares a period of reading the Bible or joining a Bible class. When we started Sunday school in our church before church starts, many began to

skip it and only arrive for the worship service. The numbers began dwindling in the Bible study class until we decided to change the time. After every service we engaged everybody in about thirty minutes Bible class before we gave announcements and benediction. Those who didn't like it had no choice because once they were in the service, they had to join the class.

The Bible described the believers in Berea as more noble than those in Thessalonica because of their readiness of mind to search the scriptures daily. The Greek word translated noble also means high in rank and generous. That shows their superiority. Their clout as a great church was evidenced by their eagerness to know the word of God. This attitude is what makes great followers and Christians. David was no different, hence his rise to fame and influence: *Psa 119:98 “Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.”*

When you attach this kind of ready-mindedness to the word of God, you will live above your enemies and the challenges you face towards the achievement of your destiny.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am ready for the word of God.

READY MINDEDNESS (2)

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.”

(Act 17:11-12)

Our readiness to hear the word of God and search the scriptures daily is a platform for building a giant faith in our walk with God. Paul went to Berea to preach the word of God and found out that the people there were nobler than those in Thessalonica. Their superiority was measured by their eagerness to hear and search the word of God on a daily basis. As a result of that many of them believed. We need faith in everything we do. We need faith daily in our lives to confront the nutty issues we face each day. However, how do we get this faith? Faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God. (Rom 10:17). The impact made on the faith of the Berean believers was generated by their readiness to search the scriptures daily to find the truth for themselves. A superior church is judged by how much word they like and the impact of the word on their lives.

We read that, “...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Searching connotes an intentional investment of time and energy to discover a hidden truth. When they found it, their lives were impacted and it produced in them a noble character superior to the believers in Thessalonica. We can compare churches and believers. This comparison of believers is not the first

in scripture. Apostle Paul planted so many churches in his ministry. He also visited them in order to strengthen their faith: *Act 16:4-5 “And as they went through the cities...And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.”* Paul went through cities he planted churches and strengthened them. As a church planter he knew the spiritual state of the churches he visited. He made a fair comparison and concluded that the Berean church was superior to the Thessalonica church.

Paul compared the spiritual and material state of the churches in Macedonia and that of Corinth and discovered that the Macedonian churches were more generous than the Corinthian churches because they gave beyond their capacity by the grace of giving God bestowed on them: *2Co 8:1-2 “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.”* We must therefore seek to measure up to God’s standard. Don’t be lazy. Rise up and love God’s word. It’s your way to a glorious future.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord help me to love your word.

READY MINDED PEOPLE SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me"

(Job 5:39)

If you are really serious with the Lord, you will take the scriptures very seriously. Jesus knew this when He told the religious people of His time to search the scriptures in order to have eternal life because the same scriptures testified of Him. If you want to know Jesus very well, then search the scriptures. Many believers don't have time for the word of God. Therefore, they lack knowledge of the God they are worshipping. The greatest way to serve God is to know God.

Hos 6:3 "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

The way to total freedom from every oppression of the devil is to know the truth. We cannot walk in the truth when we don't know the truth, hence our intense search for the truth. *Joh 8:31-32 "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

Discovery of the truth is crucial for our blessing. Many believers hardly read the Bible. There are many charlatan prophets and pastors in town who also preach from this same Bible but present twisted revelation of the word of God for selfish ambition. That is why we must be ready minded and search the

scriptures daily. Valuable things are not so easily found on the surface of the earth. It's always hidden under the earth. Most valuable minerals are hard to find in the earth and mountains. God also hides valuable things to be sought for by those who value them.

Pro 25:2 "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter." We hail King Solomon for his vast amount of wisdom. He is said to be the wisest man on earth in his generation. But do you know what Solomon did? He searched out wisdom: *Ecc 1:13 "And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith."* That was why the believers in Berea were considered to be more noble than those in Thessalonica, for *"...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."* (Acts 17:10).

Learn the art of searching the scriptures for divine truths, and it will enrich your life.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to search and know your truth.

HUMILITY OF MIND (1)

“Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house.”

(Act 20:19-20)

Can the mind be said to be humble? We have a proud mind which is also referred to as a mind hardened in pride. Dan 5:20 *“But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him...”* Nebuchadnezzar was said to have a mind hardened in pride when he became a great king in the East. God eventually deposed him and gave him the heart of a beast to wander in the wilderness for seven years. Just as we have a mind hardened in pride, we can also have a mind of humility. It can also be referred to as humility of mind.

Anybody with a humble mind is capable of doing all kinds of menial jobs. He can be sent on all errands. He is like a servant. We are admonished to have a humble mind like Christ. Christ possessed a humble mind resulting in His coming to the earth to be a servant.

Php 2:5-8 *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”*

The elements of a humble mind are that you must be ready to lose your reputation. No matter your social or spiritual status you must be ready to go and do what God asks you to do even if you think it is below your status. Your status must be rendered useless if you possess a humble mind like Jesus who left His position as God to become a man for the sake of the cross. Reputation can be a great hindrance to humility of mind.

Paul had to forgo his reputation as a lawyer and a high-profile religious leader to obey Christ and go to the Gentiles who were considered unclean in order to preach to them. Then with all humility of mind, he went preaching in public places and from house to house, *“Serving the Lord with all humility of mind... but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house”* (Acts 20:19-20).

Humble minded people are servants who carry God's message to people both publicly and from house to house. If you can do this you are humble minded.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I force myself to be humble minded in Jesus' name.

HUMILITY OF MIND (2)

“Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations... And how kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house.”

(Act 20:19-20)

One of the greatest requirements of humble minded people is service. Anyone who says he is humble must be seen to be serving. Humble service is the status of everyone who decides to follow and be like Jesus. There are many people in churches today who only attend church services without joining the services/departments of their churches. They enjoy good sermons, cordial pastoral care and relationships, and many more but will never serve in any capacity in the church.

Do you know what it takes to have a single church service? There are some brothers and sisters in a ministry called sanctuary keepers. They come to the auditorium to clean and sweep the environs on Saturdays to make sure the place is ready for service. The chair you sit on must be well cleaned. Then we have the technical men. They also come on Saturday to tune the equipment to ensure we have good sound and also make sure all technical gadgets are in shape. We have an I.T department who also ensure we can project scriptures, songs etc. on the screens to make it easy for worship and preaching. We have choirs who minister beautifully. They attend rehearsals to make sure they can deliver quality, inspiring and anointed music for every service. We have our security team who take care of members' cars while we sit in church enjoying a wonderful service. There

are people called sheepfold leaders who take care of members welfare in their communities; visiting the sick, encouraging the backslidden and standing with the pastors to shepherd members in their communities.

We have ushers who help with seating people nicely in the church. There are other ministries which all help the church to be what it is. Apart from all this, the most humble minded members of the church who care for souls come to the church and go around the neighbourhood to preach the gospel to unsaved souls. Paul preached publicly and from house to house to win souls. The greatest service you can render in God's kingdom is to bring people to the cross for salvation, for that was why Jesus our saviour came. *1Co 1:18-19 “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise....”* If you cannot preach the cross to the unsaved you are proud. Secondly, you are unwise if you don't preach the saving power of the cross. This is so because the preaching of the cross is the highest form of wisdom.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I humble myself to preach the cross to save souls.

REPROBATE MIND

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient”

(Rom 1:28)

A reprobate mind is also called a debased mind. The following versions of the key scripture will bring out better the biblical meanings of reprobate: (BBE) *“And because they had not the mind to keep God in their knowledge, God gave them up to an evil mind, to do those things which are not right;”* (ESV) *“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.”* (GW) *“And because they thought it was worthless to acknowledge God, God allowed their own immoral minds to control them. So they do these indecent things.”* (ISV) *“Furthermore, because they did not think it worthwhile to keep knowing God fully, God delivered them to degraded minds to perform acts that should not be done.”*

People who decide to get rid of God in their mind replace Him with an evil, immoral or degraded mind. When a mind is described as evil, the actions of such people with such a mind are also evil. It was this kind of mind possessed by the generation of Noah that caused their destruction by God in the floods: *Gen 6:5 “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*

An evil mind gives birth to all kinds of immorality. It is the doorway of satanic activities. As a matter of fact,

people with an evil mind perpetuate evil in society through drugs, sodomy, armed robbery, suicide bombing etc. The Bible clearly describes the immoral acts of evil-minded people as follows: *Rom 1:28-31 “And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.”*

If we refuse to retain God in our mind or acknowledge Him as God, then we and society at large become endangered species. Security becomes threatened and peace is taken away. It is therefore not good to have a reprobate mind. It is against this background that we are advised to keep our mind on God: *Isa 26:3 “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.”* To keep your mind on God, keep your mind on the word. This is equal to meditating in the word of God. *“Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.”* (Ps 119:97)

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse a reprobate mind and receive God's word.

MEDITATING IN THE WORD OF GOD: THE WAY TO RETAIN GOD IN OUR MIND

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.”

(Psa 1:1-3)

Our mind controls our actions immensely. Whatever we think of is actually what we do. The thoughts that go into our mind has the tendency to be executed to the letter. Do you know why Jesus warned us against looking at the opposite sex lustfully in our hearts? *Mat 5:27-28 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* When you look at something, it registers in your heart and you start thinking about it. As you keep thinking about the images you store in your mind, they drop into the heart and begin to drive you to activate it into the reality. The mind is very powerful!

In order to block all evil things that try to infiltrate your mind, it is better to fill your mind with the word of God. When your mind is full of the word you stand a chance of outwitting all other things that bombard your thoughts. That is why meditation is very good for us as believers.

To meditate means to ponder, imagine, mourn, mutter, roar, speak, study, talk, utter, etc. The Bible says to

meditate in the word day and night. Early morning, noonday and night season should see us meditating in the word of God. Then whatever we do shall prosper. You can take a scripture and ponder over it as you pray, walk or sit in your office, etc. Since it also means to speak, talk, or utter, you can murmur the word. You can say it to yourself: “I wish above all things that you prosper and be in health as your soul prospers.” I am prospering according to the word of the Lord in Jesus’ name.

Meditation in the word of God should be a lifetime thing. It must be done daily. The Bible says, “...day and night...” When your mind is full of the word day and night, your actions will also be full of the word day and night. We must enjoy doing it willingly and not out of compulsion. *Psa 104:34 “My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.”*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will enjoy meditating in the word of God to keep my mind on God.

THE CARNAL MIND

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

(Rom 8:7)

A carnal mind is a mind that is set on the flesh. The English Standard Version (ESV) says, *“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.”* The flesh refers to the old nature of Adam which is purely controlled by the devil. When you are born again, your spirit is saved but your soul is not saved. Your soul goes through what we call progressive salvation. Your body will be saved on the day of resurrection. The soul contains three faculties called the will, mind and emotions. These faculties are under our control. We can deploy them for good or bad. They can team up with the body to control the spirit. They can also team up with the spirit to control the flesh. When the mind teams up with the body to control the spirit of man, we call it a carnal mind. When the mind teams up with the spirit to control the body, we call it a spiritual mind.

The above scripture says that the carnal mind is enmity with God. In other words, the mind that is set on the flesh is an enemy of God. The reason is that the carnal mind is controlled by the devil, and the devil is an enemy of God. So, when you set your mind on carnal things you become an enemy of God. The reason why many believers struggle with their walk with God is that they are still tied to the old nature because they have set their mind on things in the flesh, thus making themselves enemies of God.

Carnality in the church is a very dangerous cancer that affects the ability of the church to break out and affect the world. Carnal believers are so carnal that they don't have time to pursue spiritual things. They can't pray. They can't fast. They have no desire to read the Bible. Evangelism is not in their vocabulary. Attending church regularly is a serious challenge. Giving in church is a burden. Everything spiritual is hard to understand. Carnally minded believers have the penchant to manifest the following traits as written in the Holy Scriptures below:

Gal 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

The danger in remaining carnally minded is that “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Therefore, every believer who is really serious about his salvation must be spiritually minded.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to be carnal from today.

CARNALLY MINDED BELIEVERS

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able”

(1Co 3:1-2)

The mind is very crucial in making decisions for ourselves. Every action taken is a product of the mind. What we put in the mind is what we put out of the mind, i.e., our actions. When we get born again the mind remains the same, except that, it is tilted toward Christ as a result of the decision to accept Christ. A change of mind is known as renewal of mind or repentance. The initial repentance must graduate into progressive repentance to ensure that we grow into the image of Christ in righteousness and true holiness. That is why we are admonished to renew our mind: *Eph. 4:23-24 “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”*

Renewal of mind is a personal responsibility. It is very important to understand this because many believers claim to leave many things in the hands of God when in fact, they must take personal responsibility to overcome certain things in their lives in order to live for God. It was in this light that Paul had to plead with the believers in Rome to ensure the renewal of their mind in order to serve God acceptably: *Rom 12:1-2 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,*

which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

When our mind is renewed it will help us to prove what is the good will of God, His acceptable will and finally His perfect will. However, when we allow the mind to remain in carnality, we lend ourselves to so many evils. Apostle Paul addressed the Corinthian believers as carnal, who couldn't receive spiritual things because they were babies. Carnal believers find it difficult to receive spiritual meat. They can't take certain types of teachings because their carnal mindedness overrides their spirituality. Moreover, they are quarrelsome, divisive and exhibit all sorts of traits evidenced in infants and babies: *“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1Co 3:3).* These baby traits create a great stumbling block in their way to growing into spiritual maturity.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will fight hard to overcome my carnality in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE SPIRITUAL MIND

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace”

(Rom 8:6)

Every believer can be carnally minded or spiritually minded. There is no neutral ground to this realm of the spirit. The carnally minded believer is more caught up with the things of the flesh, but the spiritually minded believer is more caught up with the things of the spirit: *Rom 8:5* “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” In every church, we can locate these two categories of believers. The carnal believers don’t show much interest in the spiritual programs of the church. Every church has a spiritual calendar they follow. Secondly every church has regular spiritual programs to enrich the spiritual lives of her members. Among them are church services on Sundays, and other week day meetings where teaching of the word of God and prayer are dominant. You see, the main ministry of pastors is prayer and the ministry of the word of God.

Act 6:3-4 “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.” When the disciples were looking for people to serve tables, the apostles settled it once and for all that they couldn’t leave God’s word and serve tables but would give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. Hence every church program comprises of prayer and the ministry of the word. These church programs are very important for the spiritual growth

of believers. However, carnal believers never show interest in them. They only attend church on Sundays to show up as a formality.

Spiritual believers are almost always everywhere every day. According to Pareto, eighty percent of the profits in every company is produced by twenty percent of the staff, hence the 80/20 principle. This could be true for churches too, where the eighty percent of the church’s load is borne by only twenty percent of the congregation. This spiritually minded people are the same people who are regular attendees, pay tithes regularly, do evangelism, attend week day meetings, and are involved in church ministries, etc.

The outcome of being spiritually minded is a good life on earth, eternal life after earth and peace on earth, but that of the carnally minded is death both spiritual and physical. That means, if you remain carnally minded until physical death, you may be heading to hell. In other words, those who are spiritually minded enjoy peace of mind in business, health etc. They are more addicted to spiritual things such that challenges they face don’t overwhelm them. What easily overcomes carnally minded believers and breaks them down is not able to overcome spiritually minded believers.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I choose to be spiritual.

HOW TO BE SPIRITUALLY MINDED

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit"

(Rom 8:4-5)

God wants us to be spiritually minded. This is because being spiritually minded makes us friends with God. Believers who are carnally minded make themselves enemies of God according to the following scriptures: *Rom 8:7-8 "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."* Those who are carnal cannot subject themselves to the law of God which is also called the law of the Spirit of life: *Rom 8:2 "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* Those who walk in the flesh or are carnally minded cannot please God at all because their flesh rules them against the desires of the Spirit. That is why those who walk in the flesh cannot please God and end up becoming enemies of God. If you are an enemy of God, He will not hear your prayer because the sacrifice (prayer) of the wicked is an abomination to God. (Pro 15:8)

So how do we become spiritually minded? Our key scripture says that we can walk after the flesh or after the Spirit. If you are too much preoccupied with the things of the flesh above the things of the Spirit you cannot become spiritually minded. To be spiritually minded you must walk after the things of the Spirit or seek after the

things of the Spirit. The following are stated as things of the Spirit we should walk after: *Gal 5:18-23 "...But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."* You must be led by the Holy Spirit and walk in love and joy daily, and continue to flow in the rest. These are character traits of one who is spiritually minded. Practical living that demands and creates the platform for spiritual mindedness are the following areas:

DAILY PRAYER: *1Th 5:17 "Pray without ceasing." Luk 18:1 "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" Luk 21:36 "Watch ye therefore, and pray always..." Eph 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer..." Col 4:2 "Continue in prayer, and watch..."*

BIBLE STUDY: Studying the Bible daily is a sure way to be spiritual. *Act 17:11 "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse carnality.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MIND

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind”

(Eph 4:23)

Understanding the way the mind works is crucial in our quest to following Christ successfully. This is because the state of the mind determines the state of our actions. Whatever we think is what we do. Therefore, keying into our mind the right stuff will result in acting rightly. *Pro 23:7 “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.”*

Unlike the spirit of man, the mind is not saved. The mind goes through continuous salvation in what we call renewal of mind. The salvation of the mind is done through the word of God. God’s word says, *“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” (Jas 1:21)*

There is the spirit part of the mind and the physical or earthly part of the mind. The spirit part of the mind focuses on spiritual things. When our mind is on God and how to please Him, it is the spirit part of man at work. When we think of reading the Bible, reading Christian literature, praying, going to win souls, giving to bless someone and many more things that we are enjoined in the Holy Scriptures to do, we are being spiritual.

Our key scripture says we should be renewed in the spirit of our mind. To renew means to change or reintroduce, repeat, restart, recommence, renovate, repair, restore etc. This gives us an

idea of a previous better mind-set which may have been lost and must be reinstated. Our mind-set was received from our first parents when they died spiritually and lost the glory of God. That mind-set is simply called a corrupt mind: *1Ti 6:5 “Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.” 2Ti 3:8 “Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.”*

Whenever we talk about corruption, we must trace it to Adam’s nature; *“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt...” (Eph. 2:22)*. This nature is overcome when we renew this mind on a constant basis with the word of God in order to live like Christ, and allow the nature of Christ to be revealed in us. *Eph 4:23 “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; Eph 4:24 “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”*

So, engage the word of God daily so you can enjoy daily renewal of mind. Let the spirit part of your mind stay on the things of God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will allow the spirit of my mind to be more active every day.

EARTHLY MINDEDNESS

"Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

(Php 3:19)

The spirit part of us focuses on God and what concerns Him. We must therefore think of spiritual things more than earthly things. Those who concentrate on only earthly things end up in shame because all they want is what will satisfy their belly. Everything they do and say are directed by the lust of the stomach. We call it stomach direction. God is not saying that we shouldn't eat or drink but rather that they should not be our first priority.

Jesus said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Mat 6:33).

He also taught us to pray like this: *"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread."* (Matt 6:9-11).

He placed God first, His kingdom second, His will third and our needs fourth. This is called kingdom priority.

When we turn the order and put our needs first, we can be described as earthly minded. This state of mind drives us not to go to church, pray, win souls, give, read the Bible, and do things that are spiritual. When we focus on earthly things above the spiritual, we tend to oppose the will and desires of God. For instance, when Jesus revealed to the disciples that He would die, Peter took it wrongly.

Mat 16:22 *"Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."* He didn't seem to understand the mission of Jesus on earth. Jesus' mission to die was on a purely spiritual ground. People might look at Him and pity Him. When He was going to be crucified, many women wept for Him but Jesus asked them to weep for themselves because He knew what His death would accomplish for humanity. So Peter's rebuke of Jesus was also counteracted by Jesus in the following: Mat 16:23 *"But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'"*

Peter was earthly minded, not spiritually minded. He was too natural. Jesus attributed Peter's attitude to Satan's influence. That natural earthly inclination, according to Jesus, was a hindrance to Him. This means that everyone who sets his mind on the things of men can be a hindrance to the work of Jesus. Set your mind on spiritual things, and the benefit will be real. Col 3:2 *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will commit myself to spiritual things.

THE ABOVE MENTALITY

"For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."

(Rom 8:6)

Our mind controls our behaviour in everything. The state of our mind determines the state of our body and our actions. Indeed, when the mind is not controlled, our actions will also be out of control. That is why it is very important to filter out the things that go into our mind. The above scripture spells out the outcome of setting our mind on the flesh and the spirit. When we become fleshly minded, it results in death. Death is the absence of life. You will never enjoy life well if your thinking pattern is controlled by your body.

However, when you set your mind on the Spirit, life and peace are guaranteed. Your struggles will stop. There will be freedom to prosper and be in health without any interference. This is the life God wants for us. Setting the mind on spiritual things also means setting it on things above. We are admonished by God in His word to set our affection on things above.

Col 3:2 "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." We know that when Jesus died on the cross and He resurrected, He sat on the right hand side of the Father far above: Eph 1:20 "that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places."

Eph 1:21 "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion."

Jesus is there right now in the heavenly places. We are also sitting there with Him according to scripture: *"and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6)* The above scripture means therefore that we are ruling with Christ in heavenly places, so we must think from above and not below. When faced with an issue, the first thing that must come into our mind is; how should a heavenly seated person think? Our thinking or mind-set sets the tone for further deliberations and discussion on tackling the situation.

Jesus came from above and therefore is above all. John the Baptist saw this and said, *"He must increase, but I must decrease." He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all."* *Joh 3:30-31*

If this is the case, then we who sit with Christ are also above all. We supersede earthly barriers and challenges. They will come but we are more than conquerors to overcome them. We must portray the "above all" mentality to assess our possessions.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am above all because Jesus is above all.

THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT (1)

“And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God”

(Rom 8:27)

God the Spirit has a mind of His own. God is a spirit. We can only communicate with God from the realm where He is. When God created man, He made him a spirit being and gave him a body so that he could communicate with God with his spirit and communicate with the world with his body.

1Th 5:23 “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We must also understand that God is one but reveals Himself in three persons. *Gen 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” Take note of “let us,” “our image,” and “our likeness.”*

We all know that “us” and “our” are plural. However, the image is only one. It says “image” instead of “images”. Meaning that even though the us is more than one person, they all have one image. When man sinned against God, He said, *“Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil...” (Gen 3:22).* Take note of “...like one of us...” So, this suggests that God exist in plurality.

This assertion was confirmed when God saw the Tower of Babel and wanted to stop man from continuing

this project. The bible says, *“Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” (Gen 11:7).* Whoever God was talking to, was Himself. The three persons in the Godhead was revealed to us by Jesus Christ as follows:

Joh 14:16-17 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” Joh 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

So, the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit are the three persons in God. Jesus said, the Father would give us another helper. This means He is like Jesus Himself, a person with will, emotions and intellect (mind). We can know the mind of the Spirit, in the same way do the mind of Christ. *“... But we have the mind of Christ (1Cor 2:16).* As a helper He can help us in our weaknesses when we entrust them to Him.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, please help me.

THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT (2)

“And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

(Rom 8:27)

The Holy Spirit is third of the three persons in God. Many people argue that God is one and cannot exist in three persons. Indeed, God is one but expresses Himself in three persons. The doctrine of God is a great mystery which cannot be easily understood by the human mind. There are many scriptural references to confirm the expression of God in three persons.

For instance, the Holy Bible says in the following: *1Ti 3:16 “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”*

The God that was manifested in the flesh was none other than Jesus Christ. The following scriptures assert that God was the Word which became flesh in the person of the only begotten of the Father: *Joh 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”*

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead who now abides in believers to teach us the truth of the word of God and help us lead a victorious life on earth. Jesus said, *“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.” (Joh 14:26).

He is now our teacher. He has a mind of His own. The way to walk with the Holy Spirit in order to know His mind is to study the Bible. His ministry to believers is to teach us the mysteries of God for a successful living on earth and empower us to witness to the world.

When we study the word of God, He shows us the ways of God and how to conquer our fears. He reveals many things for us to our profit. Every believer can benefit from the Holy Spirit: *1Co 12:7 “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”*

The way God led the Israelites through the wilderness, to conquer their enemies and to provide for them for forty full years is the same way His Spirit will lead those who follow Him. *Isa 48:17 “Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the LORD your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you in the way you should go.”*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will follow your way Holy Spirit.

THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT (3)

“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. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

(Rom 8:26-27)

It is not easy to understand spiritual things with the natural mind. In fact, natural people cannot take what the Spirit reveals unless God enlightens them. Believers can understand what the Spirit reveals but if they walk as natural men, they will not easily take it. *1Co 2:14 “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* There are many things God can reveal to us when we stay close to the Holy Spirit. When we engage in constant prayer, fasting and study of the word of God, we will have access to the hidden things of God: *1Co 2:9-10 “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”*

The Holy Spirit is God’s agent in the world today. He reveals the deep things of God to believers who love God. There are wonderful and great things God has for you. When you get to know these things, it makes you confident in life to resist temptations to walk out of God’s will. One of the

ways to receive the deep things of God is by praying in the language of the Spirit. Bible says that we don’t know what to pray for. We can pray and worship God and ask God to let His kingdom come. We can pray after the model prayer Jesus taught us. However, there are levels of prayer where we can never know precisely what to pray for, especially when certain things in the spirit are trending without our knowledge.

Do you have knowledge of an impending accident prepared for you by the devil or of a conspiracy arraigned against you by forces of darkness in your family and office? Do you know when the evil day will come? The Bible speaks about an evil day prepared for believers: *Eph 6:13 “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”* Praying in the Spirit creates an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to intercede for us according to the will of God.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Holy Spirit, reveal the deep thing of God to me.

WHAT IS PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

“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.”

(Rom 8:26)

How can the Spirit intercede for us with groanings which cannot be uttered? This is a very important question which when answered rightly can help us enhance our prayer life. The Bible says that the Spirit helps our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for. It is a weakness on our part when we don't know precisely what we should pray for during our prayer sessions. As human as we are, we are not able to decipher everything in the spirit because we are limited in our mind.

Do I pray for my son or daughter against an unknown attack? Do I pray for a sister in the church who needs a divine intervention in the night season in her sleep as agents of darkness attack her? We don't know everything. That is why the Holy Spirit helps our weaknesses in these areas by making intercession for us.

The Bible says, “...the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings...” How does the Spirit make intercession for us with groanings? Do we see the Spirit praying and groaning? Which way does He really make intercession? The answer is, the Spirit prays through our prayer, that is when we speak His language. The language of the Spirit is called tongues: *Act 2:4 “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

This speaking with tongues is a work of the Holy Spirit when He baptizes us in Him. It is also called Holy Spirit baptism, which John the Baptist foretold: *Mat 3:11 “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”*

The mystery about speaking in tongues is that we don't understand with our mind but our spirit understands, and the Holy Spirit working together with our spirit channels issues our mind cannot grasp to God who is the only one that understands what His Spirit through our spirit is saying. It is a mystery: *1Co 14:2 “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”*

When we utter a language we don't understand, the Holy Spirit uses that language to intercede for us. So, praying in tongues actually creates a platform for the Holy Spirit to intercede for us. We become prayer partners with Him for our advantage. So never stop praying in tongues.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will engage praying in tongues to partner with the Spirit.

THE MIND OF THE LORD

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?”
(Rom 11:34)

There is another aspect of the mind called the mind of the Lord. So many believers are confused about what the mind of the Lord is concerning their lives. The mind of the Lord refers to what the Lord thinks. It seems an impossible task for many believers to know what the mind of the Lord is. However, it is very easy to know the mind of the Lord.

First of all what the Lord thinks is enshrined in the vocabulary of scriptures. Nobody can see what goes on in someone's thoughts unless the person vocalizes or inscribes it on paper. When the children of Israel were redeemed from Egyptian bondage and got to the wilderness, God decided to give them laws and regulations to live by in order to be a special people to Him. So, God desiring for them to know His thoughts invited Moses to the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments: *Exo 24:12 “And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.”*

God didn't just speak His mind to Moses but went ahead to use His own fingers to write the Ten Commandments in tablets form: *Exo 31:18 “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of*

stone, written with the finger of God.” This is what composed the Pentateuch which is the Five Books of Moses. So, if we really want to know what God thinks of, then we should go to the Bible. Whatever God thinks of doing in His word is exactly what He will do. *Isa 14:24 “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.”*

If you want to know the mind of God concerning your life, consult the Bible. God says that, *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”* (Jer. 29:11).

Yes! If you ask me how my future will be and what God's mind is for me, my answer is simply that, “my future is good and peaceful.” That is the mind of the Lord concerning me, and I believe His thought and purpose shall stand. To confirm this again, let's read the following concerning the future of the righteous: *Isa 3:10 “Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.”*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God thinks good concerning me. My future is bright.

WE CAN KNOW THE MIND OF THE LORD

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

(1Co 2:16)

God is self-existent. He has a mind of His own. God is omnipotent. Nobody can be like Him in power. He is omniscient. Nobody can be like Him in knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, nobody can instruct Him. Despite how powerful God is, we can be privileged to know His mind. His mind is enshrined in the Holy Scriptures. When we read or hear the word of God, that's God sharing His thoughts with us. When we go to church, we are privileged to hear sermons and messages containing what God thinks about us at that moment.

The above scripture says that we can have the mind of Christ. How? By thinking the way Christ thinks. How do we know the way Christ thinks? By reading the lifestyle of Jesus in the Bible. The success life of people is enshrined in their stories. Whatever Jesus did was what He first of all thought to do. His main purpose of coming to the earth was to save the world from their sin. *Luk 19:10* “*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*”

The thoughts of Jesus were full of salvation for mankind. His words and deeds were characterised by salvation. It was in this context that He died on the cross. If we want to know the mind of Christ, we should read about His life in the Bible. For instance, the Bible says to have the mind of Christ as follows:

Php 2:5-9 “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.*”

Whatever issue you encounter in life, measure your reaction to the above mind-set of Jesus. He was humble. He didn't try to maintain His reputation for the sake of saving humanity. He became a servant. He descended into the world of mankind and mingled with us. Many great men and women of God, and of course successful businessmen and women are too big to mingle with people.

Jesus mingled and ate with sinners in order to save them. He entered their homes. He died for the sake of the world. He was selfless. All these and more portray the mind-set of Jesus which we can possess. The end result of His mind-set was His promotion.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will think like Christ.

RENEWING YOUR MIND TO CONFORM TO THE MIND OF CHRIST

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”

(Rom 12:2)

There is another kind of mind called the renewed mind. The renewed mind is a product of consistently changing your mind-set to conform to the mind-set of Jesus Christ through the instrumentality of the word of God. Two words are important in the above scripture; conformed and transformed. To conform means to fit in or play the game of or to imitate or adapt to something, which in this case is the world. When we submit to and obey the traditions and systems of the world, we have conformed to the world. The Bible says we should not conform to this world. We should not adapt to the lifestyle of this world.

The reason why we don't have to conform to the world is that the world's system is corrupt under the rule of Satan and lifestyle of the old nature imparted by Satan when he deceived our first parents: *2Pe 1:4 “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

Eph 4:22 “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.”

So when we conform to the world we will be corrupt. We will walk in deceitful lusts. Such people can never please God. That is why our immediate

action should be to transform. To transform means to change or convert. We are admonished to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. We can truly change our form when we change our mind. We must adopt a new mind set in order to confirm our conversion. How do we do that? We must read the scriptures and allow what it says to change our way of doing things. When we behave in conformity to what God says, we call it transformation. The act of changing your mind from a certain way of living in order to allow a new way of living that lines up with the word of God is called renewal of mind. This act of renewal is a process. We will keep at it till Jesus comes again.

The reason is that we don't know all now. We know partly and we keep knowing God. We cannot know God enough. *1Co 13:9-10 “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”*

The perfect is Jesus, so until He comes, we keep transforming by the renewal of our mind.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I desire to be like Christ by renewing my mind.

SAME MIND, ONE MIND

"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."

(Rom 12:16)

The opposite of same mind is a different mind, and the opposite of one mind is a divided mind. When you live alone, you can decide to have a mind of your own without being controlled by anybody. You can have one mind if you have your own vision, life etc. However, when you join a group, you cease to have a mind of your own within that setting. Why? It's because you must possess a group mind set.

A group mind-set enables the group to follow a set of rules towards a given purpose. If you are going to a place alone, your speed and attitude will be different from when you are in a group. You can walk faster than when you are in a group. Furthermore, you are likely to be fatigued faster when you are alone than when you are in a group. In a group you pursue one vision. If you decide to have your own vision outside the group vision, you allow what is called di-vision to set in resulting in division. As we know already, a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Even Satan will not divide his kingdom. Jesus said it as follows:

Mat 12:25-26 "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?"

A nation must have one vision in order to move on. The reason why some nations are far behind development is that they are divided along party lines. In fact, in some nations, tribalism and racism have devastated their vision to the extent that poverty is the order of the day. Di-vision is not good for groups. Even businesses need to be united in one mind as far as its operations are concerned. Wherever you are employed, be a point of unity instead of division. Own the vision of your employer and invest your best to make the company succeed.

A church is a spiritual group. It is made up of people called out of the world to represent the kingdom of God. The leader of the church is Jesus. We are called to follow His vision and enhance His kingdom. We have different denominations called local churches. If you belong to a local church follow the vision of the church by submitting to the authority of the pastor, who is the governor of the local church. It was against this background that Apostle Paul advised the Roman believers to have one mind: *Rom 15:6 "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to divide my church. I will have one mind with the church.

GLORIFYING GOD WITH ONE MIND AND ONE MOUTH (1)

“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Rom 15:6)

Glorifying God involves many factors. One of them is worship and praise. The above scripture admonishes us to glorify God with one mind and one mouth. This means that we should agree in thought and words. We should unite our intentions and what we want to do with our praise and worship. We must for instance decide when we want to meet and worship the Lord and stick to it. Time and place play a major role in employing our mind and mouth to glorify God. The early church was able to achieve the one mind and one mouth principle in their services. This was one major reason why the power of the Holy Spirit descended strongly on them for the explosion of signs and wonders in their era.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, it was recorded that the disciples went to the upper room to wait for the promise of the Father as Jesus commanded them: *Act 1:14-15 “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty”*

The power point to consider in the above scripture is that “these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.” One accord means consensus, harmony, unity or agreement. We need to have this in

our churches today to allow the Holy Spirit to move strongly in our midst. Today, due to mounting pressures of family commitments, business and financial concerns, many believers attend church services very late without considering the one mind and one mouth principle.

The most important aspect of every Christian gathering is to acknowledge our Lord and God first and ask Him to grace our meetings with His presence. As the Alpha and Omega, He must receive our worship and praise first. We must bless Him first, then, He in turn blesses us with His word. We must endeavour to meet at the same time, begin the service when everybody is present, and unite our mind and mouth to worship Him. When the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost, we have the record that they were still together at the same place with one accord: *Act 2:1,4 “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”* When we try to emulate the example of the early church we will not be far from having their kind of experience.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will attend church early to join the saints in worship.

GLORIFYING GOD WITH ONE MIND AND ONE MOUTH (2)

“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Rom 15:6)

The church of the New Testament was so united in mind and mouth culminating in the working of miracles of healing and signs and wonders, also resulting in multitudes of people being converted into the Christian faith. The descent of the Holy Spirit was as a result of corporate prayer. Today, many believers are reluctant to pray. Many believers are reluctant to attend prayer meetings. We have individual prayer time and corporate prayer time. The Holy Spirit descended in a corporate prayer time. The power of God is more concentrated in corporate prayer sessions than individual prayer sessions. We need both, especially being one with other believers in a corporate time of prayer. Jesus taught us to pray; “our Father”.

Apostle Peter and John were arrested and questioned because of their faith in Jesus Christ. They defended their faith and they were later released, after they had been threatened and warned to stop preaching Jesus. They left to join the company of the believers for prayer: *Act 4:23 “And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.”*

Act 4:24 “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.”

The scripture above says, “...they lifted up their voice to God with one accord,”

not voices but voice and with one accord; describing the unity of purpose in their gathering. They had one voice and that voice was lifted up to God for His intervention. Thereafter, they were filled again with the Holy Spirit: *Act 4:31 “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”*

There is power in unity. When we understand the role of unity in prayer as a church family and we give ourselves wholly to it; attend church early to be in the service from the beginning, involve ourselves wholly in the service, the power of God will fall on us. This same thing was experienced by the early church when Peter was imprisoned awaiting execution. The church gathered again and sustained prayer until he was released. *Act 12:5 “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.”*

One mind and one mouth are crucial for the release of God's presence in our churches. We must pay every price to achieve this unity. Impediments of family ties, friends, businesses etc. must be overcome so that we can enjoy God's presence for a victorious life on earth.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, unite our hearts and minds.

GLORIFYING GOD WITH ONE MIND AND ONE MOUTH (3)

“That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(Rom 15:6)

The word of God is true in all generations. We are to glorify God with one mind and one mouth. We saw how this principle was practiced in the New Testament. Ironically, it was not the first time in the history of God's dealings with His people. In the Old Testament too, the children of Israel applied the one mind and one mouth principle to precipitate God's presence in their meetings.

The following is an example that happened in the time of Solomon after he had finished building the temple of the Lord and dedicated it to God: *2Ch 5:13 “It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD”*

All the singers and instrumentalists were as one, and they lifted up their voice and praised the Lord. The result was astounding; God's presence came in the form of a thick cloud that filled the house of the Lord. They had unity of purpose. That day because of the presence of the Lord the priests could not minister. Protocol was broken. The cloud was so thick that they could not enter into the temple to do any priestly service of burning incense.

2Ch 5:14 “So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.”

We need the glory of the Lord in our gatherings. In fact, if we concentrate on the unity of the church in our gatherings, we will experience tremendous presence which will rub on everyone who is part of the church. Unity is something we have to work for. It will not come by itself. *Eph 4:3 “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

The singers and instrumentalists must walk in love towards one another, attend rehearsals in unity and with expectation. The whole congregation must show interest in one another and walk in love without division and factions. More especially, we must work hard to gather together on time, waiting with expectation before the start of every service.

We must pray for each service for the manifestation of God's presence. As we long for His presence and do what it takes, the glory will come and that glory will reflect in our relationships, businesses, etc.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, let your glory come into our services.

HAVING ONE VOICE AND ONE JUDGMENT (OPINION)

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

(1Co 1:10)

When you are privileged to be accepted in a group whether for business or socialization or for any other reason, you owe it a duty to conform to the unity of the group in word, deed and vision. It is your duty to walk in the unity of the group and not be a divisive agent. In the above scripture, God by His Spirit is admonishing believers to shun divisions and enhance unity of talk, mind and judgment. We must learn to have one language. Once we are Christians, we know that the only one who unites us is Jesus Christ.

We may come from different family and social backgrounds. We may come from different academic backgrounds. However, once we get born again and make Jesus our Lord, we must speak His language, think His thoughts and see the way He sees. Our unity of purpose and language is centered on just one personality; Jesus. Every believer must behave like Jesus. Our thoughts must be like Jesus. If we all think like Jesus, our unity will be easy to achieve. As a believer, I must think well about my fellow believers and relate well with them. If we all think like this, divisions will not have any place among us. Our behaviour as believers is influenced by the love of God. Therefore, we will speak a language of love. Having the same judgment means having the same opinion. If you are in a church, your

opinion must not differ from what the church believes. When you start having different opinions about your church, the leadership and vision, you cannot belong properly. You cannot be perfectly joined to the church. When your church is organizing an evangelistic outreach program, you don't have to have a divided opinion about it and follow your own vision. You must have the same opinion and vision and join the program. Every church has a program of activities customized for the spiritual development of her members. So, a church may have a home fellowship on particular days for her members, and if you belong and think the same way, speak the same thing and have the same opinion, then you must attend. Refusal to attend makes you a divisive agent in the church.

If your office is organizing seminars for all staff to empower them to be more effective in the delivery of results but instead of joining them you decide to do something else and not attend, you are being divisive in language and opinion. Change your attitude and be a unifier rather than a divider.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will keep unity with my church and group.

FERVENT MIND

"And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more."

(2Co 7:7)

Fervent means eager, enthusiastic, passionate, zealous, burning, intense, vehement, heated, etc. Having a fervent mind therefore means possessing all the above meanings in your life. When a believer possesses a fervent mind, he becomes enthusiastic about all spiritual things. A person with a fervent mind is results-oriented and is heated up for action most of the time. When you see a believer who is slow, cold and dull in spiritual things, the only thing he lacks is a fervent mind. He is never serious. A fervent mind endears you to active commitment to vision. It endears you to commit yourself to work. A fervent mind is zealous and on the move to act at the least opportunity.

The church of Corinth had a fervent mind towards Paul to the end that Paul began to rejoice more and more. A fervent mind achieves results to make others happy. We must possess a fervent mind in every area of the Christian life. We must be fervent to attend church services with joy, fervent to give, fervent to win souls, fervent to show brotherly love towards other brethren etc. We must handle Christian ministry with a serious business attitude. *Rom 12:11 "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord"*

We have to be fervent in spirit in our service to the Lord. If you are doing

something in the church, add fervency to it. Be zealous at it. Don't be slothful. God doesn't want lazy servants in His house. There are many believers who desire to serve in certain capacities in a church but lack the zeal for it. Those who want to sing don't create time for singing rehearsal because they lack enthusiasm. Those desiring to win souls have no fire in them that stirs them to do so.

In the Christian life, either you are hot or cold. Jesus challenged the church of Laodicea to move out of being lukewarm and be up and doing. *Rev 3:15-16 "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."*

If you decide to be cold toward Christ, then that can be considered as your decision to inch yourself slowly into hell. Jesus knows you have made up your mind not to serve Him. However, if you are neither here nor there, He said, He will reject you in spite of the little lukewarm service you render reluctantly to Him.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord I repent of being lukewarm. I decide today to have a fervent mind.

THE WILLING MIND (1)

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

(2Co 8:12)

There are three classes of people in the world. We have those who are not willing to take risks for their own betterment. These people can hear many messages of exhortation and motivation to take action to better their lot but are not willing to do so. No matter how much you invest into them, nothing good will come out of them. It is a waste of time, energy and resources trying to change them. Jesus taught some truths about how God's word works and produces results in different kinds of people who hear it.

A farmer scattered seeds and some fell on rocks. *Mat 13:5-6 "Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away."*

The one who is not willing is likened to the seed that fell on the stony places. No matter how much rain and care it receives, it will get nowhere because there is no depth to it. So many people are poor in life because they are not really willing to be rich. They prefer the status quo. Some beggars were interviewed some time ago. Asked to choose between employment and begging, most of them said they preferred begging to being employed. Giving reasons why, they said begging for them was also a profession and

that they got more than enough from begging to take care of themselves.

Certain prisoners were interviewed and asked whether they liked freedom or the prison life. Some preferred prison life. Their reason was that at least in prison they get their daily bread. They were just not willing deal with the responsibilities of being free. God put it to Israel one day in the following because He realized that no matter how much He tried to draw them closer to Himself, they still played the harlot: *Isa 1:19 "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:"*

Israel was not willing to be obedient in order to enjoy peace and prosperity. They were not willing to pay the price in order to enjoy the best God had for them. When you see someone with a willing mind, you will discover his zeal and zest to defy all odds in order to meet a demand.

People with a willing mind take steps to bring their dreams into reality, notwithstanding the cost. Shake off every cloth of laziness, and brace yourself to face the challenges of life. Be willing to serve God, work hard and prosper.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, I am willing to obey you and work hard for my prosperous life.

THE WILLING MIND (2)

"If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

(Isa 1:19 -20)

God will not force His will on us. He will always speak peace to us and try to persuade us to love, follow Him and abide in His commandments. When we fail to do so, then the consequences begin to lash us into submission.

Refusal to submit to Him results in our destruction. God admonished Israel to be willing and obedient in order to eat the good of the land they were in. There is good in every land. God has placed in every land something good for the enjoyment of its citizenry. The willing ones can enjoy them. There are three classes of people in the world; those willing, those not willing and those who don't know whether they are willing or not.

Those with a willing mind are action oriented. They are the movers and shakers of a place. They are unstoppable and unbreakable. They don't see why they cannot attain to heights others have already dared to attain. When we look into the Holy Scriptures carefully, we come across certain people who were willing to defy all odds to possess what God had destined for them in life.

Among them are Joshua and Caleb. When Moses sent the twelve spies to spy the Promise Land, ten of them came back with an evil report implying that they could not go and possess the

land. However, Joshua and Caleb who also saw the challenges facing them had a different report, implying that they could possess the land irrespective of the walls and the giants in the land.

Num 13:30-32 "But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it." Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are." So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height."

The willing and the unwilling face the same challenges, but the willing possesses a different mind-set from the unwilling. The willing mind says, "We are well able to overcome it." The unwilling mind says, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are..." If you are willing nothing deters you, not even the giants.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am willing to overcome. I am well able to overcome. I can make it in Jesus' name.

THE SHAKING MIND (1)

"Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2Th 2:2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come."

(2Th 2:1)

When Jesus was alive, He promised strongly that He would go to the Father and come again to take us to Him. He said, *"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."* (John 14:1-3)

We know that we have hope in God. We know that we have mansions awaiting us when we depart from this earth. Jesus said, "In my Father's house there are many rooms." Do you know that some rooms are reserved for you? We must not live in this world as though this is the only place for us. Indeed, we know that God can bless us here for us to enjoy life here too. However, this place is temporary, but the rooms up there in heaven are eternal. As we walk in this world, let's also hope in eternity. This will inform our conduct to live in such a way that we can please God.

1Jn 3:2-3 "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone

who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."

A life of purity is what will be expected of those who have hope in God. There are others who have lost hope in God. They live anyhow until suddenly they come face to face with death. Such people are shaken in their mind about eternity. In the time of Apostle Paul, the Thessalonian believers were shaken in their minds because the promise of the coming of the Lord Jesus had delayed. The coming of the Lord was a great expectation in their era. When Jesus rose again and ascended to the Father, angels came to confirm that He would come again. (Act 1:11)

These people however were shaking in their faith because they thought Jesus had delayed in coming. Don't be moved by prevailing circumstances. Be strong in your faith and know that the word of God concerning the coming of Jesus is yes and Amen. Don't be shaken in your faith. Jesus is coming soon.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to be shaken in my mind about Christ's coming.

THE SHAKING MIND (2)

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand."

(2Th 2:1-2)

There are many people in the world who don't believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, much less believe that He would come back again. As a matter of fact, many religions deny Jesus Christ as God the Son, and further deny that He will come back again. The believers living in the early days of the church, that's the first century, waited patiently for Christ's coming which never was, so, many began to shake in their mind. A shaking mind is one that is feeble and unstable. At one point there is faith in Jesus, and at another point, doubts about Jesus set in.

There are many believers who start very well; loving God, attending church faithfully, and praying always etc. until they give up in the face of delayed expectations. They expected marriage which never was. They expected some business breakthroughs which prolonged and never saw materialization within the time and way they expected. They begin to shake in their minds. John the Baptist was a very great prophet of all time with the spirit of Elijah, according to the witness of Jesus Christ (Matt 11:9-14). However, when he was imprisoned, his mind began to shake about Jesus. His faith wobbled. He sent to ask whether Jesus was the Christ; *Mat 11:2-3* "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou

he that should come, or do we look for another?"

It is possible for people's faith to shake in the face of unfavourable circumstances. John was in prison, and that could have influenced his perception about Jesus. He began to entertain a double mind about Jesus. Jesus described John the Baptist as a reed shaken by the wind; *Mat 11:7* "And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?"

How will you describe your mind? How will you describe the state of your faith in God? If you are trusting God's word for a certain miracle, don't be shaken in your mind. Be strong and firm. People with a shaking mind don't excel and achieve any meaningful progress in life. Reuben was cursed by Jacob, his fate was not to excel by reason of his unstable mind: *Gen 49:4* "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch."

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will not shake in my mind, I believe God's promises.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF THE SHAKING MIND (1)

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

(Isa 26:3)

The greatest obstacle to the faith of believers is their mind-set. This is very true in all ways. A double-minded person is unstable in all his ways.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James 1:6-8)

There are many things that cause people to become double minded. The scripture below mentions what we hear, events and people's attitude towards us as possible causes for a shaking mind and double-mindedness: *Luk 21:9 "But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by."*

Luk 21:17-19 "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls."

Despite the problem of a shaking mind and double-mindedness, there is a way to deal with it in order to win that battle. The first is to set the mind on God. The key scripture says, *"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."* (Isa 26:3) We must set our mind on God's word. Whatever God has promised in His word must be our delight and

central focus. Our mind must be made up, while our heart must trust Him through thick and thin that He that has promised will do it. Staying the mind on God is not as easy as we think. Many options to double mindedness will surface when we encounter trying moments. We will be presented with many doubtful ways.

Despite that, we must meditate on the word of God that says, things like, *Eph 3:20 "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us"*

Psa 23:4 "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."

These words of faith and comfort must capture our mind, and cause us to set our mind on them, so that the peace of God will keep us in the midst of the unfavourable circumstances. When we set our eyes on the Lord we will not be moved.

Psa 16:8 "I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken."

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse to be shaken.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF SHAKING MIND (2)

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

(Isa 26:3)

Staying the mind on God is the surest way to guarantee God's presence in our lives during times of trials. The problem of the shaking mind is everybody's, and nobody is exempted from this. Many great men of God in the Bible have suffered certain punishments from God because of this. Moses was asked by God to speak to the rock for water to come out of it, but out of a shaking mind, impatience and anger, he rather struck the rock twice, incurring God's anger, an act that later became a great hindrance to his entry into the promise land: *Num 20:8 "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together; thou, and Aaron thy brother, and **speak ye unto the rock before their eyes**; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink."*

How in the world would one speak to a rock if the rock had no ears? This rock was none other than Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. The Bible says, *"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1Cor 10:4).*

God intended Moses to speak to Jesus, the one who had living water to give them that living water to drink, and not to strike Him. However, Moses in anger did the unexpected:

Num 20:10-12 "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

So how do we solve this shaking mindedness? Another key is patience. Moses lost his temper. He didn't even strike Him once by faith but twice. Jesus prescribed patience to the shaking mind: *Luk 21:9 "But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by."*

*Luk 21:17-19 "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. **In your patience possess ye your souls.**"*

Take note of "in your patience possess ye your souls." That is the way to handle a shaking mind.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

Lord, help me to be patient in trying times.

REMEMBRANCE - A MIND FUNCTION

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance." (2Pe 1:12-13)

One of the important aspects of the functions of the mind is the ability to remember. The mind was made by God to be able to store information for many years. Certain events or issues may have happened several decades ago but your mind is able to bring them back from your memory and it becomes so fresh as though it happened yesterday. Despite the mind's ability to remember, unfortunately sometimes our memory gets blurred and we forget very important issues which when remembered can be a blessing to us. In the key scripture, the apostle was inspired to write with the purpose of putting the believers in remembrance. Despite the fact that they knew them, it was still needful for them to be reminded over and over again.

It is possible to know certain truths in the Bible and not live by them. Just knowing them is not enough. The importance of knowledge is for practical application. It is useless to know something without benefitting from it. The value of remembrance is to bring people to the memory lane so that they would stay on course and not deviate from the truth. When we are reminded, we are stirred up to live right. When memory fades, people tend to act differently. It was against this background that God had to warn Israel not to forget His good works

toward them when He took them from Egypt through the wilderness:

*Deu 8:16-18 "Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. **But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.**"*

They could forget that all the wealth they possessed was a result of God's dealings with them. So, He warned them to "...remember the LORD thy God..." Several times He kept reminding them not to forget: *Deu 5:15 "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm..."*

The mind has the ability to forget. So, remember the Lord and His goodness, and serve Him.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall remember the Lord and honour Him.

REMEMBRANCE THAT TAKES YOU BACK TO THE WORLD

“And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.”

(Num 11:4-6)

One of the unfortunate attitudes that the Israelites had was their quest to want to go back to Egypt. Having been brought all the way from the house of bondage as slaves and freed to a better place where they had free manna, they now desired to go back because they were fed up with the manna. They remembered the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and the garlick they ate in Egypt and disdained God’s provision in the wilderness. They said, *“But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.”* (Nu 11:6). This statement is an indictment of God’s love and provision. It was really an insult.

There are many believers who change their attitude to God when they begin to remember their former life and how they indulged in a certain wayward lifestyle. They remember their life of partying, promiscuity, revelling, sniffing cocaine and taking drugs. They are not happy with a routine Christian life. They seem not to appreciate joining believers for worship, prayer, Bible study, evangelism, camps, etc. They find the Christian life to be boring and their memory takes them back to the worldly lifestyle that they consider to be more exciting and fun.

The Israelites complained against Moses and against the Lord because of a short term hardship and wanted to go back to Egypt:

Exo 16:3 “And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

God had to perform the miracle of feeding them with manna after this complaint they levelled against Him: *Exo 16:4 “Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no”*

They soon got fed up with Manna and wanted something else other than God’s daily provision. Let’s appreciate the depths of the love of God for us and let’s be careful not to forget our precious salvation.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will not go back to the world.

THE MIND THAT FORGETS

"They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."

(Psa 106:13-15)

God is wonderful and proves His wonders in His works. Whatever happened between the children of Israel and God, was God showing who He is and what He is capable of doing. He sent Moses to the land of Egypt with many signs and wonders which convinced Pharaoh and his magicians that there is nobody like Jehovah, the God of the Israelites. God took them through the Red Sea and destroyed the armies of Egypt who were chasing them to destroy them. The armies of Egypt were drowned in the sea. God did many signs and wonders for them to show that He loved and cared for them. However, they always forgot His works and never waited for His counsel anytime they encountered a problem.

Remembering God's works are crucial for us in overcoming impending challenges in our life. Once God has done it before, we should be sure that He can and will do it again. Look at the many things God has helped you through. The things God has done are called testimonies. You must remember your testimonies to enable you believe God for greater works. Israel didn't remember their testimonies, and committed sins against God: *Psa 78:55-57 "He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents. Yet they*

tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies: But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow."

Our mind must keep His testimonies and not forget them. It is unfaithfulness on our part to forget them. This provokes God greatly to anger. David was a great man of God, a great warrior and king. He came to fame when he killed Goliath, and was made to marry the daughter of King Saul. However, do you know that David's victory over Goliath was based on remembering his testimonies? David said, *"And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."* 1Sa 17:34-36

If you remember the past victories, you will win impending battles.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I shall not forget the testimonies the Lord has given me.

PEOPLE WHO FORGET

"But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house."

(Gen 40:14)

One of the painful moments in the life of an individual is when people you help forget you in your trying moments. I remember the prodigal son who spent all his inheritance with vagabonds and was later deserted by them when he was in trouble. Even food was hard to come by. He had to take a job to care for pigs who struggled with him for the food they ate. All his friends left him. Joseph was imprisoned for no wrong done. In the prison, two prisoners dreamed and he interpreted their dreams. He told one of them that when his dream came to pass, he should remember him and help get him out of the prison house. The dream came to pass but the butler forgot entirely about Joseph:

*Gen 40:20-23 "And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. **Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.**"*

There are many people like that in our world. They forget those who blessed them with gifts and care when they were in need. They forget those who became springboards for them to rise

in life. They stood on others shoulders and later despised the shoulders which acted as bedrocks for them. These people are in every area of life. They are in businesses, families, churches etc. As pastors, we train people to become preachers and teachers of the word, worship leaders etc. As inexperienced as they are, they are given platforms to be coached and exposed to ministry. When they become experienced and renowned, they start ignoring leadership. They start putting up obstinate and arrogant attitudes. They have soon forgotten where they were taken from, and where it all began.

Israel was a great nation; A nation formed and born by God through Abraham. His descendants became slaves in Egypt. God sent Moses to deliver them to a Promise Land. They went through all the hassle in the wilderness. However, they forgot God and His works and spoke against His servants; Psa 106:21-23 *"They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea. Therefore he said that he would destroy them"* Don't forget those who are there for you in your time of trouble. Remember them.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will not forget His wonders to me.

CHRISTMAS WAS NOT A COINCIDENCE

"And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city."

(Luk 2:1-3)

There is no coincidence in scripture, neither is there any coincidence with God. God intentionally orchestrated the events that led to the birth of Jesus Christ. He planned it to fit His purpose and fulfil whatever He had said already in His word. Mary's virginity was a plan by God and a fulfilment of scripture. *Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.* Then before Mary gave birth God intentionally caused the above event to occur. It looked like a political event by God was behind it. The decree by Augustus that the then world should take a census was inspired by God.

There are many political events which are orchestrated by God to fulfil God's purpose. A nation will lose one president and another one will be elected all in line with what God wants to do. People cast their votes but God is the ultimate decider. God can also raise an evil against a nation because of disobedience. He raised the empire of Babylon against Israel because Israel forgot about their God that brought out of bondage into the promise land. Jeremiah prophesied to them and said,

Jer 29:4 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon:

Jer 29:7 "And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace. It is clear that it was God who caused Israel to be carried away captive. It looked like a political event but God orchestrated it. That was how the census leading to the birth of Jesus was orchestrated by God. God had already spoken that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. (Mic 5:2)

That was why a whole census had to be organized for Joseph and Mary to travel all the way from Galilee to Bethlehem. Everybody was affected by the census just because of a baby that must be born to fulfil God's plans. This simply means that God can orchestrate events that will go to your favour even if many people will have to be affected. The birth of Jesus was supernatural, and the place of birth was supernatural, and the political circumstances surrounding His birth were also supernatural. The fulfilment of your dreams will also be supernatural.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God will stir up the supernatural to my favour so that I can fulfill God's purpose for my life in Jesus' name. Amen!

THE VALUE OF THE HUMBLE BIRTH OF JESUS

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

(Luk 2:7)

There are many kings who are born in the palace. Princes and princesses live their life in a royal environment where they are born. Jesus was not born in a royal palace. He was born in a manger. They could have afforded a place in an inn because his parents tried getting an inn but God didn't permit that. God wired the birth of Jesus to be born in a very lowly place called a manger. As we know, a manger is a feeding box or trough for sheep, goats or horses.

They put swaddling clothes in the manger and put the baby Jesus into it. Since it was a stable, you could imagine the stench that would fill the atmosphere. A swaddling cloth was a cloth that looked like gauze which travellers tied to their waist to use to wrap a dead body in case some died on the way when travelling long distances. The manger and the swaddling clothes together portray the humble birth of Jesus. Everything about His birth was low value. When the wise men came, they came and found Jesus in the manger. (Luke 2:15-16). This would have been a disgrace for most people today.

If Jesus had been born in a castle or a royal palace, you and I may have to pay a fee to be able to see Him. I am sure the royal family would forbid

people from coming to see Him. He was born at a place accessible to all including animals. He began life in a lowly place. However, at the end of His life, we are told that God raised Him up and placed Him on His own right-hand side in heavenly places. This is exaltation! Christmas therefore has a lesson to teach us. We must humble ourselves in the sight of God so that God will lift us up. We should have a humility mindset. We must learn to start small in a way that looks like nothing, and by His grace and mercy He will lift us up.

When you humble yourself in the sight of God He will increase His grace in your life. The more you humble yourself, the higher you go in life in the sight of God and the more grace you receive to make it in life. Lots of things will come your way by grace. Jobs, contracts, opportunities, good friends who will be designated by God to serve your interest will all come your way. Be like our Master Jesus from today. Humble yourself and He will lift you up.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I refuse arrogance and embrace a life of humility in Jesus' name. Amen!

SELFISH THINKING

“Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews.”

(Est 4:13)

God uses many ways and means to promote His purpose in the world. He is able to turn evil to good, and use evil for good. The Holy Scripture says that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). Whatever may seem evil in life may become a point of contact or channel of blessing later.

The book Esther is an interesting episode narrating the deliverance of the Jews from a wicked massacre plot of a government official in the kingdom of Ahasuerus, who ruled the then world. Esther lost her parents early in life and was cared for by an uncle named Mordecai, who also worked in the palace. One of the officials of the king, a top ranking official, Haman, plotted to massacre the Jews and influenced the king to sign an edict to that effect. This news got to Mordecai who sent a copy of the letter to Esther, the new queen of the land who replaced the old queen because of her pride in not obeying the king. Esther was encouraged to join a beauty contest to be chosen as a queen. This position enabled her to intervene in the plot against the Jews.

When Mordecai sent the letter first to Esther to inform the king about the plot and stop it, she was reluctant because she didn’t have an appointment to see the king. She said,

“All the king’s servants, and the people of the king’s provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.” Est 4:11

On hearing this Mordecai said, “... *think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king’s house, more than all the Jews.*” Est 4:13. He dealt with the very self of Esther. Esther was thinking about her security instead of the good of her people. There are so many believers who are more concerned with themselves rather than with the welfare of the kingdom of God. The worst are those in government circles and corridors of power. They are there to pursue their stomach agenda and not kingdom agenda. Many believers in politics sit there unconcerned when others of wrong faiths pass laws against the Christian faith. They are afraid to lose their jobs. Don’t be selfish. When any evil happens to believers, you will not escape. You will also be affected. So, delete the self-mentality with immediate effect.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I will think of kingdom agenda.

GOD THINKS ABOUT YOU

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”

(Jer 29:11)

There is no need to worry. There is no need to be afraid. When you know that the God of the whole earth thinks about you, you become secured. You therefore have no cause to worry. The above scripture says that God knows the thoughts He thinks concerning you. They are thoughts of peace to give you an expected end. Other versions read: *“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jer 29:11*

You have a good future. You are not hopeless. When you don't know the word of God, you don't also know the package of your salvation. Of course, salvation comes with a package of blessings which are enshrined in the word of God. If you are a righteous person you don't need a prophet to tell you that it shall be well with you. The Bible says, *“Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds.” Isa 3:10*

All these and more are in the mind of God concerning you. God thinks about you in particular. Many people think that God thinks generally about all of us because we are many. This perception means that God does not think about us individually. This perception is wrong. God thinks about us individually. Read what Jesus said concerning us individually as follows: *Luk 12:7 “But even the very hairs of*

your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

Do not be afraid of anything in this world because your Father in heaven cares for you. He thinks of you as an individual. The very number of your hair is counted. How much more you as a person? Your future is bright. You will never fail in life. Success is your portion and is reserved for you. When you know what the Holy Bible says about the life of a righteous person, it puts fear far away from your life:

Psa 128:1-4 “A Song of degrees. Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.”

“...It shall be well with thee” is what God is saying concerning you. You shall have a good family with blessed children.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

God thinks about me to give me a future and a hope.

DELIVERED FROM SATANIC BONDAGE (1)

"So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

(Luke 13:16)

An inheritance is something left for someone (children etc.) by parents, a guardian or anyone closely related to someone. It's also called a legacy or heritage. One of the many things Jesus left for us after His death and resurrection is the inheritance of healing and freedom from the power of darkness. (Col 1:12-13) We are qualified to receive inheritance as saints. He has delivered us from the power of darkness. Power in Greek is 'exousia' which means authority, influence or jurisdiction. This means that we are no more under the influence of the power of darkness. Darkness is used in reference to Satan. We are not permitted by law to be influenced by the power of darkness.

You have been delivered from the influence of Satan. He has no right to control you anymore. You are a child of God. When Jesus met the woman who was afflicted with the spirit of infirmity, He said, *"So ought not/ this woman, **being a daughter of Abraham**, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"*

As a daughter of Abraham, she needn't have suffered what she went through. Abraham was a man of faith, and we all know that there was no record in the bible about him being sick or dying a premature death. *"This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived:*

*one hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and **died in a good old age, an old man and full of years**, and was gathered to his people."* (Gen 25:7-8)

He died in a good old age. This is our portion. Let's, take it by faith. The Bible says we have been redeemed from the curse of the law because Jesus was made a curse for us so that we will inherit Abraham's blessings by faith (Gal 3:13-14).

So, it takes faith to receive Abraham's inheritance of a good old age and long life. The woman who was bent over deserved to receive Abraham's health status but had been bound by Satan for eighteen years.

It is possible for you to continue to suffer under satanic bondage even though Jesus has obtained your freedom for you. You must not suffer these things anymore. If you are suffering demonic attacks and curses you are being cheated out of your rightful inheritance, so rise up and take your place in Jesus' name. Amen!

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. I am free from the domination of Satan.

DELIVERED FROM SATANIC BONDAGE (2)

"So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

(Luke 13:16)

I get very angry in my spirit when I see daughters of Abraham under demonic oppression and influence. Why do I get angry? Because the devil has put burdens on believers who are saved and filled with the Spirit of God. When Jesus saw the woman in His service while ministering on the Sabbath day, He called her to Him and said, "...woman, you are loosed from this infirmity..." Then, the priests of the synagogue became angry at the healing of the woman. Jesus retorted and said, *"...So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"* As a daughter of Abraham, she deserved the right to be free from the spirit of infirmity.

Today, you are called a child of God if you are born again. So, let's rephrase this: "So ought not this woman/man being a child of God whom Satan has bound... be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" This implies that as a child of God you deserve to be loosed from the bondage of Satan no matter what it is. ***"giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."*** (Colo 1:12-13) It doesn't say we are going to qualify when we pray or

fast or do something charismatic. It says, "...who has qualified us..." It is past tense. It is done already. It is finished. Jesus Himself declared that "it is finished." This happened on the cross. Because of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, we qualify to inherit what Jesus bequeathed to us after His death and resurrection; deliverance, healing, prosperity, joy, etc. Don't allow the enemy to deceive you to think that the sickness you are going through runs through the family and therefore it cannot be avoided and you must go through it. It's a lie from the pit of hell. Treat it with disdain.

Satan has no right to place any burden on you anymore because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross. You have been delivered already from the power of darkness so take your place and never allow the devil to cheat you anymore. He is ruthless and lawless. If you allow him, he will oppress you, but know your rights and assert yourself and take your deliverance as part of your inheritance.

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I am delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. I qualify for freedom.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

"lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."

(2Corin 2:11)

We must understand as believers that we have only one enemy whose interest is to destroy us. His agenda is made plain. He comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). Stealing is illegal. Killing is also illegal. In fact, all acts of atrocities are punishable by the law. Wanton destruction of life and property is another act punishable by law. We must not be ignorant of the fact that our enemy doesn't care about all that. He is lawless, disobedient and rebellious. The only Law He respects and upholds is the word of God because he was also created by the word. He knows where his boundary is, and when he gets there, he submits to it.

Our key scripture says, "Lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." It means Satan wants to take advantage of us despite the fact that He is not by law permitted to do so. In Greek, the word advantage means, to be covetous or to over reach. It also means to defraud or make a gain. This simply implies that Satan overreaches or oversteps his boundary and defrauds his subjects. He is ruthless. He did so when he deceived Adam and Eve and took advantage of them.

Only people who don't know their rights are defrauded and taken advantage of. That is why many believers suffer some kinds of affliction they need not suffer. We can only

avoid being cheated when we know our rights and privileges in Christ. Do you have an idea of all the things Jesus did for you on the cross? Your rights and privileges are found in the word of God. Knowing them will give you the upper hand over your enemy so that you can outwit him, else he will take advantage of you. Jesus said, *"...If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8:31-32)

Your right to freedom is in knowing the truth; the word of God. If you don't know, you will still remain in bondage and suffer unduly. What destroys God's children is the lack of knowledge. ***"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children".*** (Hosea 4:6) From today, don't allow the devil to cheat you anymore. You have the right to be free. Take your place now and assert your freedom in Jesus' name. Amen!

PRAYER & CONFESSION

I receive the word of the Lord. I take my place in the word of God. I refuse to be cheated by the devil. I subdue Satan in Jesus' name. Amen

ONE YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN

Read the Bible in the order that the events happened

January 1 - Genesis 1-3
January 2 - Genesis 4-7
January 3 - Genesis 8-11
January 4 - Job 1-5
January 5 - Job 6-9
January 6 - Job 10-13
January 7 - Job 14-16
January 8 - Job 17-20
January 9 - Job 21-23
January 10 - Job 24-28
January 11 - Job 29-31
January 12 - Job 32-34
January 13 - Job 35-37
January 14 - Job 38-39
January 15 - Job 40-42
January 16 - Genesis 12-15
January 17 - Genesis 16-18
January 18 - Genesis 19-21
January 19 - Genesis 22-24
January 20 - Genesis 25-26
January 21 - Genesis 27-29
January 22 - Genesis 30-31
January 23 - Genesis 32-34
January 24 - Genesis 35-37
January 25 - Genesis 38-40
January 26 - Genesis 41-42
January 27 - Genesis 43-45
January 28 - Genesis 46-47
January 29 - Genesis 48-50
January 30 - Exodus 1-3
January 31 - Exodus 4-6

February 1 - Exodus 7-9
February 2 - Exodus 10-12
February 3 - Exodus 13-15
February 4 - Exodus 16-18
February 5 - Exodus 19-21
February 6 - Exodus 22-24
February 7 - Exodus 25-27
February 8 - Exodus 28-29
February 9 - Exodus 30-32
February 10 - Exodus 33-35
February 11 - Exodus 36-38
February 12 - Exodus 39-40
February 13 - Leviticus 1-4
February 14 - Leviticus 5-7
February 15 - Leviticus 8-10
February 16 - Leviticus 11-13
February 17 - Leviticus 14-15
February 18 - Leviticus 16-18
February 19 - Leviticus 19-21
February 20 - Leviticus 22-23
February 21 - Leviticus 24-25
February 22 - Leviticus 26-27
February 23 - Numbers 1-2
February 24 - Numbers 3-4
February 25 - Numbers 5-6
February 26 - Numbers 7
February 27 - Numbers 8-10
February 28 - Numbers 11-13

ONE YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN

Read the Bible in the order that the events happened

March 1 - Num. 14-15; Ps. 90

March 2 - Numbers 16-17

March 3 - Numbers 18-20

March 4 - Numbers 21-22

March 5 - Numbers 23-25

March 6 - Numbers 26-27

March 7 - Numbers 28-30

March 8 - Numbers 31-32

March 9 - Numbers 33-34

March 10 - Numbers 35-36

March 11 - Deut. 1-2

March 12 - Deut. 3-4

March 13 - Deut. 5-7

March 14 - Deut. 8-10

March 15 - Deut. 11-13

March 16 - Deut. 14-16

March 17 - Deut. 17-20

March 18 - Deut. 21-23

March 19 - Deut. 24-27

March 20 - Deut. 28-29

March 21 - Deut. 30-31

March 22 - Deut. 32-34; Ps. 91

March 23 - Joshua 1-4

March 24 - Joshua 5-8

March 25 - Joshua 9-11

March 26 - Joshua 12-15

March 27 - Joshua 16-18

March 28 - Joshua 19-21

March 29 - Joshua 22-24

March 30 - Judges 1-2

March 31 - Judges 3-5

April 1 - Judges 6-7

April 2 - Judges 8-9

April 3 - Judges 10-12

April 4 - Judges 13-15

April 5 - Judges 16-18

April 6 - Judges 19-21

April 7 - Ruth 1-4

April 8 - 1 Samuel 1-3

April 9 - 1 Samuel 4-8

April 10 - 1 Samuel 9-12

April 11 - 1 Samuel 13-14

April 12 - 1 Samuel 15-17

April 13 - 1 Sam. 18-20; Ps. 11, 59

April 14 - 1 Samuel 21-24

April 15 - Psalm 7, 27, 31, 34, 52

April 16 - Psalm 56, 120, 140-142

April 17 - 1 Samuel 25-27

April 18 - Psalm 17, 35, 54, 63

April 19 - 1 Sa. 28-31; Psalm 18

April 20 - Ps. 121, 123-125, 128-130

April 21 - 2 Samuel 1-4

April 22 - Psalm 6, 8-10, 14, 16, 19, 21

April 23 - 1 Chronicles 1-2

April 24 - Psalm 43-45, 49, 84-85, 87

April 25 - 1 Chronicles 3-5

April 26 - Psalm 73, 77-78

April 27 - 1 Chronicles 6

April 28 - Psalm 81, 88, 92-93

April 29 - 1 Chronicles 7-10

April 30 - Psalm 102-104

ONE YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN

Read the Bible in the order that the events happened

May 1 - 2 Sam. 5:1-10; 1 Ch. 11-12
 May 2 - Psalm 133
 May 3 - Psalm 106-107
 May 4 - 2 Sa. 5:11-25; 6:1-23;
 1 Ch. 13-16
 May 5 - Ps. 1-2, 15, 22-24, 47, 68
 May 6 - Ps. 89, 96, 100, 101, 105, 132
 May 7 - 2 Sa. 7; 1 Ch. 17
 May 8 - Psalm 25, 29, 33, 36, 39
 May 9 - 2 Sa. 8-9; 1 Ch. 18
 May 10 - Psalm 50, 53, 60, 75
 May 11 - 2 Sa. 10; 1 Ch. 19; Ps. 20
 May 12 - Psalm 65-67, 69-70
 May 13 - 2 Sa. 11-12; 1 Ch. 20
 May 14 - Psalm 32, 51, 86, 122
 May 15 - 2 Samuel 13-15
 May 16 - Psalm 3-4, 12-13, 28, 55
 May 17 - 2 Samuel 16-18
 May 18 - Ps. 26, 40, 58, 61-62, 64
 May 19 - 2 Samuel 19-21
 May 20 - Psalm 5, 38, 41-42
 May 21 - 2 Sa. 22-23; Ps. 57
 May 22 - Psalm 95, 97-99
 May 23 - 2 Sa. 24; 1 Ch. 21-22; Ps. 30
 May 24 - Psalm 108-110
 May 25 - 1 Chronicles 23-25
 May 26 - Ps. 131, 138-139, 143-145
 May 27 - 1 Ch. 26-29; Psalm 127
 May 28 - Psalm 111-118
 May 29 - 1 Ki. 1-2; Ps. 37, 71, 94
 May 30 - Psalm 119:1-88
 May 31 - 1 Ki. 3-4; 2 Ch. 1; Ps. 72

June 1 - Psalm 119:89-176
 June 2 - Song of Solomon 1-8
 June 3 - Proverbs 1-3
 June 4 - Proverbs 4-6
 June 5 - Proverbs 7-9
 June 6 - Proverbs 10-12
 June 7 - Proverbs 13-15
 June 8 - Proverbs 16-18
 June 9 - Proverbs 19-21
 June 10 - Proverbs 22-24
 June 11 - 1 Ki. 5-6; 2 Ch. 2-3
 June 12 - 1 Ki. 7; 2 Ch. 4
 June 13 - 1 Ki. 8; 2 Ch. 5
 June 14 - 2 Ch. 6-7; Ps. 136
 June 15 - Psalm 134, 146-150
 June 16 - 1 Ki. 9; 2 Ch. 8
 June 17 - Proverbs 25-26
 June 18 - Proverbs 27-29
 June 19 - Ecclesiastes 1-6
 June 20 - Ecclesiastes 7-12
 June 21 - 1 Ki. 10-11; 2 Ch. 9
 June 22 - Proverbs 30-31
 June 23 - 1 Kings 12-14
 June 24 - 2 Chronicles 10-12
 June 25 - 1 Ki. 15:1-24; 2 Ch. 13-16
 June 26 - 1 Ki. 15:25-34; 16:1-34;
 2 Ch. 17
 June 27 - 1 Kings 17-19
 June 28 - 1 Kings 20-21
 June 29 - 1 Ki. 22; 2 Ch. 18
 June 30 - 2 Chronicles 19-23

ONE YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN

Read the Bible in the order that the events happened

July 1 - Obadiah; Psalm 82-83
 July 2 - 2 Kings 1-4
 July 3 - 2 Kings 5-8
 July 4 - 2 Kings 9-11
 July 5 - 2 Ki. 12-13; 2 Ch. 24
 July 6 - 2 Kings 14; 2 Chronicles 25
 July 7 - Jonah 1-4
 July 8 - 2 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 26
 July 9 - Isaiah 1-4
 July 10 - Isaiah 5-8
 July 11 - Amos 1-5
 July 12 - Amos 6-9
 July 13 - 2 Ch. 27; Is. 9-12
 July 14 - Micah 1-7
 July 15 - 2 Ch. 28; 2 Ki. 16-17
 July 16 - Isaiah 13-17
 July 17 - Isaiah 18-22
 July 18 - Isaiah 23-27
 July 19 - 2 Ki. 18:1-8; 2 Ch. 29-31; Ps. 48
 July 20 - Hosea 1-7
 July 21 - Hosea 8-14
 July 22 - Isaiah 28-30
 July 23 - Isaiah 31-34
 July 24 - Isaiah 35-36
 July 25 - Isaiah 37-39; Psalm 76
 July 26 - Isaiah 40-43
 July 27 - Isaiah 44-48
 July 28 - 2 Ki. 18:9-37; 19:1-37;
 Ps. 46, 80, 135
 July 29 - Isaiah 49-53
 July 30 - Isaiah 54-58
 July 31 - Isaiah 59-63

August 1 - Isaiah 64-66
 August 2 - 2 Kings 20-21
 August 3 - 2 Chronicles 32-33
 August 4 - Nahum 1-3
 August 5 - 2 Ki. 22-23; 2 Ch. 34-35
 August 6 - Zephaniah 1-3
 August 7 - Jeremiah 1-3
 August 8 - Jeremiah 4-6
 August 9 - Jeremiah 7-9
 August 10 - Jeremiah 10-13
 August 11 - Jeremiah 14-17
 August 12 - Jeremiah 18-22
 August 13 - Jeremiah 23-25
 August 14 - Jeremiah 26-29
 August 15 - Jeremiah 30-31
 August 16 - Jeremiah 32-34
 August 17 - Jeremiah 35-37
 August 18 - Jer. 38-40; Ps. 74, 79
 August 19 - 2 Ki. 24-25; 2 Ch. 36
 August 20 - Habakkuk 1-3
 August 21 - Jeremiah 41-45
 August 22 - Jeremiah 46-48
 August 23 - Jeremiah 49-50
 August 24 - Jeremiah 51-52
 August 25 - La. 1; La. 2; La. 3:1-36
 August 26 - La. 3:7-66; La. 4; La. 5:1-22
 August 27 - Ezekiel 1-4
 August 28 - Ezekiel 5-8
 August 29 - Ezekiel 9-12
 August 30 - Ezekiel 13-15
 August 31 - Ezekiel 16-17

ONE YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN

Read the Bible in the order that the events happened

September 1 - Ezekiel 18-19
September 2 - Ezekiel 20-21
September 3 - Ezekiel 22-23
September 4 - Ezekiel 24-27
September 5 - Ezekiel 28-31
September 6 - Ezekiel 32-34
September 7 - Ezekiel 35-37
September 8 - Ezekiel 38-39
September 9 - Ezekiel 40-41
September 10 - Ezekiel 42-43
September 11 - Ezekiel 44-45
September 12 - Ezekiel 46-48
September 13 - Joel 1-3
September 14 - Daniel 1-3
September 15 - Daniel 4-6
September 16 - Daniel 7-9
September 17 - Daniel 10-12
September 18 - Ezra 1-3
September 19 - Ezra 4-6; Psa. 137
September 20 - Haggai 1-2
September 21 - Zechariah 1-7
September 22 - Zechariah 8-14
September 23 - Esther 1-5
September 24 - Esther 6-10
September 25 - Ezra 7-10
September 26 - Nehemiah 1-5
September 27 - Nehemiah 6-7
September 28 - Nehemiah 8-10
September 29 - Neh. 11-13; Ps. 126
September 30 - Malachi 1-4

October 1 - Luke 1; John 1:1-14
October 2 - Mat. 1; Luke 2:1-38
October 3 - Mat. 2; Luke 2:39-52
October 4 - Mat. 3; Mark 1; Luke 3
October 5 - Mat. 4; Lk 4-5; Jo 1:15-51
October 6 - John 2-4
October 7 - Mark 2
October 8 - John 5
October 9 - Mat. 12:1-21; Mk 3; Lk 6
October 10 - Matthew 5-7
October 11 - Mat. 8:1-13; Luke 7
October 12 - Matthew 11
October 13 - Mat. 12:22-50; Lk. 11
October 14 - Matthew 13; Luke 8
October 15 - Mat. 8:14-34; Mk 4-5
October 16 - Matthew 9-10
October 17 - Mat.14; Mk 6; Lk 9:1-17
October 18 - John 6
October 19 - Matthew 15; Mark 7
October 20 - Mat. 16; Mk 8; Lk 9:18-27
October 21 - Mat. 17; Mk 9; Lk 9:28-62
October 22 - Matthew 18
October 23 - John 7-8
October 24 - Joh 9:1-41; Joh 10:1-21
October 25 - Lk 10-11; Joh 10:22-42
October 26 - Luke 12-13
October 27 - Luke 14-15
October 28 - Lk. 16; Lk. 17:1-10
October 29 - John 11
October 30 - Lk 17:11-37; Lk 18:1-14
October 31 - Matthew 19; Mark 10

ONE YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN

Read the Bible in the order that the events happened

November 1 - Matthew 20-21
 November 2 - Lk 18:15-43; Lk 19:1-48
 November 3 - Mark 11; John 12
 November 4 - Mat. 22; Mark 12
 November 5 - Mat. 23; Luke 20-21
 November 6 - Mark 13
 November 7 - Matthew 24
 November 8 - Matthew 25
 November 9 - Mat. 26; Mark 14
 November 10 - Luke 22; John 13
 November 11 - John 14-17
 November 12 - Mat. 27; Mark 15
 November 13 - Lk. 23; John 18-19
 November 14 - Mat 28; Mark 16
 November 15 - Lk 24; John 20-21
 November 16 - Acts 1-3
 November 17 - Acts 4-6
 November 18 - Acts 7-8
 November 19 - Acts 9-10
 November 20 - Acts 11-12
 November 21 - Acts 13-14
 November 22 - James 1-5
 November 23 - Acts 15-16
 November 24 - Galatians 1-3
 November 25 - Galatians 4-6
 November 26 - Acts 17; Acts 18:1-18
 November 27 - 1 Thes. 1-5; 2 Thes. 1-3
 November 28 - Acts 18:19-28; 19:1-41
 November 29 - 1 Corinthians 1-4
 November 30 - 1 Corinthians 5-8

December 1 - 1 Corinthians 9-11
 December 2 - 1 Corinthians 12-14
 December 3 - 1 Corinthians 15-16
 December 4 - 2 Corinthians 1-4
 December 5 - 2 Corinthians 5-9
 December 6 - 2 Corinthians 10-13
 December 7 - Acts 20:1-3; Rom 1-3
 December 8 - Romans 4-7
 December 9 - Romans 8-10
 December 10 - Romans 11-13
 December 11 - Romans 14-16
 December 12 - Acts 20:4-38; Acts 21;
 Acts 22; Acts 23:1-35
 December 13 - Acts 24-26
 December 14 - Acts 27-28
 December 15 - Col. 1-4; Philemon
 December 16 - Ephesians 1-6
 December 17 - Philippians 1-4
 December 18 - 1 Timothy 1-6
 December 19 - Titus 1-3
 December 20 - 1 Peter 1-5
 December 21 - Hebrews 1-6
 December 22 - Hebrews 7-10
 December 23 - Hebrews 11-13
 December 24 - 2 Timothy 1-4
 December 25 - 2 Peter 1-3; Jude
 December 26 - 1 John 1-5
 December 27 - 2 John; 3 John
 December 28 - Revelation 1-5
 December 29 - Revelation 6-11
 December 30 - Revelation 12-18
 December 31 - Revelation 19-22

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