

# **Fulfilling Your Predestined Greatness**

‘Lekan Agunbiade

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# Dedication

*To GOD*

The Author of destinies  
and Lifter of heads,  
my Rescuer and Helper.

*To my first teacher*

Grandma *Felicia Taiwo Ikotun*

&

My dearly missed brother  
and model of selflessness  
*Bamidele Agunbiade*;  
both of blessed memory.

*To every life*

that might have been deemed  
*a write-off* by people:  
pursue your limitless destiny  
with the joy that God has not  
written you off.

## Bible translations cited in the text

ASV - American Standard Version  
AMP - Amplified Bible  
CEV - Contemporary English Version  
DBY - Darby Bible  
ESV - English Standard Version  
GNB - Good News Bible  
KJV - King James Version  
TLB - The Living Bible  
MSG - The Message Bible  
NASB - New American Standard Bible  
NIV - New International Version  
NKJV - New King James Version  
NLT - New Living Translation  
RSV - Revised Standard Version  
WEB - World English Bible  
YLT - Young Literal Translation

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## FOREWORD

The 21st century is a complex environment of “contrasts” – a world of increasing riches but also of abject poverty; of immense technological advancements, but yet a great lack of basic amenities; of increasing knowledge of events and phenomena, but equally an era of decreasing knowledge of God and His Word. It is a world in which billions of individuals and families, low-, middle-, and even high-income countries are living below their potential— despite the promise of God and the huge possibilities of our vastly evolving global world. Seemingly “trapped” in abject poverty and deprivation, billions are living without any hope for the future. They are discouraged, disenchanted and disoriented. Some others have recorded different degrees of worldly success, yet life appears meaningless and their purpose for existence, blurred and uncertain. This book, *Fulfilling Your Predestined Greatness*, speaks to these situations and much more, while affirming our call to greatness.

Rooted firmly in the unchanging, ever-true and life-transforming Word of God, *Fulfilling Your Predestined Greatness* also draws from contemporary examples to highlight and richly illustrate the key principles for attaining the

greatness God desires for us. The author highlights examples from his own life, with the evidence of God's love, grace and guidance, to show the importance and practicalities of the life-transforming and solid principles anchored in God's Word. Indeed, this book is premised on the foundation of God's eternal love and His heart's desire for each of us as His creation to achieve the purpose of our existence, which is the ultimate definition of success and greatness. The book clearly points us to God as the foundation of all true success and greatness—and without Him, all human efforts and achievements, no matter how grandeur, is nothing but vanity. It shows clearly that faith in God must be accompanied by godly and practical actions to yield the fruit of greatness.

Additionally, this book espouses hope — hope to the discouraged, the disappointed, the discarded, the disregarded, the debt-ridden, and the likes. It reminds us that our lives can be transformed with God's help and practical godly-oriented actions. Corroboratively, the “pathway to greatness” chart (title ours), as provided and explained by the author in chapter three, highlights the key elements of “understanding”, “revelation”, and “obedience” as foundational principles to be leveraged upon in achieving one's predestined greatness.

*Fulfilling Your Predestined Greatness* raises

practical questions that we all need to reflect upon. Who are we? Why are we here? Where are we going? Most importantly, it challenges us, (in the light of these critical questions and the key principles highlighted in its six chapters), to recalibrate our lives, where necessary, to better and to more fittingly align ourselves with God's ordained greatness for our lives.

We heartily commend this book, from a beloved son and Christian leader in his own right, to you with the prayers that the Lord would bring you understanding, revelation and illumination through it. Furthermore, we pray for a fresh release of the grace of God upon your life as you read through this rich practical book, that you would not only hear the voice of God through it, but you would be quick to act in obedience—heeding the clarion call of God to step forward into His agenda of predestined greatness for your life.

**Professors Adesegun & Olawunmi Fatusi**

*Chapel of Grace*

*Obafemi Awolowo University*

*Teaching Hospitals Complex*

*Ile-Ife, Nigeria*



## P R E F A C E

## P R E F A C E

I recall during my teenage years, that we would pick some things from the trash-bin of Kikelomo Phar-macy to use or to sell—there were many days, back then, when we had no hope of a meal. I fetched water for families—filled 8-10 drums for just 50 kobo—and thus became a ‘business merchant’ at the age of 10 while still toiling tirelessly to be educated. I grew up in such a dangerous community where Satan wasted countless destinies through abject poverty, insecurity and substance and sexual abuse. Until I left home for nursing school around age 20, I could hardly remember witnessing up to five marital rites in the entire community. I was once teased that I was impotent because I was not sexually active as were my mates. Through the assiduous efforts of Ma’ami, God marked our house as Goshen for us, and for everyone whose parents decided to ‘safe-keep’ in our house.

In 2008, I overheard a conversation that detailed what my siblings and I would become in life. It was on that memorable day, I understood then, that I had been, humanly speaking, *written-off*. That realization continues to epitomize the magnitude of the grace that

## PREFACE

rescued me. How great is the Lord our God!

But I was not the first one to be written-off. I had the honour of meeting and reading about some champions from diverse fields and generations. Their lives have made me believe that God has a predestined greatness for each individual. One of the legends I had the honour of interacting with explained how he was rescued from drowning in the community well. Those who rescued him did so to salvage the water supply for the many users of the well, not because his mortal life was worth the hassle! The late business magnate, entrepreneur and philanthropist of Ijesha origin—Dr Lawrence Omole—who rose to win national honours in Nigeria could not even be christened on the eighth day because his parents were not sure if he would survive. So many babies die in their first week of life.

There are many others who practically had no chance of breaking through. But they chose to dare, to commit their all, to pursue and to earn their seats among the champions to be reckoned with. The audacious breakthroughs of Colonel Harland David Sanders, Barack Obama, Nelson Mandela, Walt Disney and Harriet Tubman, among many others, should point to us that there is no climax that a brave and focused visionary cannot attain.

## PREFACE

The good news is that *you are not less endowed for greatness*. This book offers biblical, practical, as well as contemporary attributes that you will need en route to and at your predestined greatness. Hence, it is with pleasure that I ask you to meditatively journey through the pages of this book with the Holy Spirit.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

God be glorified for His grace and kindness upon me and my path; for being the very present Help and Fortress and especially for blessing my life continually with great people. This book would not have been possible were it not for God and God-ordained destiny helpers.

Thanks to my legendary parents, Papa Reuben Agunbiade (*Yes-yes*) and Ma'ami Rebecca Agunbiade (*Elero meta*) and my esteemed *big* siblings for their priceless love and sacrifices for my life, especially for not sparing the rod. Thanks to the Akintilo family for accepting me into their happy fold.

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## *ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

## ONE

## God's Great and Precious Promises

*In this way he has given us the very great and precious gifts he promised... (2 Pet. 1 vs. 4a GNB)*

*Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises... (2 Pet. 1 vs. 4a NIV)*

*...by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises... (2 Pet 1 vs. 4a ESV)*

*great and precious promises... (2 Pet 1 vs. 4a KJV)*

There is no lasting greatness anyone can attain in life if it does not come from the Lord. All things stem from Him; He is omnificent and full of grandeur. That means He is *notable, remarkable, important, significant, unusual, extraordinary and exceptionally outstanding*. Perhaps, it is significant to start by stating that God has promises for all of His creatures. The promises are no more weightier than the adjectives preceding them: *great* and *precious*. What is more reassuring is not that the promises are great

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but that they are *very great*. In essence, to be very great means to be *exceptionally outstanding*. The adjective *precious* adds more value to the word *promise*. *Precious* means *something of a high price*; something *highly esteemed* and *dear*. What a promise for you and for anyone that discovers the promises and holds on to them!

A detailed review of *2 Peter 1 vs. 4a* gives us a reassuring hope that God has plans of greatness for everyone. It reveals God's plans for everyone to partake of the exceedingly outstanding and highly esteemed greatness contained in His promises.

The creation of the world was done in a great way. God did a thorough job for six days and at the evaluation stage,

*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good... (Gen 1 vs. 31a NIV);*

*God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased... (Gen 1 vs. 31a GNB);*

*Then God looked over all that he had made, and it was excellent in every way... (Gen 1 vs. 31a TLB).*

The whole world, everything He created, including you, was very good. They were excellent and pleasing to Him. The word, *very*, was used as an adverb intensifying the adjective *good*. This means that what God created is extremely exquisite in the fullest sense. What can be better than excellent? Nothing! What can be better than what pleases the Lord?



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Nothing! In other words, you were made good in the highest degree, in an excellent way and in the fullest sense, pleasing in the sight of God. Isn't that great?

**Discover God's Plan for Your Life**

To fulfil the greatness inherent in you, the first step is to understand that you are a product of God's labour and purpose. For God to have laboured to make you who you are, there is a purpose behind that. The earlier you realise this fact, the earlier you will labour to reach your peak.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. (Gen. 1 vs. 1-2 RSV)*

*In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water. (Gen. 1 vs. 1-2 GNB)*

*When God began creating the heavens and the earth, the earth was a shapeless, chaotic mass, with the spirit of God brooding over the dark vapours. (Gen. 1 vs. 1-2 TLB)*

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He started the job of making you a great being by creating a place (space) out of a *formless, desolate, void and shapeless chaotic mass* for you to occupy. He provided everything (out of nothing) that you will ever need in order to excel in whatever you choose to do. The entire earth was created and loaded with abundant resources that you will need to be great in life. All the needed infrastructures have been waiting for you even before you were created (born). Take a look at this scripture for you to believe this:

*Then God said, 'Let us make a man—someone like ourselves, to be the master of all life upon the earth and in the skies and in the seas'. So God made man like his maker. Like God did God make man; man and maid did he make them. (Gen. 1 vs. 26 – 27 TLB)*

*Then God said, 'And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small'. So God created human beings making them to be like himself. He created them male and female. (Gen. 1 vs. 26 – 27 GNB)*

Have you ever wondered why He created you after He had created all things or why He created you in His image? That He created you after He created all things simply proves that you were born to rule; to exert your dominion over all things that have been in existence before you were born. *Dominion* means to

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*have authority, to rule and to control.* Again, you need to know that you are a being that exists here in the world with all authority to lead embedded within you.

*...have dominion over... and over... and over... (Gen. 1 vs. 26 KJV)*

The leadership authority and greatness is in you. You only need to discover it and maximise your God-given potential that had been packaged within the real you before you were born.

He created you in His image, after His likeness, to assure you that all the powers that make Him Omnipotent and Omnificent are available to you. The power that no king can neither withstand nor restrict also belongs to you (*Dan 3 vs. 16-17, 24-25*). Your greatness is limitless! If you are sure that nobody can behold the face of God and not reverence the greatness of His countenance (which, to Moses, was brighter than the sun), then you should be reminded that you were made after His likeness. You should not worry about the judgment of this world which sees you as either ugly or inconsequential. You bear the image and likeness of God; Satan devised these discouraging words people are using to frustrate you.

No matter the negative labels people have branded you with, begin to see greatness loaded within you. Moses saw himself as a *stammerer* and for this reason he told God to get another person as his replacement. But God provided, beforehand, a way out for him in Aaron:

*Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to Pharaoh*

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(Ex. 7 vs. 7 NIV).

What an orderly God! Aaron was born three years before Moses, whom he was destined to help.

*But Moses pleaded, 'O Lord, I'm just not a good speaker. I never have been, and I'm not now, even after you have spoken to me, for I have speech impediment'. 'Who makes mouths?' Jehovah asked him. 'Isn't it I, the Lord? Who makes a man so that he can speak or not speak, see or not see, hear or not hear? (Ex. 4 vs. 10-11 TLB).*

*But Moses said, "No, LORD, don't send me. I have never been a good speaker, and I haven't become one since you began to speak to me. I am a poor speaker, slow and hesitant." The Lord said to him, 'Who gives a man his mouth? Who makes the deaf or dumb? Who makes his sight or makes him blind? It is I, the Lord...' (Ex 4 vs. 10-11 GNB)*

A good look at vs. 10 reveals that Moses was bold enough to confront and oppose the unstoppable God in his words even though he was not bold enough to confront human beings. It will not be wrong to assume that even while expressing the few words in vs. 10, Moses stammered:

*...and I haven't become one [a good*

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speaker] since you began to speak to  
me...*

The bold man inside of Moses had been hypnotised by fear of rejection long before God visited him. He must have been an easy going and quiet man who had accepted to be an obedient servant all his lifetime. He had accepted his stammering as his limitation to greatness and destiny even when God saw it as important to his calling.

*But Moses answered, 'No, Lord, please  
send someone else.' (Ex 4 vs. 13 GNS)*

He said *No, Lord* two times during a single conversation, doubting the potent strength within himself; and worse still, doubting God. He doubted, not because he did not believe God, but because he feared what the people would say more than what God was saying. If you take a good look at the first few verses of *Ex. 4* in the *GNS* version, you will discover that all of Moses' statements were preceded by *BUT*. This suggests to me that he was bringing his calling and destiny into question and doubt. Doubting what the Mighty God can do will never cast any doubt on His omnipotent being but on the destiny of the doubting individual.

What Moses did not know was that God had beforehand provided a solution for his speech defect

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*(Ex 4 vs. 13-17).*

*Then you will be like God ... . (vs. 16 GNB).*

What a disaster it would have been on Moses' destiny if God had followed his advice of getting someone else! He never knew that what he saw as an impediment was meant to make him *be like God*. What is yours? What do you see as a limitation or an impediment on your path to destiny? All you need to do is to rely solely on God and you will soon discover that the impediment is a potent ladder to your greatness.

However, for you to discover the plan and purpose of God in your life, you need to build a good relationship with Him so that you can hear whenever He speaks. Building an intimate relationship with God is a prerequisite to understanding His purpose for your life (*Phil. 3 vs. 10-11*). Hence, you need to walk in his ways and according to his statutes. Father Abraham started his relationship with God by offering himself to Him as a blind man. He left his father's land without direction but with the Director and Giver of direction. The reward of the relationship he built began to manifest when God said:

*... 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? ... For I have chosen him' ...  
(Gen. 18 vs. 17-19 NIV).*

He became the confidant of God. What an intimacy! An intimacy that had a great price tag, that was paid in advance.

## **An Heir? Who Is Your Father?**

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A child will be addressed after his father's name and attributes. Children often take after their parents in manners, beliefs and physique. Also, they take their parents as their first mentors, wanting to live their own lives after the likeness of their parents. An heir is any person who has the legal right to receive the property or money when the owner dies.

Literally, an heir takes, as his possession, the belongings of the person to whom s/he is an heir when the person dies. Likewise, in God the Father, to all who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, who can never and will never taste death, we have access to His promises and covenants of greatness which He had (long before our birth) sworn to Abraham (*Rom. 4 vs. 14-21*).

According to *Mk 12 vs. 7* and *Lk 20 vs. 14*, an heir is entitled to the inheritance of his father or the person to whom he is an heir. In essence, we are trying to establish that you have a share in your Father's properties. At the moment you accepted Jesus as your Saviour, you have become an heir to God, the Father of Jesus Christ. Look at what the Bible says:

*For from the very beginning, God decided that those who came to him—and all along he knew who would come—should become like his son, so that his son would be the first, with many brothers. (Rom 8 vs. 29 TLB)*

*For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, in order that he might*

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be the firstborn among many brethren.  
(Rom 8 vs. 29 RSV)*

*He is the image of the invisible God, the  
firstborn of all creation... (Col 1 vs. 15  
RSV)*

*God, who at sundry times and in divers  
manners spake in time past unto the  
2fathers by the prophets, Hath in these  
last days spoken unto us by his Son,  
whom he hath appointed heir of all  
things... (Heb. 1 vs. 1-2 KJV)*

At redemption, you shared the faith that Christ is the Son of God and accepted Him into your life. This act, according to the verses above, means that you have become an heir of one important property of God: righteousness (*Heb. 11 vs. 7*). You are now a brother/sister of Christ (according to *Rom 8 vs. 29*) and you have an entitlement to everything He is entitled to. Little wonder He said greater things than what He did are what we would be empowered to do if we dare to follow His statutes. This is because the power that was in Him when He was here on earth shall equally be ours if we prove ourselves as worthy heirs of God.

The son of a wealthy man in our society will be duly honoured by whoever knows the worth of his father just as a prince will be maximally respected throughout his father's territory. **Who is your father?** Are you an heir of this Great God? Do not be in a hurry to answer; take your time to think about these things. Have you given your life to Jesus Christ? Can Jesus call you His co-heir? Can God call



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you His child? Are you sure you are known by Him? Our earthly fathers in some cases may not be able to identify all their children, but God does.

*So Jesus said to those who believed Him, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."  
(John 8 vs. 31-32 GNB).*

Then you have to believe Him and His teachings to be His disciple because you cannot know the truth unless you are His disciple. Most importantly, you are not free and cannot be free until you know the truth which comes only from Him. Have you come across the truth (*John 14 vs. 6*)? Are you free?

And without wasting time, the Jews to which this question was put replied Jesus:

*"We are Abraham's descendants," they answered, "and we have never been anybody's slaves. What do you mean, then, by saying, 'You will be free'?" Jesus said to them, "I am telling you the truth: everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave does not belong to a family permanently, but a son belongs there forever. If the Son sets you free, then you will be really free..." (John 8 vs. 33-36 GNB).*

But He did not engage in any form of argument with them. Rather, He told them:

*"...If you really were Abraham's*

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*children... you would do the same*  
*things he did. All I have ever done is to*  
*tell you the truth I heard from God, yet*  
*you are trying to kill me. Abraham did*  
*nothing like this! You are doing what*  
*your father did..." (vs. 39-41a GNB)*

Eventually, Jesus confronted them with the simple fact:

*You are the children of your father, the Devil, and you want to follow your father's desires. From the very beginning he was a murderer and has never been on the side of truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is doing what is natural to him because he is a liar and the father of all lies." "...You have never known him..." (vs. 44, 55 GNB)*

Your fruits will tell us who your father is. The desires of your heart as expressed in your actions and words will tell us who your father is. Do not deceive yourself like these people who, even while attempting murder, still professed God as their father. Be honest and ask yourself this question again: WHO IS MY FATHER? Peradventure you are convinced God is your father, then, what is your relationship with Him? How old are you? What is your level of maturity? A childish heir is just like a servant.

*But remember this, if a father dies and leaves great wealth for his little son, that child is not much better off than a slave*

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until he grows up, even though he  
actually owns everything his father had.  
(Gal 4 vs. 1 (TLB).*

*What I am saying is that as long as the heir is  
a child, he is no different from a slave, although he  
owns the whole estate. (Gal 4 vs. 1 NIV).*

According to St. Paul, a childish prince is not better than a slave of his age, until the prince grows to an age that he can ascend the throne of his late father. This is why you really need to grow in your relationship with the Lord. Hence, you need to feed on the good food of eternity, which is the word of God so as to grow steadily and attain a mature age which guarantees your inheritance.

*Wherefore thou art no more a servant,  
but a son: and if a son, then an heir of  
God through Christ. (Gal 4 vs. 7 KJV).*

*So then, you are no longer a slave but a  
son. And since you are his child, God  
will give you all that he has for all his  
children. (Gal 4 vs. 7 GNB)*

A childish heir, though he be the lord of all, will remain a 'special servant' as seen in *Gal 4 vs. 1* until he grows and attains maturity. This means that you need to grow in your knowledge of the Word and your prayer life, feeding the hero (heir) within you with things that edify.

What you need to understand is that once you are mature as an heir of God, then all the attributes of your Father shall be fully yours. Can you imagine how the children of the prominent kings of this world are treated? You are worth far more as a child of God

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and heir of the King of kings. Is this not worth celebrating? The only way to rightly celebrate this is by discovering your worth and wearing the right attitude always. If you do this well, then the entire world will celebrate you. You are not ripe for celebration until people begin to see you ruling the affairs of your inheritance correctly and manifesting the attributes of your heirship.

It is God's plan for you to be great in life. He is, Himself, a Great God and you have to march into distinguished greatness. It is now your time to manifest greatness in all your endeavours. Your inheritance is not only limited to material things; it also includes imperial greatness. You have no excuse to be mediocre. Do not be like a prince that does not know himself as a prince. There is greatness in you waiting to be discovered. You are loaded with greatness. Discover it and maximize your inheritance.

**Why Are You Here?**

*Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, "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 vs. 4-5 RSV).*

*The Lord said to me, "I knew you before you were formed within your mother's womb; before you were born I sanctified you and appointed you as my spokes man to the world" (TLB).*

*The LORD said to me, "I chose you*

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before I gave you life, and before you  
were born I selected you to be a prophet  
to the nations” (GNB).*

*The Word of the Lord came to me,  
saying, “Before I formed you in the  
womb I knew you, before you were born  
I set you apart; I appointed you as a  
prophet to the nations” (NIV).*

These words of God to Jeremiah, when considered from diverse versions of the Bible, serve as a good basis for discussion in order for you to realise and identify with the purpose of your existence on planet Earth. One encouraging fact you must keep in mind as you go through life is that you are not here by accident, by chance or by an error in family planning. You were programmed and planned by God Himself to be here. God chose your parents through whom you found your way here.

Jeremiah (Jehovah is high), the son of Hilkiyah (portion of Jehovah), was born the very way you were born. He originated from a town most likely not as big as yours. His father, Hilkiyah, was a priest and a vessel unto God. Can you sense any importance in those two names? The two names center around one personality, ‘Jehovah’. Hence, their devotion to God was not surprising. Their lives were centered on Him just like their names. What is your name? Who is your name centered on? A few months before my twenty-second birthday, I discovered the importance of my names and how it had been affecting my progress in life. Two times, I have seen my mother

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encouraging me with the compound nickname—which has all my five names. It is not to her a nickname but a name she so much believed in. As she attached several meanings, responsibilities and prophecies to the name, I wept sore in my heart. For every day of my life, I will thank God for giving her the creativity that brought about the name. What is your name? What does it mean?

Furthermore, Jeremiah was not limited by the size of his town. He was God's spokesman and prophet to the nations. Before we start to consider those words of the Lord to Jeremiah, I wish to single out three differences that may exist between you and this great prophet:

- The pivot of your name: who is your name centered around? What circumstances led to your name?

Jabez was a rich man:

*Jabez was more distinguished than any of his brothers. His mother named him Jabez because she had such a hard time at birth. (1 Chron. 4 vs 9 TLB)*

In short, Jabez means sorrow, but to prove how wealthy he became, *1 Chronicles 2 vs. 55* reveals that a city was probably named after him.

Ichabod (*1 Sam. 4 vs. 21*) was never mentioned again in the Bible after its second appearance in *1 Sam. 14 vs. 3*.

Jeremiah's name was centered on God.

- His life was centered around God. As a youth, (some Bible versions refer to him as a child) to

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be able to hear God speak means that he could discern the voice of God from that of the crowded world. Who is your life centered on?

- He discovered himself and set himself apart unto God. He developed a listening heart and the obedience to do exactly as the Lord chose. *Jeremiah was a well mannered and mature heir.*

Your name could be centered on God; people may even conclude that your life is centered on God. But how deep is your relationship with God? Are you not a child-heir? These three things must work together. In our generation, we have a lot of people bearing God-centered names which do not testify to His glory. Instead, those names are mentioned in corruption cases, worldly entanglement and abuse of power. A lot of our title bearers whose lives are expected to be centered on God are not. Our generation has witnessed and is witnessing what seems to be worse than that of the Galatians.

For the most part of the book of Jeremiah, it was more of ‘*Saith the Lord*’, ‘*the word of the Lord came unto me again*’ and similar God-centered phrases. Receiving the right word from God per time takes maturity and spiritual empowerment that most of our spiritual leaders today lack.

*Now the word of the Lord came to me saying... (Jer. 1 vs. 4 RSV)*

*The Lord said to me... (TLB)*

*And the Lord said to me.... (GNB)*

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Then the word of the Lord came to me  
saying.... (KJV)*

In whatever version you may read this passage (*Jer. 1 vs. 4*), it means the same thing—that it is only God, your Creator, who can deliver to you your purpose here in this world. The Lord assured Jeremiah of how great He is to him. No individual, not even a prophet or a pastor, can tell you what you are meant to be. God packaged you. Therefore, for you to know what your package contains, you need to ask Him and His response will determine how best you can achieve your destiny.

*Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee... (KJV).*

*I know you before you were formed in your mother's womb (TLB).*

*I chose you before I gave you life (GNB).*

The first sentence ever from God to Jeremiah reveals that everybody existing here is not doing so by accident. God took His time to programme each individual with unique qualities and attributes in a special way and for a unique purpose. There is a unique programme (software) in his mind for a unique you. As we stated earlier, long before you were born, God had provided a place for you to grow; a place where greatness will be celebrated. Before He gave you life, He had chosen you. What a great privilege!

*Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee... (KJV)*



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And before you were born I selected  
you... (GNB)*

*Before you were born, I set you apart . . .  
(NIV)*

*And before you were born, I consecrated  
you... (RSV)*

*To sanctify* means to make—a person or a thing—holy, justified, spotless, approved, ordained and commissioned. These six events had been completed before your birth. You had been correctly processed before you were delivered. Also, *to select* means to choose somebody or something carefully, especially as being the best or most suitable out of a large population for a particular task. *Random House* dictionary explains it as: to pick out, to be careful and fastidious in appointing a person at the expense of others. *Consecration* means reserving something or somebody for a special purpose, or devoting somebody or something to a special purpose. In the same vein, *to set apart* can be expressed as to prefer something or somebody to others.

What else do you need to know about how greatly you have been favoured by God? A careful task had been concluded before you were born, just to make things easier for you. The nature of your making is holy because the nature of your maker is holy. Even though David said, “*Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me*” (Ps 51 vs. 5 KJV), and the Apostle Paul confirmed that, “*For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God...*” (Rom

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3 vs. 23 KJV), all you need to do is to rediscover and reclaim your initial consecration by accepting Jesus into your life.

*And ordained thee a prophet...*

*(KJV)*

*And appointed you a prophet...*

*(RSV)*

*And appointed you as my spokesman...*

*(TLB)*

Jeremiah, long before his birth, had been appointed a prophet and he became what God appointed him to be. What an orderly God! You have been appointed as well to be a unique individual in a particular vocation or calling. And you have been processed for this task; you only need to discover that very person that you have been called (born) to be. This, you can only do by seeking God (your Maker, your Producer) to tell you what He has packaged inside of you. Consider that Jeremiah would have failed flatly if he had gone into any other thing apart from being a prophet. If you plant an orange seed, the seed cannot decide by itself to

germinate and grow as cashew tree. Your Producer had planted a seed in you and you just need to inquire of Him to know the type of seed so that you can then germinate, grow and bear fruit. Vocation-wise, if a seed of teaching has been planted in you, you will just see yourself becoming a failure if you prefer to be a field engineer. If a seed of a legal practitioner has been planted in you, you will just not

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be the best medical doctor, and vice versa. The bottom line is that you will flourish only in that very vocation that has been processed in you long before your delivery. Ministry-wise, if God has called you to be an evangelist and you decide to be a pastor, you will never experience peace in pastoring. Paul had been doing wonderfully fine with the gentiles but when he decided to enlarge his scope outside God's plan for him, he was terribly beaten. Know His purpose for your life so that you can flourish. To be great in life, you need to stay put to where God has placed you. There is no greatness that you can achieve in another man's vocation that can be compared to what you would have achieved if you had stayed put in God's plan for you. Your greatness lies in your placement.

And to know your placement, seek to hear God speak to you. For three years, I was writing JAMB and I kept failing. My last score was 188. I so much desired to study mechanical engineering after I had discovered my passion for mathematics. I was eager to change to statistics as I was told by a friend that FUTA could be a good destination. But I would have failed if I had studied statistics. To hear and see God showing me a picture of myself putting on some nursing gadgets and a Bible convinced me that I would have failed in any other vocation. No wonder! Despite not preparing hard as I did for the previous JAMB exams, despite the lack of interest on my part, I passed the nursing school's common entrance examination at first attempt and with healthy grades. Even though at some point I regretted not going to

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FUTA to study statistics, I thank God that I did not opt for that step which could have marred my entire destiny.

*To the nations... (NIV)*

*Unto the nations (RSV)*

*To the world (TLB)*

Despite growing up in a small town of Anathoth, God gave Jeremiah a vision unto the nations. Not to Anathoth, not to the province of Jerusalem but “*To the world*”. Do not be limited by the size of your compound, the largeness of your town or city or by how populous your state of origin is. I do not know whether the mention of the name of your town would surprise people of its existence; yet the Lord has programmed that they will hear that name through your greatness. Jesus was referred to as a Nazarene (*Mk 10 vs. 47* and *Mt 2 vs. 23*), but you only need to know how small Nazareth is. It is interesting to know that Jeremiah was one of the most notable persons (if not the most notable) who originated from Anathoth. The meaning of Anathoth which is ‘answers to prayer’. The prayers of the occupants of the town must have been answered when God beckoned at the town to appoint one of the most reputable prophets ever. Note that Pastor E.A. Adeboye and Bishop Oyedepo are not from any of the most populous cities or towns in Nigeria. This is another thing that should encourage you. They both came from towns in which a majority of people cannot even imagine—Ifewara and Omu Aran, respectively. Your service and everything you can offer have been longed for by the entire world, not just your town or state. They are

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both too small to contain the greatness in you.

Know why you are here and tap into it. It is only in the context of your destiny's purpose that you can be great but you are sure to fail outside it. Do not limit yourself because you are unlimited. After discovering your purpose and God's plan for your life, then you need to get married to it.

**Getting Married**

You will wonder how getting married applies to what we have been discussing. We are not considering its literal meaning; it is not as the marriage between a man and his woman but between an individual and his purpose (why he/she is here). Marriage entails mutual agreement and consent between two parties after they might have considered it as a covenant of a lifetime.

**Characteristics of this Marriage**

Just as a priest, the family head, or a legal aid, will be called upon to join two people together in a religious, traditional or court wedding, it is the Lord God that will marry an individual to his/her destiny. He created all; He knows the capability and the strength of all and He will commit into your care tasks that He has already

packaged in you to handle. Three facts that are pertinent to marriage can also be applied to your getting married to your purpose:

- Any couple that is not legally joined together (either by religious or traditional rites) is only cohabiting. So is the case of anyone who does

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not consult His maker to link him/her up with his/her afore created destiny.

- The priest or legal aid will not join the couple together without a congregation of witnesses (no matter how few).
- As the Lord is joining you with what He has made you for, it must be evident to the entire world to see and testify to. You will accredit somebody as an artist when you behold the great work he has done in time past. A footballer can be celebrated when we see how good s/he can dazzle with the round leather material.

*... It was there at Antioch that the believers were first called Christians (Act 11 vs. 26b TLB).*

The disciples did not refer to themselves as Christians; their witnesses did. And you have more witnesses to testify to the work of your hands. Even though these witnesses may be bought over by the devil to acclaim something wrong out of every good deed (as they did to Jesus), a number of godly and honest persons will still exist among them.

Just as problems of all sorts can emanate from a literal marriage, the figurative marriage between you and your destiny can generate challenges too. It will definitely be very rough at different times, but all you need to remember is 'to have and to hold ...to cherish and to adore...till death do us part'. You already have your calling even before you were born. It is now your duty to hold on to your calling, to

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cherish and adore. Even when all others and circumstances are against you, remember it is 'till death do us part'. This is all you have to do: stay put and be courageous. In fact, at some point, money may appear to be a problem or limitation en route your destiny. However, over time, you will soon know it is not meant to be an impediment but a challenge to bring out the real champion [survivor] in you. Also, as families and friends may stand to oppose the actual marriage, so they may the marriage in this context. It is just that they cannot succeed, in any case, to stop you.

Everything you need to push you through has been in existence before you were born. Lacking them at the initial stages of your career or ministry may be very frustrating, but not terminal to your destiny.

Like the actual marriage, the marriage in context also allows for divorce. You may wonder at this. Yes, I did wonder at it too when the Holy Spirit told me. But I later was convinced when the Holy Spirit taught me how someone can divorce his destiny, ministry or career. You are filing for a divorce from your marriage with destiny when you refuse to seek and/or be led by God, when you are not born-again or when you prefer something other than what God has assigned to you. At the point where you are following your discretion or intuition, if it is against God's plan, you are already filing for a divorce. God's plan may not be the sweetest thing to taste at the initial stages. Even gold and diamonds may not be appealing when dug out of the mine, but God's plan will always be the best that can happen to you, and the sweetest thing

you can ever experience.

However, one sad discovery is that most people divorce their destiny because of lack of support from the people around them. This is the worst thing that can ever happen to your marriage. Apart from that, some others consider that all the obstacles are more than they can bear, and they conclude they “can’t”. When God first put this book you are holding in my heart in 2006, I did not think it was possible for me to publish a book. My bank account at the time was less than ₦10,000 and I did not have any significant connection. Everybody around me knows the grace of God on me when it comes to writing. But I had divorced the calling earlier, until God sent somebody that did not know about my ability. Dr. Tale Omole said that she attended the launching of my book in her revelation. Friend, the angels can weep if you divorce this marriage as Saul did. His divorce happened in two stages.

*He waited seven days for Samuel, as Samuel had instructed him to do; Samuel still had not come to Gilgal. The people began to desert Saul, so he said to them, ‘Bring me the burnt sacrifices and the fellowship sacrifices’. He offered a burnt sacrifice... but Samuel said, ‘what have you done?’. Saul answered, ‘the people were deserting me’, ‘that was a foolish thing to do’, Samuel answered. ‘You have not obeyed the command the Lord your God gave you. If you had obeyed, he would have let you*



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and your descendants rule over Israel  
forever. But now your rule will not  
continue. (1 Sam 13 vs. 8-14 GNB)*

He had reigned for just two years and this was his first major task after Samuel had presented him to the people as the king (his task in *1 Sam 11* was before Samuel presented him to the people). He became afraid of losing his men until he lost his destiny. The remaining 38 years of his reign were not part of God's plan. But then, he was not totally out of God's plan until when he failed with covetousness and self-sufficiency in the Amalekite task:

*And Samuel said to him, "See? The Lord  
has torn the kingdom of Israel from you  
today and has given it to ..." (1 Sam 15  
vs. 28 TLB)*

After his first blunder, God sought a captain for Himself to whom He gave the kingdom after Saul's trip to Amalek.

I am sure you must have learnt great lessons from the experience of Saul. What did the king of Israel lack that made him to 'steal' (so to speak) from the goods of the Amalekites and even spare their king? You cannot be as wise as the owner and giver of wisdom.

*For the foolishness of God is wiser than  
man's wisdom, and the weakness of  
God is stronger than man's strength (1  
Cor. 1 vs. 25 NIV).*

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The popular thing in some areas now is that our generation is witnessing a pastor-per-five-members. Every one of us wants the title, and not the responsibility. Pastors and reverends fight for seniority and superiority. An individual who God has called to be an usher will just buy good ties and nice shirts and in no time become a pastor. So many of whom God had graciously chosen, the majority of whom have disappointed God, have been rejected. Stay put in your calling; endure the hardship and care less whether or not the majority is on your side. They will join your camp to associate with your greatness when it becomes apparent.

**Discovering Those Bits of Fame in You**

In any situation you find yourself, the most important thing to do is rely on God. The next is to believe you can go all the way no matter how rough or challenging things may be. You can achieve whatever greatness God has planted in you! And I can assure and reassure you that nobody can help you to attain your goal, if you think you will fail. But if you think your dream is possible, no factor on earth can limit you. Death cannot touch you! Walt Disney, who founded the Orlando Park in the United States of America and the now globally known *Disney World*, saw visions. He battled the opposition to initiate the foundation and he commenced an architectural design. He got the master plan and made a frame for it in his room while he was sourcing for funds and manpower. He later died in the process, but at the completion of the park, the priest

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said, ‘ . . . it is a pity that the man who initiated the idea of this beautiful work could not witness this day . . . ’.

On hearing this statement, the wife of Walt Disney ran forward to reject it immediately by saying, ‘My husband saw it; in fact, on a daily basis, every time he was in his room, he saw this great park again and again. He got the vision and he imagined it even till his last minutes . . . ’.

Can you imagine? Death did not stop him from achieving his dream. Retreat inward and search out those things in you that you have thus far ignored. The earlier you know them, the earlier you launch into your destiny. There is a drop of greatness in every individual; but only a few people discover their potential.

An American was once asked which one he will prefer if he was presented with the head (brain) of Bill Gates and that of a middle-aged African. Without hesitation the American said, ‘What again can I do with Bill Gate’s head, after he has explored it all by himself? I will go for that African’s head which I’m sure is still loaded and untapped.’

This, I must tell you, is the secret behind the brain drain. They discover us even when we do not discover ourselves and pay us a token to take advantage of ‘our own’ loaded brain.

What do you like doing? What can you do better than others? You are unique; there is a unique strength within you. If Joseph had not discovered himself, don’t you think that he would have died a servant? When you discover yourself, publicise

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yourself, but do not boast about the glory, which shall be due unto God alone.

During those years that I was seeking admission into tertiary institution, I travelled far and wide, covering about twelve states in two years. But while I was in high school, I developed myself as a trader with good marketing skills. These skills enhanced my courage. And these character traits have continued to consistently add greater value to my life. I will always appreciate God for these skills.

**TWO**

# Maximizing Your Potential

Potential is defined as the talent or ability yet to be developed. It is ability or strength in raw form. This simply means the potential for excellence exists, but is not visible or developed yet. For it to be made visible, it has to be put through stages of development which only you can initiate. In essence, what you need to understand is that there is excellence, strength, an uncommon ability and a unique talent existing within you, but it is in a raw state; in its rudimentary form. To launch you into your greatness, you have to identify it and give it all it takes. Moreover, it is crucial for you to understand that a potential can exist within you without being discovered for a long time; it may be left in its latent state for decades without being developed. It is pertinent, however, to add that millions of people in the world, most especially in Africa, die without discovering their potential. What a tragedy!

Potential exists in the form of your natural abilities and talents. Apparently, one's potential is the innate ability to carry out a particular assignment. In my own terms, I wish to explain potential as "the totality of all you can be, but that you have not been".



**Practical Things You Need to Know**

- *God will not give you what you cannot carry or what you have not been equipped for.* The potential that is within you has been packed according to your capability. God knows your strengths and your weaknesses. He knows all things about 'the real you' that you need to know. Hence, you have been packaged by God according to your strength.
- *No one is on earth by accident and the best you can be is 'You'.* The circumstances surrounding your birth should not worry you. People may taunt you as being an accident; however, tell yourself that you are not here by accident. God has a plan for you and he had designed the plan long before your birth. It would be a great disaster to your destiny if you are influenced negatively, by what people say or the circumstances of your birth. The greatest tragedy you can allow to happen to your destiny is to decide to be like somebody else. It is the equivalence to murdering your destiny by your own very self. You can have mentors whose paths you wish to trace or whose counsels and pieces of advice you may heed; but you need to understand that you are not a replica of anybody; not even of your mentor. So there is a need for you to be cautious. You are a unique being, with a unique greatness living inside of you. Do not live like another person. Rather allow the good lifestyle of

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another to influence you in living your unique life in a unique way.

- *Burying your potential is burying your life.* You will agree that the World Wide Web, invented by Sir Tim Berners-Lee (an Englishman), has transformed so many destinies across the world. And you would wonder what could have become of those transformed destinies if Berners-Lee had buried his potential. If you fail to develop that material in you, it will not drag only you. God's harrowing concern is that future generations will not enjoy the benefit of the potential you buried.
- *You have all you need to be prosperous in life.* All the materials that can make you great are packaged within you. The level you are at now is probably quite low and if you agree to take it as your best, then you are finished! Do not allow Satan to cage you on a spot; make a move and do not join the multitude of murmurers who always move about lamenting about the lack of money as their reason for not making it in life. If you discover yourself and develop your potential with the right attitude and as you study and pray, you too, can become wealthy. There will be no true success if you fail to discover your potential and this simply means that the greatest height you are destined to attain in life is via your potential.
- *When you discover your dream, people will discover you.* You cannot be known for existing here on earth without any notable success.



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Millions of people live across the world on this planet but only few people with distinct testimonies are special. A general or average achievement will not be classified as success. And you can excel only in what you are better than others. It is necessary for you to discover and develop yourself. The world will only discover you when your testimonies have elevated your head above that of your peers and made you visible to the entire world to behold.

A lion cub grew up with a pack of dogs in a particular zoo which covers a very large expanse of land. Along with the dogs, the young lion goes to the river to drink water whenever they need to. Adult lions also came to the river to drink and as the lions appeared from afar, all the dogs would run off. As the dogs were running away, the young lion would also run away with them. But on a very fortunate day for the lion cub, the river was still. As the young lion was trying to drink, he beheld his face on the water surface. When the adult lions appeared, and as their usual practice, the dogs ran off, but the lion cub saw a striking resemblance between himself and the adult lions. He, therefore, stayed back, not following the dogs. And this was how he graduated from the lower level. When the young lion appeared the next time with the other lions, the dogs that he used to follow ran away with fear. Get a mirror and look at your

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real face; discover yourself and migrate to a higher level. Then do an attitudinal move by yourself and God will lift and get you in place.

- *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospereth (3 John 2).* Do not take your cue from the mediocre that see greatness as a channel to destruction; it is the wish of God that you prosper in life. The earlier you discover this, then the better you are and the farther you can go in life. *'But from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath'(Mt 25 vs. 29).* And to him that hath already, God wants you to have more and to increase. But if you decide not to have, even the little you have, shall be collected from you and be given to him that have more. Your creator did not create you to suffer, he has provided all that you will need and you need not choose suffering for yourself. Graduate from mediocrity to greatness.
- *Potential is not what you have done but what you are able to do; it is what you can manifest but lies still within you.* In essence, do not be satisfied with what you have achieved and merely rest on your laurels, ie, your past glory. Leave those celebrations for others. When David killed Goliath, he went back to prepare himself for future challenges. He did not organise parties to celebrate. It was those cowards, who had been afraid who organised the party for themselves. There are a lot more

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victories within you. The more you celebrate the past events, the shorter the distance you can see. Success is one of the greatest enemies of potential. If you are not careful, it can prevent you from going further. Yes, a modest celebration is both necessary and appropriate. However, always keep in mind that after every achievement, there are more challenges ahead. Press forward!

- *There are people who will not rise until you rise.* Do not disappoint your audience. A large number of people in the crowd is waiting for you to rise; they are expecting you to rise so that they can rise. Do not disappoint them. Rise!
- *Understand what your 'hidden treasure' means and you will understand your make-up.* Your make-up (potential) determines how you will end-up. Fulfilling your purpose in life depends solely on how far you are able to tap into your potential. If you are equipped with knowledge of your make-up, then you can begin to picture your end-up. If you cannot picture any potential, then you can be sure you cannot see any great end-up.
- *Your sight determines your height.* How tall you can grow depends on how far you can see. See something good in every circumstance around you. Even if you are in a pit for now, take it as 'prosperity in training'. It is a strategy of Satan to present you with situations and events that are enough to allow you to lose your hope. Do

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not allow him to succeed in doing this. Even if you are growing up in Egypt or Babylon, see yourself as breaking old records and setting new ones. Just look inward and upward; what you see within predicts where you will locate yourself. Avoid looking around your vicinity, because more often than not, it will be full of distractions. One of the things the Holy Spirit has helped me to understand is to picture 'something good in everything I see'. No matter how ugly it may appear to you, something good and valuable is inside it. Correct your faulty sight by living with the right attitude to life. Be happy and believe in God. Believe in yourself and do not worry if others do not believe in you. Nobody has the duty to see what is appropriate for your destiny; only you can see for yourself. Yes, mentors can try to inspire us, but the duty of identifying your purpose is exclusively yours.

- *I am made in heaven, delivered to Africa, blessed in Nigeria to affect the entire world.* Be yourself and be your best. Refuse to be limited by the name of your town or by the financial status of your family. That poor background is not to limit you but to teach you lessons on how to show compassion to the poor. My 001, 010, 101, 110, 011 meal schedule while I was in school made me to understand the real meaning of hunger (*hung*, colloquially) and to learn that every plate of food I do not need or would not like to eat could save lives from the

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agony of want. And by this lesson, I resolved not to allow any wastage while some people around me are in want. The situation is not a limitation but a preparation for your revolution. Do not limit yourself. Soar high! You are an asset meant for the world, not your locality only.

- *Understanding your identity prevents you from being a non-entity.* If you are Reuben, I am sure you will want to correct whoever calls you Rebecca, with all humility, that you are Reuben and not Rebecca. Know your identity. There is a seed of greatness in everyone but very few know it. Discover your greatness and live up to your potential.
- *The revelation.* The world is waiting for what is packaged inside of you, but you need to wake it up. You can be the light in darkness in the world, the hope for the hopeless and the help for the helpless. Falling prey to hopelessness and helplessness is like a natural disaster; it opens the door to Satan to come into your life. And to attain the height ahead of you, you have got to be making progress, as progress is the language of greatness.
- *In the valley of dry bones, there was a potentially great army (Ezk. 37).* You should wonder what could have happened if they had not awakened from their sleep. Perhaps, they would have remained dead forever. Wake up from that sleep and fight for your placement. The tomb of Lazarus was 37 feet deep but then

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he came out at the first prompt when Jesus charged him to come forth. This means that he was still loaded even when in death. Dare to die empty. You should pity Elisha who had inherited the double fold of Elijah's strength but was buried with it. And right there in the tomb, Elisha was loaded with spiritual power that he brought a dead man back to life. It would be a great tragedy if you die loaded.

- *Your certificate is not what will enable you to market your potential; it can only influence your presentation and acceptance.* A multitude of graduates are out there without any difference. Your academic qualification is never a pre-requisite for greatness. It is how you present yourself that matters and this entails believing in yourself.
- *Your problems are ladders.* To climb to a second storey window without a ladder is a very difficult task, if not impossible. Those problems that you encounter on your way up will be of help to you if you take them as your ladder. Locate the challenges that will produce the best in you and face them; do not fear them. People fail in life more often because they fear failure. Do not fear failure! Even if you fail, do not despair; take it as an opportunity to do better. A British scholar said, 'if I fail in my quest to get a 'C' in any exam, it is only an opportunity for me to get a 'B' when next I sit for the exam'. Obstacles in your path help you to grow stronger.

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- *Always stay connected to your source.* It is your source that can make you a resource person. It is your source that can resuscitate you when-ever the need arises. Pulling away from your source is pulling away from your inspiration and restoration. No matter how far you go in life, make sure that God is your only source of greatness. Remain connected to Him always, not when the need arises.
- *Be informed so as to be in form.* If you are not informed, then you will, in no time, be deformed. Information often makes the difference between the rich and the poor, the literate and the illiterate. To avoid being illiterate, seek the right knowledge for your calling, business or vocation. Study how great people made it and prospered. In your quest, do your best to unravel their secrets and their lifestyle and how they made it.
- *Maximise every leisure time.* Your time should be a great asset to you such that you do not waste it. Spend it wisely and avoid activities that consume your time without adding value to your life. Depart from those friends who waste your time. Your time is your life; wasting it amounts to wasting your destiny.
- *The friends you spend time with, the books you read and music you listen will influence your destination and your greatness in life.* Get information from the Bible and other stimulating books, journals and tapes that can edify your mind and spirit.

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- *Feed your Hero.* Feed on good things; get good materials and enrich your soul with worthwhile conversations. Whatever nurtures your soul will determine what you carry and produce. Feed on the lasting manna, the word of God, and allow the Holy Spirit to fill you in prayer. Ten minutes with the Holy Spirit in prayer is more than ten years with "seers". The veil that is used to separate the congregation and God has been removed by Jesus a long time ago and now you have the right to access God directly. Let Him feed you and you will hunger no more.
- *Locate and submit to right mentors.* A mentor is a trusted adviser or somebody with experience in a particular field, not necessarily a bishop or a prophet. The word *trusted* which qualifies adviser entails that you do not allow the title or the qualification of the person to mentor you, but his/her ability. Be mentored by what you know about the person, not by what you were told. A mentor must be somebody that has succeeded in that aspect of your calling. It is equally not out of place to have more than one person as your mentor. If you are a career person who is equally into ministry, then you can have a mentor in your field (career) and another in your area of calling. However, if you have somebody in your life who has succeeded in combining the ministry with your career, and you see the hand of God in the person's life, then s/he will be a better mentor for you.



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You may be mentored by someone who may not even know /he is mentoring you. You only need to have a ‘few minutes’ of conversation with some people, and you will feel enlightened. It is simply so because their message works for you more than listening to hours of preaching by another pastor. And I need to sound a note of caution to you that just because somebody is a prophet, a renowned pastor, a bishop, a right reverend, an evangelist, a deacon, or what have you, should not be the criteria for choosing him/her as a mentor. Allow God to lead you. Most preferably, go for somebody whose testimonies are not just a string of titles.

- *Try your potential on aspects where people have failed.* Like I said earlier, you do not have to fear failure. That somebody older than you in your calling or field have failed does not mean that you will also fail. Saul was a mighty man of war but he was afraid of Goliath, while the young David kick-started his career with Goliath whom Saul was unable to face. Tell yourself that *even though more broad-chested men might have failed, I will succeed* and you will.
- *Think ‘Yes I can’ always.* Whatever you believe you can do, you can do and whatever you think you cannot do, you actually cannot do. In the face of hard challenges, “*I can sail through*” is a sentence that can alter so many things. Never see yourself as a failure because

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you are not one—even if people say you are! Develop a winning attitude in any battle you find yourself, as your attitude determines your magnitude.

- *Think of facts, not beliefs.* Beliefs may discourage. It seemed incongruous that David could defeat Goliath. Abraham and Sarah believed that they were too old to give birth to a child. However, these facts were turned upside down. The truth is that you are a winner. Believe in yourself. Any other position apart from this is a distraction and discouragement. Avoid it.
- *Celebrate yourself* even when others do not. Celebrating yourself entails believing in yourself (what God can do through you) and being sure that your God will give you the strength and wisdom to face any challenge. David celebrated himself by remembering how God had helped him to kill a lion and a bear and his courage was bolstered. However, you must be wary of celebrating the glory of past victories and past achievements as you may become an irrelevant braggart.
- *Wear a ‘yes face’ always.* A young man was to cross to the other side of the river and he would need somebody’s ship or boat to do this. A few minutes after he got to the river bank, President Thomas Jefferson and his convoy came forth from afar, all of them on their horses. They were to pass through the river with their horses and this man decided to

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approach one of them. He begged the president for help and President Jefferson helped him as he requested. They passed through the river and when he was alighting from the president's horse, one of the soldiers asked thus, "Why did you prefer to approach the president?" The young man was shocked (he never knew the man he approached was the President Jefferson). "Because I saw him wearing a 'yes face,' the man responded. Wear a 'yes face'; smile always, whatever you are passing through, regardless. Smiles make you beautiful and handsome. Winners are always happy, and smiling is one of the components of happiness. Cultivate it gradually. Smile even in the face of all the odds.

- *Never, never, give up; Move right up.* Giving up is simply hanging up your potential. Why should you hang up? Are you fed up? Or tired? Have you failed several times? Come on. Move right up! Moving right up is moving in the right direction. Cultivate the right attitude; consult the right source of restoration and resuscitation. It is not when you need resuscitating materials that you begin to procure or look around for them. Never walk alone! Walk on the right path with the right attitude and aim upwards so that you can soar.
- *Finishing the race is what matters.* To Bob Ireland, the position he had in the marathon race he applied for was not what mattered.

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Despite his disability, he believed that finishing his course, overcoming his challenge, was what mattered most. Do not aim at positions or titles; it will discourage you. Aim at finishing your task. Do not follow the pace of others; have a strong focus. Follow God's time in running your unique race.

- *Take responsibility and be reliable.* Responsible behaviour means to act wisely and independently. Whatever is within your ability (which is never limited), respond courageously to it.
- *Learn to say thank you to God and to people.* An attitude of gratitude will take you to your desired level. Saying *thank you* to God enables you to get more, because God is a supplier of fortunes that never run out. You only need to show appreciation for His previous supplies without asking for more. He will shower you with more than what you need. Appreciating God qualifies you for greater heights in life and helps you in any situation.

An individual will expect that you show appreciation for the kind deeds extended to you, which to the individual means that you know the worth of the help he had earlier rendered, no matter how little. And the individual would be ready to help again, sometimes even when you have not asked. Furthermore, courtesy demands that you appreciate any favour, grace, mercy and help you receive from anybody, whether young or old. Another thing you need to understand is that people want recognition. They

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want to be appreciated. You need to be prudent in doing this, so that you do not give the glory that belongs to God to men. Be grateful so that you can be "great-full".

I need to share my story with you. I used to make friends easily, every time I had the opportunity to meet any new face, except those that could be used by Satan to murder me. But there came a time I decided to minimize making new friends because I discovered that it was interfering with my destiny. While I did not drop any of the ones I had, I made sure that for a whole year I did not add any new friend. Then some friends, on their own, dropped out of our friendship. That was how I was able to cope with the lesser number that remained. My belief is that I can reach more lives as a friend, than I can as a pastor. One should develop and sustain responsible and edifying friendships, and by wisdom and prayer, withdraw from the evil ones.

**The Neurosurgeon Inside a Dullard****A Brief Review of Benjamin Carson**

Benjamin Carson was born in 1951, in the United State of America, as the second (and the last) child of a marriage that did not work out. His father was not responsible. Ben Carson's mother, Sonya Carson, was just the opposite. She did menial jobs from one house to another to ensure her two sons did not lack for anything. While doing this, she was growing her own great potential. She had two sons who she primed with the knowledge of their potential for greatness, especially Ben.

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Benjamin was not known for his brilliance as a primary school pupil; he would not even get one out of ten. In fact, the day he got 'one', his classmates concluded that he wrote the correct answer by mistake. But Sonya applied her knowledge and engaged him in reading beyond the usual. Sonya always told Ben, "I work among rich people, people who are educated; I watch how they act and I know they can do anything they want to do. And so can you." With this, she planted courage and a vision in Ben and she told him several times that, "If they can do it, so can you; only that, you can do it better than they did."

She also made Ben know that it takes a distinguished achievement to book one's name in the record of greatness. "Never worry about everyone else. The whole world is full of everybody else; you know that? But only a few make significant achievements." Even after several bouts of failure in his class assessments, Sonya never saw her son as a dullard. She never got discouraged; she never cursed her son; and she continually believed that he was destined for greatness.

Even when Ben himself was getting fed up, she was still courageous. She said, "I don't care what you were and I don't care what you were not, what you are going to be is the best." These words of grace could only come from an unparalleled mother.

Before the unique job was completed, Sonya learned that Ben usually blamed others for all his mistakes. However, she responded in a way I see as harsh reproof. She pointed out to him: "What others

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want for you is not important; it is what you want for yourself. Nobody can hinder you from doing what you want if that is what you want for yourself. Nobody can hinder you from doing what you want if that is what you set your mind to do. You can always find a hook on which to hang excuses. . . . Nobody makes you fail. If things go bad for you, and make you a bit ashamed, often you will find that you are to blame. And, swiftly we run into mischief and then the bad luck comes. Why do we fault others, when we have ourselves to blame? You need to know that whatever happens to us, here are the words we usually say, 'had it not been for so and so, things would not have gone that way'. You are the captain of your ship, so agree with the shame; if you ever travel downward, you have yourself to blame".

In 1984, when Ben was just 33, he set several records. At 34, he became the head of the Paediatric Neurosurgery Department in the hospital where he was working. Benjamin Carson was one of the greatest surgeons of his time. Separating the Siamese twins was one of the foremost landmarks in the history of neurosurgery. He broke records and set new ones after a series of destiny refining impacts enabled by God and motherly love.

Ben is one of the greatest men I have ever read about. *The Gifted Hands* and *The Big Picture* are books that continue to inspire me to reshape my life. Take sole responsibility for any failure. Take responsibility and you will see yourself taking charge.

**Discover Your Strength: What Do You Carry?**

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Most of my early childhood was anchored on my late grandmother, Madam Felicia Taiwo Ikotun. She taught me almost all the cultural values that I needed to know as a young lad. My able and worthy mother had accepted grandma's stance to bring me up in a way to protect me from too much "cane" because she believed in words more than the cane. After her demise in 1994, I went to live with my mummy, who God used to channel the latter part of my childhood.

Unlike any other phase in my life, age 12 was a season full of notable incidents, happenings and discoveries. A major part of my calling started to manifest. My ability to write also became evident when I was 12. I saw myself moving from one classroom to another in Methodist High School, Ilesha, teaching a group of 2 to 15 classmates with a new testament in my hand. I also started exhibiting my nursing skills (as inspired by God). Two major things I was born to do were launched temporarily until God opened my eyes to them on November 7th, 2004.

The developed countries are growing and improving daily because they encourage their youth to aspire to greatness. They channel the life of a child based on the discovery of what the child can do perfectly and effortlessly. You probably have not been discovered by your own parents, neighbours and relatives. You can, however, discover yourself. A man I met sometime in 2007 at Bishop Sowale's office in Ilesha said he loves talking and that he can do it for hours. Lo, right there and then, for almost two hours,



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he was talking and I was not surprised when he told me that he was a journalist working with the *Nigerian Tribune*.

Flash back to a moment to your childhood. What were those acts you engaged in? What do you like doing even at your present age? There are some things that I can do perfectly and effortlessly even when I am tired. Some things are in you that fatigue can never stop you from doing.

However, there is a need to clarify here, that there are some things that you love you may find hard to do, but that thing may be what will launch you to fame. Professor Wole Soyinka failed English language when he wrote his senior secondary school exams. This implies that you if fail; you have to try again. What have you always dreamt of becoming? You can, but only if you think you can.

Who would have picked Gideon as a leader? Certainly not Gideon! He did not even see himself as a leader: “O my Lord, how can I save Israel?” Gideon asked the angel who told him that God wanted to use him to defeat the Midianites. *Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house (Judges 6 vs. 15)*. He did not discover himself but God did, and he brought out those skills he never thought were part of him. Gideon progressed from being an obscure member of minor clan to being a leader of the northern tribes; and he led Israel to the greatest landslide victory in the nation’s history.

## **Seven Assets You Need to Discover**

**A Brief Review of Gideon's Greatness***1. Embrace your calling*

Few things are as compelling as a leader getting his calling clearly. Before the angel visited Gideon with a message from God, he lived in fear and when he heard God's message, he doubted himself and asked for multiple signs to confirm the mission God was calling him to fulfil. But once he got it, he embraced his calling.

*2. Insight*

People respect a leader with insight—the wisdom to see issues and the vision to see what lies ahead. God gave Gideon insight into the weak hearts of the Midianites. By the time Gideon called his men to battle, he understood that God would give them victory.

*3. Charisma*

People flock to leaders who make them feel good about themselves. When Gideon invited the people of Ephraim to join him in pursuing the Midianites, they reacted angrily. Then, Gideon showed them the significance of their role by reminding them that they had captured and killed the princes of Midian (*Judges 8 vs. 1-30*).

*4. Talent*

Look no further than the entertainment industry for evidence that fans flock around talent. While we do not know much about Gideon's natural abilities, the

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angel called him “*a mighty man of valour*” and instructed him to “*go in this might of yours*” (*Judges 6 vs. 12, 14*). More than likely, Gideon possessed both physical strength and courage.

### 5. *Ability*

People are attracted to someone who can get things done. Gideon did not attempt to get the Ephraimites on board until he had proven his ability.

### 6. *Communication Skills*

A leader who cannot communicate his/her calling and vision will have trouble winning anyone to his/her cause. A leader must start out strong, stand up when others do not. Gideon displayed courage in the face of incredible odds but a flaw in his character led to his downfall.

An artist in Europe could not afford a huge sum of money to secure a workshop in the city, so he opted for his father's land hidden amidst the bush and put up a small tent there as his workshop. He was a very creative and productive artist but few people knew about him. However, the few who knew him graciously publicised his work. So, this was how the young artist was discovered. But he refused to relocate to the city to set up a workshop even when he could afford the rent. In no time, people used their feet and their cars to ply the road that led to his workshop, not minding how hidden it was. Talent can pave the way for your greatness, but only if you

persevere and develop it.

After my preliminary training in nursing school in part one, I discovered that I could realise a nice profit from selling a good facsimile of the nurse's cap to my colleagues in preparation for the capping (matriculation) ceremony. Two ladies in my class, (Omogoye Shakirat and Okeyoyin Temitope), who later became my bosom friends, motivated me to do it. I got about three caps from our immediate senior colleagues and I tore them apart to know what type of material they were made from. I went throughout Ilesha, but I could not get the material. I later got it in Alesinloye Market in Ibadan and bravo, I produced the caps. Many of my classmates never touched those caps, not even Shakirat and Temitope, because they believed it was not well publicised and marketed like an "imported" product. "*How will 'Lekan produce a quality cap?*" was the question of a colleague of mine.

Although some faithful friends and some senior colleagues bought a few of the caps the following year, I gave one of the caps out to Helen (a friend to my roommate, Adeyemi) as a gift for her capping ceremony. In 2006, when another set of students were to be capped, Helen bolstered my courage telling me of the difference between the cap I gave her as a gift (which cost just ₦100) and the expensive one (₦130) she bought from another person. She implored me passionately to produce many. That very night, she raised marketers for the product. In 2006, I produced many caps and I was able to sell them, even to my classmates, who did not believe in me

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initially, and to some staff nurses as well. Although I did not make much profit (not even up to ₦500) from a business that cost me more than ₦7000 and a whole week of labour, yet I was happy because I accomplished what people had thought I could not do. The profit was not as important to me as the creativity and productivity I discovered within.

Why rot away expecting somebody from Russia or America to discover you? Wake up, shake up and explore yourself. What do you like doing? What can you do better than others?

There is a great need to add that your greatness may not even lie in your vocation; it could be a talent you keep ignoring; it could be that calling you have been avoiding; or that which you think is so easy for you. Pastor Enoch A. Adeboye was a lecturer in mathematics (a Ph.D. holder), but his Ph.D. in mathematics was not enough to make him great the way the calling of God upon him has transformed him to greatness. You need to discover what God has designed to orchestrate your greatness. And as you discover it, you need to write it down, pray over it, seek God's guidance and start gradually. Start small; you will end big.

Discover the strength within you and develop it. That is your greatness in a raw form. You have to grow it under God's grace and guidance. I see a great champion in you; but you need to see it yourself and dare to die empty after offering and exploring all the virtues loaded within you. Do not die with your potential intact. Your potential is simply 'potent greatness in a raw state.' Hence, it never reaches

greatness until you tap into it.

The Lord blessed me with a scholarship for my bachelors in nursing science at Obafemi Awolowo University. The sponsors paid my school fees and gave me the sum of ₦46,000 for textbooks. Being the initial stage of the sponsorship, I decided to buy ₦20,000 worth of gifts to appreciate some individuals who helped me in securing the scholarship. I bought shares worth ₦26,000 with the rest. About three months later, I had a dream in which the chairman of the scholarship foundation asked me about the textbooks. When I woke up, I saw the dream as a premonition. In order not to offend my sponsor, I went to borrow money to buy some of those books. My intention initially was to sell the shares to buy the textbooks, but the stock market was sluggish, hence I had to borrow. When I got to class with many textbooks, my fellow students were amazed. They asked if I had become a marketer of textbooks and without hesitating, the market boy in me jumped out and I answered: “yes”! I want you to know that the profit I made from the book business (through God’s help) served me well; I did not have to sell my shares. It cost me my time and strength, and my initial desire to be anonymous in that class was lost. But again, the satisfaction of doing what I enjoyed was worth more than the financial profit.



### THREE

## Greatness in the Making

God created the world in an orderly fashion. This is the reason behind the beauty that pours from the week-long job of the Almighty Creator. He, likewise, gradually makes you into what He wants. Just as God did the most important task of preparing a space for your greatness to flourish and to manifest, before you were conceived (*Jer. 1 vs 5*), such that the period of your gestation would enable your biological development, there is the need to inform you that your greatness will also be in stages and phases. Though there is a load of greatness in you, that greatness will not come by accident. It is a deliberate and rather slow process.

The process of making greatness is one of the most important stages of your life. The word *making* signifies the process of producing, developing or being made into something. And what is in the making here is your destiny. A major reason why this phase of your life is important is that every one of your decisions counts now more than ever before and will be far-reaching. You have discovered what God has in store for you and what you are loaded with. However, this is a phase where all decisions will be yours and you are expected to be mature enough to reason for yourself. It will be a great advantage if you learn how to be led by the Holy Spirit. And more



so if you develop a listening ear and

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an obedient heart so that whenever the Holy Spirit gives you a way out in any situation, you can obey and follow His directives. If you surrender to the Holy Spirit, then the challenge of this phase of your life is solved.

**Getting Prepared**

Since you now have insight into your worth and the reason for your existence, you will need to prepare yourself for the task. In order to understand that God has provided all you will need, I wish to share with you lessons from the preparatory phase of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was born six months after the delivery of John the Baptist, whom God appointed to prepare the mind of the people for the advent of Jesus Christ. Even in His early years, Jesus supported His father in his carpentry work; he was not idle.

*Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?....  
(Mk 6 vs. 3 KJV)*

*Is not this the carpenter's son?.... (Mt 13 vs. 55  
KJV)*

These two verses reveal to us that despite knowing His worth and His mission on earth, Jesus identified that His time had not come and decided not to stay idle 'til the time will come. He engaged in a vocation. This allowed Him to understand the condition of the world and to know exactly the depth and breadth of his mission. He was not getting prepared in a vocation alone; He was developing His knowledge of the world.

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Now His parents went to Jerusalem  
every year at the feast of the Passover.  
And when He was twelve years old,  
they went up to Jerusalem after the  
custom of the feast. (Lk 2 vs. 41-42 KJV)  
...where he was obedient to them ... (vs.  
51 GNB)*

The verses above reveal to us that He grew up as a child in a family that adhered strictly to the laws and customs of the land. In vs. 51, we were told of his obedience to His parents. This means that the social customs and culture, as well as the moral training from His parents, guided and anchored His childhood, perhaps just like yours. However, His childhood, in many respects, was not like yours.

*After three days they found Him in the  
temple, sitting among teachers listening  
to them and asking questions; and all  
who heard Him were amazed at His  
under-standing and His answer... . “Did  
you not know that I must be in my  
Father’s House?” (Lk 2 vs. 46-49 RSV)*

He knew the task before Him and He prepared Himself for the challenge through a sound knowledge of the doctrine. We can safely assume that He had been coming with His parents to the temple right from His birth and that this was most likely not new to Him; only that this may be the first time His parent left Him behind.

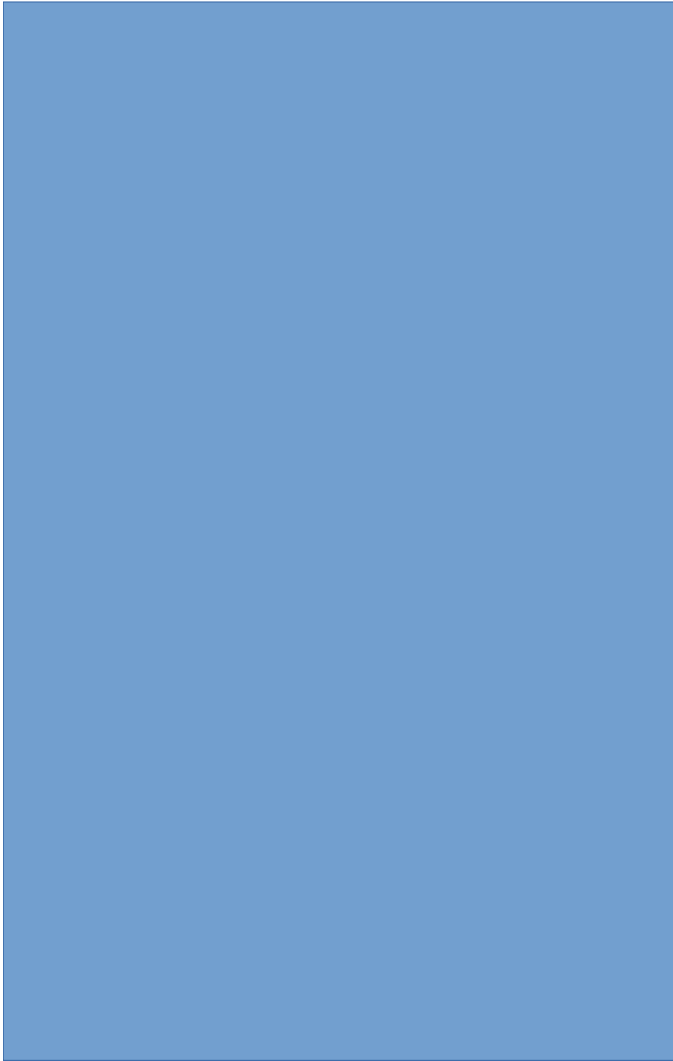
*In the first year of His reign, I was  
studying the sacred books and thinking.  
(Dan 9 vs. 2 GNB)*

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*In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel,*  
*understood by the books. (KJV)*

To prepare yourself, there is a need for you to study relevant books as well as to investigate issues of interest which will give you a sound knowledge base. The chart below will enable you to understand better: Whoever wants to achieve greatness must pass through those phases. What you read matters a lot. This helped our Lord Jesus in *Mt 4* (when Satan came to test Him). Jesus provided the right answers from the word of God to all of temptations by the Satan. He is the Word Himself; yet He studied to set a good example. No wonder the Bible recorded for us, something of His growth in *Lk 2 vs. 52*.

Can you still picture the major events of your childhood? It is never too late to start your preparation; you can start right now. Unlike any other carpenter, He was enriching Himself with the substance of the kingdom. A comprehensive study of *Lk 2 vs. 41-52* will instruct you on how to prepare yourself for your own *Mt 4* and *Lk 4* comes. This is because you cannot go to the next level if you do not pass Satan's test. You therefore need to prepare hard to forestall the plan of your adversary.

Before Jesus prepared Himself with the word, fasting and prayer, God appointed John the Baptist to give the people foreknowledge of Him, even when the people never knew it was 'the Carpenter', Jesus, that



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John was preaching about. Have you ever wondered why He was never distracted by John's praises? He did not allow the accolades lavished on Him to confuse or distract Him. He remained focused.

### **The Appointed Time**

In the making of the great person within you, one thing you need to understand very well is *time*. Your inability to understand this might lead to failure. Those years that Jesus was known as a carpenter were never wasted. Did you know that if He had started His mission at the age of 10 or 12, He most likely would not have been able to command the attention as the adult Jesus of 30 did? People might have called Him an *outcast*, a *foreigner* or a *stranger*, because He would have been unknown to them.

*To everything there is a season, and a  
time to every purpose under the heaven.  
(Eccl 3 vs. 1 KJV)*

If He had skipped any of those stages, many things could have gone wrong. His doctrine and words of life might have been rejected by the people He was sent to save. He could have appeared to be seeking self-glory; He could have been distracted. Ultimately and more importantly, the words, "*thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased,*" may not have come upon Him.

*And the Lord answered me, and said;  
write the vision and make it plain upon  
tables, that he may run that readeth it.  
For the vision is yet for an appointed*

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time, but at the end, it shall speak and  
not lie; though it tarries, wait for it;  
because it will surely come, it will not  
tarry. (Hab. 2 vs. 2-3 KJV)*

*And the Lord answered me: Write the  
vision; make it plain upon tablets, so he  
may run who reads it. For still the vision  
awaits its time; it hastens to the end—it  
will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it  
will surely come, it will not delay. (RSV)*

*The Lord gave me this answer: Write  
down clearly on a tablet what I revealed  
to you so that it can be read at a glance.  
Put it in writing, because it is not yet  
time for it to come true. But the time is  
coming quickly, and what I show you  
will come true. It may seem slow in  
coming, but wait for it, it will certainly  
take place, and it will not be delayed.  
(GNB)*

Something caught my attention in the passage above and that is the repetition of the word *it* as well as *what I revealed to you*, where both refer to the vision. The King James version made mention of *it* nine times, the Good News Bible, ten times and the Revised Standard Version, ten times, in just two verses. This is simply to tell you how important the vision was to God.

God's instruction to Habakkuk should be of great importance to you. You should,

- Seek Him to get the vision

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- Write it down
- Write it plainly and boldly on a big board
- Wait for the appointed time
- Listen carefully to hear when it speaks
- Wait for it

These six steps are crucial to your vision, and how you follow them will determine, to a large extent, how soon and how well you fulfill your dreams.

Jesus knew His appointed time. That was why He queried His mother for attempting to haul Him into action before His time (*John 2 vs. 4*). If He had not waited for His time, He might not have been counted worthy for such a miracle. He did not wander into an untimely fame. He never circumvented any stage of His preparation. He read and listened to his teachers before He began to teach. He waited for the divine enablement from His Father before introducing Himself to the world. He read about His commission (*Lk 4 vs. 17-20*) before He began to teach and to perform diverse miracles. Circumventing a stage in your preparation could terminate your dream! Wait for every step and do not to lose focus. Listen perfectly to hear whenever it speaks.

**The Making of a Prime Minister:****A Review of Joseph's Life**

According to John C. Maxwell, becoming a leader is a lot like investing in the stock market. If you hope to make a fortune in a day, you are doomed. It is what you do day by day over the long haul that matters most. If you develop your leadership skills, allowing



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your ‘assets’ to compound over time, the inevitable result will be growth. Although some individuals have greater natural ability than others, nearly all the skills of leadership can be acquired: respect, experience, emotional strength, people skills, discipline, vision, momentum. . . . The list goes on. That is why leaders require many seasons of training to be effective. Maxwell concluded with the good news that you can grow in your ability to lead. Regardless of your starting point, you can improve.

**Phase one: I don’t know what I don’t know**

*Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told his brethren, and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, hear I pray thee, this dream which I have dreamed; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. (Gen 37 vs. 3-7 NIV)*

The circumstances surrounding his birth made his father prefer him to his other brothers. This did not bode well with his brothers who could not bear *the*

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*preferential treatment* —Joseph was given a coat of diverse colours by their father. They could not hide their jealousy. Perhaps he was too naive to realise that his brothers hated him, as Joseph would always inform them of his dreams. The Bible says, *they hated him yet the more.*

Most people are amazed at this state of naivety. That was where Joseph began. He did not understand the social hierarchy in the society in which he was raised. He never imagined his brothers would react the way they did. Joseph did and said things without understanding the effect it would have on his interpersonal relations with others. His inexperience cost him more than two decades of alienation from his family.

### **Phase two: I know what I didn't know**

*And they took him and cast him into the pit; and the pit was empty, there was no water in it . . . then there passed by Midianite merchantmen, and they draw and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt... . And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's and captain of the guard.*  
(Gen 37 vs. 24-36 KJV)

It took a life-changing event to capture Joseph's attention and start him on the road to maturity. Thrust into slavery in Egypt, he began to learn what he did not know. He came to understand that

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leadership is a difficult enterprise and carried a huge weight of responsibility. Over the years, he suffered betrayal and learned hard lessons in human relations and leadership. The process moulded his character, developing in him both patience and humility.

**Phase three: I know and grow and it starts to show**

*And they said unto him, "We have dreamed a dream and there is no interpreter of it . . ." . And Joseph said unto them, "do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me them I pray you ..." . And Joseph said unto him, "This is the interpretation of it . . . . But think of me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house."(Gen 40 vs. 8-14 KJV)*

Great men display their skills when opportunities arise and shine only because they have paid the price through serious preparation. When the pharaoh finally called Joseph, the young man performed with excellence and great wisdom. He did not succeed because he suddenly got good at 30, but because he paid the price preparing himself for 13 hard years. Joseph's hard-won wisdom and discernment got him promoted to second-in-command of what was then the most powerful nation on earth.

**Phase four: I grow simply because of what I know**

*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 you over all the land of Egypt..." And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." (Gen 41 vs. 40-44 KJV)*

During the seven years of plenty, Joseph demonstrated his leadership ability. He filled the cities of Egypt with grain and prepared the country for an impending famine. One can see how far his leadership ability had grown only by observing what he did during the lean years that followed. While he focused on feeding the people of Egypt, the strength and wisdom of his leadership enabled him to feed people from other lands as well. In the process, he brought countless financial rewards, livestock and plots of land into his master's treasury. He also fulfilled the prophecy of his childhood dreams. He grew in his journey from the pit to the palace. Yet nearly 23 years passed before he could be reunited with his brothers and see his own vision fulfilled. In the end, Joseph realised that God had supervised the

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process of his development as a leader and had been groomed for a much greater purpose than he ever imagined as a naive teenager. If he had not gone through all the stages, he would never have arrived at his destination. Follow God's ordained steps to your greatness.

**Joseph's seven P's****1. Parent (*Gen 37 vs. 1-4*)**

Although his mother (Rachael) died when he was quite young, Joseph was much loved by his father, Jacob. Jacob loved Joseph more than his elder brothers. Everything needed for his growth and development was provided by his father.

**2. Prophet (*Gen 37 vs. 5-11*)**

He developed his 'prophet' stage even while in his father's house. He saw visions and prophesied accordingly, not minding who got angry or who did not. I was aided by the Holy Spirit to learn from the passage that whatever you consistently confess is what you will become—possess. He confessed his greatness. He did not fear what his brothers would do. He prophesied greatness and achieved it. If he had kept mute in deference to his brother's hatred, he would never have fulfilled his destiny. Although you do not have to make your dreams known, you still have to confess them and stand firmly by them whether people agree to them or not.

**3. The Pit (*Gen 37 vs. 24-28*)**

All his brothers wanted was to vanquish his dream and make him a person no consequence. I was surprised to learn that none of them sought how to be great themselves, but rather to kill their brother who annoyed them with his visions of greatness. That is just how the 'world' operates. Note that the world is not ready to offer you what you deserve unless you demand it. It is, therefore your fault if you fail to desire greatness.

**4. Potiphar (*Gen 37 vs. 36; 39 vs. 1-6*)**

Can you imagine God showering favour on Joseph so much so, that, as a slave, his master gave him the authority over his house, as well as favouring Joseph's master because of Joseph? Even in the pit, the Lord caused his brothers to have mercy on him. In other words, he commanded God's favour even in the pit (*Gen 37 vs. 21, 26*).

One of the most fiery of the trials of Joseph came up at this point when his master's wife requested that he should lie with her. As a great man, Potiphar, most likely, would have married a very beautiful lady. But Joseph was not distracted by her beauty. What many would see as a 'big privilege' was to him wickedness (*Gen 39 vs. 7-10*). After the woman failed to persuade him to do her bidding, she devised a means of punishing him, and that landed him in his next stage. Have you ever reasoned that Joseph's dream would have been buried if he had yielded to

the woman's desire? He would not have come across pharaoh's servants, if he had not been sent to prison. Integrity and righteousness paid off for him.

### **5. Prison (*Gen 39 vs. 20, 23*)**

Out of the first 5 Ps, this was perhaps the most important for Joseph. Yielding to the pleasure of sin would have localised his greatness, restricted him to ruling Potiphar's house and aborted his great vision. Having scaled through that hurdle, God made it possible for Joseph to obtain favour even from the prison keeper (*Gen. 39 vs. 22*).

### **6. Palace (*Gen 41 vs. 14-39*)**

His courage and achievements while in prison were followed by a request which pharaoh's servant forgot to deliver. When God's time came, he needed not to beg for recognition; he was made known to the king (*Gen 41 vs. 9-11*). So the king hurriedly sent for him. His position as a prisoner, his appearance, and his expectations were all transformed within a moment of God's intervention when he appeared in the palace. Before the king, he exercised great courage (boldness), humility and accuracy in interpreting the pharaoh's dream.

### **7. Prime Minister (*Gen 41 vs. 37-57, 42-46*)**

The boldness and wisdom he displayed at the palace fetched him a post next to the king. Pharaoh was the king and Joseph managed the practical affairs of Egypt as the prime minister. You will agree that his

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well-formed character and God's favour primed him for the job. He fulfilled and realised his divine dream.

### **Brought up in Egypt: The Making of Moses**

*And he said, when ye do the office of the midwife to the Hebrew woman, and sees them upon the stools, if it be a son, then ye shall kill him, if it be a daughter then she shall live... And Pharaoh charged all his people saying, every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive. (Ex 1 vs. 16-22)*

After the death of the pharaoh who appointed Joseph, a wicked one who succeeded him anticipated that the Israelites might one day want to leave Egypt. Knowing that men would always lead such a mass exit, he decided to kill all the male children born to the people of Israel. But the Lord frustrated his plans by raising up God-fearing midwives. Moses became one of the beneficiaries of this great mercy. It was amazing that the daughter of pharaoh was the one God used to protect, name and nurture Moses, right in the pharaoh's palace. Moses had his childhood in the palace.

*One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that and seeing no one he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. When he went out the next*



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*day, behold, two Hebrews were*  
*struggling together; and said to the man*  
*that did the wrong ‘why do you strike*  
*your fellow?’ He answered who hath*  
*made you a judge over us? Do you mean*  
*to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? ...*  
*(Ex 2 vs. 11-15 NIV)*

His mother, who was privileged to be his nurse, might possibly have informed him of the challenges of the Israelites. Right from his early years, he discovered the need for his people to be liberated. He saw himself in a position of one who would set his people free. Although he grew up in the palace, he was there as planned by God, in order to be prepared for his future tasks. The burning zeal to liberate his people led him to murder the Egyptian, thinking nobody knew. He suffered a setback when the very kindred he was trying to deliver rejected him the following day with an insult. The reason they rejected him was that he hurried into a task that required patience and process. He did not, initially, follow God’s time frame and this could have cost him his life when the pharaoh got to know about the act. You need not be told that his people reported him to the king; it is possible they did.

Moses fled for his dear life to the land of Midian and there he helped Jethro’s daughters, delivering them from their oppressors and helping them in their hard task. While working for Jethro—who later became his father-in-law, the Lord revealed Himself unto Moses.

By this time, Moses had lost confidence that God

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would use him for such an important task. His fear must have stemmed from the rejection he suffered from his people and the plan of the pharaoh to kill him. Two times he told God, “No, Lord.” He lost his courage and started off with excuses. He thought his stammering would constitute a limitation, but God raised Aaron to become his aide and to ease the workload. God succeeded in persuading Moses about his task and at the appointed time, and he courageously delivered the Israelites from their land of hard labour and slavery. He was totally obedient to God, even when the people he was leading turned away from God.

For you to realise your vision and fulfill your dream, you will have to separate yourself from the unbelieving and disobedient crowd so that you can wait for the time that God had planned long before your birth. *He maketh all things right in His own time* implies that whatever you do outside His time will definitely be wrong.

**From Gilgal to Jordan**

*And it came to pass when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel... . And Elijah said to Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee for the*

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*Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he*  
*said, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul*  
*liveth, I will not leave thee... . And Elijah*  
*said unto him, tarry, I pray thee here: for*  
*the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he*  
*said, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul*  
*liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two*  
*went on. (II Kings 2 vs. 1-6 KJV)*

It was time for Elijah to be translated and for Elisha to graduate into the prophetic office after serving Elijah for some years. But his character, loyalty, integrity and humility in service were not enough to earn him this greatness. His greatness was in his determination and perseverance. Elijah's departure from Elisha was already known to five parties:

- To God who knows all things
- To the sons of the prophets at Bethel (vs. 3)
- To Elisha (vs. 3,5)
- To the sons of the prophets at Jericho (vs. 5)
- To Elijah (vs. 9-10)

Elijah permitted Elisha to accompany him to Gilgal with no instruction about tarrying in a place. When they arrived in Gilgal, he told Elisha to stay while he went to Bethel (vs. 2). The word *Gilgal* is from the Hebrew word 'gal', meaning *to roll*. The doubling of the word comes as *Gilgal* which means *rolling round and round or rolling off away*. Next Elijah urged him to tarry at Bethel while he went to Jericho (vs. 4). But again Elisha refused to stay behind at Bethel (a

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house of God). It appears he saw greatness that a house cannot contain and as such did not allow himself to be restricted to a house. He wanted something larger.

Elijah asked him to remain in Jericho while he went to Jordan, but Elisha would not agree to leave Elijah. He did not settle in Jericho (*a city of palm tree*) perhaps because he felt he was not a palm tree and that a city was too small for his greatness. He had a vision too big for a city to accommodate.

The reason for all these “*tarry I pray thee here*” was not stated in the Bible, but it could be that Elijah was testing Elisha to see how determined he was to have his spirit and power and to carry on in his place after his departure. I understand that Jordan is a river that passed through so many cities, being a major river. Elisha fought the battle of his destiny and endured to the peak of it, staying on the course, even when it involved passing through the wide river of discouragement.

### **Goliath Annihilating Courage**

Jesse paraded his first seven sons before Samuel, but none of them were God’s choice— He had not called them; He had also rejected them. It was this that led Samuel to ask, “*Are here all thy children?*” (*I Sam 16 vs. 11 KJV*). David was the youngest of them and the only choice of God.

Samuel had earlier concluded on Eliab by human judgment but God rebuked and prevented him from making such blunder. Ever before he got to Jesse’s

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compound, God had revealed to him that someone in Jesse's house—a son of Jesse—would be anointed. He had to ask that question when none of the sons presented got God's approval. After a very interesting scene, David was selected and anointed as king in the presence of his brothers. Even though another king ruled in the palace, David was 'ruling the affairs of Israel' from his father's house.

*But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, behold now, an evil spirit from God trouble thee... And Saul said unto his servants, provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me... And David came to Saul and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour bearer. (I Samuel 16 vs. 14-21 KJV)*

Although the Lord had earlier anointed David as king, he had never been to the palace. So the Lord provided an avenue to bring him to the palace where he would later sit and administer justice unto the people of God as king. As a new entrant, God brought him in as an armour bearer. The king needed a musician, somebody who could play well, to sing inspiring songs and to restore the spirit of God to Saul. The musician was brought to the king and was appointed as an armour bearer. What a contrast! It only took David a few minutes in the palace before the king, to gain the king's favour. We do not know why, but we could reason that David was a very

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handsome young man (*I Sam 17 vs. 42*).

Note that David was serving as an armour bearer when he was anointed as the king of the land. He never rushed to the throne; he lived patiently through those processes. Again, we can see David, a great man, waiting for the appointed time. Know and wait patiently for your time.

*And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath of Gath... . And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, why are ye come out to set the battle in array? Am I not a Philistine, and ye servants of Saul? Choose you a man for you and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then we will be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. (1Samuel 17 vs. 4-11 KJV)*

Goliath's physique frightened all the soldiers of Israel. Not even the warrior himself, King Saul, could come out to face him. He was equally afraid.

*And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, "what shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and*

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 taketh away the reproach from Israel?  
 For who is this uncircumcised Philistine,  
 that he should defy the armies of the  
 Living God?" And David said, "what  
 have I now done? Is there not a cause?"  
 (1 Sam 17 vs. 26, 29 KJV)*

David's motivation to fight the giant was not for the promotion that awaited whoever won the battle, but to deal with the reproach of the people of God. To claim a corporate victory for Israel was more important to David than his glory. He had heard Goliath speak, and his speech stirred up anger in him. Rather than become fearful of Goliath, he saw himself fit enough to deliver Israel from him who reproached her. And this he did 'til his death; he never for once panicked. Stand your ground and be strong!

*And David said to Saul, "let no man's  
 heart fail because of him; thy servant  
 will go and fight with this Philistine."  
 And Saul said to David, "thou art not  
 able to go against this Philistine to fight  
 against him: thou art but a youth, and  
 he a man of war from his youth." (1 Sam  
 17 vs. 32-33 KJV)*

When Goliath taunted the armies of Israel, the frightened Hebrew soldiers forgot how to fight. They lacked the kind of leader who could strategise for success. Saul was a very experienced soldier, but he and his men feared Goliath; and likewise they concluded David was too young for the challenge. He underestimated him because of his youth (*1 Sam 17*

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vs.

133) and the boy David responded by reeling off his qualifications: how he had fought and conquered a lion, a bear, and how he saw himself doing much more to Goliath. He was never discouraged; all attempts to discourage him—by his brothers and the king—only spurred him and ginged his confidence. He started by asking questions, saw himself as capable, declared himself fit for the fight and went head-on to claim his greatness. All these four phases came along with discouragement and distractions, but he never gave in to being branded as ‘too young’.

*And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go: for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. (1 Sam 17 vs. 38-40 KJV)*

To claim your greatness in any battle, you need to equip yourself. You will arm yourself, not with just anything, but with whatever you have proved to be right. By implication, this cannot be any thing else for the child of God but God's power. Saul wanted to



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arm David with a suit of armour. Can you imagine a warrior wearing an armour he had never proved before? But then, David had proved his sling and smooth stones, and he stuck to them. You do not need another person's armour to be great in life.

*He said to David, "what is that stick for? Do you think I'm a dog?" And he called down curses from his god on David ... . David answered and said, "you are coming against me with sword, spear, and javelin but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the Israelite armies which you have defied ..." (I Sam 17 vs. 43-45 GNB)*

Here is another proof that David fought to deliver his people from reproach. He was sure of his weapons. Not only that, he was much surer of his God. It is necessary to declare here that your best weapon for the battle is the word of God (stone) which will never fail in any battle you engage in, as well as a courageous heart (sling) which can accommodate, understand and send out the words (stone) in the right direction. David's greatness came through seven stages:

- *His perspective differed to others:* He did not see what everyone else saw: an invincible giant. He saw an opportunity instead.
- *His method differed to others:* He decided to use proven weapons that he knew would work, not the conventional ones.
- *His convictions differed from others:* He recognised that Goliath had no covenant with

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God of Israel; while he felt passionately committed to God's covenant.

- *His motives differed from others:* He heard Goliath's threats defying the God of Israel and David knew without a doubt that God would defeat Goliath. To deliver his people from shame was David's motivation, not to secure self-glory.
- *His vision differed from others:* He wanted to make Yahweh known to the world as the most powerful God on earth.
- *His experience differed from others:* He brought to the battlefield past victories over a lion and a bear, not months of paralyzing fear.
- *His attitude differed from others:* He saw Goliath, not as a threat too big to hit, but as a target too big to miss.

These traits brought David into the limelight, ignited his fame and brought him into his predestined greatness. He ruled Israel for 40 years. You only need half of his courage to be great. So many other great men of God displayed courage in the face of mortal danger and won.

### **How You Can Prosper in Your Babylon?**

*In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.*

*And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of*

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 Judah into his hand, with some of the articles of [a] the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

*Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the language and [b] literature of the Chaldeans.*

*And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. (Dan 1 vs. 1-6 KJV)*

Nebuchadnezzar had captured Judah and enslaved all the occupants of the land. At a point, he demanded that Asphenaz, the master of the eunuchs, should appoint certain ones among the captured men so that, after a period of training, they might serve

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before the king. Below are the qualifications they must possess:

- They must be princes (*vs. 3*)
- They must be youths (*vs. 4*)
- They must be without blemish (*vs. 4*)
- They must be good in appearance (*vs. 4*)
- They must be well educated—skillful in wisdom
- They must be skillful in knowledge (*vs. 4*)
- They must be proficient in science (*vs. 4*)
- They must be refined and polished so as to be able to stand before kings (*vs. 4*)

After these young men had been selected, they were renamed according to the language and religion of the Babylonians. I need not mention that one's name is as important as one's destiny. A name could determine how far an individual can go.

These men all lived to fulfill their real names. Daniel (God is Judge) was renamed Belteshazzar (prince of Bel); Hananiah (gift of the Lord) was renamed Shadrach (commander of Aku, the god of the moon); Mishaël (who is what God is) was renamed as Meshach (who is Aku); and Azariah (who Jehovah helps) was also renamed Abed-Nego (servant of Nego, the god of science and literature). Though they were renamed, they never forgot their real names and lived to fulfill their names from God.

Daniel was simply determined to be great, not minding if he was in a strange land or not. He took the most significant decision of his life which helped

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him decide much better in subsequent issues.

*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, or with the wine which he drank ... . (Dan 1 vs. 8 KJV)*

*Daniel made up his mind not to let himself become ritually unclean by eating the food and drinking the wine of the royal court ... (GNB)*

*But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's rich food, or with the wine which he drank... . (RSV)*

That was the first major decision he made while in Babylon. To have passed those requirements for selection, he probably had been brought up with sound instructions. Here, he decided to add holiness, righteousness and dedication to God to his make-up. Just as the king's meat and wine could have defiled Daniel, so can some acts (that others think are never wrong) defile and distract you from your destiny. To others, there was nothing big or bad in those delicacies. But to him, it meant becoming ritually unclean. One important step is to identify those acts, materials, groups or associates that could defile you and to separate yourself from them.

Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah and Daniel were friends. Chapter three of the book of Daniel catalogues how virtuous and determined they were to serve God; how they never valued their lives so much as to deny their great God and how God proved His

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mighty worth through them before the idol worshipers of Babylon. The effect of these three friends could have had a bad influence on Daniel, if they were not the type that served God obediently. It is necessary to take care in choosing your friends and associates lest they wash you away from your greatness.

*Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dream; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king of his dream. So they came and stood before the king. (Dan 2 vs. 1-2 KJV)*

The king had a terrible dream that kept him awake all night. To make it worse for Nebuchadnezzar, he only remembered that it was an important dream, but could not remember the scenes in the dream. He could no longer picture the content when he got up from his dream (*Daniel 2 vs. 3*). Each time I reflect on this passage, I am usually struck by King Nebuchadnezzar's brutality. Is it not bizarre for someone to have a dream and expect another fellow to tell and interpret the dream, not to even talk of when the dreamer can no longer recall? As expected, all the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, Chaldeans and the wise men were not able to interpret the dream. In fact, they confessed to the king the truth that such was not possible to be answered by anyone among the living. Disappointed in his wise men, the

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king promised to totally banish them by decreeing their deaths. Only the 'gods' could tell such a mystery that Nebuchadnezzar demanded (*Dan. 2 vs. 10-11*). But these bizarre circumstances was what God wanted, in order to intro-duce his outstanding servant, Daniel, and glorify Himself thereby.

The 'best' of the kingdom had failed the king and their death sentence was about being implemented when Daniel got to know of it. Did you know that Daniel and his fellow wise men were doomed to be part of the clearing out? Were they summoned and asked to answer the king's rare demand? No (*Dan. 2 vs. 15-16*). Let us pause for a second and ponder. Are you in a sinking ship, a poor state of health, a business failure, a derailed marriage or dead-end relationship? Or are you fighting a spiritual war from the realm of darkness against a team, company, community or organisation that you are part of? Are you very sure that God has not intentionally planted you there for such a troubled time? Daniel did not mince words; he was sure that he only needed some time to seek the face of his God and leverage on His faithfulness.

By the time the young Daniel revealed and interpreted the king's dream, the joy that permeated the hearts of the idolatrous Babylonians, who were doomed to die, could only be imagined. Daniel would have been seen by some of them as a god. And he is a god, actually. As *Ps. 82 vs. 6* explains. Anyone in a relationship with God is not in any way lesser than 'a god' and a god with high authority. It often only takes a man or woman with a covenant with God to

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preserve an entire generation. Daniel sacrificed the delicacies and preserved himself for God. He remained steadfast in his walk with God and would not mind missing out on the fantasies that others revelled in. Our societies and the entire world greatly covet such God-chasers. Will you dare to be one?

While the major breakthrough Joseph needed on his path to becoming the prime minister of Egypt was interpreting the pharaoh's dreams, David only needed to kill Goliath for the entire kingdom of Israel to know that there was a ruddy king serving in the palace. Daniel needed to do what no human was capable of doing, before becoming the darling Babylonian province leader (*Dan. 6 vs. 1-3*). His consistency was seriously tested. Who would have thought that the same Daniel would not have been exempted from worshipping Nebuchadnezzar's molten image (*Dan. 3*)?

The confidence Nebuchadnezzar had in him and the manifestation of God's wisdom as seen in *chapter 4* should have been enough to seal Daniel's place among the untouchables. While the idolatrous Babylonian lords should have desisted from plotting any wrong against Daniel (*Dan. 6 vs. 4-9*), Daniel's self-denial and prayerful life, his steadfastness and unwavering devotion to God paved the way for him to excel in Babylon and more importantly, he brought glory to God.





## FOUR

### **The Secrets Behind Solomon's Greatness**

Solomon was one of the wealthiest persons in the era in which he lived. He is reputed to be the wisest king that ever ruled Israel as well as the only king in the history of Israel whose reign witnessed complete peace for up to 40 years. He carried out the most expensive building project ever. His records and great achievements would be reviewed in this chapter so as to get you prepared for your brighter destiny and to provide the necessary guides that you need to get there.

#### **David and the Circumstantial Birth of Solomon**

David was the last son of Jesse and Nahash's marriage. The name *David* means *beloved* and it speaks well of his covenant and relationship with God. He was a shepherd right from his early teens. He launched into fame when he withstood the fearful and threatening Goliath and defeated the man whom the whole army of Israel had run away from, including Saul. God anointed him king and provided opportunities for him to get familiar with palace life before he was installed as king. He engaged in several battles and wars and he overcame all. However, one of the devoted soldiers of Israel during David's reign was Uriah, the Hittite, who had a wife, Bathsheba. We are not told anywhere in the Bible that Uriah had a child before his death. This probably suggests that

Uriah was perhaps still a very young man when he married, but the Bible did not record that Bathsheba was barren.

*And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Kabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. And it came to pass in an evening tide that David arose from off his bed and walked upon the roof of the King's house and from the roof, he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers and took her, and she came into him and lay with her for she was purified from her uncleanness and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said I am with child. (II Sam 11 vs. 1-5 KJV)*

David's house was solidly built, one of those buildings where men slept on the roof in the summer to avoid the heat. But a question remains unanswered from the latter part of vs. 1: Why did David tarry in Jerusalem and did not go to the king's battle? He would never have been tempted if he had

gone with the army; he eventually joined the battle and completely vanquished his enemies (*II Sam 12 vs. 26-30*).

As regards Bathsheba, several questions could also be asked. Why was she washing herself (bathing) in public view and around the king's terrace? Did she not know that such an open place would be a source of temptation to whoever saw her? Could there have been some design on her part? Was she altogether innocent (*vs. 2*)?

The king sent to inquire after her and finally was able to invite her down to the palace. Did she ever refuse the invitation? And after honouring the invitation, and the king made his intention known, did she ever show any form of reluctance? We hear nothing of any reluctance about her coming to David and there was no evidence that she was forced to be with David. Could it be that she passed through these phases with David nursing in her heart a clandestine interest? Or was she afraid that David could kill her if she had declined?

After a long and impossible plot by David to make Uriah responsible for the pregnancy, he put everything in place for Uriah to be killed and this he achieved. After the death of Uriah, David was then able to secure Bathsheba as his wife. It is painful to know that this grievous sin was the only evil recorded against David throughout his entire life. Despite his sin, God did not forsake him, although God at the same time did not overlook His justice (*II Sam 12 vs. 1-13*).

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As part of the punishment, God did not listen to David's supplications for the child to live. God did not even allow the child to spend the number of days required for naming to be performed. 'It' was used for the child all through, because the child was then in the early neonatal age (1-7 days) and was never named.

*And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her and lay with her and she bare a son and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him. And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord. (II Sam 12 vs. 24-25 KJV)*

*Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba. He had intercourse with her, and she bore a son, whom David named Solomon. The Lord loved the boy and commanded the prophet, Nathan, to name the boy Jedidiah because the Lord loved him. (GNB)*

The first secret is that right from birth the Lord loved Solomon. The meaning of his name is *peace* and this was witnessed all through his government. Through Nathan, the Lord named him Jedidiah, which means 'Beloved of the Lord.' Whoever the Lord our God particularly loves has no reason not to be great in life; he or she needs only to walk in His ways and according to His statutes. The first thing you need to seek before seeking greatness is to know and remain

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in the love of God.

We are not given details in the Bible about Solomon's childhood but we understand that he grew up in a polygamous household. We can also reason that because Bathsheba was much loved by David, Solomon was preferred by David to his brothers.

### **Made to Succeed David as King**

*Now king David was old and stricken in years and they covered him with clothes, but he got no heat...Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. (I Kings 1 vs. 1, 5 KJV)*

David was about 70 years old at that time: he was made king at 30 and reigned for 40 years. Not many people in Israel, men especially, lived to such ripe old age then. In fact, David was the oldest king that reigned in Israel in that era. Being David's oldest surviving son, Adonijah thought he was the next to be installed king and he organised a feast to celebrate this, disregarding his father's approval and blessing (*I Kings 1 vs. 5-9*).

*But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah and the mighty men and Solomon his brother he called not. Wherefore Nathan spoke unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon saying 'Hast thou not heard*

*Fulfilling Your Predestined Greatness that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign and David our Lord knoweth it not? Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life and the life of thy son Solomon. Go and get thee in unto King David and say unto him, Didst not thou, my Lord O King, swear unto thine handmaid, saying Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? Why then doth Adonijah reign? Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee and confirm thy words (I Kings 1 vs. 10-14 KJV).*

Nathan reminded Bathsheba of the promise David made to her of Solomon, her son, succeeding his father on the throne and counselled her on how to carry out a well-planned strategy to save her life and that of her son. He knew well that if Adonijah should reign, he and others who were not invited for the feast would be in danger. So, for the safety of his own life and the lives of others, he preferred Solomon to reign as king instead of Adonijah.

Bathsheba's place in the whole scheme was indispensable. We see her living up to her name, *the daughter of an oath*. She, with Nathan, mapped out a strategy, and she did this with great passion to pave the way to greatness for her son. As planned, she went in unto the king, reminded the king of his oath which he swore to her a long time ago that Solomon

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would reign after him. We were not specifically told when the oath was made; but Bathsheba reminded David with full conviction that she was not framing up the matter which the king himself confirmed (*vs. 13, 17, 28-30*).

We can, however, reason that the oath possibly came up after the death of her first child while David was comforting her. It could have come up too in the early period of Solomon's life. She probably got David's full attention and used that opportunity to demand for a special gift from David. And just after reminding the king of the oath, she revealed to the king all the acts of Adonijah and how necessary it was for the king to act as fast as he could.

*Then King David answered and said, call me Bathsheba. And she came into the king's presence and stood before the king. And the king swore and said, as the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul of all distress, even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead even so will I certainly do this day...The king also said unto them, take with you the servant of your Lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king*



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Solomon. Then ye shall come up after  
him, that he may come and sit upon my  
throne; for he shall be king in my stead;  
and I have appointed him to be ruler  
over Israel and over Judah. (I Kings 1 vs.  
28-30, 33-35 KJV)*

The second secret of Solomon's success was that he got his father's approval and blessing. If Adonijah had reigned as he had planned, I am very sure he would have failed. In all areas of your life, seek the blessings of your parents so that the promises of God will be fulfilled in your life. Although some parents could be ungodly in their desires and wishes for their children, you, as a child of God, can direct their hearts to the ways and wisdom of God through your prayers and godly attitude towards them. And except when you convincingly hear God charging you to go ahead without minding if they agree with your plans or not, doing so could mark the beginning of your end. Seek the blessings of your parents; it goes a long way to make you succeed in anything you do.

These two factors greatly helped Solomon in his succession to the throne of Israel. God chose him and gave him the authority to rule; and secondly, David chose him as his successor. Apart from your parents, when you are to attain a new level in anything you are engaged in, seek with maximum loyalty and humility the blessings of the person you are to succeed or of those who are higher than you in the field, ministry or business.

Some people could be hard-hearted or wicked that

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in spite of your loyal and humble service to them, they still will not want you to make progress. Do not hate them; just keep being good to them. It is God that will reward them, not you.

David did a very skillful job to smoothen the transition process in his kingdom even at an old age:

- He made a public commitment (*vs. 28-38*)
- He brought key influences into the process (*vs. 32*)
- He gave Solomon some of his own resources (*vs. 33*)
- He set up public commissioning for Solomon (*vs. 34-35*)
- He publicly endorsed Solomon's leadership (*vs. 35*)
- He initiated a royal ceremony to transfer the throne to his successor (*vs. 39-40*)

In your chosen career, before a superior will nominate you for promotion to a greater office of service, be sure that they see something that is worth being appreciated in you—a potential that separates you from others. David had seen the troubles brewing on the horizon and knew well that he was placing his son in a precarious leadership position. But twice he confidently said that Solomon would know what to do (*I King 2 vs. 6, 9*).

Moreover, a very close look at the words in *I Kings 2 vs. 12: Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father and his kingdom was established greatly*, reveals that these first two secrets—loved by God and blessed and approved by David—were the most

important for the establishment of his kingdom. Ever before any other act, these secrets established his prosperity.

### **David's Charge and Solomon's Early Days on the Throne**

*And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. And it was told Solomon, saying, behold Adonijah feareth King Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let King Solomon swear unto me today that he will not slay his servant with the sword. And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. (I Kings 1 vs. 50-52 KJV)*

The right to seek refuge in sacred places was a common practice in Israel. It was clearly recognised in *Ex 21 vs. 14*, where it can to be refused only under certain circumstances.

*But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die. (Ex 21 vs. 14)*

*Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned*

*The Secrets Behind Solomon's Greatness not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the Lord, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. (I Kings 2 vs. 28-31)*

It would seem from the text and also from *I Kings 2 vs. 28-31* that if any accused person would take hold of the horns of the altar, he would be safe, unless his crime was of a horrible nature. It was this fact that Adonijah banked upon to secure his life from the wrath of the newly installed king.

Solomon's third secret was that he did not commit himself to anyone without studying their character. It is an honour for kings to stand by their word at whatever cost. Adonijah was a potential threat to his kingdom, and if Solomon had sworn that he would never kill Adonijah, he would have gotten the

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opportunity to disrupt Solomon's peaceful reign. Rather than accede to this foolish request, Solomon gave Adonijah other options.

Whoever wants to be great in life should always scrutinize his words and avoid unnecessary or foolish commitments. Solomon's kingdom would have been ruined if he had done that.

**The Five-Fold Charge of David to Solomon****1. Be thou strong and show yourself as a man**

David knew the role that God's strength played in his life and reign. He knew that even if God is ready to help, without courage, one will not learn of the might of God. He also knew that fear is the reason behind most failures in life.

**2. Keep the charge of the Lord your God**

- Walk in his ways
- Keep his statutes
- Keep his commandments
- Keep his testimonies

David gave him the most important key to prosperity: *"That thou mayest prosper in all that thou does, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself"* (vs. 3). The meaning of this second charge is that if King Solomon would walk in the ways of God and keep God's command-ments he would definitely prosper and benefit from the covenant of God to David (see vs. 3-4). He equally knew that if Solomon would depart from them, he would assuredly fail and this we saw in the latter part of Solomon's life.

- 3. To execute judgment on Joab according to his own wisdom.**
- 4. To show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, to allow them to eat at his table**
- 5. To execute judgement on Shimei also according to his own wisdom**

The fourth secret was that Solomon kept his predecessor's charge and acted on them. As he assumed the throne, apart from the issues that came up on their own, these charges, especially the last three, were the first set of assignments he undertook. Unfortunately for him, he failed later in life to keep on fulfilling the second charge of complete obedience to God and this cost him his life and reign.

### **Standing on Firm Ground**

*And he said, thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel set their face on me, that I should reign; howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's for it was his from the Lord. And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, say on. And he said speak, I pray thee unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay), that*

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 he may give me Abishag the Shunamite  
 to wife ... And King Solomon answered  
 and said unto his mother, and why dost  
 thou ask Abishag the Shunamite for  
 Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also  
 for he is mine elder brother; even for him  
 and for Abiathar the priest and for Joab  
 the son of Zeruah. Then King Solomon  
 swore by the Lord, saying, "God do so to  
 me and more also, if Adonijah have not  
 spoken this word against his own life." (I  
 Kings 2 vs. 15-17, 22-23 KJV)*

He knew that Adonijah must be prudently dealt with so as to prevent him from either directly or indirectly dethroning him. Now, after he had given Adonijah his options (*I Kings 1 vs. 52*), we saw him here making a very dangerous request. He had celebrated himself, as David's heir, although he was never ordained to be king and to prevent the shame of his misguided actions, he had to plead with Bathsheba to talk on his behalf to Solomon to release Abishag to him. Abishag was one of David's wives and it was part of the Jewish culture that all the king's wives either become widows for the rest of their lives or be married to whoever succeeds their dead husband as king. The custom of the land was tied to the crown, and by implication the new king would inherit the wives of a deceased king. To have granted Adonijah's request would have encouraged his ambition of being king. So Solomon had to reject this flatly.

The fifth secret of Solomon was that he was a

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leader who made firm decisions. It is important, as a good leader, that you steer away from becoming too rigid, though firmness is called for in some instances. If you identify anybody that you think could pose any problem, threat or confusion in the nearest future to your destiny, then it is advisable you cut yourself off from that person. By communicating your concerns with prayers and wisdom, take yourself out of the relationship.

**His Request**

*In Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night and God said; ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, thou has shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou has given him a son to sit on his throne as it is this day. And now, o Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father and I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or come in.... Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? (I Kings 3 vs. 5-7, 9 KJV)*

The sixth secret of Solomon was his humility. He did



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not exalt himself; he did not allow his position to go to his head. He still saw himself as a child, so that God can give him what he thought is required of him to attain manhood. Even though David regarded him as a wise man (*I Kings 2 vs. 6, 9*), Solomon still saw himself as a youth that needed to be empowered by God's wisdom. His humility guaranteed his greatness. Another secret behind his greatness was that he valued the people of God. They were his subjects and he had the power to rule them according to his own will, but he did not see them as just ordinary people. He qualified them with lovely words:

- A *chosen* people
- A *great* people
- A multitude *that cannot be numbered*

Any leader who wants to attain greatness in life must not underestimate the people. Such a leader should place a big value on them in his thoughts, words and actions. Such a leader should show how much he/she respects and values his subjects. This will make his people to reciprocate the leader's respect and honour and obey his/her words with maximum cooperation.

When you have wisdom, you will have wealth and

When you have wisdom, you will have wealth and



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- Azariah, overseer of the officers (vs. 5)
- Zebud, principal officer, a friend and a counsellor
- Alishar, officer of the household
- Adoniram, overseer of taxes (*vs. 6*)

These eleven officers were made to oversee the affairs of all the government of Solomon as distributed into different parts/offices.

The twelve officers of the commissaries:

- The son of Hur (vs. 7-8)
- The son of Dekar (vs. 9)
- The son of Hesed (vs. 10)
- The son of Abinadab (vs. 11)
- Baana, son of Ahilud (vs. 12)
- The son of Geber (vs. 13)
- Ahinadab, son of Iddo (vs. 14)
- Ahimaaz (vs. 15)
- Baanah, son of Hushai (vs. 16)
- Jehoshaphat, son of Parnah (vs. 17)
- Shimei, son of Elah (vs. 18)
- Geber, son of Uri (*vs. 19*)

He appointed these twelve men to oversee 12 sectional provinces of the kingdom and to levy taxes on the people to supply the king: his household, all the kings' court, and others to whom he was responsible. And each man supplied the king for a whole month every year. What an orderly arrangement. All the needs of the king and the entire

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palace were cared for by these officers and there was never a lack recorded.



*Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude,*

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eating and drinking and making merry.  
And Solomon reigned over all kingdom  
from the river unto the land of the  
Philistines and into the border of Egypt:  
they brought presents, and served  
Solomon all the days of his life (I Kings 4  
vs. 20-21 KJV).*

Thus, one officer among the twelve appointed officers, was mandated to supply all the needs of Solomon in a particular month, Adoniram would oversee the income generated by the remaining eleven officers and probably remit it into the central account monitored by the king. And with this wisdom, Solomon leveraged his counsels of men to realise his greatness (*I Kings 4 vs. 29-32*).

### **The Building of the Temple**

*And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, thou knowest...But now the Lord hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. And now I purpose to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord spoke unto David my father, saying, thy son whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build a house unto my name. (1 Kings 5 vs. 2-3, 4-5 KJV)*

He knew the covenant of God concerning his father and that he was the one to fulfill it. As soon as



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everything was sufficient to execute his mission, he started immediately. He did not lose focus. For any individual to achieve greatness, he/she must be focussed and avoid any distraction.

*And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and the two made a league together. (I Kings 5 vs. 12 KJV)*

**He Was a Man of Peace**

Solomon lived to fulfill his name. He sought peace with other kings as well as with his followers. Because he was a man of peace, he was able to maintain good relations with other cities and towns bordering his kingdom and to secure their help when the need arose. As a person with potential for greatness, you need to keep the peace with others, as you do not know who could be of help to you in the future. Do not allow your position, power or fame to cause you to misbehave. People who do not seem to matter much today, could be important persons tomorrow; if you make a poor impression today, it could be detrimental to future relations.

*And King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. (I Kings 5 vs. 13 KJV)*

**He Made Use of the Available Resources**

No matter how hard people may complain, the resources you need to prosper are often within your

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locality and in abundance. You only need to put them to work. If you fail to do so, people will think you can do the job all alone. Research revealed that the 163,850 men who were regular workers under Solomon were almost as many as the number hired by Ford Motor Company, (USA). He looked inward for manpower and he got much more.

*I Kings 6* gave a full description of the whole building: the length, the breadth of all the divisions and rooms in the temple, and the type of wood and materials that were used to build the temple. Something caught my attention in *vs. 7*,

*And the house, when it was in the building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.*

This again reveals how orderly Solomon was as a leader. You can imagine the magnitude of the building described in *I Kings 6* which covered a length of 208 feet and a breadth of 104 feet, and which was 62 ½ feet tall; and that for all the time it was under construction, there was no sound of any cutting with any iron material.

**He Fed His People and His Servants**

According to *1 Kings 5 vs. 20-24*, the estimated number of people Solomon fed daily was up to 30,000, without giving the number and value of the harts, roebucks, fallow deer, and fowls. Solomon spent more than \$6,358,300 on an annual basis. I

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need to tell you that feeding your followers helps you to get the best from them. It makes your followers adhere to you. Whoever feeds you is your lord. So providing for the daily needs of your followers, especially food, is something that enhances your team's productivity.

The foundation of the temple was laid in May of the fourth year of his reign; and it was completed in November of the eleventh year of his reign; and the temple was dedicated to God in October of the 12th year of his reign. This meant that it took 7½ years to complete the construction of the temple and 11 months to complete the interior decorations. He was conscious of time and yet paid attention to the details.

**The Advisors of His Wisdom**

*And Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived .... (1 Kings 12 vs. 6 KJV)*

He did not see himself as an all in all. Rather he kept good associates, friends and had counsellors who advised him on issues. With all the wisdom that God bestowed on Solomon, he might have felt that as the wisest being on earth, there was no need for him to seek anybody's counsel. But Solomon understood the value of listening to diverse opinions. His son ignored the counsel of these men and he failed. This simply tells us the importance of consultation to Solomon when he was the king. If you ever desire to be great

in life, then you need to be humble enough to accept that you cannot be all in all. Others are also important to you.

### **His Great Wealth of Wisdom**

Solomon's wealth of wisdom was the anchor of his life: his peace, properties, animals, servants and money. He applied wisdom to all issues and this paid off for him. Wisdom is the correct application of knowledge. This means that he was knowledgeable and in areas where he did not have the knowledge required, he referred to those who had knowledge in such aspects.

Because the hand of God was upon him, he was able to apply their knowledge in the right way. This was the major secret behind the making of Solomon's wealth besides God's promise to enrich him with the type of wisdom that had never been seen before on the surface of the earth.

Solomon's wealth was his wisdom. However, it is worthy to note that the temple that Solomon built for God was valued in 1925 at \$81,000,000,000 which in naira is about ₦28,012,658,000,000. And it was revealed that he used more than this to build his personal house. Solomon is reputed to have embarked on 10 building projects.

By this, we can assume that he would had at least spent a triple amount of the above figure to execute all the building projects. You need to remember that he had several other properties apart from these buildings. If the above was the value as at 1925, what would it be now? What a great man he was: the

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world's richest being, the world's wisest man and the greatest being that ever lived, besides Jesus Christ.

You can also be great; you only need to follow God's path and request for the immortal thing—wisdom, so that other wealth can follow in droves.

## FIVE

# Determining Factors of Greatness

A close survey of the lives of the great men of God who lived in biblical times, as well as worthy men who lived at other times, reveals that there are certain factors which help to facilitate one's attainment and retainment of greatness in life. Some of these persons might have been briefly or fully discussed in the previous chapters. However, we shall yet consider, in this chapter, certain greatness determining factors as can be learned from the way they lived.

### **Patience**

This is the ability to endure provocation, irritation, misfortune or pain without complaint, loss of temper or enmity. It is also the power or willingness to subdue restlessness while one is waiting. Patience is also a form of quiet perseverance, an even temper and diligence.

But why start with patience?

*That ye be not slothful, but followers of  
them who through faith and patience  
inherit the promises. (Heb. 6 vs. 12 KJV)*

The reason to start with patience, according to the Holy Spirit's directive, is that for anyone to attain and

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fulfil his/her potential for greatness in life, the person needs to be patient as well to exercise maximum faith in preparation for the fulfilment of his/her greatness. The preparation for greatness requires one's passing through all sorts of pain, provocation, annoyance, misfortune and persecution. Like the saints of old, one needs to exercise faith in God, being assured that good fortune, joy and glory lie ahead. The apostles knew, quite well, that the two virtues we can combine to achieve the fulfilment of those great promises are faith and patience—believing and holding on to one's belief and coping with whatever pain or hardship that comes one's way.

*But that on the good ground are they,  
which in an honest and good heart,  
having heard the word, keep it, and  
bring forth fruit with patience. (Lk. 8 vs.  
15 KJV)*

The Lord Jesus Christ gives us a clear picture, that no plant bears fruit the day it is planted; that no investment brings the expected return in a day. When you discover your potential for greatness, you need to know that it is not that very day it will become obvious for the world to see. It has to pass through the process of sprouting. The process may not always be pleasant, but the Lord has assured you that with patience, those efforts will bring your desired greatness to fulfilment.

*And not only so, but we glory in  
tribulations also: knowing that*

*tribulation worketh patience, and  
experience, hope... (Rom 5 vs. 3-4 KJV)*



The trying period is a refining process which brings the best out of you. Diamonds, in their unfinished form, does not have much value. But when it has passed through the refinery, it becomes priceless. You need to know that most people fail to fulfil their potential for greatness because they chose not to endure the trials. But if you dare to be different and persevere, a great destiny would definitely be yours.

### **Generosity**

Generosity is the act of giving; it is the readiness to giving freely, showing kindness and treating others with grace not minding their, colour, ethnicity, language and/or religion. You need to know that generosity is one of the keys to greatness.

*Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shall find it after many days. . . If the cloud be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth: and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be. (Eccl. 11 vs. 1, 3 NKJV)*

This means that blessings will be returned to one who is generous and hospitable (*Eccl. 11 vs. 1*). The purpose of *vs 3* is, perhaps, to underscore the certainty of the blessings that will follow a generous person. For just as nature is unfailing, so will the man who casts his bread upon the water be blessed in due season.

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*They have been severely tested by the troubles they went through; but their joy was so great that they were extremely generous in their giving, even though they are very poor. I can assure you that they gave as much as they could and even more than they could. Of their own free will they begged us and pleaded for the privilege of having a part in helping God's people in Judea. (II Cor. 8 vs. 2-4 GNB)*

These Macedonians, though impoverished, rejoiced at the opportunity of sharing their meager resources with their more impoverished and persecuted brethren in Judea. They gave beyond their ability, and did so willingly, even begging to give out of interest, without being forced by anybody.

*And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. (Mt 10 vs. 42 KJV)*

Even though the reward of giving is much, whenever you give, you should not expect your reward to come from human beings, but from God. Jesus, in this verse, was charging the people to give to the people of God (disciples), promising an unfailing reward. 'Great' was mentioned in the Bible 959 times, and this tells you of God's disposition towards you. Beyond this, you need to understand the contents of

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Jesus' teaching about giving (*II Cor. 9 vs. 6-7*). The more you give, the more you receive; and the more you withhold, the more you depreciate. Giving is investing which, according to Jesus' teaching, will yield bountifully if done bounti-fully. The secret of wealth is being kind and generous to the needy as God will continue to be generous to you in return.

**Consecration**

Noah Webster says consecration is a solemn or sacred dedication to a special purpose. In whatever calling, vocation or business you may find yourself, dedicating your life to achieve a special purpose is noble. But consecration is deeper than commitment. You can live your life devoid of a higher purpose designed for you by God and still be committed to a business or a calling. But consecration involves presenting yourself as a sacred instrument, a vessel unto honour and devotion, to the task for which you have presented your sacred self.

*But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank, therefore, he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. (Dan 1 vs. 8 KJV)*

He identified the task before him and consecrated himself for the task. As an individual on the path to greatness, consecration will help you revere God, the possessor of life and all in it (*Gen. 39 vs. 1-10*) and

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such reverence, surely, will take you to your destiny. Do not develop commitment alone, consecrate yourself as well so that your commitment would always be in the way and fear of God, yielding bountiful fruits. Consecrating yourself to God is, invariably, consecrating yourself to greatness.

**Creativity**

For the greatness in you to be birthed for the world to see, you need to envisage better than you did before. Picture new things and develop the drive to invent them as well as to take a fresh approach to whatever is it you do. Even in that very common business, strategise and put up new and uncommon things. You are a unique being, loaded with a unique potential for greatness. For you to actualise that unique potential for greatness, you will need to develop something that will distinguish you from others out there.

Benjamin Carson separated the Siamese twins for the first time in the history of the world. Thomas Alva Edison patented the first commercially successful light bulb in 1879. Many of the Christian hymns were composed by a woman who believed that having eyes but not seeing is far worse than being blind. You are a potential bundle of breakthroughs. Just look inward and do something. Do not be discouraged if you fail in the process or if the venture is not yielding much financial reward. It will in the long run.

In order to be creative, there is a need for you to sharpen your imagination. Imagination is the ability to create mental images or pictures; the ability to be

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creative and to think of new and interesting ideas or methods. What are those things you always picture? Among the resources that the Lord has loaded within you is your mind's eye which sees what the biological eyes cannot see. It produces images capable of transforming your destiny for good. What you need to do is to live every day with a positive attitude, picture positive things, believe in yourself and act promptly.

**Accuracy**

This is the state, condition or quality of being correct or exact. You will agree with me that for anybody to succeed in any art or vocation, there is a need for him/her to be accurate. I wish to explain this very important factor with what the Random House Dictionary of English says about accuracy: "*Condition or quality of being correct or exact, freedom from error or defect.*" If *defective* means *faulty*, to be *accurate* would imply that you avoid, as much as possible, any fault in your actions, style of living and reactions—responses to situations and critical issues, words—conversations and utterances including the jokes you make—that can soil your image and affect your imagination. I would like to dwell on making up for any deficit in your character, knowledge deficit in particular.

Studying relevant materials—books, journals and so on—and investigating issues of interest—researching, consulting, listening to enriching media programmes and meditating—can go a long way to keep you informed.

*Determining Factors of Greatness**If you are not updated, then you are outdated*

is a maxim you need to adopt, knowing that if you are not informed, then you will be out of form.

Go the extra mile in reading about facts; listen better than before, and actively seek information. Do not be easily satisfied when it gets to being informed; get all the information you can. Have the interest to and more importantly, know that God is the most accurate Being; wait on Him for guidance. He has all the answers; He knows all things—even those mysteries that keep you wondering and wandering. Go to him in prayer and I am sure he will lead you through.

Have you ever wondered how Noah became the world's first carpenter (*Gen. 6 vs. 14-22*), or how the Temple (*I Kings 6-10*) was built without the sound of iron or stone being cut within the building? Noah did more of listening while the builders did most of the observations and assessment—these could involve some mathematics. I need to tell you that Daniel did both praying and listening for God to reveal Nebuchadnezzar's dream to him. A truth that you need to know is that God speaks to whoever cares to listen.

**Ambition**

In the sincere hope to record some achievements or distinctions in life, resides a strong passion and drive for success. To make it in life, you must single-handedly decide that you want to truly make it. Though there is a great plan for you to be outstanding in whatever you choose to do, it is left to you to seek the fulfilment of your goals. The world

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will not offer you your dream on a silver platter. You have to ambitiously pursue your dreams. Demand for the best by develop-ing the desire and the drive to make it in life.

You need to put in all the zeal required and the drive to realise your desires (*Dt. 2 vs. 24*). Develop the passion needed to excel and to transform yourself into what you were born to be. You can do this by discovering yourself as a person with the potential for greatness. Ambition is what makes the difference between a failed and a successful person. A failed person loses interest easily and readily accepts the status quo; whereas the ambitious person sees failure as a stepping stone to the fulfilment of his/her destiny.

Only you can limit yourself; not even the sky can limit you. The only way to excel is to discover your present state and admit that you can do better. Picture the height you want to reach and put in the effort required. However, it is of utmost importance that you have the desire to fulfill your God-ordained destiny.

The majority of the spies that were sent to get information about the Promised Land saw themselves as grasshoppers and admitted they could never conquer the land. In the midst of that discouragement, Joshua and Caleb proclaimed otherwise and declared themselves fit to take the land. While the thousands who admitted that they were weak, all died. Joshua and Caleb had great drive and became heroes to be reckoned with. Do not underestimate yourself! The situation may be

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*Goliathic* in nature; all you need is the *Davidic* drive: “I can do it” and “I will do it better.”

**Accountability**

To be accountable is to give an explanation, a justification or a report of one’s actions and expenditures—of time, energy, knowledge, properties, materials, funds and more importantly—gifts/talents. A bitter fact you must take into consideration is that all your words—those jokes that you think are of no importance, the gossip and backbiting you engage in and the verbal expression of anger will all be accounted for, whether you like it or not (*Mt 12 vs. 36*).

One of the most significant factors that can motivate you to excel in your career and calling is having it in mind that you shall be held accountable for all of your actions. A faithful steward knows that serving is more important than being served and a good report of all your actions is more valuable than storing up material wealth. The husbandman in *Mt. 21 vs. 31-41* never prepared any account of his stewardship; he had forgotten that his Lord will one day review his ledger; whereas the servants in *Mt. 25 vs. 14-28* provide a good example, teaching us that we will one day be brought forward to explain our debits and credits.

To make it in life, you need to decide to be solely responsible for your deeds and misdeeds. Even when people are being irresponsible by apportioning the blame, you should hold yourself accountable (*Amos 3 vs. 21*). This will help you to correct your deficit and



make you progress faster than can be imagined.

Of utmost relevance is the truth that you will be held accountable for how you spent each of your seconds here on earth and how you utilised your God-given talents. What are you doing with your time? Is it relevant to your purpose? The story was told of a wealthy Nigerian who, many years ago, doled out about ₦8 million for his mum's funeral rites, but never spent up to four hours at the week-long function for which so many people spent days and some weeks to prepare. When asked why, the rich man said: "I must confess to you that my minutes are worth more than my millions. I can waste my money but not my time."

You are a bundle of gifts yet to be discovered. Are you using those talents of yours for God or for Satan? It does not matter if you agree to it or not; you will be called to give account of all. Accountability singles an individual out for greatness among his/her peers, co-workers and even among fellow church members. It makes you a leader to leaders.

### **Discontentedness**

To best explain this factor, it is important to briefly discuss contentment. To be contented is to be satisfied with what one is or has, not wanting more. One is just simply satisfied. If contentment is to be happy with your state, not wanting any improvement, growth or development, then discontentedness is to be dissatisfied with your current state, not accepting it as your best.

Despite the achievement of Paul in his service to

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God, the exemplary apostle said:

*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conform-able unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus... (Phil 3 vs. 10-13 KJV)*

What an exemplary leader. You need to know that this feeling of discontentedness was an important factor in Paul's making. Accepting that you need no further improvement is another strategy Satan can use to limit the extent to which you can fulfil your potential for greatness. Although discontentedness may be inter-preted as greed by some people, we can also see it from the perspective of one wanting more, so as to realize all of one's potential for greatness, though grateful to God for the achievement already gained, the individual refuses to rest, dissatisfied in his/her current state.

I wish to bring to your notice that great people like Albert Einstein were never contented with failure. Rather, Einstein, like others, saw failure as an opportunity to start all over again and to do better. Abraham Lincoln, I am sure, did not have the word failure in his vocabulary. Do not be shocked that accomplishing 99% of your potential is not good enough. Aspire to die empty by releasing all the

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substance within you to bless the world and glorify God thereby.

You may think 50% is a pass mark; but Ben Carson once said 95% to him is failure and that he must achieve a 100% to be satisfied with himself. Isn't that great? Contentment on the long run turns an individual into a mediocre. Dream big, aspire big! Big is the greatness within you and you are unlimited; do not therefore limit yourself with satisfaction in your current state.

**Character**

This is the totality of the traits that make up the nature of a person. It could also be an account of the qualities or peculiarities of a person. For an individual to succeed in his vocation, ministry or business, there is a great need for him/her to develop a good character. It is what makes you unique among your colleagues, business associates or fellow ministers. A discerning character could make you flourish in whatever you lay your hands on; whereas lacking it could strangle your greatness.

The competition, ie, the number of people who are engaged in your type of business has nothing to do with how far you will go. Your character—how you treat clients—does. How you welcome your clients, how you address and respect them, how you display knowledge of your business, how you appreciate them for patron-ising you and your simple “thanks for coming, goodbye sir/ma” all matter. Your ‘you can have a seat, ‘thanks so much sir/ma,’ will remind them of your estab-lishment when next they come

shopping.

You need to understand that character is not talent; rather, it is something you develop over time. It has much to do with being just, courteous, honest, loyal and forthright. At your place of work, single yourself out by being loyal and forthright. Something funny happened in one of the greatest firms in Lagos: a sum of ₦1.5m was missing within a department of the firm. A panel was set up to investigate the matter. One of the workers, while facing the board, said, "I wish to plead before this board that Mr. Joseph should be considered for exemption from this trial." You will wonder why he did not plead for himself. It was because Mr. Joseph had been loyal in a ₦7m matter before.

The Oxford Dictionary of English further defines character as the ability of an individual to handle difficult or dangerous situations. Your contribution in ministers' meetings and conferences could single you out among your co-ministers. The out-going and friendly attitude you present in your community, could even preach more than your radio and television broadcasts.

### **Commitment**

This is the willingness to commit time, effort, energy etc. into something or to be committed to a course. It is a pledge to carry out something. It is the willingness to stay put to a particular vision and to stay true to the course even when others give up.

No matter how lucrative your vocation or business or how great your calling, if you lack commitment,

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you will definitely fail even if you have the knowledge required to succeed. This is because there will definitely be periods in your career when you will have to face tough challenges. In that lucrative business, there will be a time when you will want to pull out. At some point, you may think God has never called you. In that happy marriage, you may pass through many storms that may lead you to question how you got into it. Staying on course with your destination to greatness will hold you in place even when the so-called strong men have pulled out.

However, to withstand the trying times of that flourishing vocation, calling, business or marriage, there is the need for you to be led by God so that you can have a pillar to hold on to whenever the raging storm comes. So many people will fall off on their journey to greatness during the storm simply because they lack commitment. If you want to fulfill your dream in life and realise your vision, you need to develop the spirit of commitment which always says, “come what may, I will hold on forever.”

Similarly, persistence is to continue doing something in spite of difficulties. Having a strong foundation anchored on God’s word is the first thing that will strengthen your resolve to never give up during challenging moments. Your appointed time to launch into fame may be when others are fed up, and you are *fed on*. This was what helped Ruth. She stayed on the course along with Naomi when Orpah left. Orpah could no longer see a future with Naomi, but Ruth did and was able to withstand the very tough times with Naomi. This very act of commitment

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and persistence are what made Ruth to be among the great names in the Bible. Orpah's departure was like alighting from a bus of greatness, as we never read anything about her after she left Naomi and Ruth. Stay true to that course, persist, be committed; your greatness will soon come.

**Attitude**

This is the manner, disposition, feeling, position, tendency or orientation of the mind with regard to a person or thing. Success or failure is greatly predicated upon attitude. Attitude is the orientation of the mind of an individual concerning an issue, act, person or thing and how it affects and determines the individual's response.

There is the need to state clearly that an individual's attitude is a major determinant of how far he/she can go. Any task you face in life, no matter what the people around you think about the task, if you have the right attitude and drive you can make it.

Abraham Lincoln was a great man and known to all and sundry as 'Honest Abe'. Too poor to go to school, he educated himself and became a lawyer, a Whig Party leader, state legislator and US Congressman. He became a leader in the new Republican Party. He then ran for president in 1860, sweeping the North and winning. Although his background was very poor, he never said I can't do it. Failure was not in his vocabulary.

Have the right attitude. There is greatness within you and a wrong attitude could strangle you out of

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your destiny. Having the right attitude made Abraham Lincoln and it can make you if you cultivate and develop it. The way to cultivate the right attitude is to be positive always, and to see something good in whatever you are passing through in life.

**Courage**

This is the mental or moral strength enabling one to firmly venture, persevere as well as to withstand danger, fear, pain or difficulty. This has the effect of helping someone to control fear when facing danger, pain or opposition.

*Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the comet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well; but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? (Dan 3 vs. 15 KJV)*

These three Hebrew youth had consecrated and committed themselves to the fear of their God and that helped a great deal to instil inestimable courage in them. The king had given an order, the obedience of which would have been a sin against their God. This they declined to do. They did not panic about being reported to the king; they never minced words and were unanimously bold even before the angry king. The king pardoned them for disobeying him in

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the first place and gave them another opportunity to vindicate themselves from his wrath and the impending pains of the fiery furnace that awaited them should they refused to obey him. These noble men would never shake nor panic —not even at the king's threats.

*Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. (Dan 3 vs. 16-18 KJV)*

Can you imagine three of them taking a unanimous decision not to be frightened by the king's wrath? They called him by his name once and as 'O King' twice to direct their bold answers to him. They believed much in their God for deliverance from the hands of the heathen idol-worshipping king. They were resolved that should God deliver them not, they would still not bow in worship to the idol set up by the king at the expense of sinning against their God. Due to their fearless courage, the king was eventually convinced of the God of the Hebrews and commanded that all the people of the land should serve Him.

*Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent*



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his angel, and delivered his servants  
that trusted in him, and have changed  
the king's word, and yielded their  
bodies, that they might not serve nor  
worship any god, except their own God.  
Therefore I make a decree, That every  
people, nation, and language, which  
speak any thing amiss against the God  
of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,  
shall be cut in pieces, and their houses  
shall be made a dunghill; because there  
is no other God that can deliver after this  
sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach,  
Meshach, and Abednego, in the province  
of Babylon. (Daniel 3 vs. 28-30)*

Furthermore, the king promoted the men in the provinces of Babylon. You will believe me that if they had feared the king and sinned against God, we would never have had anything to read about them in the entire Bible. Their courage drew people—including the highly placed—to God and placed them in their greatness. To them, courage was what their greatness required, just as that of Elisha required perseverance.

### **Reliability**

This means trustworthiness. It is also being consistently good in quality or performance. In simple words, reliability implies that others rely on your ability—the knowledge of your worth and your capability—so they can rely on you for good service

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delivery. It is important to note here that your greatness cannot be bought. If you do, it will not last long. It also cannot be proven overnight. You need to put in your all, your best, on a daily basis, so that your greatness can be endorsed here on earth among people.

In whatever area you want to achieve greatness, your best resource pool will be the people around you, as your greatness resides among them. Hence, you have to be dependable for them to see you as somebody on whom they can rely.

In your academic pursuits, being reliable makes you outstanding among your colleagues. Being a responsible and reliable professional makes you due for promotion even when protocol says it is too early to be promoted. If you are a reliable business man or woman, you will not fail your customers. You are not “*great-able*” if you are not reliable.

**A Sense of Humour**

Having a sense of humour is the ability to keep people at ease in tense situations. The point is not for you to turn a comedian, but to become a source of comfort, laughter and joy to whoever comes your way. So if you wish to promote happiness, first, you need to cultivate a smiling face. If your countenance is harsh, it could mar your venture. If it does not mar your steps, you are likely going to become a person others would avoid, regardless of your wealth or position in society.

Millions of people around you are going about with different burdens in their hearts and your encounter with them can turn their

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entire destiny around for the better. It does not matter where you meet them; it matters what you are able to impart to them. For instance, a business woman that knows how to make and keep customers happy and smiling throughout the few minutes they spend in her store may not need to tell the person to check again before the customer says “*see you some other time.*”

No matter how cheap or how exquisite your products, if you do not have a smiling face and a witty personality, your business-persona is incomplete. Your smiling face is a reassurance to several souls around you. No matter what you are passing through, cultivate that habit of smiling; make people smile. Your cheerless face sends a distressing message to someone who is looking at your face for comfort and reassurance. Even in the face of danger, be happy and make people smile.

**Humility**

A modest opinion of one's own importance is humility. Humility has to do with doing all it takes not to be overruled with a sense of your own worth. This is neither to ridicule nor to underestimate yourself, but to exalt others as worthy. Humility should not be shown to only the learned or the wealthy or the priests but to everybody that comes your way.

*Be kindly affectioned one to another  
with brotherly love; in honour preferring  
one another; (Rom 12 vs. 10 KJV)*

*Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves*

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unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject  
unto another, and be clothed with  
humility: for God resisteth the proud,  
and giveth grace to the humble. (1 Pet 5  
vs. 5 KJV)*

Apostle Paul was instructing in *Rom 12 vs. 10* that we should exercise brotherly love with others and to be quick in honouring others. It is a wise saying that respect beget respect. When you, with all modesty, consider your worth, then, you can place value on others. If you are humble, greatness will tumble into your path.

It is not only God that *resisteth* the proud, people also do. They resist the person that exalts himself and looks down on others. No matter how illiterate, how poor or how young the people who cross your path are, show respect to them. Even if you are the boss, respecting people will make them love you; even more, they will cooperate with your directives. However great your destiny looks, if you are not humble, you will stumble. Respect is reciprocal; show love and respect to others—co-workers, co-ministers, colleagues, students and customers—so that greatness can be yours and such that will outlast your days.

Do not show pride because of your title: — professor, bishop, pastor, or family background: Ojukwu, Awolowo, Saraki, or Obama. Always show respect to everyone you meet. The individual will always respect you with enthusiasm. Such an individual can recommend you for promotion if need be. Beyond that, learn to respect others, not minding

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their age and/or socio-economic status. By this, either directly or indirectly, you are gradually influencing people's lives. Preaching is not only done when you are on the pulpit. In fact, it is better done off the pulpit—in your day-to-day relationship with others.

If you are proud, no matter how wealthy or well positioned you are, people will not respect you. They will not even want to have much to do with you. Your subjects may respect you because they have no choice, and if they have the grace, they will prefer to be led by a humble individual. To attain any greatness in life, be humble and to retain your greatness, show humility to others.

**Inspiration**

It is the process by which one's creative abilities are stimulated. It also means to kindle or prompt by influence. Inspiration is not the firing up of what you do not have within you, but what is lying dormant, inactive within you. Inspiration could come in different ways. For you to tap into your greatness, you need divine inspiration to fan to flames your potential.

Inspiration comes from God. Inspiration from God is that special influence of the Holy Spirit which enables one to scale the hurdles and attain heights hitherto unattainable. Seen from the perspective of the infallible will and word of God, inspiration implies "being motivated by the Holy Spirit." And this is the best and the most transforming of all sources of inspiration. You need to be inspired by God before

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you can do the impossible to change the so-called stubborn situation.

Inspiration comes especially from reading God's 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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim 3 vs. 16-17)*

Reading the Bible inspires you as it enables you to know the mind of God concerning issues of life as well as to be humble and be prepared for the Holy Spirit's leading.

Inspiration also comes from others around. Locating yourself among people with the right attitude can largely affect how you fulfil your potential for greatness. These should be people who can see the greatness in you and motivate you to birth your potential through their words of encouragement. This is where the result of keeping bad company comes in as they can influence you otherwise.

Books and tapes are also sources of inspiration. The books you read, the messages and music you listen to or sing, can inspire you to face a great task and prepare you for success. Greatness can never be realised without inspiration. Live life and locate yourself in the right environment so as to be inspired.

**Love**

Love is a strong feeling of deep affection for somebody or something. It is a profoundly tender or passionate feeling of warmth or deep affection. You can express love for your job, vocation, business or ministry and for people around you.

Your love is first of all to God, whose love for you predates your birth. He loves you so much that He gave his only begotten Son to die for you. The best way to reciprocate His love is to love Him in return by doing His will.

To be great in your endeavours in life, you need to love what you are doing. If you are in a profession you do not love, you may not go far. People who are forced into a profession they do not love rarely make it. The few who make it are those who develop love for the profession along the way; many others merry-go-round on a spot. It is just like limiting yourself from greatness when you do not love your job. Irrespective of what your calling is or what people say about it, what determines how far you will go is your interest, your love for that ministry. Whatever you love, even if others do not love it, they will likely change their mind, when you attain your goal.

Joseph's brethren did not like his dream but he loved it. In fact, he was always happy and excited to discuss it. He laminated the pictures of the scenes in his dream at the back of his heart and his love for the purpose of living his dream helped him to fulfill it. No matter how rough, dirty or ridiculous your business might be, if you love it, you will always be happy with the business. The *pure water* sachet, that is now a

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lucrative business in Nigeria, was invented by a woman who believed in her product, even though her friends tried to discourage her. But she was not discouraged. “*Iya Olomi*” is now a millionaire.

Showing love for people who surround you is very important. Jesus summarised those ten commandments into two: love the Lord your God and love your neighbour as yourself. It is worthy of note that sometimes, on your way to greatness, people may mock and/or discourage you; they might even discredit you to satisfy their hatred of you. People who are not aiming high in life shoot arrows of hatred to bring down those who are aiming high.

However, just as the slothful might deride you, the fellow that is aiming high may also be challenged by your greatness to work harder. In the face of such trials, what will persuade the gainsayers to recognise your greatness are your soft speeches, your humility and tender love guided by your astute vision. Do not pay hatred with hatred; instead, radiate love (*Rom. 12 vs. 19-21, I Cor. 13*).

**Vision**

Vision is the power of projecting far beyond the now; the power or ability to plan for the future with imagination and wisdom. Vision entails seeing farther than the present: to see what others cannot see and hold on to what others may believe is unrealistic.

When God, who is the owner of divine visions, opens your eyes, you will behold what an average man cannot. A vision from God is a supernatural



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encounter. It is divinely communicated information about one's life. It may set the target or goal or purpose which brings about the drive, zeal and passion for its realisation.

*Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, Thou hast well seen : for I will hasten my word to perform it. (Jer. 1 vs. 11-12)*

Your vision, destiny, purpose or greatness is not for you to plan or ordain but for you to discover and develop.

*And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north. (Jer. 1 vs. 13 KJV)*

After the Lord had anointed Jeremiah (*Jer. 1 vs. 11, 13*), He asked him, "What can you see?" And he saw correctly the two times, and then God began to unfold to him different things that he needed to know in order to fulfill his purpose in life. The farther you can see, the farther you can go. The world is like a dark night—what you do not see, you cannot go towards. For you to be great, you need to see greatness in yourself and to pursue its realisation with passion. Your thoughts are limited to what you

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can imagine; your imagination depends on your thoughts; your desire depends on your imagination; and your desire determines your future.

In *Gen. 13 vs. 8-15*, Lot determined his future from his earthly vision, while Abraham made his from a supernatural one. Ruth, the grandmother of David, saw a future which others would have termed impossible and in the end, she was glorified.

**What Affects Your Vision**

- The people you move with: Abraham could not see heavenly visions when Lot was with him. Lot means 'veil', so Abraham's sight was covered up (*Gen. 12 vs. 14*). Moving with people who have accepted defeat will not allow your vision to spring forth.
- What you eat.
- What you listen to creates your environment in the spirit realm. Staying away from the divine network is staying away from greatness.
- Tradition and doctrine.
- The people you follow—your mentors. Your mentors can make or mar your greatness.

**What Vision Does To A Man:**

- Guarantees you a place at the top (*Gen 37 vs. 2, 5*)
- Makes opposition and challenges to bow (*Gen 37 vs. 8, 20*)
- Makes one's steps to be guided by God—

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God orders the destiny of a man who carries His vision.

- Makes one to resist sin.

Joseph saw visions at age 17 and he achieved his destiny; Paul had a vision on his way to Damascus and was fulfilled. Fulfilment comes from doing what you were created to do. Do all you can to discover your purpose for living and dare to be purpose-driven.

**Wisdom**

This is the knowledge of what is true or right coupled with a just judgement, discernment and/or insight. Wisdom is the ability to make good judgements because of one's experience or knowledge.

For an individual like you who wants to fulfill his/her potential for greatness, the secret behind Solomon's greatness (wisdom) is what you will need. It is wisdom that makes one great; not power, literacy, or family background. All these may influence your greatness, but wisdom is what makes an individual great in life.

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Prov. 1 vs. 7 KJV)*

*For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous. (Prov. 2 vs. 6-7a KJV)*

*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore*

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get wisdom: and with all thy getting, get  
understanding. (Prov. 4 vs. 7)*

Solomon, out of experience, made it known to us that the principal thing needed for a person to fulfil his/her potential for greatness is wisdom. To get wisdom, which comes only from God, you need to live your day-to-day life according to God's ordinances. He has all things in abundance and gives to people as He wishes. For you to qualify for His great wisdom, which will definitely help you to fulfil your potential for greatness, you must live a righteous life. Have the fear of God in your heart and life, and follow his path always (*Prov. 2 vs. 2*).

*And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon  
him, the spirit of wisdom and under-  
standing, the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of  
the Lord. (Isa. 11 vs. 2 KJV)*

When you walk in the path of the Lord, His Holy Spirit will abide with you. After this, the spirit of wisdom will fill you, and then all other things will follow. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches best how to know and apply wisdom.

*For wisdom is better than rubies; and all  
the things that may be desired are not  
be compared to it. (Prov. 8 vs. 11 KJV)*

To be great in life, the requirement is wisdom.

**Characteristics of Divine Wisdom**

The wisdom that comes from God to anyone who asks is:

- Pure: chaste, holy and clean (Jas 3 vs. 17)
- Peaceable: (Jas 3 vs. 17, Heb. 12 vs. 14)
- Gentle: meek, modest, kind (Jas 3 vs. 17)
- Easily entreated: not stubborn or obstinate, but yielding to others (Jas 3 vs. 17)
- Full of mercy: always forgiving and giving kindness (Jas 3 vs. 17)
- Full of good fruits (Gal 5 vs. 22-23)
- Without partiality: having no respect of persons (Jas 2 vs. 1-10, Jas 3 vs. 17)
- Without hypocrisy: open, honest, genuine and true (*Jas 3 vs. 17*)

**The Blessings of Wisdom**

- It excels folly (*Eccl 2 vs. 13*)
- It does not allow one to be discouraged
- It is good and with an inheritance
- It enables you to make profit
- It is a defense (*Eccl 7 vs. 12*)
- It gives life
- It is better than strength (*Eccl 7 vs. 19, vs 16*)
- It proves all things (*Eccl 7 vs. 23*)
- It gives joy and boldness (*Eccl 8 vs. 1, Prov. 3 vs. 13*)
- It delivers in war (*Eccl 9 vs. 15*)

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- It is better than weapons (*Eccl 9 vs. 18*)
- It is profitable to direct (*Eccl 10 vs. 10*)

**Faithfulness**

This is being loyal to somebody or something over a long period of time. It also implies a dutiful or thorough performance of one's duty or obligation. It is the quality of staying true to one's words, vows or promises. Faithfulness means being dependable, trustworthy and believable.

Loyalty helps you to get rid of difficulty on your way up. Joshua had walked with Moses for quite a number of years. He was steadfast and adhered to God's statutes. His integrity made him fit to wear the very mighty shoe of Moses. Moses trusted him; he knew how dependable Joshua was and this paved way for his uplifting. When the apostles were to elect elders among the congregation, Paul charged them to look for people of honest report—not liars, not deceitful people—but people of good report. When it is time to elect a leader in any firm, ministry or profession, organisation or association, the people who are going to be led will be interested in knowing the past of the would-be leader.

Apart from loyalty, honesty is another aspect of faithfulness. It enables people to believe your words; they can trust you. When nobody is ready to say the truth as it is, they believe you will not be deceptive; they can count on your word.

Anyone who wishes to be great in life must make sincerity his/her watchword. Your customers know

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you cannot sell fake products. They know that the product you have will be original. To avoid the trap of dubious business persons around you, they will stick close to you, simply because you have, at one time or the other, proved yourself. The same applies to your professional practice as well as your academic performance.

Another form of faithfulness is to be duty conscious. You know the right time to arrive and to leave your workplace. You are not absent when you are expected to be present. Even when others sneak out of their duty post, you always follow the rules and code of conduct. When you display such faithfulness, your colleagues will vote you as the most faithful worker in the department or the firm. If someone tries to cheat you, someone will warn you and be there to fight for you.

**Diligence**

Diligence requires a steady effort and careful work. One is not due for greatness if one is not diligent. Diligence means a consistent interest in your business, career, academic work or calling. Steady effort necessitates consistent input of time, energy and resources in order to realise your set goal.

*Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. (Prov. 4 vs. 23 KJV)*

Manage your business or career with all diligence for out it are the fruits of greatness. If you are to fulfil your potential for greatness and you are in the right profession or calling, lack of diligence can thwart the

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fulfilling of that greatness and render you a nonentity. (see Lk 12 vs. 58).

*Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence..... (Rom 12 vs. 8 KJV).*

Whatever you choose to do in life, you will stand out by your diligence and automatically pass for a leader anyone can recommend.

*He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. (Prov. 10 vs. 4 KJV)*

*The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute. (Prov. 12 vs. 24)*

Also consider: *Prov. 13 vs. 4, 21 vs. 5, 27 vs. 23-24.* Staying true to your purpose with all the necessary commitment, and more importantly, diligence, makes one a great individual over time. Do not grow weary; the substance of a diligent man is precious.

*Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings and not mean men. (Prov. 22 vs. 29)*

Greatness makes kings to bow before you. It gets you to the summit in your academic pursuits and business. When you think you are not growing, just be diligent and you shall command the attention of kings.

## **Dedication**



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Dedication is the giving or devoting of oneself, time, effort and resources to a noble cause, purpose or person. It involves being earnestly, intensely, seriously, sincerely, completely, entirely and wholly given to something or someone. In the words of Bishop Oyedepo, “dedication means to be insanely committed to a cause. . .”

The greatness you do not devote yourself to, you cannot fulfil; and you cannot seize a thing that you cannot see. To fulfil your potential for greatness, you must commit yourself with all intensity and drive to your purpose and cause. Much has been said in this chapter about commitment. Hence, I only need to talk briefly on dedication as it cannot exist without commitment.

In your career, business or ministry, the phrase, ‘*come what may*’ should instil a sense of dedication in you that even in the face of rejection or dejection, you will still stay true to your cause; that in the face of discouragement, you will still not be shaken, but remain steadfast.

In your place of work, the act of devoting yourself wholly to your purpose will single you out for promotion, just as dedicating yourself to your studies will bring you success in the long run. When others on campus are partying, concentrating on your studies will distinguish you as a serious student. In your ministry or career, a sincere and earnest devotion to your purpose attracts greatness. Lack of dedication in whatever you do means you are committed to failure.

**Zeal**

We have discussed ambition and commitment as well as dedication and diligence; but there is the need to also talk about zeal which is somewhat slightly different from the above. Zeal can be defined as vigour for someone or something. It is a devouring desire, enthusiastic diligence or fervency. The word vigour means strength or intensity of feeling or enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is strong excitement, admiration or interest in what you have chosen to do.

Zeal is somehow stronger compared to commitment or ambition. It is staying on course no matter what happens; staying with full interest and excitement in your chosen profession. It is seeing the future with all its excitement, even when you fail. It is being enthusi-astic as ever when "pushing through the darkness or another dreary mile".

Zeal is what drives you to greatness. Great people are zealous. That is why you see some men from history not giving up no matter what they face on their way to greatness. When Abraham was 99 years old, God still told him to walk before him and be perfect (*Gen. 17 vs. 1*). He did not despise God, having walked before Him for so many decades without a child. Being zealous for God's commandments was what helped him through.

Abraham Lincoln was one of the greatest presidents that ever lived in the White House. He did not lose HIS passion and ardour throughout his struggle to keep the United States unified.

*Wherefore seeing we also are  
compassed about with so great a cloud*

*Fulfilling Your Predestined Greatness 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. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12 vs. 1-2 KJV)*

Jesus acquired the seat of honour at the right hand of God by enduring various hardships on the way.

The apostle Paul made himself a servant to all: amidst the strong, he became strong; among the weak, he became flexible and adaptable. In all, he conquered kingdoms for the sake of the precious faith.

*For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save*

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some. And this I do for the gospel's sake,  
that I might be partaker thereof with  
you. (I Cor. 9 vs. 19-23 KJV)*

This was the purpose behind his passion for which he never considered any ridicule as a stumbling block, but as a stepping stone. He had the picture of his purpose laminated on his heart and that provided his drive throughout his ministry. He became zealous and was called several names, which never worried him. He maintained the excitement of the joy ahead, to the end. Zeal drives great men to their greatness.

### **Self Discipline**

This is the training of oneself to act in accordance with laid down instructions, rules and regulations. It is a set of instructions and exercises designed to instill disciplined conduct or action. Discipline is seen as behaviour that is in accordance with the rules of conduct; or behaviour maintained by a system of social norms and regulations.

To fulfil your potential for greatness, you need to get back and study the laid down rules by which you can guide yourself so as to arrive at your destination. Following the general rules that guided people that have succeeded in that particular field will also help you to succeed. More importantly, you need to sit back as well and develop your own rules and principles which will bolster you to your desired greatness. Joseph did not only follow the general rules to attain greatness; he strategised his own rule of stark obedience to God. Daniel would probably

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have failed if he had only followed the general rules in Babylon. He discovered the need to develop his own principles by which he would guide and govern himself. To prosper in any endeavour you find yourself, there is a necessity to know and to, preferably, write out those rules and drills that you want to observe to guarantee your success and a good reputation.

Discipline entails developing your own personal rules and instructions as you ply the right route that will guarantee your greatness. As a minister called by God, if you are not determined to walk in the path of discipline, then your failure is guaranteed. Just like the failure to follow traffic rules may predispose you to an accident, your failure to live and act in accordance with those laid down rules will lead to a great fall in the ministry.

It is understood that you do not tamper with the accounts in your business, ie, do not rob Peter to pay Paul! Similarly, pay your tithes so as not to strangle your greatness with greed. Show courtesy, humility and take a godly approach to issues and customers. Self discipline also applies to your vocation. Be faithful to the general rules, do not cheat and your upliftment will be assured.



## SIX

# Issues That Can Mar Your Destiny

Much has been discussed in the previous chapters to convince you of the predestined greatness within you that awaits expression. There is a significant need, however, to inform you that every glory has a story and that there are several issues and circumstances which can endanger your greatness. If these dangerous events are not well handled, they are capable of turning your greatness to madness. This chapter discusses these issues with relevant biblical examples.

### **Chasing Power**

Having the assurance that you were born to be great, you need to depend solely on God's timing for yourself. Chasing greatness or fame will land you in a lifelong madness and could even terminate your life prematurely. When preparations were on-going for the 2007 general elections in Nigeria, and our politicians were being murdered across the nation, the Holy Spirit helped me discover the root of the power hunt in the Bible. That discovery made me

understand that the outrageous wickedness of some of our erstwhile politicians could be likened to that of Abimelech.

*And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother. And they gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him. And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself. And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar*



*that was in Shechem. (Judges9 vs. 1-6  
KJV)*

After Gideon died, it was expected that one of his 72 sons should reign after him. Abimelech, being the only child his mother had for Gideon, went to his mother's family to solicit their evil support so that he could 'at all cost' become the one to succeed his father. They accepted his words and funded his wickedness; he killed seventy of his brethren on a stone, not realising that Jotham escaped. And after he had murdered all his 'rivals', he was made the king by the very people who knew the secret of his qualification. Jotham, the only person that escaped, challenged the people of Shechem and pronounced judgement on them and on Abimelech the king.

When, by the help of the Holy Spirit, I discovered this place, my heart bled for our noble country, Nigeria. "Do or die" became the language of our leaders. Whoever has a brighter chance than they do must die, so as to pave way for them. Abimelech had the passion to be great but because he did not have patience and a just heart, he lacked the attributes to hold the office of a king. So many of our leaders are like Abimelech. They are not fit but they have a strong desire to rule their fatherland (and never to serve). Because of their ever-growing ego, they want to be referred to as *His/Her Excellency*, and with lots of titles and superlatives which they do not merit.

To be great in life, you need not hunt for greatness with evil desperation. Have a vision to be a just and fair ruler and stand by your vision. Develop yourself in terms of knowledge acquisition, humility and selfless service, then God will exalt your head.

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The reality that David had been anointed as the king while Saul ruled could have boosted his ego to try to overthrow Saul, but he did not allow this. He accepted to serve the incumbent and during this period, God developed and refined him for the greatness ahead. When people began to praise him more than Saul, he was still not desperate to fulfill what he was convinced God had anointed him to do. Even when Saul threatened his life, he still did not succumb to pressure to harm Saul when he had the opportunity. When he got the news of Saul's death, he did not rejoice that his enemy had died; instead, he mourned for Saul with a fair heart. And when God deemed that he was ready, David ruled with the mighty hand of God upon him. If he had offended God during the period between being anointed and the time he was installed as the king, only God can tell what would have become of his destiny.

You are meant to be great in life, but do not hunt for power. Power and fame will come your way on their own accord, when you have played your own godly part. Without any clandestine meeting with any group, people will request you be their leader. Greatness follows meekness. If you and I agree to follow David's path and refuse to follow Abimelech, our land, our noble nation, Nigeria, will be greater than it is now. Abimelech ruled for six years before God exercised judgement on him and the people of Shechem who consented to his evil ways. God's judgement may and may not be immediate, but it is always inevitable, it will come sooner or later.

**Disobedience**

*There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphilah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul... So when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him, 'There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people.' Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him... (I Sam 9 vs. 1-2, 17, 10 vs. 1 NKJV)*

The Israelites had demanded for a king and in response to their request, God chose Saul and ordered Samuel to anoint him. Samuel did as God had spoken. I observed that disobedience could come in two ways: either the disobeying individual is actually not interested in obeying those rules or that s/he is being pressured to disobey—as in the case of Saul. He offered sacrifices to God, a rite which he knew was exclusively Samuel's role to perform. He had waited for seven days, yet Samuel did not come. His people scattered away from him and to recover their full attention and interest, he decided to break the laid down rules and regulations by offering the sacrifices to God. But lo, as he finished offering the sacrifices, Samuel came forth.

*And Samuel said to Saul, "Thou hast*

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done foolishly: thou hast not kept the  
commandment of the Lord thy God,  
which he commanded thee: for now  
would the Lord have established thy  
kingdom upon Israel forever. But now  
thy kingdom shall not continue...” (I Sam  
13 vs. 13-14 KJV)*

This marked the end of Saul’s reign over Israel. The remaining years after these were not recognised by God anymore. But then, God provided him with another opportunity to make himself acceptable when God commanded him to go and destroy the Amalekites.

*Samuel also said unto Saul, “the Lord  
sent me to anoint thee to be King over  
his people, over Israel now, therefore,  
hearken thou unto the voice of the words  
of the Lord...now go and smite Amalek,  
and utterly destroy all that they have  
and spare them not; but slay both man  
and woman, infant and suckling, ox and  
sheep, camel and ass.” (I Sam 15 vs. 1,  
3-4 KJV)*

Here we see God giving Saul a second chance (15 vs. 1). He gave him a task to test his obedience, but Saul disobeyed God again, using his discretion (the initial disobedience was due to the pressure of his people). Saul disobeyed the words the Lord had given to him by Samuel. He saved six things in the land, all of which God instructed him to destroy. He saved:

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1. Agag's life
2. The best of the sheep
3. The best of the oxen
4. The best of the fatlings
5. The best of the lamb, and
6. All else that was good.

He was instructed by God to destroy 'all' but he destroyed 'all that was bad or ugly', according to his discretion.

*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice  
and to hearken than the fat of rams (I  
Sam 15 vs. 22)*

This was Samuel's last charge to Saul. Thereafter, the kingdom was rent away from the hand of Saul.

To attain greatness in whatever you lay your hands on, obey the words of God and follow the wise instructions of your leaders.

Another example of disobedience is the prophet who God sent to Jeroboam. God gave him the necessary instructions that he should follow:

*For so it was charged me by the word of  
the Lord, saying, "Eat no bread, nor  
drink water nor turn again by the same  
way that thou camest." (I Kings 13 vs. 9  
KJV)*

But this man did not follow the charge to the letter. He was distracted by another prophet who lied to him, and sinned against God. He did not confirm those words of deceit. And for his disobedience, he was killed by a lion on his way back. Obedience simply means obeying God's commandments. Once

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you refuse to do this, you have agreed to terminate your destiny. Know the mind and standing of God on all issues, and adhere to them. Follow His instructions; no matter how ugly they may seem to you, there are elements of greatness lying in them. Perhaps Naaman would have remained a leper until death if he had not obeyed Elisha's instruction to bathe in a dirty river.

Do not follow your instincts, follow His instructions. Your instincts could lead to your execution, but His instructions will always lead to your exaltation. Though this may take time; obedience involves patience.

**Self Glorification/Pride**

*The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honour of my majesty?" (Dan 4 vs. 30 NKJV)*

The most dangerous thing that can make any great man fall from any height is self-exaltation. David said, *"Once hath God spoken, but twice have I heard it that all powers belong to the Lord."* God told David this fact that no man has any power or might of his own but that every strength comes from God. Man cannot possess anything *"except it be given to him."* No matter how little or great, it stems from God. For his wrong act, Nebuch-adnezzar lived like a wild animal in the bush for a period of seven years, according to God's word. When the time was due for

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him to be restored, he saw God as the Originator of all things and the Owner of all power (*Dan 4 vs. 34*).

You need not have lycanthropy (a form of mental disorder in which an individual sees himself like an animal) before you know that only God deserves all praise, thanks and exaltation, and that God is a jealous God. Would you not be angry to listen to somebody you helped to attain greatness praising him/herself for being great out of his/her personal effort? If you, as a human being, would be angry at this, how much more God, without whose effort nothing would exist on the surface of the earth?

Herod, a mighty and great king in his own time, was struck by the angel of the Lord and was eaten up by worms because he failed to glorify God. He saw himself as the origin of his greatness and that marked his end. In your pursuit of greatness, identify God as your Source and the Origin of all things, who made you greater than your anticipation. Do not share the glory with Him, do not withhold it either, but give it all to your Lord who deserves it.

**Lust**

Those steps that led David to commit adultery with the wife of Uriah were steps that led to a great disaster which outlasted David himself. While he lived, his children had sex with each other (when Ammon raped Tamar), killed one another, and the child that Bathsheba delivered, died. However, all these were not as important as God's judgement concerning him:

*Now, therefore, the sword shall never*



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*depart from thine house. . . . (II Sam 12*  
*vs. 10 NKJV)*

Israel has never witnessed a lasting peace since the reign of Solomon. Not a year has passed that has seen Israel at peace. It has always been at war with one country or the other. At a time in the 19th century when the Philistines did not engage Israel in any battle for almost a decade, there was a war within Israel, where cities and ethnic groups stood against one another. This may not be entirely unconnected to the consequential 'irresistible' urge of David for Uriah's wife. Because of the everlasting punishment that David's act attracted, he pleaded all the rest of his days to avert this punishment. Instead, God promised him His lasting love. There was no other notable offense from David recorded in the Bible that attracted God's anger, save his lust for Bathsheba.

Solomon, the wealthiest and wisest man that ever lived on this planet earth ended his life shamefully because he had penchant for foreign women (*I Kings 11 vs. 1-49*). How could the wisest man in history turn away from God? How could the leader whose gifts and focus once made him the talk of the world get distracted from his calling? The temptations that pulled Solomon down was gradual. He did not acquire 700 wives and 300 concubines in a day, it was gradual. The women that God had charged Solomon not to marry were the very persons that Solomon so desired to have as wives and concubines. And the reason God gave for this instruction came to pass in his life; they turned his heart against God.

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One thing Solomon did not reckon with, which later pulled him down, was the fact that his wealth and wisdom would also attract temptation. Once we 'arrive', it becomes easy to stop feeling hungry for growth and excellence. How quickly we become satisfied, and we begin to spiral downward. Distraction is an enemy of direction. Solomon became careless and distracted before he began to depreciate in value. Solomon who had loved God and served Him without faltering, was now lost in his own self-aggrandizement, having seemed to have forgotten his duty to God should be first. He forgot those charges of David, his father. He lost his focus probably into about 1000 directions. Except you marry in accordance with God's bidding, any marital engagement you commit yourself to can be a disaster. Solomon began to build houses for the diverse gods of his wives and concubines, he began to sacrifice to their gods and this led to his end.

God took away the kingdom from Solomon and that was the beginning of the end. God gave 10 out of the 12 divisions of Israel to a servant and Solomon was referred to by God as a *prince* while he sat on the throne as king (*1 Kings 11 vs. 34*). Solomon was power drunk and lost to ruin. He backslided and the king who had glorified God all around, saw nothing other than sorrow and hardship, as he wrote in Ecclesiastes.

Samson, one of the most powerful human beings that ever lived on this third planet from the sun, was ruined by lust. Just like Solomon, Samson was loved by many women. It is necessary to state at this

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juncture that, if a great man cannot control his sexual appetite in the presence of women, then woe betide such man. Women are of high esteem and are meant to be highly respected and cared for, but there is a need for a man to apply wisdom in doing this, lest he loses his drive. It is important to know that, although women are helpmeets and good counsellors (if they are God-fearing). To be on the safe side, one must be prayerful before settling down to marry. The same warning goes to women (because there are also a lot of men out there who are only interested in 'man-ning' you to destruction).

On a number of occasions it was said of Samson that he 'went down'. If you follow this through, he was going down to meet one woman or the other. This simply means that as he was going down physically, he was also going down spiritually. Do not go into any relationship that requires your going down. Further-more, Samson's physical strength and sexual prowess made him feel that it was safe to confide in those women even more than in his parents. He could keep secrets from his parents but not from a woman (*Judges 14 vs. 16-17; 16 vs. 16-21*). Eventually, his lust led to his downfall in the valley of Sorek. His sexual desires veiled his eyes and his greatness was severed cheaply by Delilah. He became an object of ridicule and was made to perform as sport for his enemies. At the point of death, he was still loaded and mighty because he failed to fulfill his destiny. In order not to get lost on your way to greatness, do not be tempted to give in to your sexual desires.

**Bad Associations**

This could come in different ways like: marriage, friendship, counsellors (or advisers).

*Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him. (I Kings 16 vs. 30 NKJV)*

Can you imagine an evil man in the sight of the Lord getting married to a woman that is a devil incarnate? One should not be surprised that issues that made Ahab sad were always devilishly handled by Jezebel. Ahab had a person to whom he could report cases that were beyond his capability to handle. His prophets were also channels for the manipulation of evil spirits, such that when Micaiah the prophet warned him, he did not heed the truth in his words. He was surrounded on all sides by men and women with evil in their hearts. Eventually, dogs licked his blood.

Surrounding yourself with unworthy friends and advisers and people who never aim high could terminate your life or greatness—thereby rendering a predestined great man as a common fellow.

*Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, "Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you." So he said to them, "Depart for three*

*Fulfilling Your Predestined Greatness days, then come back to me." And the people departed. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, "How do you advise me to answer these people?" And they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever." But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!" (1 Kings 12 vs. 3-8, 13-14)*

To achieve the predestined greatness that God has for you, surround yourself with people of wise counsel, not only like-minded people. Your own mind at times could be wrong and if, however, you consult and take heed to people of wise counsel around you, they will steer you in the right direction. Remember that in *I Kings 11*, God had, because of Solomon's sins, rent the kingdom away from him. Now his servants had been mandated by God to rule over ten tribes out of twelve and Rehoboam his son was

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reigning in the place of Solomon over Judah and Benjamin only. Before the people of Israel separated themselves (I want to believe out of loyalty for King Solomon), they consulted with Rehoboam to know if his government had any plan for their lives so that they could decide whether to continue to serve Rehoboam or not. Rehoboam took an initial wise step by asking his father's counsellors for advice.

If you find yourself in any organisation as a leader, and you find your co-workers (and especially your subordinates) on the job before your arrival doing well, you have no reason to send them away, in the name of retrenchment. Solomon's counsellors were used by God to guide him wisely, but Rehoboam sent them away so that the ego-seeking youth surrounding him could take their positions as counsellors.

These youth grew up with him (*vs. 8*) and by their advice (*vs. 10-11*), one could conclude that they were set of wicked and foolish people. These were his friends and they influenced his decisions negatively. He took to their counsel at the expense of the elders' wise counsel. He never consulted God or the prophets unlike Solomon. People that surround you will influence your imagination and decisions, both positively and negatively. Any friend that does not share your vision will later rent it asunder. If Rehoboam had taken the elders' advice, he would have probably secured the Israelites as his servants forever.

Abraham (in *Genesis 16 vs. 1-6*) employed God's wisdom, if not, the counsel of Sarah (*vs. 2*) could

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have torn their home apart, before God answered their request. Abraham did not answer her hurriedly. His decision was guided by wisdom (*vs. 2, 6*) and this paid off, even though the product of the advice (Ishmael) ended up as an enemy to their covenant son (Isaac).

Nehemiah had a great passion for his father's land and God enabled him to rebuild walls of Jerusalem. He took the initiative to face the challenge, but there arose two men of confusion: Sanballat and Tobiah; but he refused to follow their poor advice. On your road to greatness, so many obstacles will block your path, which if you are not courageous, determined and focused, they are capable of dousing the fire of your burning zeal. Nehemiah saw them, he heard their mockery and reproaches but he was too focused to be confused. And later (*Nehemiah 13 vs. 28*) when he came across Eliashib (a son-in-law to Sanballat) during the execution of the project, he drove him away in case he was sent to confuse or discourage him.

The unguarded association with the enemies of your greatness could be severely harmful to your destiny. Wise counsel from bold people with whom Naaman had surrounded himself helped and brought about his valuable cleansing.

**Greed**

Greed can be defined as an excessive desire to acquire power, wealth or material things, especially when it is obvious they are not essentially needed. A greedy person collects food when not hungry or

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amasses wealth when there is no lack, without any consideration for others.

*But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well? And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And Naaman said, "Be content, take two talents." And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" And he said, "Thy servant went no whither." And he said unto him, "Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet*



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*thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to*  
*receive garments, and olive yards, and*  
*vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and*  
*menservants, and maidservants? The*  
*leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave*  
*unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever.” And*  
*he went out from his presence a leper as*  
*white as snow. (2 Kings 5 vs. 20-27 KJV)*

You need not be reminded that Gahezi wore cloth to meet Naaman. His desire to collect the clothes and money was not because he needed them, he was only interested in procuring more than he needed. Twice in the process, he lied to Naaman and later to Elisha, who by the help of the spirit of God followed the entire encounter with Naaman. The eagerness to get materials and wealth he did not need marked Gahazi to the very end of his destiny and ministry. Elisha prophesied that the leprosy of Naaman, whom Gehazi had deceived, would come on him. Right there and then, Gehazi became leprous. Even worse, the reward for his sin was not only borne by him, but also by his seed.

*And Achan answered Joshua, and said,*  
*Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God*  
*of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:*  
*When I saw among the spoils a goodly*  
*Babylonish garment, and two hundred*  
*shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of*  
*fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them,*  
*and took them; and, behold, they are hid in*  
*the earth in the midst of my tent, and the*  
*silver under it. And Joshua said, Why hast*

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*thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble*  
*thee this day. And all Israel stoned him*  
*with stones, and burned them with fire,*  
*after they had stoned them with stones.*  
*(Josh 7 vs. 20-21, 25 KJV)*

Things had been going on well for the Israelites. Suddenly, after an incredible victory over Jericho, an Israeli foot soldier, Achan, chose to disobey some clear directives regarding treasures captured in the war. Joshua told his men that all the spoils taken from Jericho were to be considered “devoted things”, belonging to God’s treasury. But Achan defied Joshua’s orders, took some valuables and hid them under his family’s tent. Joshua, unaware of Achan’s sin, sent a small contingent of soldiers against Ai and the Israelites suffered a major rout. Joshua immediately knew that something must have gone wrong. He sought God’s face for answers and eventually identified Achan as the culprit. In an act of severe judgement, the guilty man, his entire family, their livestock and possessions were all destroyed. By this fearsome act, Joshua determined to follow God and to remove those who would stand in the way of God’s work among his people. Just like the situation of Gehazi, Achan stole certain valuable materials which eventually destroyed his career, and cost him his entire family and all his possessions. Greed capsizes great men. For you to fulfill your destiny, you have to get rid of the spirit of greed within you before it gets rid of you.

**Failure to Act Out**

As strange as this may sound, that failure to act out is potent enough to render an individual unproductive for life. Peter and John in *Acts 3* were going to the temple to pray, as was their usual practice. And sitting at the beautiful gate was a lame man who had been there for quite a long time. When his time came to be healed, he looked up to Peter and John for alms. Standing before him, the disciples lacked money but they had the Owner of money.

And Peter said:

*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength (Acts 3 vs. 6-7 NKJV).*

The man's healing was in three stages:

7. Prophecy
8. Being taken by the right hand
9. Lifting up

Most of us prophesy, pray without ceasing but to achieve your greatness in life, you need to act it out, ie, let your lifestyle speak louder than words. The words of Peter to that man, I am very sure, were good, but could not be acted upon by the man. He had been there for a long time; rising, not to talk of walking, was a very strange and impossible task for him. Peter must have saddened his heart with that instructional directive. Simply put, alms were the man's expectation, but Peter had a better idea that

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the lame man found disheartening. But unlike you and me, Peter took him by the right hand. This means acting through and in the right route, direction and manner. He had prophesied, but he had to act out his words for the man to understand he was not talking about an impossible task. You might have prayed, but acting it out indicates your serious-ness, strong faith and determination to possess what you have declared. The Bible did not say that the man stood up and walked after Peter had held his hand. Peter still had to lift him up for the work to be perfected. 'To lift up' entails aiming up, above your present situation. It entails depending on the God, who governs the entire universe. He is there for your perfection. To lift up involves the strongest level of faith and determination. It means you are ready to possess your predestined greatness. You have prayed but your greatness can never be perfected if you fail to act out this last stage. If the level of holding the right hand is the level you secure a job, lifting up in that situation entails knowing you are meant to rise to the top in your career, set your mind above your present status and aim towards it.

One important point in this event was that, being the very first healing Peter and John would perform, they did it courageously, as if they had been doing it for a long time. They never feared, they never stopped halfway in the three stages, they were determined to follow the path of their teacher (Jesus) and were never distracted. Greatness is lying dormant in you, but not only do you have to declare it, you need to achieve it and to develop it. No matter the level you

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have achieved, do not rest, there is always room for improvement in life.

**The Gates and Everlasting Doors**

*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye  
lift up, ye everlasting doors... (Ps 24 vs. 7  
KJV)*

To enter into your greatness, there are some gates that should lift themselves and some everlasting doors that need to be lifted. Those gates can lift themselves, but you have to inform and charge them. The gates will obey but those everlasting doors will not respond to your instruction; they will respond to your lifting.

In some families, there are familiar limitations and traditions which deter people from trying their hands on projects to advance their lives. If they try to break through the barrier, they may not succeed or they may be incapacitated for the remainder of their lives.

These are destiny marring issues and to overcome them, one really needs to act promptly. If you are from a family where nobody out of about 6-10 children advances up to university education, then you need to start with those gates as from your first year in the high school. Command them and emphasise that they should be lifted; instruct them with all aggression and seriousness. This involves a series of meaningful prayers and fasting to break those covenants, vows or curses that may be holding

the gates down.

Then, concerning the everlasting doors, as from your first day in school, especially in high school, you should start aiming at university education. As your prayers are lifting those gates, let your preparation and studying be lifting those everlasting doors. '*Be ye lifted*' means your instructions and commands cannot lift them, but your actions, through serious and determined studying can.

Combining these two, the way will be paved for you to enter into your greatness. Pray and act, I can see you there on top. The Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you always, in Jesus' name.

