

# HANDLING THE DOWNTIMES OF LIFE



Every challenge of life has an expiry date.

**SEYI ADEYEMI**

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“Take control of your thought.”

*...For as he thinketh in his heart, so he is...*

*(Prov. 23:7)*

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## *Preface:*

### *Downtime - The happenstance of Life*

Life operates in ways, most times, beyond the level of our understanding. The operational manual for life on earth is given by the one who created both the heaven and the earth. The precision with which daily life occurs, the interchange of day and night, the change in seasons at prescribed times since the advent of the earth all go a long way to affirm the existence of a creator who is in control of all things. And so the discussion about life and existence cannot be complete without reference to the Creator of Life. It does not matter which side of the religious divide you belong, your opinion or view of life does not change the fact and the truth as documented in the manual of creation.

After a varied experience of Life, King Solomon, in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes in the bible, jotted down what has become the inevitable realities of life. Verses 1-3 of that chapter records thus:

*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:*

*A time to be born, and a time to die;*

*A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is*

*planted;*

*A time to kill, and a time to heal;*

*A time to breakdown, and a time to buildup;*

*A time to weep, and a time to laugh;*

*A time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to experience human life on earth affirmed this reality as recorded in Saint John's gospel chapter 16, verse 33. It reads thus;

*" ... In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. "*

Downtime is therefore the happenstance of life. Whether we like it or not everyone passes through life with their doses of good and evil. The times of evil are the harbingers of downtimes in our lives. And they do happen with different levels of intensity. God didn't want this to be our experience in life, hence he warned the early man in Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:17).

Man in disobedience, nudged by Satan in serpentine clothing, chose the experience he was being barred from by God and in his foolishness welcomed the establishment of evil experiences in life on behalf of our collective humanity. This climaxes in physical death.

The inevitability of the downtime experienced in life and how best to handle them is the focus of this book.

We seem to have focused much on how to succeed and handle success in life and played the ostrich regarding failure and how to handle downtime experiences occasioned by failure and other evils of life. A story trended on WhatsApp recently (in 2020). It reads thus:

*"There was a very brilliant boy, he always scored 100% in Science. Got Selected for IIT Madras and scored excellent in IIT. Went to the University of California for MBA. Got a high-paying job in America and settled there. Married a beautiful Tamil Girl. Bought a 5room big house and luxury cars. He had everything that made him successful but a few years ago he committed suicide after shooting his wife and children.*

#### WHAT WENT WRONG?

*California Institute of Clinical Psychology Studied his case and found "what went wrong?" The researcher met the boy's friends and family and found that he lost his job due to America's economic crisis and he had to sit without a job for a long time. After even reducing his previous salary amount, he didn't get any job. Then his house installment broke and he and his family lost the home.*

*They survived a few months with less money and then he and his wife together decided to commit suicide. He first shot his wife and children and then shot himself. The case concluded that the man was programmed for success but he was not trained for handling failures. Now let's come to the actual question, what are the habits of highly successful people?*

*First of all, there are many people who will tell you about success habits but today I want to tell you that even if you have achieved everything, yet there is a chance to lose everything, nobody knows when the next economic crisis will hit the world. The best success habit according to me is getting trained for handling failures.*

*I also request every parent, please not only program your child to be successful but teach them how to handle failures and also teach them proper lessons about life. Learning high-level science and math will help them to clear competitive exams but knowledge about life will help them to face every problem. Teach them about how money works instead of teaching them to work for money. Help them in finding their passion because these degrees will not help them in the next economic crisis and we don't know when the next crisis will hit the world. "*

*"Success is a lousy teacher. Failure teaches you more."*



The truth of the matter is that nothing happens without the Almighty's knowledge. God in his omniscience knows all things even before they happen. The good news is that even when life knocks us down, God lifts us when we trust him to do so for us. You will not be the first or last person to experience downtime in life. The very first important thing when you experience a downturn of any kind in life is to take control of your internal monologue. What you say to yourself has far more impact on you than what anyone says to you. Our loving heavenly father who had brought others out of the valleys of life is still in the business of doing so even as he uses life experiences to draw us closer unto Himself.

# CHAPTER I

## *Handling Downtime in Work & Career*

We are programmed to work in Life. Right from the creation of humanity, we were wired to be physically engaged in a productive venture. The purpose of our creation was to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26). That meant the first man had a job to oversee God's real estate. And so shortly after creation, the scripture records that "God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed." (Gen. 28). His job was to tend the garden.

Interestingly, the man's job was not meant to be laborious for the scripture further recorded that "... out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food..." (Gen. 29). It was a cool job! Added to the job was the benefit of a daily *happy hour* session every evening with God as he came in the cool of each day to have a good time with fellow Adam. It was a blissful work experience, embedded with a work-life balance that every worker loves to have. The work environment and condition of service was such that kept Adam in high spirit all through. God then thought more

about Adam's welfare and made a partner suitable for him in Eve. This made the work environment more enriching and rewarding. Adam had the best condition of service anyone ever desired until he lost his job!



*Fig. 1 Downtime at work*

Adam violated the rules of engagement by disobeying his employer's order. His alibi of being influenced by "the woman you gave me" could not stand. The finger-pointing to the serpent by Eve could not save the situation. Then things changed for the worse. The job that had brought joy to both of them now began to attract the unexpected. Fear came in. "I heard your voice and I was afraid." Suddenly, the realization of nakedness set in. (Gen. 3:10). And then came the barrage of curses from the one who had blessed Adam and Eve from the beginning. And the worst happened. Adam lost his job and was evicted!

*"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Gen. 3: 23-24).*

This was not a case of suspension but that of expulsion. Outright termination of appointment. In common parlance, Adam got fired! Have you lost your job in a similar circumstance? Or you've had some serious cases of misconduct or even otherwise that has made life miserable for you on your job? Many people have jobs that have robbed them of their joy and for fear of being jobless and broke have held on sorrowfully to such jobs. Many have lost jobs that were a source of happiness and a channel of blessing in their lives for various reasons ranging from being an accessory to some misdemeanor, failure to report wrong doings to the appropriate quarters, lack of initiative, and even collaboration with wrong doings.

The loss of a job is very much associated with loss of livelihood, self-esteem, and personal dignity. If a replacement is not found on time it may begin to erode self-confidence. Fear and panic may cause depression and

the contemplation of negative actions such as crime or suicide. All these are features of the downtime experience associated with work and career.

## **Downtime on the job**

### *Job loss*

Mail Online (October 2, 2020) reported the news reproduced below:

### **Newlywed BP vice president, 61, hanged himself at his £2million home a week after being made redundant, inquest hears**

Nick Spencer, 61, was found dead at his £2million home in Buckinghamshire. He spent a decade working for the oil giant BP when he was forced to leave, The father-of-two became depressed and worried about finances, his wife said. Sitting at Beaconsfield, a Buckinghamshire coroner recorded verdict of suicide.

*After graduating from Harvard Business School in 1999, Mr. Spencer became a general manager at European Refining, directing three refineries across Europe.*

*The vice president of British Petroleum hanged himself at his £2million home a week after he was made redundant, a*

*coroner heard today. Newly-married Nick Spencer, 61, was found dead at his luxury home where he lived with his wife Eve in Buckinghamshire in April. His inquest heard he spent a decade working for the oil giant BP when he was forced to leave the firm on March 31 this year. After he was told of the redundancy the successful father-of-two became depressed and worried about managing his finances, Eve told the coroner. In a statement she said: 'Since he was made redundant he had been depressed.*

*He had been looking for a new job and I felt he seemed positive but there was an oil crisis because of Covid-19 and he was worried about remortgaging the house and the finances. In the period leading up to his death, he seemed a bit more down and it was the 12th anniversary of a family bereavement. On the evening before his death, we watched the news and went to bed. We talked about TV and he came to bed at 2am which was unusually late.*

*At 6.40am on April 7 he got up. He was normally an early riser and I went back to sleep. I later went into the study and saw the letters he had written. I opened the one addressed to me and called the police, I was very worried. 'The first police officer to arrive at the home in Beaconsfield, Bucks., discovered Mr Spencer hanged in the house's garage. Eve identified the body as her husband*

*at 10.30am. Pathologist Dr Steven Corrigan confirmed the cause of death as hanging.*

*After graduating from Harvard Business School in 1999, Mr Spencer became a general manager at European Refining, directing three refineries across Europe. He went on to work at ConocoPhillips for the next seven years, tasked with establishing the business in the MENA region. In October 2009, he joined British Petroleum (BP) as a business unit leader working for the next five years at the largest refinery in the US. Following his huge success, he was selected as Vice President of Global Refining in November 2014 where he led 7,500 employees with a gross margin of \$6 billion. He stayed in this position until he was made redundant in March this year.*

*In a report to the inquest a psychiatrist confirmed seeing Mr Spencer on January 18 where he referenced his employment coming to an end, stated he had had suicidal thoughts for a while and even had a specific plan in mind. He spoke about the symptoms of his redundancy, building up regrets and thoughts of his children. He talked about the cost of pain caused by some of his actions. I felt the protective element in terms of his family prevented him from actioning any thoughts of suicide,' the psychiatrist added. After the appointment in January, Mr Spencer*

*refused to follow up and cancelled his arranged appointments.*

*Sitting at Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire coroner Crispin Butler said: 'Many weeks had passed but all through that period of the job coming to an end was the reality of that. Saying goodbye to people he worked with but not in the way in which one hoped because he couldn't have a leaving party and the physical element of having his IT equipment taken from his home address, had affected him. It seems his depressive illness, loss of work, his personality, uncertainty about finances, remortgaging, an element of social anxiety and a life-long privacy all affected him.*

*'The changes to Nick's life were reinforced in the notes that he wrote. It was not something he had done to demonstrate he was calling out for help, it was his decision. One can see the evolution of the processes as he reacted to the ending of his job. He recorded a verdict of suicide at the inquest which was attended by Mr Spencer's devastated sons Robert and Richard Spencer.*

A sad end to an illustrious career! Again a case of not being able to handle failure or job loss induced downtime.



There are a few research write-ups that are worth considering regarding the downtime experience on the job.

# 1.

**Forbes**, in a research article titled *"More Than Half Of U.S. Workers Are Unhappy In Their Jobs; Here's Why And What Needs To Be Done Now"* written by Jack Kelly, a senior contributor, captures the classic example of the downtime experience even while on the job. It reads thus:

*"America boasts the highest level of employment in decades. The stock market is booming, but something seems to be amiss. With an historic and robust economic expansion and the all good news surrounding it, there seems to be large cracks in the system. The mood, for a lot of people in the country, **appears angry, discouraged and resentful**. There are claims of **income inequality and unfairness**. Many people feel underemployed, stuck in their dead-end jobs and not earning close to what they're worth. People working in the gig economy-not by choice, but due to lack of suitable opportunities-are demanding to be considered employees and paid fairly with additional benefits. These issues raise the question over how many people are actually in "good" jobs.*

*The sentiments voiced by the people around us have now been substantiated by a comprehensive study conducted jointly by the Lumina Foundation, the **Bill** & Melinda Gates Foundation, Omidyar Network, and Gallup. These prestigious organizations surveyed 6,600 workers and asked them about the factors that matter most for overall job quality, including compensation, job security, opportunity for advancement, benefits, stability and dignity. The study collected these factors into a job satisfaction index.*

### ***The Findings:***

*The study tackles some severe issues. The workforce in the United States has been subjected to swift radical changes over the last decades, including automation, globalization and go-nowhere jobs. The metric of the unemployment rate is not the best gauge to evaluate how workers are doing. We have many open jobs available to bolster the ranks of the employed. However, the study questions whether they're meaningful, suitable and high-quality jobs that offer satisfaction-or are they Mc Jobs?*

*Sadly, only less than 50% of US workers feel that they are in good jobs. There is a nexus between the **quality of one's job and the overall quality of a person's life**. While a*

*number of workers in good, mediocre jobs rate their overall quality of life as "high," most of those in bad jobs feel the contrary.*

*People who are at a lower-income level are less likely to be satisfied with all 10 aspects of job quality, including those unrelated to income. Comparatively, older workers, white workers and people with higher levels of education are more likely to be in good jobs than other types of workers. Employees at various income levels share one important commonality-having **a sense of purpose is prioritized and they don't want "just a job."***

*There is a **strong correlation between race, ethnicity, gender and job quality.** Black working people are twice as likely to be in bad jobs compared to white working people. It is more pronounced for black women.*

*While it's reported that pay has improved in recent years, job quality has not. In a time period where healthcare costs are skyrocketing, employers are offering fewer benefits now compared to the recent past. Adults aged 18 to 64 who are covered by private insurance are down 72% from 1980.*

*Interestingly, workers living in smaller areas outside of large metropolitan cities give higher job-quality ratings.*

*This holds true even if they are earning significantly lower incomes.*

*Workers were more likely to report they were holding a good job when they worked for larger organizations and were allowed the opportunity to be creative, learn new skills and encouraged to do their best work.*

***It used to be the standard that employees would steadily climb the corporate ladder of success. The study reflects otherwise.***

*The percentage who say they are in their best job ever begins to level off at a younger age. Middle-aged and older workers report that they're not working in their best job ever and are more likely to say they were laid off from that job.*

*Full-time employees are significantly more likely to be in a good job than part-time employees. However, **the data shows spending too much time at the job decreased the overall job quality.***

*Employees in bad jobs are twice as likely as those in good jobs to be looking for a new opportunity. Those who are satisfied in their job tend to be more productive and loyal to their employers.*

The results show that despite a perceived strong economy, most people self-report that their job quality has stagnated or gotten worse on almost every aspect. The conclusion is that there are some people -particularly those who tend to have a higher level of education and earnings- who are happy in their work and it transfers over to their lives outside of the office. Living in a smaller town with less pressure, shorter commutes and lower taxes where their money goes further make people feel that they hold quality jobs.

**Workers in jobs that lack purpose-without an upward career trajectory-and feel unappreciated by management rank their roles low in terms of quality.**

There are pressing concerns that the aforementioned trends of the deployment of technology, relocating jobs to other countries and the lack of stability will further degrade the quality of jobs at all levels.

CEOs and management need to take heed. **As it's reported, employees who feel uninspired and left out will not be very productive nor will they seek out a new job elsewhere. This would hurt the future growth of the companies. As the best talent leaves, the ones remaining will maintain their unhappiness.** It would be prudent for executives to make the effort to improve the

quality of jobs and empower their employees, which would then significantly improve conditions and the chance of future success for both the workers and the company.

To avoid repeating the down time causes, I have highlighted them in the above report. This report is a good guide for CEOs and business owners.

# 2.

Robbie Abed, **author, writer, and founder of** firemeibegyou.com@robbieab **wrote an article titled** *"The 1 Reason Why Miserable People Don't Quit Their Jobs."* He stated this, "Miserable employees would want nothing better than to get a new job, but they sit still and don't do anything about it. I figured out why." Here is an excerpt of that write up:

*It's 6 am Monday morning and your alarm clock buzzes waking you up from Sunday night's slumber. Time to face another work-day as you yank the power cord out from the wall and begin your morning routine en route to the office. For many people, they are satisfied with this routine. For others, pure misery. The best leaders in business can withstand a lot of adversity- way past the point where they first begin feeling uncomfortable. So, why do people quit in the first place?*

*In a recent poll conducted by Gallup, 70 percent of people interviewed suggested that the number one reason they left their former role, is because of their supervisor. Not too surprising, right? So, I wanted to dive deeper. Why don't these miserable people quit their jobs? I ran an informal survey to my email list (of mostly miserable people) and received over 1,000 responses.*

*I asked the question: What is preventing you from quitting your miserable job?*

*It's the one thing they can't stand the most:*

***They're afraid their new boss is going to be even worse.** Every employee needs to feel supported. So, if this isn't the cruel joke of the century, I don't know what is. They quit because they hate their boss. They don't quit because they're afraid they're going to hate their new boss. Now, that's comedy!*

*With more and more flexibility and freedom in the workplace in 2018, aided by the advent of technology, I was curious as to why so many people stick around at their current jobs, even when they are miserable.*

*So why are we so fearful of the future? And what does that say about our careers?*

*We all could stand to take a few more risks. Worrying about the future is a waste of time--and in light of our conversation--a waste of money and good talent. Too many people feel stuck in their jobs, and this really hurts the companies that they work for. If you are afraid of your boss, chances are you are afraid of doing your best work too.*

*I remember a client project specifically where I was extremely miserable. My ideas weren't being listened to, and the project was on its way to be a big failure. Instead of speaking up and trying to fix the project, I ended up just doing what I was told and watching it fail with everyone else. It wasn't the best for the company, and that's what happens when an employee isn't being appreciated.*

*Employees need to feel supported. Doubts about managers can lead to a lack of effective communication, which can stifle innovation and halt creativity. If you're miserable in your job, here's what to do. In theory, we should tell these employees to get out of a poor situation and that it will all work out. Being courageous in your career shouldn't depend on your supervisor.*

*I also wonder: How many of the people quoted in the Gallup polls have actually had an earnest conversation with someone above them about why they feel like they*



*don't like their jobs? My guess is that the number who have is much smaller than the number who say that their boss is the number one reason they hate on their job. I'm not suggesting these people are wrong. I'm just curious to find out what we can do to make work better.*

#3.

A prominent job employment agency, **Jobberman**, in their article titled, *Unhappy Employees Should Not be Taken For Granted* opined that "Disgruntled employees are ticking time bombs." Excerpts from the article reads thus:

*As an employer, the capacity of unhappy employees to hurt your organisation should never be taken for granted or handled with levity. The reason is simple. Disgruntled employees are unhappy, unproductive, lack motivation, less likely to channel their energy towards achieving the goals of the organisation, and risk spreading negativity to their coworkers.*

*According to Galup, "87% of the employees all over the world lack motivation and are unhappy at their jobs." For Nigeria, the figure rose to 88%(period), which leaves only 12% of the employees being engaged, happy and satisfied with their jobs.*

*The unhappiness of this majority of employees stems from a number of factors. Findings by Accenture revealed that 46% of employees were unhappy because they believe they were underpaid. Another 34% were not happy with the lack of opportunity to advance their career while 31% said long and inflexible hours was the main reason for leaving their current job.*

*According to another study conducted by Blackhawk Engagement Solutions, there is a wide gap between the expectations of employees and what employers offer. The study, as seen above, also shows that employee rewards and recognition may not be aligned with what actually makes employees happy and more productive. In its survey, Blackhawk Engagement Solutions revealed that 67% of employees affirmed that their jobs were important for overall happiness.*

*This leaves us with a clear problem; majority of employees are not happy and when they are not happy, they might or might not do the following:*

***They only do what they are paid to do***

*Unhappy employees usually do not stretch themselves. They often feel so discouraged that they hardly ever try to challenge themselves to break or set new records of sales*

*or results. They mostly do not complete projects ahead of time. Most of them look busy but end up getting very little or nothing done.*

### ***They are always in a hurry to complain***

*When your employees are unhappy, they complain about virtually everything. For instance, they complain about why the Accounts Department always requests for a detailed report at the end of each working day. They complain about how they have to work late to complete their tasks. They complain about the length of the strategy meetings at work. They complain about how slow their laptops are. They might even complain about why the office is on the 15th floor and not the ground floor. In essence, they see the bad side in anything and never hesitate to tell others about it.*

### ***They are prone to mistakes***

*Disgruntled employees often make minor or major mistakes. Since they do not concentrate on their tasks and apply themselves fully, they tend to get very sloppy at what they do. Many times, they make mistakes because they don't care about these mistakes or the implication of their mistakes. In some cases, they deliberately make these mistakes as a way of purposely hurting the organisation and its reputation.*

### ***They spread sour stories***

*Employees can either be the best brand ambassadors for your brand, or its worst undoing. When employees are not happy, their discontent hardly ever drifts far away. Their frustrations are always primed for release in the form of sob stories that most likely paint your organisation in bad light. They tell tales of how badly they are treated, how their efforts are not rewarded, how selfish your organisation is, how they would not hesitate to leave the moment they get another offer; even with a salary cut. While most stories might be exaggerated, such information about your company could end up denting its image.*

### ***They isolate themselves from teamwork***

*Unhappy employees are not good at teamwork. They are just not interested in working with coworkers whose job satisfaction levels are healthier than theirs. They bury themselves under their individual experiences. When there is a problem at work and others are sharing ideas on how to overcome the challenge, they would rather play the spectator. They don't make any move to get involved in solving organisation problems.*

### ***They are quick to anger***

*This should not come as a surprise. Unhappiness and*

*anger and usually not so far apart. Therefore, when employees are unhappy, they become hostile and volatile. They are usually not civil in their interaction with others or in their decisions. They vent their frustrations on the closest target within their radar. They treat their coworkers badly and rarely show any remorse.*

### ***They don't share exciting moments***

*In addition to not having close friends at work, unhappy employees would not engage in team bonding events voluntarily. In extreme cases, they find a reason to avoid such events by all means. When your organisation lands a big deal or client or achieves a certain objective, they are not excited about such feats.*

### ***Scarcity of new ideas***

*Happy employees are usually excited about their jobs and they constantly strive to increase their performance. When your employees are engaged, they come up with fresh ideas for specific tasks and projects that have been assigned to them. They are also eager to receive feedback. However, when your workers become unhappy, they don't have any ideas to drive the company forward and when they do, they keep these ideas to themselves.*

### ***They are happier when the office closes for the day***

*When your employees become unhappy, their motivation takes a massive decline. They cannot find the inspiration to do the things that you have hired them to do. For them, leaving the office is far more exciting than their arrival there. They derive little or no satisfaction from resuming work and have no enthusiasm towards putting their best into getting results. For them, the excitement is lost. The irony of this is that while they may be excited over weekend outings with the family, they fail to replicate this spiritedness at work.*

### ***They quit but stay***

*An employee resigning and leaving your organization is not the only way to quit the job. In some situations, the employee quits psychologically. Such employees remain within your organization despite the grudges they hold against your company. However, their performance takes an epic dip as they no longer strive to work in line with targets set for them.*

### ***They quit and walk away***

*When your workers are disgruntled, they become very impatient. The moment they believe their contributions to the organization are no longer valued, they resign and take a walk. One factor that could trigger this, for*

*instance, workers voluntarily resign, there is a tendency that you might be left with a batch of employees who will be is if a high number of extremely talented co- unhappy.*

*Interestingly, many of these will happen at the early stages of the employee's unhappiness. At a more advanced stage, disgruntled employees take it a notch further by:*

- *Damaging your brand and misrepresenting your company*
- *Alienating valuable clients and making costly mistakes*
- *Leaking crucial brand secrets*
- *Writing bad reviews for your organization*
- *Discouraging potential hires from joining your establishment*
- *Poisoning the thoughts of others and distracting them*
- *Missing deadlines*
- *Stealing/ram your company*

*The study by Blackhawk Engagement Solutions further revealed that 38% of employees said their employers currently offer no rewards or recognition at all. Meanwhile, 82% want to be recognized for exceeding personal performance levels, 79% wanted recognition*

*after receiving a promotion while 77% want to be recognized for exceeding team performance levels. A study of these downtime repercussions shows lots of destructive tendencies. The pitiable part of it is that such negative emotional emissions do not improve the situations or feelings of such victims. It makes it worse. While it is advisable that employers be sensitive to employee downtime, which in management language is described as low morale, there are also means of helping such downtime victims to handle these challenging situations.*

Here are some suggested Tips for handling downtimes on the Job:

### **Take control of your thought**

*" ...For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."(Prov. 23:7)*  
Don't let your situation hijack your thought process. Emotions and rationality belong to different compartments of the brain. When negative emotions have the better part of you, they can obliterate your thinking process. So no matter how bad you feel on the job, take a step back and think of the good times. Be appreciative for the time you needed a job badly and this one came through. Remember how the income from the job has helped you meet most of your needs; how your self-



dignity has been enhanced by having this job. Remember that you may indeed outlive the person or persons that make you miserable on that job and that tough times never last. Don't let other people or situations redefine you. Stamp your personality on the situation. Downtimes are the result of emotional distress, counter it with positive thoughts. With this you will get back your vibes!

### **Work your way out of the situation**

*Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men. (Prov. 22: 29)*

No matter what anyone thinks about you on your job, let your performance speak. No one quarrels with good performance. The first casualty of emotional downtime is performance. Poor performance will rob you of negotiating power. It's your top performance that will bring you to the negotiating table where you are likely to get your desire. Dropping the ball when you are unhappy on the job drops your ranking. It's your performance that will open better doors for you in case you need to change jobs.

### **Have honest conversation with who matters**

Being able to share the burden of your heart in a decent

conversation with appropriate persons has a great cathartic effect. It relieves you of pressing emotional baggage and enables you to have a better understanding of workplace issues. Negative internal monologues can cause serious depression, so let out the steam as it were! This will give room for better reasoning on the issue and you will be able to make better decisions that will be in your interest.

### **Change is the only constant thing**

Changing jobs when the opportunity presents itself is a natural step of action. What is most important however is how you leave the organization where you currently work. It's dangerous to bum bridges. Ensure, as much as you can, that the process of disengagement is seamless and without any disruption to your organization. The organization is made up of people and you will always meet them at other fora in life. You may need them in the future. Always leave well and harbour no grudges. The best is ahead of you.



*Fig. 2 Downtime in Career*

*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."(Prov. 23:7).  
Don't let your situation hijack your thought process. Emotions and  
rationality belong to different compartments of the brain.*

## CHAPTER 2

### *Handling Downtime in Marriage & Family Life*

*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they both shall be one flesh. (Gen. 2:24)*



*Fig. 3 Downtime in Marriage*

Marriages always suffer casualty when downtimes are not well handled. Everyone in the family brought about by marriage is a victim when downtimes result in divorce or violence. Even the society shares in the pain of being a victim of children brought up in dysfunctional homes. No one is pleased, no not even God.

What constitutes downtime in marriage? Several things. It includes bareness (or childlessness), unfaithfulness,

financial difficulties, Sickness, lack of attention, diminished love, children's misbehavior and poor academic performance, poor housewifery- Poor cooking, disorganization of the home, and so on. Who or what orchestrates downtimes in marriages? One can point accusing fingers to several things and even people. Interesting. As the finger pointing goes round, it might ultimately get to you also as one of the contributors! What goes round comes round.

Downtimes are not strange in marriage. The first couple on earth had their share of downtime. After Adam and Eve violated God's commandment by eating the forbidden fruit and the finger-pointing had gone round - even God had a share of it! -they were driven out of the garden that used to be their home. *"Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."* (Gen, 3:23- 24) That was paradise lost! When "paradise" situation is lost in a marriage, downtime sets in. There was no record of any quarrel or irreconcilable differences breaking out between this first couple. This showed how well they handled the situation.

The next statement scripture made about them in chapter four was that of intimacy. "And Adam knew Eve his wife..." (Gen. 4:1).

Abraham and Sarah had prominent downtimes. Twenty four years of bareness was not the only issue they had to cope with. Although that in itself invited depression into the life of Abraham that on a couple of occasions God had to call him out at night, showed him the stars in the dark night, and asked him if he could count them? On another occasion, God took him to the sea shore and asked if he could count the sand at the seashore? All these God did to assure him of the promise of fruitfulness. In between these was the issue of having to eject Hagar, the slave woman and her son Ishmael that she bore for Abraham. That was a very difficult situation. It was Sarah's idea from the beginning, then she became the originator of the quit notice. Oh, let's not go there!!

The constant clashes between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot's herdsmen leading to the separation of the two; the test request from God to Abraham to go and sacrifice his only son Isaac on Mount Moriah, and so on. These were not easy experiences. Downtimes in marriage could be so exasperating that weeping gives way to farcical laughter as was the case of Sarah, when at the age of

ninety, she was told to expect conception! The good news however was that the downtimes ended and lasting joy came. That's what happens when downtimes are well handled. Tough times never last, but tough people do.

Let's share some thoughts on how to handle downtimes occasioned by Several causes.

### ***Bareness***

Bareness is a very strong word. It depicts *a fait accompli*. It's a state of inability to conceive and have a child. It's a word that describes a situation that defies all solutions. Five women were introduced as barren in scripture but four of them had the situation reversed. Only the one that despised the worship of God never recovered. That was Michal, Saul's daughter who despised David when he danced before the Lord as the Ark of Covenant was being brought to the City of David. (2 Sam. 6:23).

You are not barren. You may be experiencing a delay in conception but as long as there is life, there is hope. This is the first mental shift that helps to handle this downtime situation. Being childless is a temporary situation that is subject to change, it's just a matter of time. In over twenty-five years of my pastoral experience, I have had to pray and wait with several childless couples whose childless

experience now happened to be a phase of their lives. That phase passed away one after the other as God proved His faithfulness by giving each one of the couples fruits of the womb at one time or the other. A couple even had twins! Each time I see these children, it assures me of God's faithfulness. A person can only be described as barren in past-tense after she's dead and had no child. Even at that being able to adopt a child while alive puts bareness to shame!

In my pastoral experience, I have seen bareness fall like a pack of cards as God releases his grace and mercy. Waiting times always look like it's forever. Trusting God and staying within the multitude of right and godly counsel ensures safety and helps ameliorate the pain. I have been there. My wife and I have also had to wait and go through very challenging experiences but God has always remained faithful. Today I rejoice when I see those children that God gave couples to pull down the pillar of bareness.

Men usually think bareness is a female condition. Medical science has proven this wrong long ago. Men could also be infertile. So both male and female infertility are conditions that can be faced in marriage. This is when to pull together rather than pull apart, accusing one another. Partner



support is critical in the issue of delayed conception as it is *you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven.*" (Matt. 18:19). It's not out of place to carry out medical checks but remember it's God that gives children not doctors. Many make the same mistake Rachel, Jacob's wife, made in Gen. 30:1 - "...*give me children, or else I die.*" In the case of contemporary men, it's a case of "give me children or I'll marry another woman."

Panic and sorrow are not helpful, keep them away with the word of God. Speak positively to yourself. Don't host pity parties. Let husbands speak words of encouragement to their wives and not accuse them of being witches. Accusation and counter-accusations don't help. The past is gone, confront the present with faith and determination, and the pillar of bareness will crumble. Assure parents and in-laws that God is in control. No one gives children but God. Stick with Him. *"Lo, children are the heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. "* (Psm. 127:3) Don't fall victim to going elsewhere to seek the fruit of the womb. There's only one source, others are fake and they are served with sorrow! Don't go there.

### **Marital Unfaithfulness**

The Contemporary world calls this cheating on your

spouse. Old Testament scripture calls it treachery. New Testament scripture calls it adultery.

*"And this have ye done again, covering the alter of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regarded not the offering any more, or receive it with goodwill at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant ...Therefore take heed to your spirit and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth" (Malachi 2:13-16)*

Marital unfaithfulness is a joy killer and marriage wrecker. Irrespective of what the root cause may be in any circumstance, the outcome is the same. Sorrow. Infidelity is the only New Testament basis for divorce which is most hated by God. Unfortunately, it does not give room for remarriage. This heightens the sorrow. The way out of downtime due to marital unfaithfulness is therefore forgiveness.

True forgiveness is easier where there is genuine repentance and the guilty spouse truly forsakes his or her untoward ways. However, where there seems to be no

retreat from such dastard acts what options are available to such an unfortunate partner? A combination of all of these would help:

### ***Self-check***

Check yourself. What is your flirting spouse looking for that he or she can't find in you? Excessive emotionalizing, fighting, throwing tantrums, and malice only worsen the situation. Find out where you're lacking and do something about it. Have honest conversations with your partner so you both can find corrective solutions.

### ***Prayer***

Adultery or any sexual immorality is a spiritual problem that manifests in a physical condition. This is the truth. You, therefore, need to engage in spiritual warfare using appropriate spiritual weapons not just in the place of prayer but also in daily living.

Here's the fact; a flirting husband is in the captivity of a strange woman (or strange women), he needs freedom! Likewise, a flirting wife. Fighting in the place of prayer helps to set the captives free. *"For the weapon of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds ..."* (2 Corinthians.

10:4). And since it's a continuous battle, you need to *"put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"* (Ephesians 6:11). Prayer is your responsibility not that of a contractor. Prayer works. *"...For the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"* (James 5:16)

### ***Counseling***

It is not out of place to seek help in a case like this. Being a very delicate matter, it is important to seek counsel from the right source. *"...In multitude of counselors there is safety."* (Proverbs 24:6). You need a trusted, spiritual, mature, and experienced counselor for matters like this. You need guidance in perception management to help you identify who the real enemy (or enemies) is (or are) - the invader and the devil - who wants to ruin your home. So don't fight your spouse no matter how disappointed you maybe.

Couples in situations like this need counseling. Guilty parties in marital unfaithfulness hardly agree to go for counseling. They always think they can handle it. They also believe it would expose them to ridicule. However, your attitude to the whole issue from the onset would contribute to your ability to persuade such a person to agree to counsel. A mature counselor will surely protect

your confidentiality. However, if your spouse refuses to go for counseling, you receive godly counsel and add prayer to it. This will help the matter.

### ***Medical Protection***

Extramarital affairs carry the collateral risk of sexually transmitted diseases. This is why you need medical advice and protection. Seek a qualified, experienced, and mature medical personnel to confide in and take reasonable steps to protect yourself from infections that could become life-threatening.

### ***Domestic Violence***

Domestic violence is a malaise that is ravaging homes across the world. Domestic violence occurs both ways, that is, from Husband to wife (and children) and from wife to the husband (and children). Although the former is prevalent. Domestic violence alters the equation of love. It's a result of a condemnable lack of self-control. And with the extreme cases of murder and destruction that we witness across the world lately, we cannot but conclude that the devil has moved this up to top-notch in his destruction agenda.

What then are the options available to victims of domestic violence and how do you handle the downtime that such a

dastard situation brings upon a victim?

### ***Seek Reconciliation***

Except where the aggressor in the case of domestic violence has a mental health situation, situations that result in violence can be discussed and reconciled. An experienced counselor would be helpful in such a situation. Individual soul searching is important at this point to be able to identify where things went wrong and corrective action taken.

### ***Seek Protection***

There are various government and non-government bodies that have been set up to help to protect victims of domestic violence. Seek protection.

### ***Seek Safety***

If all physical and sensible steps fail to stop violent attacks, stay off and seek refuge in safety. Marriage is meant for the living. It is advisable to stay away from life-threatening situations while seeking a solution. As undesirable as separation may be in marriage, it is not God's intention that you die an untimely and senseless death in your home. Your mindset at this point is to seek help to salvage your home and deliver your spouse. A violent spouse is certainly under demonic influence. So run for your dear

life and let the solution be sought from a place of safety and protection.

### ***Pray***

Maybe you didn't pray enough and seek the face of God before you made your choice of marriage partner; maybe this situation is a case of an attack of the devil against your marriage; whatever be the situation, prayer helps matters. Prayer helps to restore your peace as God releases mercy towards you. Your prayer should not be a prayer of vendetta or destruction but a prayer of restoration and regeneration. Your focus should be to save your family.

### ***Staying single is an option***

Marriage is a wonderful creation of God and good to be desired. Marriage epitomizes the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32). As such the bride is expected to be married to a Christ-like groom. Likewise, the groom expects the bride to be faithful while they both love and submit to one another. Should either party make the mistake of marrying a devil, that's it! You will either stay married or revert to being single.

Hopping in and out of marriage through a divorce does not have any Christ-like precedent. That's the reason marriage is something that should be prayerfully and carefully

entered into. Marriage is not a dangerous institution, people are. It's tough to live single with responsibilities when you are not a widow. (Widowhood is equally not easy though). But if staying alive means staying single and staying safe, so be it. Provided you are committed to the Lord and depend on Him to live holy and righteously, living inevitably single is not a sin. You are permitted to remarry only if the other party is no longer alive. Tough! However, the reconciliation window should always be open. Situations change. Prayer changes situations and people too. Should you have a different experience, then living single becomes a cross to carry and you can yet follow Christ and have the joy of the Lord in your life.

### ***Financial difficulties***

*"Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me. Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain" (Proverbs 30:8-9).*

It's not nice to be broke. Yet the cycle of life may at some point tilt in that direction. It could be manageable when you are single and broke but when you have family and dependents to take care of, it could be exasperating.

People react in different ways when faced with financial



challenges. Some men become aggressive, some become alcoholics, some vent their frustration on their spouses and children and some could outrightly become withdrawn and anti-social. Worse still some commit suicide. Financial challenges usually ignite mood swings in women. Some become gluttonous, eating so much till they become overweight. All of these reactions do not help the matter; in fact they worsen it. The first thing to do when faced with financial challenges is to *"guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life"* (proverbs 4:23). That means you need to be in control of your internal monologue. Avoid negative thought that can lead you into a pity party. *"No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."* (I Corinthians 10:13).

Financial challenges can emanate from various issues - loss of job, loss of contract, down turn in business opportunities, excessive financial responsibilities and so on. Every challenge of life has an expiry date. This should motivate you to channel effort in positive and productive directions that will bring you out of the challenging financial situation.

Financial challenge helps you reach out to your core ability and deploy the same in a positive direction. Look for the needs around you and see how you can meet them profitably. Look for problems around you and think of how you can solve them. The world belongs to problem solvers. Money is attracted to solution providers. While all these are ongoing, married people need to support one another at times like this. A working spouse should ensure he or she fills the gap as much as possible while the financially challenged spouse should be grateful and reasonable.

Financial downtime is a time to make necessary adjustments. You may need to scale down your standard of living and taste temporarily. You have no one to impress or to please. *"I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."* (Philippians 4:12)

As the popular saying goes - tough times never last but tough people do. The most important thing to manage during financial downtime is your emotional response. Remain positive and optimistic while you put in effort in whichever area of endeavor you choose to pursue. Those who mock you today will soon witness your turnaround and your celebration. Change is the only constant thing in

life!

### ***Sickness***

When health is lost, all is lost, is a popular saying. The truth is that all is not totally lost. Ill health is indeed a setback, but there is always an opportunity for recovery. Sickness can bring one down emotionally. It's however important to know that healing is in the hands of God. He is *Jehovah Rapha*. There is a healing mechanism embedded by God in the human system. It's called the immune system. Whatever medical treatment anyone receives, the response of the body to it is what determines healing. That's why it's an incontrovertible truth that God is our healer.

In sickness, as you go through your treatment, keep your spirit high, and be optimistic; it's a panacea for quick recovery. Your recovery and healing will come. *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?* "(Proverbs 18:14).

### ***Children's Misbehavior***

The day a child is born, the family rejoices. The day a child is christened, the world celebrates all in hope and high expectations of the goodness that the life of the child will bring to the family. When the child grows to adolescence

and young adulthood and begins to chart the path of misdemeanor, the parental pain is unimaginable.

Now he or she's outgrown the rod of correction. The world is skewed these days to derail destinies of unsuspecting youths. Only the focused and determined who respond to proper parental upbringing, with Christ in their lives, come out tops in life. They make their parents proud and grateful to God for such a fortunate harvest in the lives of their children.

The lives of young people are being hijacked by the deceit of worldliness and land-mined fame garnished with drugs, wrong role models, and various destructive substances. They chart these unsuspecting paths and suddenly encounter untimely death or waste. Sometimes it's not that parents didn't train these children in the way they should go, the way of the Lord and of righteousness. They did their best. But life happened to them. Such children, like Eve in the garden of Eden, hid to the voice of the devil.

How some children bring pain to their parents! This brings a major downtime in the lives of parents. This is the time to call on God in prayer. *"And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shall glorify me."* (Psalm 50:15). Turnarounds do happen. Ask God to take

control of the heart of that child of yours today and He will do.

### ***Poor academic performance***

*"Best student in Mathematic - Adeeko Johnson; Best student in Physics - Adeeko Johnson; Best student in Geography - Adeeko Johnson; Best student in Integrated Science - Adeeko Johnson .... "* The elation of parents, whose children excel in their studies, at prize-giving days in schools is an interesting sight to behold. The crestfallen countenance of parents whose children are struggling with their academics, on the other hand, is a pitiable sight. After the facade of an emotionless face in public, such parents go home and soak their pillows in tears, particularly when they consider the enormous amount being paid as school fees.

This may truly be a cause of downtime for parents but please remember, that in the race of life, *"...the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to the men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."* (Ecclesiastes 9:11). This is not to excuse poor performance but to let you know that life is a marathon. Some are slow starters but catch up and speed up later in life. Some are early starters but may not keep the tempo

forever. So don't give up on your child. Believe in your child. Give all the support and encouragement you can offer.

The story of great men such as Ben Carson, a black American Neurosurgeon, should inspire such downcast parents. He was written off as a dullard and thrown out of school, but his mother believed in him, supported him, sought optical help when it was found that he had a sight problem and he turned out to be one of the greatest Neurosurgeons on earth! Your child is gifted in something. Let it manifest and help him or her to build on it. Your sorrow will be turned to joy!

### ***Abandonment***

There have been cases where a spouse travels abroad either for studies or in search of the golden fleece with a promise to come back to his wife and children only to disappear into the thin air; abandon the woman (and children) and go and start another family elsewhere. In rare cases, it could be the other way round, where the woman abandons the man. This is wickedness!

Some men walk out of their homes following minor disagreements and separate themselves from their wives and suddenly begin to frolic with young ladies (some carry

strange women) on the street. Some women also pack out of their marital homes following some issues that happen to become irreconcilable. They live their spouses desolate and downcast. Such spouses become miserable as a result of the trap they find themselves in. This situation is nothing but a satanic attack on the family.

But must we attribute human misbehavior to the devil to absolve people involved from the responsibility of their actions? It's always an unholy alliance for which there is a joint responsibility. How then does an abandoned spouse handle the resultant downtime caused by such a situation?

### ***Get yourself a good means of livelihood***

The first important thing to do is to get yourself a job. If you can be self-employed or engage in any form of entrepreneurship, the better for you. This is why it is important for women who opt to be housewives either by mutual understanding with their spouses or by obedience to the preference of their spouses, to maximize the advantage and engage in various online business opportunities that currently exists.

Being a housewife is not an easy job either. A housewife should be recognized for who she is - a homemaker. This is critical to any family and indeed to the fabrics of society.

However, the need for some level of financial independence reduces the impact of vulnerability to the evil of spouse abandonment.

On the other hand, if you are a career person, it's important to ensure you secure your continued means of livelihood by ensuring commitment to your job. The emotional destabilization caused by such situation could be quite challenging. Taking a short timeout from work, i.e. a legitimate vacation, will enable you put yourself together and regain your emotional balance for optimal performance on your job.

### ***Fight to take back what belongs to you***

An abandoned spouse is an attacked spouse. Scripture says, "*What therefore God hath joined together. Let no man put asunder.*" (Matthew 19:6) Walking out on a spouse for selfish reasons is putting asunder what God has joined together. This is not the same in the case of a spouse who leaves as a result of domestic violence. Such a spouse leaves to protect him or herself and preserve life. However, whatever be the case, abandonment is a separation that needs to be fought against.

Such fights are fought in different ways. Prayer, prayer for victory over such an attack against one's family, is the



starting point. Strong family support is also a weapon against this problem. Good family members can intervene in such a circumstance and persuade such couples to reunite. The church also provides strong support in this regard. Not only is a prayer altar erected to help solve such problems, other physical steps can also be taken to persuade the absconded partner to return and the lingering problems are prayerfully addressed. Taking your marriage or family back is a battle worth fighting.

### ***Live your life***

When all else fails, live your life! There are issues that one has to commit into God's hands, leave them in his "parking lot" and let his will be done. What is important is for the spouse in such a situation to come to terms with the situation, having done all he or she could do to bring about a settlement. The discussion around divorce and remarriage is always a difficult one. A child of God should always defer to the will of God in such a matter. While divorce is hated by God, the scripture clarifies situations where it becomes inevitable. That doesn't however make the situation better, it only gets more complex. But with God all things are possible. Stick with the Lord and he will make all things beautiful in his time.

### ***When the wine runs out!***

This is when romance gets to its lowest ebb in marriage. This can happen any time during the lifetime of a marriage relationship. There are periods when partners become so used to each other, and living together day-in, day-out that boredom sets in. This should not be, but it happens. Human nature is quite complex. Love, they say, is like wine. The longer it lasts, the better it tastes. But when the wine runs out, it's another story altogether.

Just as Jesus provided new wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2), there is a need to constantly put new wine in the marriage relationship. Challenges of life could drain the "wine" in marriage. There's a need to constantly top it up, and it's not too expensive to do so.

Every man or woman has his or her preferred love language. Couples need to know their partner's love language and speak it. It could be verbal and it could be an actual physical action. Love languages include:

- ✓ Verbal appreciation
- ✓ Warm hug
- ✓ Sensual touch
- ✓ Physical help
- ✓ Care and support

- ✓ Romantic outings
- ✓ Relaxing outings and vacations

Once you know what tastes sweet to your spouse, give it as often as you can.



*Fig. 4 Downtime in Family Life*

## CHAPTER 3

### *Handling Downtime in Relationships*

No man is an island to himself. Life thrives on relationships. Relationships are formed in various ways and for various reasons and objectives. Relationships between the opposite gender may be entered into ultimately with marriage in view. Relationships can be built on professional grounds to establish a business partnership. A relationship can also be based on mutual friendship based on a common interest such as sports or any other area of interest. Friendship could grow to become very strong and emotional. "... *There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*" (Proverbs 18:24).

The bond of friendship between Jonathan and David as recorded in the scripture was much stronger than the relationship Jonathan had with King Saul his father. Trust and reliance emanate from such a relationship. A betrayal of trust results in serious disappointment and could cause major downtime in people's lives. It was argued in the case of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* that the betrayal rather than the stabbing of Macbeth by Brutus sped up the death of Macbeth with the lamentation *e tu-Brute* on his dying lips. Handling downtimes resulting from relationship disappointments may be quite challenging but not

impossible. Some of these situations are discussed in this chapter.



*Fig. 5 Downtime in Relationships*

### ***Jilted***

You have been in a courtship relationship for a while with the expectation of marriage. Suddenly your partner makes a U-turns leaving you broken-hearted and disappointed. Worse still, age is not on your side! Crying or weeping in situations like this is inevitable and allowed. It is the window through which this type of disappointment is ventilated. Emotional pain is tough to bear, but there is a balm in Gilead that heals the broken-hearted.

By the way, this may just be a blessing in disguise. A broken courtship is better than a broken marriage. It is not the end of the world or the end of your life. It simply means

you deserve better than who you thought you had. Wipe your face, be your best self and the one who values the virtue you carry will soon discover you. Don't because of a one-off bad experience generalize that all men or all women are evil. Your prayer is for God to lead you to the right person and when that happens, you will enjoy a blissful relationship.

### ***Betrayal***

When your business partner betrays you through various unfaithful and undercutting tactics it can be very disappointing. This can result in serious disputes which, if not properly handled, can end in litigation. Of more concern is the downcast feeling that such disappointment foists on one. Aspirations and high hopes which accompany such partnership venture at inception take a nosedive. How best should one respond to such an issue?

*"Can two work together, except they be agreed?"* Amos 3:3. Partnerships thrive based on compatibility and "complementability". Where a partnership fails the test of these criteria, a separation or dissolution is inevitable. What is important is how. And I do not mean the legal process. That's the easiest part. Recalibrating your mind to start afresh is a strong factor that can give the needed energy. Avoid unnecessary bickering and quarrel. Let your

separation be peaceful and orderly. This way you will avoid distraction and be able to focus on the next steps. Be aware that your trust should mainly be in God. That means always give an allowance for human disappointment even in the best of relationships. This will help ameliorate the pain whenever it happens.

### ***Friendship gone sour***

Friendship is a very strong bond. It is however a bond whose wheel is oiled by trust and faithfulness. It balloons and soars over time. What happens when that balloon gets punctured and deflated is a resounding crash, bringing along a collateral feeling of dejection and disappointment. This can grow bitterness in large quantities in one's mind. This can kill trust in one's heart. Enmity and malice can take root from such. But ask yourself, didn't Lucifer betray God? The first thing to do is to find out what happened and why. Was it an error or an intentional action? Then learn from the experience.

You will need to separate friendliness from friendship. They are two different things. You should be friendly to all but not all can be your friend. Be magnanimous to forgive the offense but now decide the appropriate path to chat - friendliness or friendship. " *...Seek peace and pursue it.*" (Psalm 34:14). More importantly, be at peace with

yourself.

## **People Share Their Friendship Betrayal Stories**

Friendships are just as hard to keep as they are to make. Once you've built a bridge of friendship with someone, it becomes the responsibility of both you and that person to put in the necessary work to maintain them. Friendships are delicate, so the moment that one side (or both) begins to neglect those maintenance efforts, the connection will start to deteriorate. Sometimes, it happens gradually, while other times, a single breach of trust can ruin everything in an instant.

People from around the world took to the internet to share their friendship betrayal stories and they are all as juicy as you'd expect them to be. From heartless double agents to secret haters, these tales will surely have you inspecting your own friendships for any weak spots:

### ***#1 Stealing Business***

My husband and I had a friend that we helped get back on his feet. We paid off some tickets he had, got his license reinstated, hooked him up with a solid connection for a reasonable, well-running car to replace his beater, AND gave him a place to live and a job (automotive repair)... He then decided it was a better choice to tell all our



customers we were overcharging them and that he'd do the jobs cheaper if they'd bring it to him at his house (this was a short time after he moved out of our house, after never repaying anything he owed us. Not that we'd asked). Broke my heart...

## **#2 Unfaithful Wife**

My wife said she needed some time for herself so she went to stay at her mom's for a while. One day, I went to pick up my kids and walked in on her and my best friend in my bed. Turns out, it had been going on for a while and she knew him before she knew me (which I had no clue about). I'm prompted to conduct a DNA test on the kids. I hope the results don't break my heart.

## **#3 Competitive Self-Centeredness**

Years ago, when I was studying towards a health-sciences undergraduate degree, most of the cohort was determined to get into medical school. Our medical school program mainly accepted students from only our competitive undergraduate course, due to subject prerequisites. We all knew each other and were friendly, hanging out together, and forming study groups.

Many of my friends were great—we shared tips, resources, practiced exams, and interviews together. But there was a handful who *really* wanted to get into medical school, and since the program ranks applicants mainly based on undergraduate results, the better your friends perform, the lower your ranking is for selection.

So near application time, some of us would head off to the university library to borrow out textbooks to find chapters or page numbers that the lecturer mentioned would be on the exam. And they would be ripped out. You'd go and find another library copy of the textbook, and *that* page would be ripped out too. All of them, totally removed in a hurry.

I didn't believe that someone from our cohort did it until the interview practice began. Students began obtaining copies of the questions from previous years and lying when others asked if they had it. I saw someone give a terrible, awful interview answer and the other student would give them glowing feedback and inform them they should say that, word-for-word, during the interview. It was a mess and a lot of relationships fell apart or were never the same again.

#### **#4 From Godfather To Real Father**

I had a good bud of mine, who's the godfather of my son,

live with me and my wife. I travel a lot for work, and I was out of the country for about six months in the Middle East. I came back and found out she was pregnant, with twins, and that they weren't mine.

## **#5 Turning The Focus**

My mother told me she was sick of being with my dad. She told me a bunch of things he'd done which made her afraid of him. She asked me to tell a few of her close friends about how she was being treated because she wanted them to understand why she was leaving. Then she decided to stay with him. So she told her friends that she had no idea what was wrong with me, but they should pray for me because it looked like I was going through something.

## **#6 Hey, Soul Sister**

My best friend since fourth grade. I called her my soul sister. I genuinely was so grateful to have what I thought our friendship was. She fell on hard times, got weirdly religious, and stopped working while going to a private university. I was always there for her-I was a shoulder to cry on, I visited her all the time because she didn't have any friends and I knew she was lonely, helped her with groceries and rent, and even helped her family out. One

day, she came over and after buying her groceries, she told me a higher power had been telling her to cut me off for two years and she had to listen. Now she wants to be friends again. Nope.

## **#7 Respect Yourself**

I asked two of my friends if they wanted to live together in college. Then, one of them asked another person in our friend group if he wanted to join in as well. Then they asked another. .. and another. And then once there were too many people for one apartment, they dropped me out of it. I'm no longer "friends" with any of them. It was kind of a wake-up call though because I definitely gave way too much of myself to those people not knowing that I was the most expendable one. It really taught me not to put others on a pedestal and respect myself more. It has since led to me developing far more healthy relationships that bring me a lot of happiness.

## **#8 Rock Bottom**

My best friend stopped talking to me after my dad passed away. He took the whole friend group with him. Apparently, I was "too emotional." I was 13. Having my entire friend group walk away from me when I was in such

a terrible place in my life stuck with me forever.

### **#9 Unfriendly Manipulation**

Several of my housemates decided to move to the west coast after college. There was one who was planning on going with them that they didn't want to keep living with. They waited to tell her until after they had driven out over spring break to look at apartments-in her car. Pretty gross, and it really messed with her. They told her after they got back.

### **#10 The Letter**

In seventh grade, she wrote a 10-page letter on all the reasons I should end myself and had all but one of my friends sign in agreement after I confided in her that I felt like something was wrong with me (early undiagnosed depression-go figure). The day she gave it to me was arguably the worst day of my life at the point because my parents told my sister and me that they were considering divorce and my grandmother passed away.

### **#11 The Village Gossip**

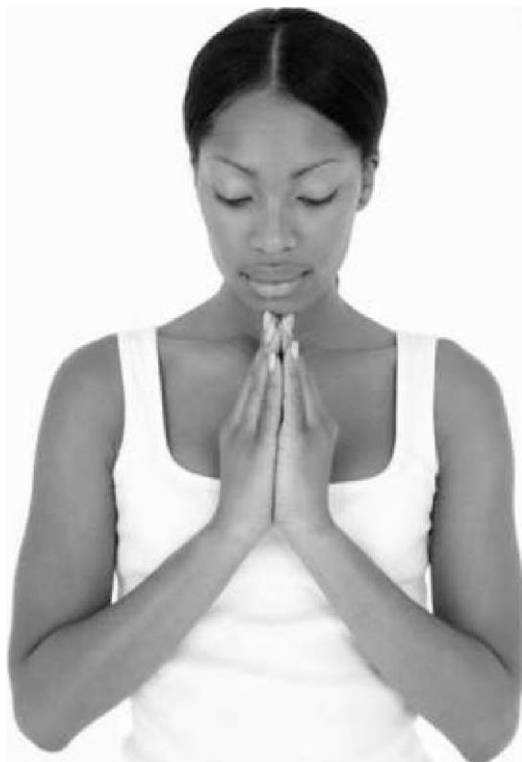
I had one friend who honestly wasn't my favorite person

because she was really manipulative, but I never said anything bad about her. I found out that she had been talking bad about me to all of our mutual friends and telling them all that I did horrible things that I never did. I ended up essentially being pushed out of that entire friend group and it ruined a lot of my high school experience.

## **#12 The Source**

I had one friend. I was bullied by everyone at elementary school. Because my friend John would also be bullied when he hung out with me at school, we only played outside of school. One day, a popular kid asked to play with me during recess. I was ecstatic! Until after a while, they said, "You're not as bad as John said you are." And that's how I learned WHY I was bullied.

How awful these betray stories are! They could trigger serious downtimes and emotional lows. It's best to operate on a basis of "anticipatory disappointment." This is a phrase that requires everyone to give allowance for misdemeanors in all relationships. *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"* (Jeremiah 17:9). It's helpful to always guard yourself and better still bounce back from downtime occasioned by relationship betrayal.



*Fig. 6 Downtime in Relationships*

## CHAPTER 4.

### *Handling Spiritual Downtimes*

*"Enter into his gate with thanksgiving, and into his court with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4)*

*"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24)*

*"Beloved, I wish above all things, that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 1:2)*

The Christian life is a life of joy. *"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"* (Romans 14:17). Contrary to what many people think, the Christian life is not boring. The Holy Ghost is an exciting personality. His presence in our lives ensures we live a spiritual life. The spirit of a man can sustain a man irrespective of whatever he goes through in life. The truth of the matter is that while Jesus is the lover of our soul and does everything to ensure the prosperity of our soul; Satan, the god of this world is the hater of our soul who constantly plots to destroy it. It is the happenstance of life motivated by satanic machinations that brings us down to low spiritual levels; levels where



we think God has forsaken us and completely abandoned us. But this is not true. The irrecoverable ones are Satan and his demonic host. They are doomed forever. But for you and I "*... there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.*" (Job14:7)

There are several biblical role models, heroes of faith, who had downtimes, even in their spiritual lives and in their relationships with God. They are men and women of like passion and we can learn from their experiences. Downtimes are part of the experiences of life, but God never leaves us nor abandon us in our downtimes. He forewarned us though that our downtimes may even be triggered by tribulations, put in contemporary language, the vicissitudes of life. " *... In the world, ye shall have tribulations: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*" (John 16:33)

Not one person will pass through life without a downtime experience, especially spiritual downtimes. When we err and when we sin there is grief that comes over our hearts. This becomes good grief when it works repentance in us. There is also the downtime occasioned by prolonged waiting for answered prayers on very vital issues of life. All these affect our spirit. However, there are ways to

bring us up from our spiritual downtime. We can learn from our fathers and mothers in faith.

### ***Abraham & Sarah***

From the scriptural record, God called Abraham out of his father's house and gave him a comprehensive promise:

*"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen.12:2-3)*

Before long, the promise of blessings became fulfilled. Abraham became wealthy in all denominations of wealth in his time - silver, gold, and cattle. And for twenty-four years he waited for what he considered the most important promise of God for his life- being a channel of blessing to all families of the earth, yet his family was incomplete and he was aging! At a point in time, at the lowest point in his relationship with God, he posed a heart-rending query to God saying, *"... what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir."* (Gen. 15: 2-3)

This was indeed a downtime in the life of Abraham and Sarah. Downtimes do cause us to make mistakes, take to wrong advice, and generally fret out of frustration. Abraham experienced all of these. Out of frustration, Sarah recommended Hagar her maid to Abraham to do the job of birthing the much-wanted child but that was not God's will. That caused more problems than solutions.

In all of these Abraham held on to God and never gave up on God. He understood that whatever God does not do, no one can do it. An attempt at man-made solutions only leads to latter-day trouble. Indeed, *"weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning"* (Psalm 30:5). This has always been my belief; with God, the longer it takes, the surer it becomes. Let this lift up the burden off your heart. Whenever God is packaging something great, it takes a little longer than usual. Patience and trust in God help one to keep hope alive. Praise and Prayer put you on his divine radar for remembrance, for, not long from now, you will *"mount up with wings as eagles "*

### ***Gideon***

Gideon is a case study in despondency. He lived through the oppression of the Israelites by the Midianites, a period when all of the law, prophesies, and the historical antecedent of the divine experience of past generations of

his forefather paled into insignificance. It was so bad that even the right to decent meals was denied them by the oppressive Midianites.

An interesting encounter and conversation between Gideon and an angel revealed how low Gideon and indeed all of Israel had gone:

*"And an angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord. If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?" (Judges 6: 12-14)*

Just at the lowest point when Gideon felt forsaken, God reached out to him with a word of encouragement and escape from the grip of sorrow. Truly Israel was a victim of their disobedience to God and God used other nations to punish them but not to destroy them. Just in case you are also going through the repercussion of your misadventure in life, you've got to learn to take God's chastening in good

faith rather than rebel. Seek for mercy and forgiveness as you turn away from your bad ways and trust God to restore a time for refreshing back to you.

## ***Elijah***

Even men of God do experience downtimes. Elijah was the foremost prophet in Israel. He was so in tune with God that he called for fire from heaven on Mount Carmel to consume his sacrifice and to prove that the God of heaven is the authentic God. He stopped the rains for three and a half years and raised the dead. Yet at the threat of a woman (Jezebel), he not only fled but became discouraged.

*"And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain the prophets with a sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more so also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and Came and sat under a juniper tree: and requested for himself that he might die: and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." (1 Kings 19: 1-4)*

Elijah opened up to God and shared his feelings. A burden shared is half solved. Sometimes you may not have anyone to share your burden with but we have a companion in the Holy Spirit. He is real. In prayer, we can unburden our hearts and ask for his help. He is the divine resource person available to us in this dispensation. He is the comforter and an encourager. Go for Him.

God helped Elijah out of his discouraged situation through the "still small voice." He got a fresh assignment, *"Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room"* (1 Kings 19: 15-16)

Getting engaged in kingdom business is a way of uplifting your spirit. Great fulfillment comes to you when you serve God in any capacity He desires of you. Get busy in your local church, serve the Lord. Zechariah the High Priest, as recorded in Luke chapter 1 got the answer to his most desired prayer request while in active service. The promise through an angel of his wife's conception and the birth of his son, John (known as John the Baptist) lifted his spirit unbelievably! God never forget our labour of love.

He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him.

### ***David***

David's entire life is a case study of the ups and downs of life. His Psalms speak to this. There are many occasions when he experienced downtimes in life. When he became a fugitive being chased by King Saul; when the child born out of his illicit affair with Bathsheba died; when his son, Absalom revolted against him and when his wives and children along with those of his soldiers were kidnapped and carried away are series of downtimes in his life.

*"And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south. And Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captive. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voices and wept until they had no more power to weep And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of the people was grieved..."(1 Samuel 30: 1-5)*

This was the lowest point in David's life. You just may have experienced a low point in life as well, possibly as a result of a significant loss. Seemingly irreplaceable losses have very devastating effects on one's mind. The loss of loved ones or things of great value do lead to major downtimes in life. But you don't have to stay down! Charting the path out of the valley of life is the wise thing to do. And the energy required to do this can be got from the same source David got his. "...*But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.*" (1 Samuel 30:6)

How does one encourage himself or herself in the Lord? First, you need to tell yourself that in all things, God is in control. Secondly, present His promise of never leaving nor forsaking his own to Him. Thirdly acknowledge before him that with him, "all things are possible," and praise him for it. Fourthly, refuse to accept the lie if the devil that may suggest there is no way out for you. This was the experience David shared in Psalm 3:3, "*Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head*" Fifthly, seek his counsel and direction in prayer on what next to do.

At this point trust the Holy Spirit, who is the comforter and the Spirit of joy, to move into your heart and lead you. Do



not also forget to leverage the counsel of reliable people of God. " *...In the multitude of counselors there is safety.* " (*Proverbs 11:14*)

## ***Ruth***

Ruth was an example of a young widow, downcast and dejected truly, but found solace in the relationship with her mother-in-law. Her case transited from an emotional one to a spiritual one. "*And Ruth said, in treat me not to leave thee: for wither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*" (*Ruth 1: 16*).

The death of a loved one puts one under serious emotional pressure. This is one reason young people need to consider the family background of their intended spouse before making the final decision to get into a marriage relationship. One with a strong spiritual background could provide the needed solace in the days of trouble. On the other hand, Naomi is the vintage role model for mothers-in-law. Not only did she win the love and loyalty of Ruth, she also won her over to the God of Israel.

The story of Ruth concluded that not only did she find love again through her mother-in-law's connection, as she remarried to Boaz, a man the scripture described as "a

mighty man of wealth," the ultimate blessing was that through her lineage came king David and our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh. When Ruth gave birth to a child for Boaz, "*...the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying. There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.*" (Ruth 4: 17) All things always work together for good for those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose.

### ***Job***

The story of Job is the precursor of the common question, "why do bad things happen to good people?" Job went through the most extreme travail anyone could go through despite being a good man by God's reckoning. "*And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*" (Job 1: 8).

The travail that God allowed Satan to put Job through was both a test of his integrity and spirituality. The spiritual test came when his wife said " *...Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die.*" (Job 2:9). Have you ever been in a situation where you think God is a wicked God for allowing you to go through the challenge you are going

through or have gone through? You are at the same point that Job found himself. This is a tough spiritual downtime! Job was at the fringe of losing it all if he had heeded the emotional outcry of his wife. Job's several utterances in his tribulation are learning points in spiritual maturity; *"For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease."* (Job 14:7) *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: "* (Job 19:25) *"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"* (Job 23:10)

These are spiritual boosters in the day of trouble. These were the words of encouragement and assurances that sustained Job in his travail. Although no one looks forward to a Job-kind of experience anymore, no one knows from which direction the vicissitude of life will come. Apostle Paul counsels us to be *"...patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer"* (Romans 12:12) as such time will always pass away.

### ***Hannah & Rachel***

Hannah and Rachel had similar experiences. Despite being legitimate wives and eligible for conception and childbearing, they experienced inexplicable non-conception. Being both victims of mockery and torment,



*Fig. 7 Handling Spiritual Downtimes*

they responded differently. Hannah wept inconsolably as the annual Shiloh convention reminded her of her seeming hopelessness. Rachel threatened suicide if her husband does not give her children. Every woman that has experienced the waiting room of child conception can relate to their frustrations.

How they handled their issues after their emotional outbursts is today a lesson in handling spiritual downtime occasioned by childlessness. Hannah poured her heart out to the Lord one-on-one that she was mistaken to be drunk in the early hours of the day. She then topped it with a vow which she fulfilled when God did His part. (1 Samuel 1:11). Rachel on her part, held her husband, Jacob responsible for her predicament. One could get so

emotionally and spiritually derailed at times like this. Even in his anger, Jacob knew where the solution lied and cried; "*....Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?*" (Genesis 30:2)

Seeking solutions, especially spiritual solutions, from the right source is critical to handling the downtime of life. God honours our faith even as our faith honours him. When you are down spiritually, occasioned by any happenstance of life, stick with the Lord Jesus and shun problematic alternatives. He alone knows the way out.

### *Sin induced downtime*

Right from the days of Adam and Eve, sin has always been the cause of spiritual downtime. The devil compounds it by aiding the sinner to add self-condemnation to it. He made Judas feel so self-condemned after betraying Jesus that he committed suicide. Just in case you feel you have disappointed God so badly, as well as people who look up to you, you are not irredeemable. The blood of Jesus was shed for this very reason, "*...and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanses us from ALL sin.*" (1 John 1: 7).

Here's is the good news; "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the*

*Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-2).*

Are you down spiritually, you can rise again!



*Fig. 8 Spiritual Downtimes*

***The spirit of a man can sustain a man irrespective of whatever he goes through in Life.***

# CHAPTER 5

## *Handling Financial Downtimes*

Nothing grounds one as much as being broke! No one, no matter how spiritual, feels happy when financially down. Even God isn't happy when you're broke! Being financially down is not a sign of righteousness. God has delight in the prosperity of his people. "... *Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*" (Psalm 35:27).



*Fig. 9 Financial Downtimes*

Many things may lead one into the financial valley; Loss of job, business challenges, debt, and refusal to compromise one's faith. When one refuses to join the multitude to do evil, as the scripture says, "*yea, and all*

*that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."* (2 timothy 3:12) Taking a righteous and principled stand can cause loss of financial benefit, but *"a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."* (Luke 12:15). Financial downtime can be the result of several occurrences of life.

People generally blame several situations for financial problems. The most common culprit is the socio-economic situation of a country. When the economy of a country is down, the fortunes of business ventures and people are usually tied to it.

Ironically, some people boost their financial fortunes at times of economic downturns. This is not new, neither is it news anymore. *"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him."* (Genesis 26:12). We are currently (in 2020/21) in the era of a global pandemic (COVID-19) induced economic downturn. Lockdowns across the world had led to the collapse of several businesses. On the other hand, the lockdown has led to the rise of online and technological-based businesses. While some are counting their losses, some are smiling to the bank. This is the irony of life and there are lessons to learn from it. Handling situations such as this and, better still, coming out of such



a tight financial situation is very important. Here are a few suggestions to consider:

***No situation is permanent***

*"And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. (Daniel 2:21)*

Nothing in life is as constant as change. Life changes come with their learning opportunities and wisdom packages. The first thing anyone experiencing a financial downturn must absorb into his or her psyche is, *this too shall pass away*. How long it would take you may not know, but change is inevitable with time. A period of financial downturn is not the time to give up, it is a passing phase. It is the time to align with the one who "changes times and seasons." Some financial fortunes may be tied to government policies or various human situations. These by nature are always subject to change. Patience in such a situation is desirable and waiting till your change comes is wisdom.

Some financial fortunes can also be tied to rethinking. A change in times calls for a change in mind-set. This is what enables one to look at problems with opportunity lenses.

In life, nothing is cast in stone except change.

### ***Faith, not fate***

*"Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."* (Proverbs 4:23) Financial downturns have a direct effect on one's mind. What the mind believes and accepts at times like this is a determinant of the next line of action. Misfortune is no one's exclusive fate in life. What you require is faith in God to bring you out of the situation as you work your way out.

Never accept a financial downturn as your fate in life. It may be a test of faith, it may be a result of wrong judgment and action, it may very well be as a result of a satanic attack. In all of these never treat the situation as *fait accompli*. God still lifts people out of horrible situations (Psalm 40:2), so keep your hope alive as you trust God to send you a lifeline.

The biblical story of the Samaritan economic downturn presents a timely case study. (2 Kings 6 & 7) Things got as terrible as it could be. Humanism began to give way to cannibalism yet the king of the land was so helpless. Help came by the word of the Lord but was met with unbelief in high places. That's what always happens with men. We hardly ever give God a chance in our situation. We think

we've got it all figured out with our tiny brains! God proved himself in Samaria, in a manner that was fatalistic to the unbelieving economic minister of the land. Change rides on the tide of faith, faith in the unchanging changer in the affairs of life. True life has always been a partnership between faith and power, man and divinity. The Almighty has proven himself times over that he rules even in the affairs of men. He is a key player in the handling of downtimes of any sort, including financial downtime.

We see people around us whose life stories lend credence to this truth. The Devil is such a bad Devil that he constantly suggests that you are stuck in whatever adverse situation you find yourself in life, particularly when he is behind the orchestration of such terrible situations. He got Jesus and his disciples to feel that way, during his earthly ministry, when Jesus was eventually arrested and crucified, until the resurrection morning when the tide turned.

The Devil and the establishment of that time got so confused with the turn of the event which was a result of divine wisdom that Apostle Paul recorded their regret in 1 Cor 2:7-8; *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this*

*world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. "*

The Devil's principles have always been the same - hopelessness! That's what drives people into various dastardly acts like suicide. As a line in one of those faith-inspired popular hymns says; *"faith can sing through days of sorrow, all will be well. "* This is as much truth as it is a balm for the heart. This is what helps to manage failures in life with the knowledge that it is a passing phase and not a *cul de sac* destination!

### ***Faith and Work***

*"Yea, a man say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:18)*

Financial downtime is a period of personal economic recession. The way out of any form of recession is productivity. The biblical principle of *"Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over ..."* (Luke 6:38) should not be quarantined as simply a seed sowing principle in churches. It is more of an economic principle that brings people out of the valley of a financial downturn. The world is full of needs at various levels and in all communities.

The ability to spot a need that you can give a solution to profitably, which you then carry out, is the "work" that your faith is waiting for to change your financial fortune. If you give the world what it needs - goods or services - the world will give back to you "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over."

The world needed an efficient office work tool and a man gave *Microsoft* computers (hardware and software); the world needed a global goods distribution network and a man gave *Amazon*; the world needed a virtual platform to do business in the light of the global pandemic lockdown and a man gave the *Zoom* platform; the world has not stopped giving to them in good measure    Spot the need that you can meet and believe God to help you meet those needs; spot the problem that you can solve and believe God to help you provide the solution. You can even become a freelance volunteer social worker in your neighbourhood. You never know what this can turn out to be as time goes on. This is how we put our faith to work.

There was the story of a man who rose to top political office in his state in Nigeria. He was said to have been a volunteer provider of water through delivery tankers to his immediate community that was in dire need of this basic necessity. His popularity sky-rocketed in his community

and won him the governorship of his state! *"shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."* (James2:18)

### ***Lying low is not a curse***

*"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."* (Job 14:14)

People respond to financial downturns in various ways. Some feel the shame is so unbearable and contemplate suicide, thinking death is more valiant than mockery! This is a lie of the devil. The same lie Job's wife uttered in Job2:9 *"...curse God and die."* Job chose to wait till his change came. Waiting for change is a difficult experience, however, embedded in the waiting time are the opportunities for fresh initiatives, lessons of dependence on God, trust, hope, and faith.

Waiting time is a period for introspection, rethinking, and re-strategizing. It is also a time for drawing closer to God and enhancing your spiritual relationship with the Almighty. It is a time of serious commitment. Don't you ever think you can outsmart God by just trying to "use Him" to get out of your financial quagmire, and thereafter abandon him to do your thing! Don't fool yourself, God

knows the intention of every heart. Be sincere with God and yourself.

You have nothing to prove to anyone. Everyone carries his or her cross in life. *"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven "* (Eccl 3:1). The period of financial downturn required prudence in all things, lying low is not out of place. You don't have to be seen everywhere. Choose your outings, choose your engagements and choose your expenses. Your change for the better will come. This is an opportunity to reset things in your life.



*Fig. 10 Financial Downtimes*

## CHAPTER 6

### *Handling Downtimes in Health*



*Fig. 11 Downtime in Health*

*"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth"* (3 John 1:2). This is God's desire for all. God's best is not healing but perfect health. God created perfect beings in Adam and Eve, to whom sickness was alien. Sin it was that diminished humanity, making us susceptible to sickness. Sickness has become so much an accompanying partner to sin that the sinful nature of man inherited from the Adamic nature has made sickness a precursor to death.

When God put Adam in that garden he made for him, he warned; *"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying,*



*"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth"* (3 John 1:2). This is God's desire for all. God's best is not healing but perfect health. God created perfect beings in Adam and Eve, to whom sickness was alien. Sin it was that diminished humanity, making us susceptible to sickness. Sickness has become so much an accompanying partner to sin that the sinful nature of man inherited from the Adamic nature has made sickness a precursor to death.

When God put Adam in that garden he made for him, he warned; *"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shall surely die"* (Genesis 2; 16-17). Let's remember that when the man was created, he was created in the image of God. Of course, all that is in God is Life. It was this breath of life that God used to elevate man from mere mud to a living being, bringing man to the status of a god, the image of the living God.

God's commandment is the rule of life. The violation of this rule was a rejection of life, an attraction of curse by the law, and a step down to a lower and weaker nature that is

susceptible to all sorts of attacks including sickness and death. Adam and Eve violated the rule and made the plunge! Sickness became common in human experience as it is domiciled in the curse arena. David confessed on behalf of humanity in Psalm 51: 5, "*Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*"

Thanks be to God for our Lord Jesus who came to redeem us from the curse of the law. He paid the price for sin and sickness and *by his stripes, we were healed*. However, it has become a recurring decimal in human experience that there is "*a time to kill, and a time to heal.*" (Ecclesiastes 3:3) We recognize this much even in marital relationships where couples are enjoined to protect their love for one another "in sickness and in health."

Sickness is a fact of the Adamic nature but healing and health is the truth of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so when we are confronted with sickness, while we explore the benefits of medical sciences and its prescribed medications, we need to acknowledge that the truth about healing is that it belongs to the Lord, "*for I am the Lord that healeth thee*" (Exodus 15:26).

An interesting debate raged within early Apostolic Pentecostals. It revolved around the issue of healing

without medication but simply by faith in the word of God and prayers. The historical antecedent of the miraculous healing power exhibited during the era of Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola brought about a clash with the group which aligned with the British Apostolic group which believed modern medicine was part of God's healing agenda. This brought about a great polarization within the apostolic movement in the early days of the 1930s till the 1970s.

There are records of men and women of great faith who stuck to their unrelenting faith in healing by prayer and the word of God. The use of medication was considered a betrayal of faith and an attempt to diminish the power of God to heal without human intervention. To push their case forward, it was an aberration for any of their sons or daughters to choose to study medicine and aspire to be medical doctors. Where would they practice it?

Indeed God honoured the faith of these fathers and mothers of faith. God is always a good God and knows how to meet us at our level of faith. But was it or is it biblically wrong to avail of modern medicine? Would that amount to a denial of faith? The answer to this question is a two-edged sword. On one hand, is the truth that the God our fathers in faith called upon has not changed. His healing virtue is still very much available and with or

without human intervention, healing still belongs to him. On the other hand, is the fact that no one can box God to a corner on his choice of healing method. The scripture is replete with various healing episodes by our Lord Jesus Christ and his prophets that not one style is the same as another. He healed Jarius's daughter and the Centurion's servant with his word, Whereas God commanded Hezekiah's healing through the usage of boiled fig lumps (a form of natural medication). *"And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered."* (2 kings 20:7)

God understood the zeal and the faith level of both apostolic groups and showed mercy on both schools of thought as He still does today. It is always a matter of "be it unto you according to your faith." One thing has since been clear, the knowledge of medicine and medical sciences did not emanate from the Devil but as usual, he tries to hijack all that God created. The Devil is incapable of doing such great things. His agenda is mainly to steal, kill and destroy. The purpose of medical science is to save lives. The provision for food and healing were made by God:

*"And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and **good for food; the***

*tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil". (Genesis 2:9) "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there **the tree of life**, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: **and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.**" (Revelations 22:2)*

Food and healing were provided through leaves (Vegetables) and herbs (roots). The hustler that the Devil is manifested as he started to cast his spell and incantations on what God had provided, stealing and rebranding it as his idea as revealed in *Folk Medicine*. As God released more knowledge to men, the study of these leaves began to reveal the healing potential that God had put in them. This is the precursor to pharmacology and pharmacy generally. The best of doctors know they only care while God alone heals. Thus the scripture admonishes that our faith *"should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."* (1 Cor. 2:5)

In times of health challenges, our emotions are also challenged and our spirit is down. This is where the remedy needs to start from. *"A merry heart doeth good like medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bone. "* (Proverbs 17:22) - Notice the scripture refers to the goodness of medicine - *"...doeth good like medicine."*

There seems to be an inexplicable correlation between our emotional state and our response to medical treatment and general convalescence. The issues that challenge our emotions are issues such as fear, the fear of the sickness leading to death; the financial impact of the health challenge; lost opportunities during the period of being indisposed; and various other sources of anxiety.

There are various resources around to help manage these emotional challenges. There are human resources such as family and friends who give a helping hand and words of encouragement; there is also the fellowship support that places of Worship offer (provided one is a stable and committed member); Scriptural resources that place a demand on our faith; religious leaders who give needed spiritual, moral and financial support and of course medical personnel who do their very best in caring for their patients. All these surround one in times of challenges and contribute to the recovery process.

In all of these, the individual in the situation is the one faced with the challenge of handling the downtime experience. Let's share a few biblical characters' experiences in such situations and learn some handling tips from them:

## **Hezekiah**

*2 Kings 20: 1 -13*

*In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*

*<sup>2</sup>Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,*

*<sup>3</sup>I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.*

*<sup>4</sup>And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,*

*<sup>5</sup>Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.*

*<sup>6</sup>And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of*

*Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.*

*<sup>7</sup> And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.*

Hezekiah had a health challenge that was compounded by a death-bound prophesy. It wasn't a prophecy of doom for doom-sake, the truth was that his time was up. He indeed had the privilege of being notified that his time was up. Not many have that kind of privilege in life. While this issue put him in emotional turmoil, (he "wept sore") he didn't just give up, he cried unto the Lord. The finality of the situation hit him badly by the word of the prophecy but he also realized that since God was involved in the situation, he had a chance to make his case.

God is always involved in our situations - good or bad- and He does have listening ears. He is a living God, he is not a God who is not touched by the feelings of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15) and so he can change things, including his decisions on the grounds of His mercy.

*"...This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petition that we desire of him." (1 John 5:14-15)*



Making Him the first port of call during health downtimes is a wise thing to do.

Interestingly, God reversed His decision on Hezekiah and added fifteen more years to his life. And through prophet Isaiah, God sent him the treatment therapy for recovery; *"And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered."* (2 kings 20:7). God didn't miraculously heal him, he was healed via recommended medication therapy!

## **Timothy**

1 Timothy 5:23

*"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. "*

Timothy was Apostle Paul's mentee that was pastoring the church in Ephesus but had health challenges. Apostle Paul recommended some medicinal options that he believed could help him. In Matthew 9:12, as part of his teaching illustrations, Jesus used the analogy of the sick person and the physician; *"... They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."* So seeking medical help is biblical. This does not negate God's healing power and the power of prayer to turn things around.

## **A sick Christian**

*"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven."*

James 5 14-16

There is an introduction of another phenomenon in the health challenge handling-issue by the scripture quoted above. The sin factor. This is usually the underlying factor beneath sickness. Not that every sickness is caused by a particular sin but that the sinful human nature makes the human body susceptible to sickness. Though Christ has redeemed us from this "nature" and given us his divine nature, which guarantees us divine health, occasionally, committed sin can trigger sickness as a repercussion till repentance and forgiveness brings healing and restores health. A biblical precedent in this regards is found in Mathew 9:2:

*"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."*

Sickness can also be caused by so many other factors outside of sin. Environmental factors, infections from bacteria, viruses and even aging. If not for the sin-nature that has conferred mortality on the human body, all these would not have had any effect on man. But we are where we are. The period of health challenge is a period for self-introspection. It's time to be true to one's self and be humble enough to acknowledge one's sins (if there are), repent, and seek God's forgiveness. It is not a time to give God an ultimatum!

## **The Centurion**

Mathew 8: 5-13

*<sup>5</sup>And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,*

*<sup>6</sup>And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.*

*<sup>7</sup>And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.*

*<sup>9</sup>For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this,*

*and he doeth it.*

<sup>10</sup> *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

<sup>11</sup> *And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>12</sup> *But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

<sup>13</sup> *And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.*

Faith in the word of God is important during a health downtime. The word of God is not the word of man. The word is God! (John I: I) The word of God is a medicine that kills sickness from its spiritual roots. The Psalmist attests to the efficacy of the healing word; *"He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."* (Psalm 107:20). The centurion must have been privy to this secret and quickly latched on to it during his encounter with Jesus recorded in Matthew chapter 8. The word of God is not only medicine for our soul and

spirit but also works on our bodies. It takes faith to transport its efficacy from our heart to our body, even when our body is screaming to the contrary. The mystery of the healing word can only be unraveled in faith in Him in whom is life, our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Be in health and prosper**

The provision for perfect health was made for man before the need for healing arose. The food that God recommended from the beginning was the medicine required to maintain good health. Most health challenges arose as a result of the negation of the divine diet and menu.

*And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food....  
(Genesis 2:9)*

*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.  
(Genesis 2:16-17)*

From the above, it's obvious that fruits and vegetables are

a priority on the divine menu. You can't go wrong with these. It's the exploration of "*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*" that is "killing" our health. Consumption of what is bad for our health (which may be good to the eyes) is that exploration that lands one on the sickbed, in addition to some other environmental factors. Eating healthy helps maintain good health. Let's not tempt God with our dietary misadventure.



*Fig. 12 Downtime in Health*

# CHAPTER 7

## *Handling Business Downtimes*



*Fig. 13 Downtime in Business*

*"He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. "(Luke 13: 6-9)*

Many things revolve around our business lives. Our hopes and aspirations for a better life as well as our desire for



fulfillment and self-actualization. The direction of our business experience is to large extent directly proportional to the reading of our blood pressure! For entrepreneurs, their lives revolve around their business. One can therefore understand the emotional challenges that business downturns is capable of causing.

It has been rightly observed and noted that the best of business schools have "managing Success" in their curriculums, but the lessons of managing failure are taught in the school of life. Many things can cause a business downturn, in all of these, the business owner carries the can. A business downturn does not amount to a failure. It's a situation whereby the reality of happenstance does not align with desired expectations. If things turned down, they can equally turn up as well. Nothing in life is as sure as the dominance of change.

A business downturn can be described in several ways. It could be loss or diminishing sales of goods and services; adverse economic conditions that jeopardize business survival; termination of valuable contracts; loss of valuable customers; persistent debt owing to non payment for work done; it could also be the result of the prevalence of expense over income that wipes off business capital and it could also result from acute competition in

the business space. These are not acts of God but experiences of life. Nonetheless, once a downturn hits a business, it calls for a cause to revisit the drawing board and re-strategize.

### **Down but not out**

*Rejoice not against me, o mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. (Micah 7:8)*

Business is a bouncing board and business people should have enough oxygen in them to cause them to bounce back when they fall. *Humpty Dumpties* don't last in business. Once they hit the canvas, they crash. But the one with hope, the oxygen that brings back from the brink, can always bounce back again.

Here is scriptural truth that helps:

*For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. (Job 14:7).*

The ability to bounce back depends largely on the mindset. Bouncing back may be in different forms and shapes. You don't necessarily have to keep doing the same thing. You can always come back different, stronger, and

better. Modern-day terminologies for such re-calibration include restructuring and re-engineering. If need be you may re-skill and up-skill. Starting something new can also be refreshing. Once there's hope there's life. Being knocked down is not news, it's your bouncing back that makes you a champion over adversity and that's what makes headline news! Once you are back, it's a new day.

### **In the eye of the storm**

Our focus in this discussion would not be business strategies but human strategies that help to sustain one who is plagued with the challenges of a business downturn.

### ***Believe in God, believe in yourself***

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3: 5-6)*

God is a better businessman than any human being. He's been confronted with setbacks too and he came out of them better. In Genesis chapter one, after he created the heaven and the earth, challenges arose;

*And the earth was without form and void; and darkness*

*was upon the face of the deep.(Genesis1:2).* This was a downturn in the enterprise of creation but with an undaunting spirit that kept working on the situation, (*And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"*) Light showed up from God's creative genius and the rest is history! We had the earth where every other thing created after the initial setback was divinely declared as *Good*.

God created Adam and Eve in his image and had high hopes of them. They were to replicate his dominion on earth but they turned out to be a let-down! They sold-out to the Devil and caused a setback to God's original plan. Thank God, He was already ahead of the game. He had a salvation plan all worked out and executed with precision by our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, God's plan is back on track and things are working on schedule.

God had a plan to raise a people for himself through Abraham. He had a timetable that didn't sit quite well with the man Abraham and Sarah his wife. They walked in time while God worked on purpose. When time seemed to be running out in their estimation, they detoured to temporarily help God to achieve his aim only to cause humanity more problems than ever imagined. God brought him back on track on Genesis chapter 17;

*And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

Not long from then, God recovered from Abraham and Sarah's Foolishness. The child of promise came in Isaac and the covenant was established. God knows how to recover from setbacks and downturns, we can learn from him.

If you believe in God, your confidence in his wisdom and ability will soar. That's where your self-confidence comes from. You need the wisdom to handle a downturn experience. *"And If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him"* (James 1:5) Never talk down to yourself during the downturn period. Always delight yourself in the Lord. This is the period when the devil tries to hijack your internal monologue. He speaks defeat and discouragement and failure to your mind. Guide your mind diligently. Be in control of your internal monologue. Speak life to yourself and the situation. This is not about self-deceit or denial. Faith does not deny the fact of what is on the ground but believes in the power of the truth of the word of God to prevail over what is. Remember it's a

battle, a chapter in the entire war of life. If you are on the Lord's side, you will win. It may take some time, but here's the testimony of a man who waited on God and came out of a downturn:

*I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. (Psalm 40: 1-3)*

### **Tough times never last**

Patience is one of the casualties of a downturn experience, particularly in business. Time feels like eternity. Expectations crawl while the wheel of progress grinds slowly. It's like the experience of insomnia waiting for the day to break. Darkness seems to be cast in stone and seems ever determined not to go away, but the day will surely break.

Having a mind that is focused on the end of a traumatic era, helps one to go through the experience. Job made a statement in the cause of his calamity, a calamity that was quite extensive covering Life and business:

*If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. (Job 14:14)*

It's the second part of that statement that seats pretty well with an expectant heart. " .. *all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.* Don't let tough times take you out, they shall soon pass away! Tough times have an expiry date.

### **You are not responsible for the downturn**

The government monetary policy led to an increase in interest rate leading to higher cost of operations and resulting in a business loss; a fall in international prices of crude oil resulted in lower foreign exchange receipt and a devaluation of the local currency wiping off your profits; new technological innovations brought new competition in the business space and now earnings and profits are shrinking and the business is under serious threat; a new government policy has severe and adverse effects on your business sector and everyone is gasping for breath. These are various business scenarios and there are several of them, many more that could occur leading to a business downturn. It wasn't you that caused the problem! As a business owner, you should not assume the

responsibility of being the General Manager of the country where your business is based. Don't bring unnecessary guilt upon yourself. Your role is limited to managing your business within the socio-political and economic space. Yes, you may participate in advocacy in pushing for a better business climate and policies but focus on navigating through the business environment and making a success of your business as much as you can. Spend less time blaming operators of the economy but look for opportunities even in adversity. You may not be responsible for the economic downturn, but you are responsible for the way your business turns out ultimately.

### **Family support is key**

Families are the first to get the brunt of a business downturn. The emotional pressure that the man or woman of the house goes through no doubt filters to the family. Tempers become short. Comments and conversations become far in between. Outings, recreational visits, and travels get canceled. Some people become grumpy and restless. Some lose their appetite while some may be robbed of their sleep. Families do bear the brunt of this business downturn. This is where a high level of understanding and family support is required. Spouses need to give one another a lot of comforting words and



encouragement. Tolerance levels must also go up while financial demands must be cut to reasonable levels. Remember it's a transient curve in the family experience, this too shall surely pass away.

The family prayer alter, at times like, this need to be fervent. The family should bond together, pray together and hope for the best together. Where one spouse is able to bridge the financial gap, he or she should gladly do so in a most unassuming manner. None should wear the garment of pride or engage in reckless comments. This is a test of the family bond and each member of the family should endeavor to pass this test.

Young children are usually unable to understand such downturn situations. Their demands remain constant no matter what the situation is. Parents should try not to takeout their frustrations on their children. Gently and lovingly let them know what you can afford to provide for hem at any given point. Although the provision of food is non-negotiable! Remember, this is a passing phase.

## CHAPTER 8

### *Suicide - The Devils Way Down*

*"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." (Matthew 27: 3-5)*



*Fig. 1 Suicide - Devils Strategy*

The Devil is the cheerleader for self-destruction. He operates as the tempter to do evil, accuser, and the condemnation advocate. He operates around the

periphery of our minds. He dictates heinous responses to situations. The Devil's choice is always the pathway down destruction lane. This was exactly what he did with Judas Iscariot, as recorded in the above scripture.

Until recent years, Suicide was an uncommon phenomenon in Nigeria. A few years ago, Nigeria ranked high on the index of the happiest people on earth, despite the misery around. Gradually, things began to change as cases of suicide and suicide attempts which were hitherto rare became more frequent.

Below is an extract of a report from reporters of Daily Trust, a Nigerian Newspaper on the occasion of the *World Suicide Prevention Day*, 2020.

## **Quote**

*Daily Trust*

*By Fide/is Mac-Leva, Haruna Ibrahim, Ojoma Akor and Ronald Mutum*

### ***Nigeria: 264 Nigerians Commit Suicide in Four Years***

*As Nigeria joins other countries in marking this year's World Suicide Prevention Day, no fewer than 264 suicide cases were recorded in the country within the last 4 years,*

*Daily Trust investigation has shown.*

*The theme of this year's World Suicide Prevention Day is 'Working Together to Prevent Suicide'.*

*The victims comprising males and females took their own lives between January 2017, and August this year, according to Newspaper reports reviewed by Daily Trust within the period.*

*This figure excluded numerous suicide cases that have not been reported by the media.*

*Daily Trust reports that suicide remains a criminal offence in Nigeria.*

*Under Section 327 of the Criminal Code Act, attempting to kill self carries a penalty of up to one year in prison.*

*"Any person who attempts to kill himself is guilty of a misdemeanour and is liable to imprisonment for one year," the section said.*

### ***Why people commit suicide***

*Experts say some of the reasons for the reported suicides range from financial hardship, marital issues, depression and job losses among others.*

*Analysis by the Daily Trust for the time under review showed that Lagos State (South-West) topped the tally with a total of 23 suicide cases. It showed that within the first and second quarters of last year alone, no fewer than 42 Nigerians among them 11 students committed suicide by consuming the deadly insecticide called sniper while others either drank acid or set themselves ablaze.*

*The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that close to 800, 000 people die due to suicide every year.*

*This means at least one person kill self every 40 seconds.*

*The International Association for Suicide Prevention (!ASP) said suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year olds globally.*

*It has also been estimated that every year, about 30,000 people die by suicide in the US., while 650,000 others receive emergency treatment after a suicide attempt.*

*According to WHO Suicide Ranking, with 17.1 suicides per 100,000 populations in a year, Nigeria ranked the 30th most suicide-prone out of 183 nations.*

*Suicide is a global phenomenon with 78 percent of cases occurring in low- and middle-income countries as at 2015*

*while 1.4 percent of global deaths in 2017 were said to be from the phenomenon.*

*Nigeria is also ranked 10th African country with higher rates of suicide, leading countries like Togo (26th), Sierra Leone (11th), Angola (19th), Burkina Faso (22nd), with Equatorial Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire occupying 7th and 5th positions respectively.*

### ***More suicides recorded in 2019***

*A breakdown of the reports reviewed by Daily Trust indicates that the year 2019 recorded the highest number of suicide incidences with 85 cases.*

*This was followed by the previous year (2018) during which 79 suicide cases were recorded.*

*A total of 66 suicide cases were recorded in 2017 while 34 cases have so far been recorded between January and August this year.*

*While many of the victims died after consuming the deadly chemical commonly called 'sniper, ' others committed suicide by hanging while some victims died by setting themselves ablaze either with petrol or inside their vehicles.*

*A study by the Suicide Research and Prevention Initiative (SURPIN), conducted at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), revealed that "out of every 66 suicide victims cumulatively recorded in 2018, only about 37.9 percent committed or attempted it through conventional means, while nearly 62.1 percent bade life farewell through the consumption of poison, especially the deadly chemical- Sniper. "*

### ***Suicide victims***

*On March 25, 2019, the picture of an SUV on Third Mainland Bridge, Lagos graced the pages of many Nigerian newspapers.*

*As it turned out to be, that car belonged to a physician, Dr. Al/well Orji who had parked and jumped into the lagoon. Similarly, on May 13, 2019, the body of Chukwuemeka Akachi, an undergraduate of the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka was discovered by a passer-by after he had successfully executed his suicide mission in the solitude of an uncompleted building located at the Sullivan Road, Nsukka.*

*He was said to have slipped into a coma after taking two bottles of the deadly sniper.*

*Although passers-by reportedly rushed Akachi to the UNN Federal Medical Centre in an effort to revive him, it was too late as he was declared dead at the hospital.*

*In another case, Christabel Omoremime Buoro, a 21-year-old 300-level student of the Department of Medical Laboratory Science, University of Benin (UN/BEN), reportedly killed herself after she was allegedly jilted by her boyfriend.*

*On June 18, 2019, her lifeless body was discovered in her fiat at Plot 4, Uwaifo lane, Newton Street, Ekosodin area, behind the university.*

*Christabel was said to have drunk the mixture of the deadly sniper chemical with a bottle of soft drink leaving behind a suicide note where she reportedly stated that she was taking her life because her boyfriend broke up with her.*

### ***Medics explain signs of a suicide mission***

*Medical experts listed certain signs that someone maybe thinking or planning to commit suicide.*

*According to them: change in behaviour or the presence of entirely new behaviours; when a person is always talking*



*or thinking about death or killing self; when a person loses interest in things he or she used to care about and making comments about being worthless, helpless or hopeless.*

*Others include when the person has depression, takes risks that could lead to death, the sudden switch from being very sad to being happy, visiting or calling people to say goodbye, looking for a way to kill themselves such as searching online for materials or means, acting recklessly and withdrawing from activities among others.*

### ***Why people commit suicide***

*Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri, a Consultant Neuro - Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist said people commit suicide for several reasons, such as depression, reactions to failure and disappointments, response to accumulated domestic violence, unemployment, alcohol dependence, drug use and abuse, among others.*

*She said suicide was not the best way of dealing with personal loss or the way to manage any situation.*

*"Suicide has to stop and this involves joint campaign by everyone,"she said.*

*Speaking on how to discourage people from committing suicide, Dr. Kadiri, who is also the Medical Director of*

*Pinnacle Medical Services, Lagos, said: "There is a need to develop resilience (the ability to cope with adverse life events and adjust to them), a sense of personal self-worth and self-confidence, effective coping and problem-solving skills, and adaptive help-seeking behaviour because they are often considered to be protective factors against the development of suicidal behaviours. "*

### ***Mental challenges encourage suicide***

*According to Dr. Monday N. Igwe, who is the Medical Director of the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Enugu, suicide has always been with us in Nigeria.*

*He noted that because of the cultural impediments (seen as a taboo) the incidences are being under-reported.*

*He said with the improvement in communication through the social media, suicide cases are now easily shared to a vast majority of people but added that this also has its implications.*

*On the causes and solutions to the menace, he said: "Many reasons have been given; untreated mental illnesses especially depression, other psychosocial factors like unemployment, natural and man-made disasters.*

*"Other factors include increasing family disharmony, social and economic exclusion among others.*

*"It requires a multi-sectorial and a multi-disciplinary approach involving various government ministries, agencies and departments especially that of health, labour and employment and other social services to address it,"he said.*

### ***COVID-19 and suicide cases***

*A psychologist, Dr. Yemi, said the impact of COVID-19 has heightened the cases of depression among the people as a result of the loss of sources of livelihood and loved ones, among other factors.*

*The expert said the situation is further worsened with the increasing cost of livelihood and limited options for the people.*

*He said, "People have overcome COVID-19 but are yet to recover from the social-economic impact of the pandemic. "People have lost jobs, and businesses have collapsed. A lot of people are complaining and feeling frustrated.*

*"They talk about the government not being bothered about their plight.*

*"This period is when they expect the government to provide support for them with all that happened with COVID-19.*

*"But the government increased the price for fuel and electricity making the common man thinks all hope is lost," he said.*

### ***What the police said***

*There was no readily available official figure of suicide cases as efforts to get the information from the police were not successful.*

*The spokesman of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF), DCP Frank Mba, said on Wednesday that the police prosecute suicide suspects based on the merits of the case.*

*He was responding to questions by Daily Trust on the number of suicide cases, including those rescued and being prosecuted by the police.*

*Mba explained that police authorities are concerned on the high level of suicide cases in Nigeria and treat them as mental cases.*

*He said it would be double jeopardy to prosecute suicide suspects while they were suffering from health issues.*

*The police spokesman said they use their medical department to counsel those who attempted suicide, including the use of Christian clergy and Muslim clerics to counsel the suspects.*

*Also, a source in the security circle said. figures relating to suicide are being kept as "secret" insisting that "not every information is meant for public consumption. "*

### ***Government, parents, clerics key to averting suicide***

*Some Nigerians spoken to yesterday told the Daily Trust that government, parents, clerics and opinion moulders are strategic to curtailing suicide.*

*Halima Abubakar, a student at the University of Maiduguri, said governments at all levels should be responsive to the wellbeing of the people.*

*"The youths commit suicide more than the aged and this is because they feel short-changed.*

*"In the event someone is looking for admission but could not get, or he is in school but finding it difficult to feed, or has graduated but there is no job, what do you think would happen?" she asked.*

*Johnson Mark, a trader at the Utako Market in Abuja said parents should be blamed for some suicide cases.*

*"Most parents don't have time for their children.*

*"They don't watch them closely to understand their problems and some children feel abandoned and therefore commit suicide,"he said.*

*Ustaz Aminu Abdullahi in Jos said clerics should be taking time to preach the implications of suicide.*

*"In Islam for instance, the punishment for anyone who commits suicide is that he or she will dwell in hellfire.*

*"Also, clerics should make their followers understand that there is no condition that is permanent. "*

*"Certain things are trials from the Almighty and if someone facing challenges commits himself to God, he would overcome them," he said.*

## **Unquote**

Apart from cases of mental illness that require medical and spiritual attention, the rise in cases of suicide as a result of problems and failures in life require urgent

pscho-spiritual attention. More than ever before, people need to be trained in handling failing in Life. That you failed on an occasion or series of occasions does not make you a failure in Life. People who have succeeded in life failed many times than you ever imagined before they succeeded. Failing is part of the learning process of life. No matter how expensive failing may be, the ultimate success at the end of the day would be worth the experience. Life may knock you down, but the decision to bounce back or be out is yours. This is why the state of the mind is important.

*"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of Life"* (Prov. 4:23) The Devil is a liar. He lies about hopelessness to people and suggests to them to end it by taking their own lives. Don't buy that trash! Here are the words of truth and word of Life::

*"For there is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease" (Job 14:7)*

*"For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but the wicked shall fall into mischief" (Proverbs 24:16)*

*Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall. I*

*shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. (Micah 7:8)*

*"Weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning (Psalm 30:5)*

*"... Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27)*

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Corinthians 4:17)*

The word of God carries light and the light is the Life of men. These scriptural passages (and many more) are your defensive weapons against the lies of the Devil and the temptation to commit suicide in the face of difficulties, losses, and embarrassments. Your life is more precious than any material thing of life. They are not worth dying for.

### **Suicide is a crime and a sin**

Under Section 327 of the Nigerian Criminal Code Act, attempting to kill self carries a penalty of up to one year in prison. Killing one's self eventually nails the coffin as the victim executes capital punishment upon himself or herself for no just cause. This is self-inflicted injustice!



*"Thou shalt not kill."* (Exodus 20:13) That includes yourself. Thou shall not kill yourself! Suicide is a violation of the right to life. If it is both a crime and a sin, then victims of suicide are double losers. They lose on earth and in eternity, booking a space in hell. You have a right to live, don't let the Devil make you flush that right down the drain. The big deal is that suicide robs the victim of eternal life! Don't do it!!!

## CHAPTER 9

### *My God: The Lifter Up of My Head*

*Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.*

*Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God.*

*But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.*

*(Psalm 3:1-3)*

This is one of the most beautiful yet profound scripture anyone can hold on to in life. Contained in these three verses is the summary of the discussions of this entire book. The troubles of life, the downturns and the feeling of hopelessness and its attendant despondency, discouragement, and the restoration of hope in God. They all wrap up the reality of life.

Internal monologues are critical to the handling of downtimes in Life. Our monologues in times of travail draw largely from our faith and our values. These are the armor that keeps off the invasion of despondent thoughts fueled by the lies of the Devil. It's the Devil's stock in trade to amplify problems and make them large enough to obliterate our faith. He enlarges the problems so much that

they appear larger than life and insurmountable. Yet with just a little faith in God, we can puncture the balloon of problems the Devil hangs precariously over our lives.

David in scripture mastered the art of internal monologue. He drew from his faith and trust in the Almighty:

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. (Psalm 42:5)*

Some factors affect us during our downtime experiences. Our handling of these factors help us in coping with the situation we find ourselves in. These factors include time, spiritual maturity level, and ear-gate experiences.

## **Time**

Time is one that could be a healer and could also be a challenge. Downtime experiences always feel longer than necessary. The night always appears long and unending. One always desires that a nightmare is over as soon as possible. However, there is this saying that; *"the impossible we can do at once, miracles take a little longer."* Amid the downtime, our character is being built, our resilience is being reinforced, our faith is being tested,

and our trust in God is being examined. Time challenges our ability to hold forth while help is on the way. This too shall pass away but for how long will this go on is the top inquiry of our mind.

We have David's experience in scripture as a soothing resource at times like this:

*I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD. (Psalm 40: 1- 3)*

The assurance of help ameliorates the pains of the waiting time. Just be sure you are waiting on the Lord and resting upon His promises. He sure will come through for you.

### **Spiritual Maturity**

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10: 13)*

Our travails in life may be temptations and trials of faith to assess our level of maturity and possibly move us to the next level. Everyone who passes through life will attend the school of maturity. It is not by choice but by the mandatory experience of life. Products of this institution come out in one form or the other. Some come forth refined while some come out damaged. The difference in output is in the level of spiritual maturity.

Job came out this way: *"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. "* (Job23:10)

Judas turned out this way: *"And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."* (Matthew 27:5)

God is our anchor in the days of trouble. He is the solid rock, all other grounds are sinking sand. Whatever is needed to see you through the downturn, He is the provider. He is as much the God of the mountain as he is the Lord of the valley. Isaac in the scripture went through these life experiences and his spiritual maturity proved worthwhile. From his deportation from the land of Gerar (Genesis 26) after being unusually successful in the period of famine to the perennial Philistinine contention against

every well he dug at the Valley of Gerar. It all ended in his enemies bowing before him and acknowledging God in his life.

*Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD. And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink." (Genesis 26: 26-30)*

Patience is a product of spiritual maturity and it pays in the long run.

### **Ear-gate experiences**

*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Roman 10: 17)*

Just the same way faith is boosted by hearing the powerful and encouraging word of God, fear can also come into

one's mind by the damaging words of discouragement and hopelessness. What one allows to get past one's ear-gate during a downtime experience is very important. It goes straight to the heart. "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*" (Proverbs 4:23) This is not about not wanting to hear the truth. Truly the truth of a matter could be bitter, but what we always call the truth may just be the *fact* and not the real *truth*. Life is a constant clash between "fact" and "truth." The reality of one's experience is the fact. It is not denied or else one will be living in self-deceit but the truth is in God. "*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the Life ...*" (John 14:6)

For example, that one is ill and distressed may be a fact, a real one, but the truth, based on of the word of God, is that by his stripes, we were healed.

*But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.* (Isaiah 53: 5)

*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto*

*righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* (1 Peter 2: 24)

This is the truth that needs to be established over the fact of our experience. This is where the fight of faith takes place. It does not deny the reality of our feeling but establishes the reality of the power of God's word over our physical experience. That does not stop one from seeking medical attention, but remember healing belongs to God. Behind the fact of our experience may be the force of the Devil but behind the truth of our expectation is the power of God. Our ear-gate is the passage to establish our choice. The more of the truth of the word of God we allow through our ear-gate, the more it shapes our thought process and drives us to positive actions. " *...Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.*" (Romans 10: 17) and "*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*" (Psalm 119:105). Be intentional about what you choose to hear.

### **The Lifter up of my head**

The downtime of Life is that time when one's head is bowed. It's that time when the news update does not look promising. It's that time when money may fail. It's that time when men become self-appointed advisers. It's that



time when alternative gods show up. It's that crossroad of life when no direction seems right. The heart is distressed and the head is bowed. At times like this, the testimony of someone who has gone through this path of life provides the much-needed tonic to rejuvenate a distressed soul.

*"Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.*

(Psalm 3: 2-3)

No one passes through life without a "head-bowing" experience at one time or the other. This is one sober experience that humbles us. No one stuck in heavy mud pulls himself or herself out without help. This shows that even the strongest of men and women do have their moments of vulnerability. The baby in us always cries for a lifting. No amount of motivational speaking can lift one when in life's mess. You need power beyond the suppression for a lifting.

*I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall*

*see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.* (Psalm 40: 1-3)

God makes use of lifting agents to bring us out of adversity. Men and situations are God's lifting agents. From scriptural records, Joseph was unjustly imprisoned. God used Pharaoh's bottler and Pharaoh's dream to lift him out of prison. Daniel's sojourn to the lion's den was the unusual elevator that lifted him to become the president of governors in Babylon. Esther, at the admonition of Modecai his uncle, prayed, fasted, and acted and the turn of events changed in her favour as well as that of Modecai and the Jews. No one lifts better than God. He has ready agents for your lifting.

*When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.* (Psalm 126: 1-2)

You will laugh last.

# CHAPTER 10

## WORDS ON MARBLE

### Quotable Quotes

*This is a bouquet of Inspirational words from this book*

*In my pastoral experience, I have seen bareness fall like a pack of cards as God releases his grace and mercy.*

*Waiting times always look like it's forever. Trusting God and staying within the multitude of right and godly counsel ensures safety and helps ameliorate the pain*

*Panic and sorrow are not helpful, keep them away with the word of God. Speak positively to yourself. Don't host pity parties.*

*When all else fails, live your life! There are issues that one has to commit into God's hands, leave them in his "parking lot" and let his will be done.*

*Abraham held on to God and never gave up on God. He understood that whatever God does not do, no one can do it. An attempt at man-made solutions only leads to latter-day trouble.*

*Seeking solutions, especially spiritual solutions, from the right source is critical to handling the downtime of life. God honours our faith even as our faith honours him.*

*When you are down spiritually, occasioned by any happenstance of*

*life, stick with the Lord Jesus and shun problematic alternatives. He alone knows the way out.*

*Just in case you are also going through the repercussion of your misadventure in life, you've got to learn to take God's chastening in good faith rather than rebel.*

*Being financially down is not a sign of righteousness. God has delight in the prosperity of his people.*

*A change in times calls for a change in mind-set. This is what enables one to look at problems with opportunity lenses. In life, nothing is cast in stone except change.*

*Change rides on the tide of faith, faith in the unchanging changer in the affairs of life.*

*The ability to spot a need that you can give a solution to profitably, which you then carry out, is the "work" that your faith is waiting for to change your financial fortune.*

*Waiting time is a period for introspection, rethinking, and restrategizing. It is also a time for drawing closer to God and enhancing your spiritual relationship with the Almighty*

*Sickness is a fact of the Adamic nature but healing and health is the truth of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*It has been rightly observed and noted that the best of business*

*schools have "managing Success" in their curriculums, but the lessons of managing failure are taught in the school of life.*

*Never talk down to yourself during the downturn period. Always delight yourself in the Lord.*

*Don't let tough times take you out, they shall soon pass away! Tough times have an expiry date.*

*Humpty Dumpties don't last in business. Once they hit the canvas, they crash. But the one with hope, the oxygen that brings back from the brink, can always bounce back again.*

*Being knocked down is not news, it's your bouncing back that makes you a champion over adversity and that's what makes headline news! Once you are back, it's a new day.*

*Patience is one of the casualties of a downturn experience, particularly in business. Time feels like eternity. Expectations crawl while the wheel of progress grinds slowly. It's like the experience of insomnia waiting for the day to break. Darkness seems to be cast in stone and seems ever determined not to go away, but the day will surely break.*

*Don't let tough times take you out, they shall soon pass away! Tough times have an expiry date.*

*Life may knock you down, but the decision to bounce back or be out is yours. This is why the state of the mind is important.*

*Our life is more precious than any material thing of life. They are not worth dying for.*

*Internal monologues are critical to the handling of downtimes in Life. Our monologues in times of travail draw largely from our faith and our values.*

*It's the Devil's stock in trade to amplify problems and make them large enough to obliterate our faith. He enlarges the problems so much that they appear larger than life and insurmountable. Yet with just a little faith in God, we can puncture the balloon of problems the Devil hangs precariously over our lives.*

*Amid the downtime, our character is being built, our resilience is being reinforced, our faith is being tested, and our trust in God is being examined.*

*Patience is a product of spiritual maturity and it pays in the long run.*

*Life is a constant clash between "fact" and "truth." The reality of one's experience is the fact. It is not denied or else one will be living in self-deceit but the truth is in God.*

*Behind the fact of our experience may be the force of the Devil but behind the truth of our expectation is the power of God.*

*No amount of motivational speaking can lift one when in life's mess. You need power beyond the suppression for a lifting.*

### **Last Line:**

Downtime experiences in life are not always the making of the Devil or a result of demonic or spiritual attack. Life, sometimes, just happens to us in different ways. Sometimes, it's God behind the storm so he can get our attention and work out His purpose in us. Jesus already gave us a heads-up; "...in the world, ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Sure, the entire world system is skewed against humanity pointing us to Calvary and making us desirous of our eternal home as we navigate through this life; not as losers but as victors; ultimate victors, and partakers of Jesus' victory. Downtimes, as undesirable as they are, bring us closer to God. So when we pray, let us pray in faith and not in fear, let us hope in trust and not in doubt, let us act spiritually and not just emotionally as the Holy Spirit walks with us through the waters of life. Job said, "*...when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*" (Job 23:10) May a better you come out of the vicissitudes of life.



## About the Book

“The very first important thing you must do when you experience a downturn of any kind in life is to take control of your internal monologue. What you say to yourself has a far more impact on you than what anyone else says to you.”

“Take control of your thought.” ...*For as he thinketh in his heart, so he is...*” (Prov. 23:7) Don't let your situation hijack your thought process. Emotions and rationality belong to different compartments of the brain. When negative emotions have the better part of you, It can totally obliterate your thinking process. So no matter how bad you feel on the job, take a step back and think of the good times. Be appreciative for the time you needed a job badly and this one came through. Remember how the income from the job has helped you meet most of your needs: how your self-dignity has been enhanced by virtue of having this job. Remember that you may indeed outlive the person or persons that make you miserable on that job and that tough times never last. Don't let other people or situations redefine you. Stamp your personality on the situation. Down times are the result of emotional distress, counter it with positive thoughts. With this you will get back your vibes!

Every challenge of life has an expiry date. This book will help you.

## About the Author



Seyi Adeyemi is a Pastor, Counselor, Former Banker, Management Consultant, Trainer and Life Coach. He is the senior pastor of The Worship Center an Apostolic Church located in Oregun, Lagos, Nigeria. He is also the CEO of A.A. Weavers Consult Nigeria Ltd, a Training and Consulting firm based in Lagos, Nigeria. He was a former Director and Head of Trade Products, Citibank Nigeria Ltd and was

ordained a pastor in Christ Apostolic Church. He has brought together in this book a mixture of over 25 years of pastoral experience and over 30 years of corporate life experience. He is the author of several other books including Rivers of Living water, New Birth, New Life, Guide to choosing a life partner, Register Now in Book of Life. He is the convener of the annual Apostolic Fire Conference which has been impacting lives since 2017. An impactful and much sought after conference speaker, a prolific teacher and dynamic preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is married to his darling wife, Dammy Adeyemi and blessed with three lovely children.

