

THE FOUR
ESSENTIAL
HABITS OF THE
NEW CREATION
IN CHRIST

How to program your spirit for the glorious life

A TETRALOGY BY
ONÓRIO CUTANE

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Translated by Sofia Magalhães

Reviewed by

Dénise Monteiro

OGC PUBLICATIONS LLC

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THE FOUR ESSENTIAL HABITS OF THE NEW CREATION IN CHRIST

PREFACE

The book at hand is a manual of instructions and guidance for the believer's spiritual. It aims to help the believer program himself spiritually for a glorious life according to the will of God, our Father.

We present the four essential and indispensable habits of a person regenerated by the Holy Spirit. First, it's necessary to understand that the human being lives configured by the habits he creates throughout his life due to his experiences and daily lives. These can influence his way of being, speaking, and behavior in a general sense. Habits configure a behavior that a person learns and frequently repeats until it becomes part of his subconscious and dictates his *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*. This way of being and doing things results from the frequent repetition of acts that, when internalized, become a rule or an attitude. To be a habit, there must be a regularity in the way of acting or doing things. Once a person's character is configured and his behavior shaped by this frequency of activities, it becomes difficult to break certain habits to start others. Furthermore, habits can be detrimental, slowing down a person's life and progress if they are harmful, just as they can catapult an individual's life if they are beneficial and positive.

Reading the Holy Scriptures, we constantly encounter stories of men and women who lived extraordinary and glorious lives, as if they weren't of this world. They belonged to another world, to a higher realm than this world: the realm of heaven. They achieved victories in seemingly impossible situations and walked with God, pleasing Him in their ways. There was no mountain so high that they couldn't cross, no giant that they couldn't defeat. They had in common the habits, habits of a new creature.

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The notion of the new creation refers to the fact that there is a regeneration process, a new birth for those in Christ Jesus. Jesus is described in the Scriptures as the Second Adam because he came in human form to die on Calvary's cross, rise again, and give us new life: eternal life. This life is a free gift from God, given to those who have been born again into the kingdom of God. It's a glorious life, but for its activation and experience, the believer must develop and live according to new habits: the habits of a new creature in Christ. To this, the Lord Jesus bore witness, "if you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19 NKJV). In another passage, the apostle Paul stressed, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV). So, who is the new creation? It's that man or woman who, by virtue of his or her faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, has been enlightened within, transformed, and given a new life. It is he who is saved and has fellowship with God, his creator.

As a new creature, there are certain habits that the believer has to develop, without which his experience with God wouldn't be glorious, and his life on earth would be lackluster. Many preachers have been engaged in preaching the Gospel throughout the world to bring many souls into God's kingdom and save lives. And one of the challenges derived from this glorious ecclesiastical exercise is that the bulk of born-again believers experience moments of temporary joy concerning their salvation, and then it all dies down. They become, spiritually, like choking babies, and others even suffer from chronic spiritual malnutrition. As a consequence, their faith falters for lack of a solid foundation, and their trust in God is shaky in the face of the challenges of life in this sensory world or the front of the devil's continuous attacks against them. They live in tribulation and anguish for lack of knowledge, without peace, joy, and the will to live. They

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cannot express their faith in God and show the joy of the salvation they have received through faith in Christ. And, because they cannot visualize new horizons in the spiritual arena, they falter. They need to know how to use the compass of the word God has given them and gloriously navigate through life, even in times when contrary winds blow against their progress. They have a cell phone to communicate with their savior. Still, because they don't know the codes of their home country, the kingdom of heaven, they cannot develop communication that activates their country's angelic contingent to come to their rescue or just their service. What is needed? You need to know the word of God and the aspects inherent to its multi-functionality and multi-purpose, according to the will of God, Father.

This book is here to help shed light on these and some other aspects. It's a guidebook for the believer on developing the habits that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had and recommended for us to have a glorious life. The Holy Spirit impressed on my heart to write this book to help God's children in the world in their spiritual growth. It deals with the four essential habits of the born-again Christian. These are:

1. The habit of praying always;
2. The habit of studying God's word and meditating on it;
3. The habit of testifying about Jesus;
4. The habit of gathering in Christ's church.

There are explanations and guidelines for each of these habits and how to configure your spirit in light of the revelations that God's word brings us. With the knowledge derived from the information contained in this book, the reader will have the opportunity to imitate the Lord and program his daily life into a spiritual investment that will bless his life forever. In addition, the reader will grow in grace, and he will have more extraordinary abilities to do what he

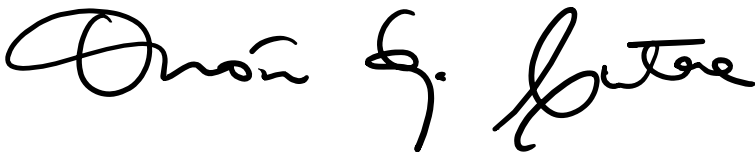
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couldn't do before or even go beyond the physical limitations of this material world. Likewise, the reader will grow in knowledge, enriching his spirit daily in a spiritual investment that won't only give him rewards in eternity but will also give him mechanisms to live above the circumstances of this world.

This book is divided into four parts to facilitate the reading and digestion of the information and insights contained herein, and each part has its chapters and subchapters. Furthermore, it's written in plain language that is easy to understand. It also has practical examples and practical instructions on how to proceed in each of the habits. With it, the reader will learn to apply God's word in every area of his life.

I hope this manual will be helpful to you in your walk with Jesus. Now that you are saved and born again, I invite you to develop these four essential habits, which don't exhaust all the habits a believer should have but will serve as an essential foundation for your spiritual growth.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Oron G. Gutierrez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Oron" is written with a large, sweeping capital 'O'. The middle initial "G." is written with a smaller capital 'G' followed by a period. The last name "Gutierrez" is written with a capital 'G' and a trailing flourish.

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INTRODUCTION

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV).

Changing habits has been something very complicated and challenging for many people. This is because a habit constitutes a set of practices that, repeatedly done over time, become engraved in a person’s subconscious, thus, conditioning his character and his way of being, acting, and doing things. To a certain extent, the person becomes dependent on these habits, and consequently, they control him and dictate his appetites, desires, and motivations in life. All these habits have been assimilated over some time of repeated practices.

Habits can be positive or negative as well as good or bad, and for each of these two groups, there are advantages and disadvantages.

Positive or good habits help a person to grow and improve in life. They raise an individual’s standard of living and make him stand out among others who don’t have them. For example, some people have the habit of waking up early to pray and exercise. One, it helps in spiritual strengthening and makes the person sensitive to the voice of God. That is, prayer strengthens the communion between man and God. However, for this habit to be reiterated and to prevail, it’s necessary to break other patterns contrary to it. War arises between the flesh and the spirit because the flesh doesn’t want to pray and doesn’t like to wake up early. Sleep is great, and waking up at dawn

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is complicated for some. Therefore, it's necessary to set an alarm on the clock to wake you up at a specific time every day.

In the early days, it may even seem difficult to obey the clock if you choose to follow what the flesh feels and craves at that moment. It's necessary to be disciplined and firm in your decisions and choices, thus going against the will of the flesh and the comfort that early mornings bring during sleep. It's likely that in the first few days, the person will feel disturbed by the noise of the alarm and will wake up only to turn off the alarm and set another time until they sleep and complete their state of sleep or rest. He only finds out later that the sun has risen, and he is already late for her service, school, or his place of exercise for the economic activities that earn his bread on the table. Thus, hunger and misery are born. Why? Because of the flesh and the lack of discipline. You have to discipline the flesh and do what you want and not what it wants.

Breaking habits requires a lot of will, decision, and firmness, ignoring the harmful cravings of the flesh. This is why prayer is an exercise in discipline for those who want to tame the flesh and not let themselves be controlled by their appetites. The flesh is like a car, and you are a driver or motorist; if you don't know how to drive the vehicle, you have to get down and push it. It can facilitate your speed as well as hinder your movements. So, you have to learn its mechanical workings, its speeds, and how to drive it.

Once, a brother told me, "Apostle, I don't like high speeds. So, when I buy my car, I will drive at 60 km per hour and 80 km/h at most." Well, he was saying that because it wasn't his car, and he had a phobia about speeds.

High speeds are not good because you may have trouble getting around it in case of a sudden obstacle, thus getting into or causing

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an accident. Therefore, you must always take your car for an oil and suspension check and a vehicle inspection to make sure that it's in optimal condition. Furthermore, the driver's psychological state must be stable before getting into the car and driving because not only do you put your own life at risk but also other people's lives.

So, it's always good to check that the car has enough fuel, that the tires are up to date, and that no children are playing under the car. It's a responsibility to drive a car because when you are on the highway, you not only drive your vehicle but in defensive driving, you also drive the vehicles of others on the road. That is why it isn't enough to have the money to buy a car and drive it. You must have a license, and for that, you must pass the theoretical and practical exams. Unfortunately, many prefer to buy or bribe the officials to have the license, but they cannot bribe the obstacles and circumstances on the roads. Although most accidents involve the action of demons that want to drink blood, many are human and not mechanical.

So, the brother who told me that he would never drive at high speeds was blessed and bought his car. Today, he can't ride in the 60km/h or 80km/h limits as he promised before getting the car. He has developed a bad habit of running all the time. How did he get to this stage? Because the vehicle also asks you to increase the speed. But that is where the problem lies: it shouldn't be the car dictating the driver's mental speed; it should be the driver dictating the mechanical speed of the car. So, we see a correlation here between the driver's mental speed and the car's mechanical speed. If a man doesn't have the discipline to tame himself, he won't be able to tame the physical car he is in. Can you see the importance of discipline in creating new habits and breaking old ones?

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Now, if prayer is an exercise that stimulates the spirit and awakens it, so are physical exercises. Let's imagine that you want to lose some weight or increase the power of your cardiovascular system; you will have to learn to wake up early and exercise. You will have to schedule specific times during the day for this, which can be in the morning or the afternoon. In the first few days, you may face a challenge or war against your own body. Why? Because the body isn't used to waking up at that time or to being subjected to that kind of exercise. This requires discipline to create regularity concerning the activities and the time when they are done. One step after another continuously. Initially, you may not see the desired results, but you have to be persistent until your body gets into the habit of this new routine. This result comes in the medium or long term. You have to discipline yourself not to eat anything that comes your way or whatever you feel like in order not to spoil the rhythm you have created.

After a while, you will find that your own body will ask you to do these exercises, wake up to pray at the usual time, or do exercises at the standard time. If the activity hurt in the beginning and left you with inevitable aftereffects, it will no longer hurt when you do it again. This is because your body has gained consistency and has acquired a new habit that it's conditioned to. Thus, you begin to enjoy spiritual and physical health that others do not have. This isn't the result of wishful thinking but of regular discipline and obedience. This is why Paul encouraged Timothy.

For example, if you have never exercised throughout your life and are starting now, it's never too late to start. It can be today!

It's likely that after some exercises, you will feel pain and certain discomforts. These are normal because your body has never experienced them before. But with repeated and regular practice, this

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passes and becomes normal. Old habits die hard, but with discipline, they will be overcome.

For example, when I was still a teenager, I decided to set the alarm to wake up at 4 am to pray. At first, it was a challenge. With the cold of the early morning and the warmth of the blankets, I noticed that it wouldn't be easy to wake up that easily. But I had goals: I wanted to grow in the spirit and have a strong fellowship with God. In addition, I wanted to plan my day, week, and life and flag it before the day began. So, I changed the time to five o'clock when the alarm went off at four on the first day. After that, however, I started to be disciplined by obeying the alarm, another extra that served as a disciplinarian from the second day on. At first, it bothered me, but in the end, we became friends.

As time went by, the Holy Spirit always woke me up at 4 am to pray and study the Bible no matter where or in what country I was. Today, what was once my military discipline and rigorously uncomfortable has become my greatest pleasure and an extraordinary life experience with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. The background is that God will not violate man's will, but He gives grace and will to desire and do the good work. So, it's up to you to decide to change your life, your habits, and how you do things. Who knows, maybe the reason why your life doesn't change is that your practices haven't changed yet. Some habits are typical of poor people, and that is why no matter what they are given, they will never be prosperous.

For example, constantly waking up late, laziness, the begging spirit - always wanting to be served and given the fish and never interested in learning how to have a hook and go fishing. This creates dependency, and people get tired, and it becomes a burden for them

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always to be helping the same person. So, it's normal to lose friends and relationships because of this procedure.

Another habit that contributes to poverty is the spirit of always creating debt. Once the last debt is paid off, the person feels at peace that he is free of debt, but soon after he will have another one, and so on, the person works but doesn't see what he is doing with the money, because at the end of the month he always has high unpaid bills. Another habit that contributes to poverty is to appear to be what you are not in front of people—living above your capabilities and spending above your income. This is dangerous, even though it earns you compliments in the eyes of the people who see you. Thus, poverty is not only a state of mind; it's also a spirit and is activated by bad habits.

On the other hand, the wealthy have certain habits that characterize them: they know how to invest and reinvest their income in assets. Most of them have a regular financial thermostat and know that they cannot spend more than they earn. Their expenses are below their incomes. They don't live to impress people, but they do everything to make the money they have and generate more money. We can say that the poor person spends to appear rich, and the rich person invests in remaining prosperous. One lives an imaginary and utopian world, and the other lives a real world, taking risks and facing the challenges inherent to the status he has attained.

If you give a million dollars to the rich person, he invests it in producing more money, but if you give it to a poor person, he can have a spending party and buy luxury cars and clothes that make him spend money. That's why people who are rich and have money don't like others to know it. And people who have no money like to appear wealthy when they have nothing. So, consequently, they spend money to sustain and maintain their unreal image, while the rich

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invest money to expand their productive capacity and influence. So, it all depends on habits.

There was a rich man who made an investment that bankrupted him. But after about two years, he was rich again. Why? Because of his financial thermostat and his habits. He no longer had the money, but he had the practices and the mindset that made him have the money. So, he managed to overcome and get back to his level.

Another man who was poor, but made a lot of money in 2 years, lost everything because he didn't have the habit and mentality that went along with the new status he had achieved. Do you see why habits are determinants of a person's life condition? Develop good habits.

Why did I write this work? To help you develop good new habits and, above all, the four habits of a new creation.

For example, for those who used to drink alcohol and have just quit or want to, you should replace this old habit with a new one, perhaps drinking juice instead of alcohol. Replace bad habits with good ones. Refuse to indulge the desires of the flesh that are contradictory to God's will and that slow down your progress in life. Habits don't like to die, so to deal with them successfully, you must replace them with new ones that are much better than they are. They die when the new ones bury them. It isn't enough to say you have already changed; you have to do something different that shows you have already changed. Show how John the Baptist said, "bear fruit worthy of repentance" (Matthew 3:8 NKJV).

May God bless you richly and abundantly

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PART I

THE HABIT OF PRAYING

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CHAPTER I

Understanding the concept of prayer

Communion with God

Prayer is commonly defined as communion with God or communication with God. It's through prayer that man interacts with God, his creator. Prayer is the most incredible power that God has given man through which we interact with Him and establish a healthy fellowship. This fellowship sets the basis of our daily and eternal relationship with God. The Scripture, in 1 John 1:3, says, "That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." So *a priori*, we see in this text that we must have fellowship with God and with His Son Jesus Christ.

In practice, it's to this fellowship that we have been called in Christ Jesus. As the Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." The word communion used in these texts comes from the Greek word "*Koinonia*." And this term means "sharing, communication or division." That is, through *Koinonia*, God's blessings, peace, health, prosperity, and joy are transferred from God to man's spirit through the Holy Spirit.

In this sense, prayer allows your spirit to come into contact with the Spirit of God, and there is a transfer of glory to the one who prays. This is why the Scripture states that whoever is joined with the Lord becomes one spirit with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17). Thus,

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there is a fusion of spirits. So, likewise, the Spirit of God meets and unites with the spirit of man, thus generating the transfer of energies and power.

Without a disciplined prayer life, you will have no spiritual progress and may become insensitive to the activities that take place in the spiritual world. Prayer is like pedaling a bicycle on a hill or climb; if you stop pedaling, you fall off. Likewise, praying is like swimming in deep water at the beach or in a swimming pool; if you stop swimming, you sink. Hence the need to develop the habit of praying daily.

As a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and a new creature in Christ, you need to develop a healthy prayer life, without which your progress in life will be complicated because life is spiritual. Prayer is like a marriage; if the spouses don't have healthy communication, the marriage can fall apart. It's the same with our spirit; we need to be in constant contact with divinity, with God, to keep our spirit in the state of alert to what is going on in the spirit world, which roughly influences our life here on earth. However, we have to overcome the desires and the will of the flesh because the flesh doesn't want to be subject to God.

Why should I pray? - you may wonder. Well, you should pray because Jesus told us to pray. In Luke 18:1, Jesus taught his disciples about the need to pray and never faint because prayer is also a necessity. When you gave your heart to Christ and were born again, your spirit, your inner man, was born and not your flesh. And it is this part of your spirit that needs to be always in communion with God. Often, the flesh will be your greatest enemy because it doesn't want to pray. This is why Paul exhorted, "for we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV). You must be led by the Holy Spirit, by the inner voice.

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CHAPTER II

Giving God legal permission to intervene in the affairs of the earth

To pray is to give God the legal right to intervene in the affairs of the earth. This is where we find the biggest reason why we should pray. “But apostle, how can I give God legal right to intervene in the affairs of the earth, God being sovereign?” Well, there are three things you should know about God’s sovereignty.

1. **God is sovereign.**

This means that He is independent in His decisions and actions, for He is the Creator of the universe and man.

Before everything existed, He existed, and he created everything. So, the Scripture attests in Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.” This Scripture alludes to the fact that God is the Creator and owner of all things. Therefore, being sovereign, no one influences him because He has total autonomy of decision and action.

2. **God’s sovereignty is linked. It is bound to His Word.**

“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth” (Psalm 33:6 NKJV).

Moreover, God upholds all things by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3b). It’s the Word of God that secures the moon, the stars, and the sun in their courses. It is He who holds the earth and everything that exists. Also, God and his Word are one, “In the

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beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1-3 NKJV).

3. God is as sovereign as His Word.

This means that the Word of God is sovereign, just as God is sovereign. Where the Word of God reaches, God also reaches through it. Therefore, the Word of God isn’t independent of God but an integral part of its extension to man. Therefore, God won’t do whatever it cannot do because He acts and operates through His Word. He created the universe through the Word. God is eternal, and so is his Word. “Forever, O LORD, your word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89). When there is a problem on earth with men, and they pray, God usually sends his Word to do the work in coordination with the Holy Spirit, as the psalmist says, “He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions” (Psalm 107:20 NKJV).

Dear reader, I want you to understand the following, “God has exalted his word above his name.” The word “name” in Hebrew denotes “character.” So, we can see that God’s Word is above his character, and it’s the Word that reveals to us God’s nature and *modus operandi*. When I say that God is as sovereign as his Word, I mean that God doesn’t act apart from his Word, for it is the constitution of the kingdom of heaven. This brings us to the following point.

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4. God doesn't violate His Word.

This statement means that God's actions and operations are always in agreement with His Word. It's this point that leads us to understand the need to pray.

Remember that in the previous lines, we said that prayer is to give God the legal right to intervene in the affairs of the earth? Well, here is the answer to the question linked to man's authority that gives him prerogatives to give God access or legal right to intervene on earth. In the book of Genesis 1:26 NKJV, we read, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"

If you look closely at this Scripture, you will see that God practically delegates all authority over the earth to man. Therefore, the earth was given to man, with a physical body to manage and administer it. No spirit without a physical body is legal on earth. Whenever spirits, whether from God or the devil, act upon the earth influencing the lives of humans, they are given permission by the man with a physical body. It's easy to notice this, looking, for example, at the birth of Jesus Christ. Why did he need to come through a woman's womb and not in spirit? The answer is simple because no spirit has any right on earth without a physical body. Even God had to submit to this principle that He Himself established in His Word. It's a law, and the spirits know it.

If Jesus had come as Spirit in His divine-spiritual form, His death on the cross would have been illegal, for He came in man's place to die for man and save man. The Scripture in Hebrews 2:14-15 NIV attests to this, saying, "Since the children have flesh and

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blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” Jesus, even though He was one hundred percent God, was also one hundred percent Man, so He was called the Son of Man in allusion to His human nature that encapsulated divinity in Him.

In the text in Mark 5, we read about a man possessed by a legion of demons who asked to be thrown into pigs when Jesus commanded them to come out. The man was paranoid and wandered about the cemeteries and graves and had broken shackles and fetters with which the community sought to tame him. When the evil spirits came out of him into the pigs, the madness he was suffering from also came out and passed unto the pigs that drowned in the sea. Why did those evil spirits ask to enter the pigs’ rod? Because without a physical body, they would have no legality in that province.

Once, they were there, legalized by the mad man whom they owned. Now they would remain in the same province by the legality given through the animals with physical bodies - the pigs. So much so that even when the pigs’ rod drowned in the sea, they remained alive, within the waters, looking for whom they could again possess. They always want to return to the body from which they were expelled. This is why you, as a child of God, must fill yourself with the Holy Spirit, with His Word, and have a healthy prayer life to keep yourself filled with fire daily. Because of lack of this knowledge, many brothers in the church are always manifesting demons and are not entirely free because their bodies and habits are still fertile fields of the devil and demons. Therefore, you must not give place to the devil.

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Did you know that even the Holy Spirit, to be legal on earth now, had to come in the name of Jesus, that is, in place of God, and acts using men and women - vessels surrendered to God? Jesus stated, "But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." This is why God wants to fill all flesh with the Holy Spirit in his greatest project to win humanity back to himself. Thus, God will have the utmost assurance that humanity is His because it will have and live by His Spirit and not by a rebellious spirit from the devil.

Your belonging to God isn't measured by the uniform you wear, or the years you attend church, but by whether you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and have been filled with the Holy Spirit. Only those who have the Spirit of God are children of God.

In all the examples listed above, we regularly see the interconnection between the spirits of the spirit world and their communion with both men and animals.

Dear reader, understand that your physical body is what makes you legal on earth now. That is why, in God's work, He uses the living and not the ones who have already passed into eternity, and it is His primary plan to fill you with His Holy Spirit daily. The earth is something physical, and only a man with a body has the legal power to operate on it. And non-human spirits operate by proxy on earth - using the permission that men give them. For example, suppose someone is in the habit of performing ancestor masses or killing animals and offering blood to the spirits. In that case, that blood will be the door or article of legality that will allow demons to come into that family to wreak havoc in their relationships, professional life, academia, and the like. Therefore, you shouldn't make mass to the

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ancestors because it isn't to them that you are offering these sacrifices, but to the devil, even unconsciously.

The Scripture states, "The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's, but the earth He has given to the children of men" (Psalm 115:16 NKJV).

As a human being, you and I are descendants of Adam, the first man to exist on the face of the earth from whom we all trace our ancestry and descent (Acts 17:26). Thus, the activities on earth are handed over to men (male and female). Therefore, even God needs to use a man to save other men. Seeing the suffering of the people of Israel in Egypt, God went to a remote land, Midian, and called a man, whose name was Moses, and sent him to deliver his people (Exodus 3:7-8).

Why didn't God go to deliver his people directly without needing man's agency? Because activities and operations on earth must involve the conscious or unconscious acquiescence of a human being. This is why God's own Word states, "By a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet he was preserved" (Hosea 12:13 NKJV). There were several episodes in which God used a human being to deliver and protect His people. Time would not be enough to tell you about Gideon, who delivered God's people from the Midianites. Of Deborah, who delivered them from the Philistines by the hand of Kiserah. Of Joshua, who introduced Israel to the promised land, and of David, who delivered them from Goliath and the Philistines.

Furthermore, in the New Testament, we see in the text from Acts chapter 10, God sends an angel to Cornelius, commander of an army of one hundred soldiers in the Roman system, also called the centurion. The latter was in prayer and fasting for three days when

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the angel of the Lord appeared to him and directed him to send for Simon Peter. Then, in chapter 11, Peter recounts the facts according to what Cornelius had told him, and these were the words of the angel, “Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words with which you and all your household will be saved” (Acts 11:13-14 NKJV).

Why didn’t the angel go to evangelize Cornelius? The answer is still the same: because the earth was given to man and spirits need the permission of a human being or to use their agency to operate on earth. When Peter began speaking in Cornelius’ house, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the Word and began speaking in other tongues and glorifying God even before finishing his discourse sermon. Where was the Holy Spirit all this time when Cornelius was praying and fasting for salvation? He was there, in Cornelius’ home, hovering above the roof of his house, waiting for Peter - a human being - to speak the words that would permit him to enter, fill and baptize Cornelius and his family.

This all leads us to one fact: God’s spiritual intervention on earth requires, first of all, that there be a man or woman who prays. Hence, prayer is giving God the legal right to intervene in the affairs of the earth on man’s behalf. Therefore, it’s very dangerous not to pray.

Dear reader, understand that it’s through prayer that man participates in spiritual activities in the spiritual arena. If you don’t pray, even if you are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, you may find yourself suffering barriers and obstacles in life that have no logical-rational explanation. So why do you think your opponents are capable of offering sacrifices containing the blood of goats and oxen to witches to see someone harmed? Because these sacrifices

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legitimize the manifestation and operations of evil spirits invited by that person.

Many brothers have difficulty giving their tithes and offerings in church. Still, they don't know that their adversaries are capable of even sacrificing human lives to get along in their business.

Dear reader, many ugly things and evil plans are being made now against you and humanity; only unceasing prayer can stop this. Therefore, in addition to daily personal prayer, you must also engage in prayer, which is how you pray for the good of others.

God said through Jeremiah, "And seek the peace of the city to which I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace" (Jeremiah 29:7 NKJV).

Someone once said, "Why is there so much evil on earth ... where is God then, if He cares about humans at all?" Well, God has always been there, but He needs someone to pray for, that He can intervene. So you must invite Him; you must call Him. And He extends to you the invitation today for you to pray, "Call to me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3 NKJV).

Dear reader, as you pray, pray knowing that you have authority on earth through the flesh and power over earth and spirits by your union with Jesus and faith in His name. Pray expecting results. God wouldn't invite us to pray if He didn't feel like answering us. Therefore, you must develop the habit of always praying and never faint. Pray when things are bad, and pray when things are good. Many brothers, for example, when they are still in the battle to have a job, a house, marriage, children, promotion, or when they are

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facing some attacks and challenges, they pray a lot. They pray in the morning, at noon, in the afternoon, at night, and dawn; they always desire to pray and study the Word. They are spiritual warriors - intercessors - men and women of prayer. They don't like to miss any "Live" - televised or online services, nor face-to-face services.

They hunger for God and are humble. Because of this exercise of constant prayer life, they are filled with heavenly fire and begin to achieve victories, destroying demonic altars. And when they see that they are already prosperous and have reached their goals and dreams, they begin to cool down in prayer. They pray once in a while and don't study the Word constantly. They think that they are already mature in the things of the spirits and no longer need to pray as they used to. That's when they start to lose their spiritual fire like Samson lost his hair, allowing him to keep the anointing of dominating force. Sometimes they go to bed without praying and leave the house to go about their business or occupations. And even when they do pray, it's just a few seconds, "Father, in the name of Jesus, blah, blah, blah." They forget that Satan, their adversary, never has a holiday or takes a vacation.

Thus, they are caught unaware and unprotected. Consequently, demonic attacks begin to arise, and spiritual missiles and arrows of wickedness are launched from all sides in bursts. There, the believer wants to react, but the spirit is weak, and consequently, unwanted things begin to happen. Why all this? Because you have not watched in prayer. Jesus- Jesus said, "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation" (Matthew 26:41 NIV). Praying is a way of doing spiritual vigilance around your life because the physical attacks you see are engineered in the spiritual world and consummated through physical agency.

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It was the same thing that happened to King David, the man who had killed Goliath, the most feared giant of that time. He had come from successive victories over all his adversaries, and God was with him. But on the day, he decided to let down his guard and no longer go to battle to which he had been anointed and defend his people, he fell into temptation, seeing Bathsheba, wife of Uriah, one of his soldiers, bathing naked. David was on the terrace, of the promotion and the kingdom. He could not resist the temptation, which caused much damage to his kingdom and his family.

Dear reader, don't let your guard down, don't stop praying. That is why Paul exhorted, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17 NKJV). To pray without ceasing doesn't mean talking all the time, but to develop an awareness of dependence on God at all times and talking to Him in your heart.

Know that you don't graduate from prayer. There is no stage of spiritual growth that, once you reach it, exempts you from praying. You must pray continually and never lose heart (Luke 18:1).

Your life depends on prayer mixed with faith because victories or defeats are decided in the spirit, and you participate in the spirit through prayer. You see, if you don't pray, you may experience unpleasant moments from the devil and his agents. It's the fellowship with God that neutralizes the devil's fiery darts and the missiles turned against you. Therefore, prayer is vital; indeed, it's indispensable for the believer who wants to live a glorious life on this earth.

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CHAPTER III

The power of prayer

In the New Testament, when the church was still a baby, God sent an angel to free the apostles imprisoned in a public prison. This is how Luke tells us in Acts 5:17-20 NKJV, “Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.”

Notice that the angel the Lord sent to deliver them came without any invitation. They had not exercised their sovereign priestly responsibility to pray. But still, they were set free. They thought it would always be like this, but in Acts chapter 12, a similar scenario is repeated with two different ends: one disastrous and one glorious. The same devil who had influenced the high priest to arrest them did the same through King Herod. He went further when he saw that he couldn’t destroy or stop the apostles using the traditional and jealous religious leaders. This time, he used a political leader who enacted anti-Christian laws. But even here, the church continues without praying, not knowing yet that prayer is to give God legal permission to intervene in the affairs of men on earth.

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First moment: disastrous

The Church's passivity and disaster with James

James is arrested, and the church continued with that thought, "He is very anointed; he is a pillar of the Church, so no harm will come to him." They overlooked the fact that anointing is no substitute for prayer. Whether anointed or not, you must pray because the function of prayer is far greater than that of anointing. The anointing is the power that God gives to a man or woman to exercise a divine office that saves, delivers, and/or blesses people in the name of Jesus. It depends on the faith of the person to whom we minister. When Christ was crucified, why didn't those who took His hands to crucify Him come forward? Because they had no faith.

Prayer establishes close contact between God's throne in heaven and man here on earth, causing God's presence and the glorious heavenly blessings of peace, love, joy, and health that God has at His disposal to be transferred to man and become part of his daily life. That is why a man who prays is ten times more powerful than one who preaches, only. The devil shudders when he sees a man or a woman on her knees, on her belly, or standing praying, because he knows that there, God will intervene. Remember that it was God who instituted prayer, and He would not invite us to pray if He Himself didn't want to answer in the first place.

Since they didn't pray for James, King Herod had him put to death by the sword. The question is, where was the anointing when he was arrested and killed? With him. Where were Jesus and the angel when James was beheaded? In heaven, looking at the whole scene of the unfolding events. Why didn't they intervene? Because they didn't pray.

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Second Moment: glorious

The Church's activity and Peter's deliverance

When James was already dead, his Jewish opponents were satisfied, and Herod went ahead to arrest another pillar of the Church - Peter and wanted to have him killed like James. Only this time, the church was awake to its priestly mission. It already understood the necessity and the power of prayer. But, to human eyes, Peter was in a blind alley; he was handcuffed to his feet, facing four squads of soldiers, two others half distant who were watching him with guns and an iron gate leading to the city.

From the human point of view, there was no escape. But the Holy Scripture says, "Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church." On that day, in heaven, all that could be heard was the same thing, "Father, Lord, deliver Peter from prison, in the name of Jesus" - paraphrasing. In answer, the Lord sent his angel, and suddenly a light shone in prison, and touched Peter on the side and woke him up, saying, "Arise quickly! And his chains fell off his hands." As they went out, the iron gate opened by itself. And Peter went to the house of Mary, mother of John, and found them praying that even they didn't believe it was him, they thought it was a ghost. They prayed even without faith, but God answered by sending the angel who delivered Peter because it was a prayer of agreement and unity.

Note that this angel wasn't sent when it was James' turn, but this time is sent to answer the church's prayer. Glory to God! He always answers the prayers of his people. That is why all believers in the church must pray for their leaders - apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, pastors, or missionaries. You should pray for

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them. And if you, reading this, are a leader, you should also pray for other men of God.

Third Moment: God's judgment on King Herod

Because Herod magnified himself above God and tried to destroy the work of Christ, God sent the same angel who had delivered Peter and, with a sword, struck him, and he died instantly. Thus, the Scripture testifies, "So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:21-23 NKJV). In the end, the Word of the Lord grew and multiplied. When the church prayed, God removed the obstacles that hindered the advance of the gospel, and the Word was proclaimed far and wide, by word of mouth and through the apostolic letters of Paul, Peter, James, and John.

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CHAPTER IV

Develop the habit of praying

Spend time with God

Dear reader, understand that all those who have walked with God have had a life of bold faith mixed with a habit of prayer.

For instance, looking at Jesus, we can learn a lot about his most important and constant habits. He did nothing without first praying. Even as the Son of God, Jesus knew to spend quality time with the Father. This is what Scripture says, “Who, in the days of his flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:7-9 NKJV).

This Bible passage clearly reveals to us what the life of Jesus Christ was like when he was physically on earth. He had the habit of praying. We see in this context that he even wept in his prayers. He was and still is our Intercessor. Prayer is vital; it’s a sign of our dependence on God and his power. When you rely on other things outside of God, your prayer life will wither away, but when God is your hope, you develop a spirit of always praying because you know that God is the source of your life in every way.

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CHAPTER V

Jesus' diary

The Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, offer us lenses from which we can look at the daily life of Jesus and his habits.

For example, Jesus' day was composed of three crucial moments:

1. Morning devotion

When it was still dark, he would wake up very early and go to a deserted place and pray there.

Thus, we read, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35 NKJV).

This was Jesus' habit. To wake up early and go to a deserted place to pray. He would spend hours there in prayer while everyone else was asleep. You have to realize that the Scripture does not say that He went to the desert to pray; but rather that He went to a desert place and prayed there. What does this mean? Well, to say that He was going to a desert would imply a desert – where, by nature, there is no life and no massive human habitation or presence. For example, the Sinai desert through which the people of Israel passed, or the Sahara desert that divides Maghreb Africa from sub-Saharan Africa. But He went to a place that was deserted, and there He prayed. This place was obviously different from the desert where he spent forty days and forty nights because, in this place, Mark attests, there were wild animals, “And immediately the Spirit drove him into the wilderness. And there he was in the wilderness for forty days,

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tempted by Satan. And he lived among wild beasts, and angels served him.” To this particular place, He went only once, at the beginning of His ministry.

You have to understand this; otherwise, someone will want to go into a wilderness full of wild animals on purpose and expect God’s deliverance. You cannot tempt the Lord. He delivered Daniel, David, and Samson from lions, but these were not done on purpose by going there. The salient point here is that Jesus was going to a place that was desert and praying there. That is a place where there is not much movement of people, no noise from industrial machinery. He wanted a place that was quiet and still. And the reason why he went there at dawn was probably because no people were passing by at that time. He wanted to teach us to look for a quiet and still place where we can pray and meditate on the Word. For instance, your office, room, house, and kitchen can be your deserted place – a place where there is no noisy movement of people. What is the advantage of these places? The silence, tranquility, and calm. This allows you to hear more loudly the voice of God in your heart without any distractions.

Jesus prayed. Using the verb in the imperfect tense, “prayed,” denotes that it was a continuous action that Jesus carried out. He didn’t do it once in a while, but it was His daily routine.

With this time spent with the Father while His disciples slept, He was more than recharged to heal the sick, cast out demons, and work miracles in a split second. This is the equation: the more time you spend with God in prayer and meditation on His Word in your room, the less time it will take you to solve your day-to-day problems.

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If you don't spend quality time with God in prayer, you may have a bad or less productive day, and you will think that God was not with you. The problem is that you have not surrendered your day to God in prayer. This is why many brothers and sisters are frustrated in life and wander from one place to another, working for a hole in their pockets and eating without being satiated.

Dear reader, learn from Jesus - our example in life: spend time with God in prayer. Wake up early and pray. For example, you can do the following:

1. Wake up too early;
2. Find a quiet and calm place, turn off audiovisual devices: cell phones, televisions, etc., so as not to be distracted.
3. Lift your hands and begin to praise God and worship Him, if possible, sing to Him, and exalt His name.

"Father, you are holy, powerful, merciful, and gracious. Thank you for your eternal and unconditional love toward me. Thank you for eternal life and grace." Start thanking him for your family and for all the good he has done and will still do for you. You can do it on your knees, sitting, on your stomach, or standing. What matters is the disposition of your heart: the attitude of faith, dependence on God, and gratitude to Him.

4. Pray for other people, for the suffering and the wronged, pray for the sick in hospitals and the needy on the streets, etc., and for people for whom you want God to do something.

5. Study the Word and meditate on it. To meditate is to think on God's Word repeatedly until all thoughts that are not of God are dispelled from your mind.

6. Have a notebook and pen or tape recorder with you.

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Create an expectation of wanting to hear God say something. This is also an attitude of faith: expectancy. Surely God will speak to you, and often it will be through thoughts that He will place in your heart or mind. You will know that this information comes from deep within your spirit. Remember what Paul said, “But as it is written, ‘What eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, these are the things which God has prepared for those who love him.’”

Notice that God has things that you haven’t even thought of or imagined. He may give you the ideas you need for your business, your family, and much more. Moments alone with God are crucial. I usually wake up at four in the morning every day and practice this, and it works. Of course, it isn’t so imperative that you wake up at four in the morning, but for me, it’s the time that my spirit has been programmed by the habit of waking up to pray.

In the beginning, years ago, it wasn’t easy, so I had to set an alarm to wake myself up. But then it became a habit and no matter what time zone or what country I am in, I always wake up at that time now. Why? Because when you have a time like this, your spirit registers, and the Holy Spirit registers, and God will visit you at that time. Notice that there was what was called a “time of prayer even in the apostles’ time.” Thus, the Scripture testifies, “And Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1). It was on this day and time that Peter performed one of his great miracles, out of the resurrection of Tabitha.

You must give your day to God in prayer every morning. Remember, “Through the LORD’S mercies we are not consumed because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I hope in Him!” (Lamentations 3:22-24 NKJV). So make

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the Lord God your first portion, every morning. Then, God will speak to you through the Holy Spirit.

Do you remember those things that the eye has not seen and have not come to your imagination yet? Those glorious things that God has prepared for you? Well, He will communicate and announce those things to your spirit - your heart-by means of the Holy Spirit. And when He does, then record, take note of, record that information because it can change your life for the better and deliver you from all evil plans. As a result, you will begin to see what you could not see before and find yourself doing what you could not do before. This is what Scripture says, “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10 NKJV).

Prayer allows this contact between the Spirit of God, who carries information and blessings from God, and the spirit of man, which receives, by faith and confesses through the mouth.

Second moment of Jesus’ daily life: itinerary ministry

Jesus was a man very focused on the mission that the Father had entrusted to him. He was not distracted by anything. Jesus was focused on results and not merely on tasks. He prioritized things that would bring glory to God and attest that He was the promised Messiah. Even the miracles He performed had concrete goals -he didn’t do them just any old way. For Him to go to someone’s house, that person had to invite Him by faith, as Jairus did. And for Him to stop along the way and work a miracle for someone, that person had to have faith. Like the hemorrhagic woman who had suffered for twelve years, the person had to have a situation that attracted and

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activated His compassion; like the widow of Nain, Bartimaeus, the Syrophenician woman who asked for healing for her daughter, or like the centurion who asked for it for his servant. He went to Lazarus' house, but what interested him was Mary's attitude of sitting and listening to the Word and not Martha's fumbling around in the kitchen for temporary things.

In short:

A) Jesus prioritized the things that were eternal or the things that would add some value to the kingdom of God that he had brought: He wanted to save souls.

B) Jesus went where the anointing and his work were valued and did not stay all day trying to convince people who, a priori, would not and did not want to change (Pharisees, teachers of the law, Sadducees).

C) He was direct and very bold in his words and convictions. He wasn't afraid of anyone or anything. He didn't seek fame, although his achievements were tied to fame that created envy in his opponents.

D) He was a strategist.

He knew what miracles to do and how to do them, so much so that some he performed in secret. He didn't overexpose himself before his time.

One remarkable thing is that throughout the day, He ministered, in an itinerant way, without losing focus of what He had come to do on earth. He knew how to deny what would harm His image and mission, denying when they wanted to make Him king. He didn't get busy trying to give answers to questions that, a priori, didn't require answers. He used divine sarcasm, which consisted in refusing to answer a question by asking another one that would

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confuse his opponents, trapping them so that, embarrassed, they would leave. For example, when asked whether it was lawful to give taxes to Caesar or not, He answered with a question whose answer embarrassed His detractors. He taught us not to spend time trying to convince people who have already formed a biased opinion.

E) Jesus prioritized and valued time.

Listen to His words, “I must work the works of Him who sent me, while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (John 9:4-5 NKJV). He taught us to have goals in life. You must plan, give your plans to God in prayer, and work focused on results. That is why his ministry lasted only three and a half years, but even so, it had and still has a tremendously massive impact on the whole world.

The disciples slept a lot; He didn’t. Instead, he woke up while they slept.

I have found that the first hours of the day are essential for us. They are very fertile and productive, and after 10 am is not much anymore. Use the early hours to plan, pray, and create a broader vision of your projects and family. Work while others sleep.

Jesus went to a deserted place and prayed, as I explained in the previous lines. The Holy Scripture says that Simon and those who were with him followed Jesus to his place of prayer, and finding him, they said, “Everyone is seeking you. And he said to them, ‘Let us go into the neighboring villages, that I may preach there also, for that is why I have come. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out demons.’”

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In summary, Jesus had a very dynamic daily life, busy attending to people's needs but focusing on his main goal: saving souls.

In no time at all, he was casting out the demon that made his disciples take turns swapping nine of them, and the demon wouldn't leave. And the answer was simple: they didn't pray. Prayer is fundamental.

Third moment: night devotion

He spent time with the Father on the mountain in prayer.

So far, I am showing you, dear reader, that prayer was the central part of Jesus' life and ministry on earth. If by day he spent his time ministering to the crowds and then taking time to be alone with his disciples and decipher the parables for them, at night he went to the mountain and prayed. Dear reader, outside of the tasks you have throughout the day, you must not forget to have time for your family, your husband, your wife, or children and the like. Don't sacrifice time with your family for the sake of chores, just because the work will not always be done and finished all on the same day. So, you should plan weekly, monthly, and, if possible yearly activities, of course reserving space for changes if possible. You should also give time to the people who love and value you most.

Often, Jesus would say goodbye to the crowds and always go to a place for prayer. Prayer was his fuel, and the Holy Spirit was his driving force. This is how Matthew tells it, "Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to

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pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there” (Matthew 14:22-23 NKJV).

Jesus liked to go at night to the mountain to pray. It was a fixed place, so the passage we read doesn’t say “to a mountain” but “to the mountain.” Meaning that it was a place of regular attendance for Jesus. After praying, He went to walk on water. Here, we notice that glorious and miraculous life followed Jesus and was always demonstrated after He left His place of prayer alone with the Father.

Dear reader, if you also want a glorious life, learn to spend time with God in prayer, as the Lord Jesus, our example, did. Jesus overcame every challenge He faced because He had intimacy with the Father. Notice His words: “Behold, the hour cometh, and now is at hand, when ye shall be scattered, every man to his own part, and shall leave me alone; but I am not alone, because the Father is with me” (John 16:32).

This was the secret of Jesus’ success: communion with the Father, communion with the Holy Spirit, and this communion was given through prayer. There is no permanent victory or celebration without the involvement of prayer. One with God, you are complete. As the great woman used by God for signs and wonders, Kathryn Kuhlman said, “The life of consecration is a solitary one, and communion with Jesus, with the Holy Spirit, is more important than the presence of the multitude of people at your side.”

All the great men of God had this indispensable habit of praying. You need to pray to keep the gifts and blessings that God gives you. Notice that Jesus liked to be alone in prayer. You don’t need a crowd of people around you to be happy and prosperous, you only need the Holy Spirit, and He will bring you the right people.

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Even when He wanted to make essential decisions for His ministry, Jesus didn't do it before praying. For example, when He wanted to choose His apostles, He spent a whole night in prayer. Luke recounts it this way, "Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12-12 NKJV).

Many believers complain that they have chosen the wrong wife and some women the wrong husband. Still, others complain about having made wrong decisions in their academic and professional careers or made bad investments in failing businesses. This is because they are not taking advantage of prayer and intimacy with God. Remember I taught you about the importance of recording what the Spirit of God speaks? Yes, it's essential. He never fails. Spend time with God in prayer and allow yourself to be guided by His Word. He is the counselor that the Father sent for us, to guide us through life into eternity. You are not alone; the heavenly Father is with you. Learn to take the challenges of life into the spiritual arena. Be like water; it doesn't fight its prey on land, but carries it to its habitat on high. And there, even the mamba snake is powerless. Take everything in prayer.

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CHAPTER VI

The Foundations of Prayer

Prayer is:

1. A privilege

It's a great way to maintain our relationship with the Lord. It helps me get the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Every time I pray and lean on the Spirit, I get an impression of Him. His anointing remains on me. This is why prayer is a communion with the Lord. In Him, something is transferred from heaven to my spirit and impacts my world. Therefore, I must always make time for God in prayer and meditation. While meditating on the Word, I became the object of my reflection.

2. A divine responsibility

It's a command from the Word of the Lord. He told me to pray always.

3. It's a discipline

I must discipline myself to pray even when I don't feel like it. I must develop it in myself. Whatever you do consistently, over and over again, will eventually become part of your system. And then you will do it naturally. You can't stay at home waiting for God to give you a passion for patients in hospitals. No, you must go there and see the needy and the helpless, then the desire to do something for them will arise in your heart. God's purpose is to prosper you so that you can be a pillar for your work and help the needy. So, you have to position yourself to be the right channel for God.

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CHAPTER VII

The indispensability of prayer

Looking at the Scriptures, we see Jesus Christ praying and getting results from his prayers. These results caused his disciples to seek him out and ask him to teach them how to pray. It's essential to note that one of the major requests that the disciples made of Jesus was explicitly on the subject of prayer. This is how the Scripture tells us, "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1 NKJV).

John the Baptist's disciples and those of the Pharisees prayed, but Jesus' disciples didn't pray and didn't know how to pray. One of the things that amazed Jesus' disciples was his habit of waking up early to go to a deserted place to pray or to a hill at night to pray. However, the greatest amazement was not necessarily this routine morning and evening exercise of Jesus but the results from this productive habit. For example, on one occasion, Jesus went up a hill with Peter, James, and John to pray. And a man brought his son, who was lunatic and seriously tormented by an unclean spirit, mute and deaf, who cast him into the waters and onto the stones, causing him to foam at the mouth several times.

At the time, he brought the child but didn't find the Lord Jesus except for the nine apostles who hadn't gone up the mountain to pray with the Master. They thought that prayer was dispensable and could only perform an exorcism, leaving the unclean spirit. The nine took nine turns on this path, each trying to cast out the evil spirit that refused to leave. Finally, tired and exhausted, they found themselves powerless and unable to help the boy whose father was

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in tears, desperately. And, Jesus comes down from the mountain, and with a simple word says, “Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more. Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him...” (Mark 9:25-26 NKJV). Where was Jesus coming from before this operation? From the place of prayer, of communion with the Father. His disciples were astonished, and when they were alone with the Master, they asked: Why couldn’t we cast him out? Jesus referred them to faith and prayer. “This kind can come out by anything but by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9:29 NKJV).

Jesus didn’t mean that we must always fast on the day we want to cast out demons or pray for the sick, but that we must always be in an attitude of prayer, having our fellowship strong with God. This, the disciples knew how to do yet, they simply did not pray. On one occasion, sleepiness weighed them down until they slept three times when they should have been in prayer. The fact is that prayer allows the spirit of man to have contact with the Holy Spirit, the divine essence in us. There is a transfusion of power, energy, life, and revelation from God to the person who prays - transfiguration and transformation in this contact.

In the text in Acts 16, we see Paul and Silas finding a place by the river to pray. Thus Luke narrates, “And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there” (Acts 16:13 NKJV). This exercise culminated in the salvation of a woman named Lydia, who was selling purple. Scripture states that the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to the message Paul was preaching. It’s a fact, and when you pray, God can open the heart of your unsaved family member for them to receive the Gospel message in faith and be saved. But it takes prayer for the Holy Spirit to prevail and operate in the hearts of the people for whom we pray.

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Notice that not only was there salvation, but in this exercise of prayer, there was also the deliverance of a girl possessed by a divination demon.

Furthermore, Paul and Silas were released from prison because of the power of prayer mixed with praise. We notice in this context that prayer was a permanent habit in the life and ministry of these great men of God, who laid the foundations of the church. Note verse 16, “Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.” The words spoken by the unclean spirit possessing this girl disturbed Paul in his spirit, who turned to the spirit in her and said, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour” (verse 18). Where did Paul’s power come from? From his fellowship with Jesus. From his communion with the Father in prayer.

Dear reader, if you want to have an extraordinary life in this world, invest in your communion with God. For example, the apostle Peter had one of his glorious experiences in which God gave him visions while he was on the terrace of the house where he was - praying. This is how the Scripture tells us, “The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened...” (Acts 10:9-11 NKJV).

Communion with God can bring you glorious experiences and project you into the spiritual arena.

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CHAPTER VIII

How to pray correctly

In prayer, we pray to the father in the name of Jesus. This is the formula that Jesus Christ, our Lord, gave us. In Matthew 6:9 Jesus said, "This is how you shall pray: Our Father who art in heaven..."

Through faith in Jesus, we have been born again and are new creatures. Furthermore, God has given us the Holy Spirit by which we can now call Him "Father". Therefore, He is our heavenly Father. Therefore, when you pray, call Him Father. He is your father, glory to God. Have you ever stopped to think about this? Your father is the owner of silver and gold. He is the greatest of all the doctors on the planet, and his power never fails. Surrender to him and trust in him.

In the Book of John 16:23 NKJV, Jesus said, "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you." Notice something here? The Lord instructs us to ask the father, in his name. He continues, "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (Verse 24). Jesus wants to see you happy, full of health and enjoyment. That is why he says that we have to ask for our joy to be fulfilled. Why? Because God's answer to a prayer is in itself a miracle, and a miracle produces joy because it helps us overcome barriers and limitations imposed by human and material inability. Until then the disciples did not use the name of Jesus in prayer because they did not even pray. They were spiritual babies. And Jesus wanted them to experience the joy of invoking his name or asking the Father for something and the Father answering. In this way, the formula is prescribed for us: we pray to

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the father in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, whenever you pray, you will say, "Father, in the name of Jesus". Why? because Jesus has given us power of attorney to use his name.

When you pray to the father with recourse to the name of Jesus Christ, it's as if you are in the place of Jesus and the father hears you as if he were hearing Jesus. Therefore, He answers. We are Christ's church and members of his body, spiritual on earth. we have his life and authority to represent him on earth. we are his ambassadors and legal representatives. Therefore, we are his voice, his legs, and his arms to touch humanity and bless it, as if he were the one to do it. So, starting today, start praying in the name of Jesus Christ. You don't need to use big names to call God in prayer, "Oh Lord, great, big God..." instead, call him "Father." "Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, thank you for your grace, love, and salvation. I ask and receive it now, in the name of Jesus."

Pray with faith while waiting on an answer

Finally, pray in faith, believing that God hears you and He answers. Jesus stated in Mark 11:24 NKJV "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." Notice something here? Jesus assures us that we receive what we ask the father for. You don't have to shout a lot, because, your heavenly father is not deaf. He hears and answers prayer made in faith.

You are his son. "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15 NKJV). Based on, these revelations and this information, raise your hands and start talking

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to your heavenly father, now. Praise him, thank him, and tell him how much you love him. Pray for other people. Use the name of Jesus.

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PART II

THE HABIT OF STUDYING THE WORD
OF GOD

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CHAPTER I

The Word of God: The Basis of our Faith

“But Jesus answered him, saying, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God’” (Luke 4:4 NKJV).

The word of God is the spiritual food that serves multiple purposes in the life of the believer. It can save his soul, nourish his spirit, purify his mind, and program his life for success. Like physical food, which nourishes the body, the Word of God assumes equivalent functions from the spiritual perspective. For example, if you go too many days without eating, your body may begin to lose strength and consequently become prone to various illnesses derived from the weakness of the body. Therefore, proper nutrition is very vital for the body. People who care about their health know that by taking a portion of food, they are not just eating a meal but taking vitamins that are nutrients for the cells in their body. Likewise, if your body needs solid food to live, your spirit needs to feed on the Word of God. Hence the need to develop the habit of constantly listening and hearing the Word of God.

The Word of God is the basis of our faith, for faith comes by hearing the Word of God. The Word of God enables you to listen to the voice of God (Romans 10:17). No believer can grow spiritually without proper spiritual nourishment. That’s why Peter said, “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Peter 2:2 NIV).

When one accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior and is born again, he needs to be fed spiritually in order to grow. Indeed, we are

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children of the Word and born of the Word. Thus, the Scripture testifies, “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Peter 1:23 NIV).

We result from what we feed on, both in the physical body and in our spirit. The Word of God begot us and introduced God into us. Thus, you were born as a spiritual baby, and you need to grow in your spirit. This growth can take place in two ways and two areas:

1. Growth in knowledge;
2. Growth in grace.

Thus, the Word testifies, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18 NKJV).

Dear reader, you need to grow. Otherwise, you will wither in the spirit. Furthermore, God wants you to grow up and become a spiritual giant. Only at this stage will you be able to overcome all the challenges of your life on this earth. The Word of God is the prescription for the believer’s success. Note God’s words to Joshua, “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:8 NIV). What an instructive recommendation God gave Joshua! This was the man who was to assume the position of leadership in Israel and the responsibility of leading God’s people to possess the promised land. And the greatest instruction was to meditate on the Word. But why? Because the Word of God is a fountain of infinite wisdom.

You need the Word to strengthen your faith, and faith, in practice, grows in parallel with knowledge of the Word. More knowledge, more faith; less knowledge, less faith.

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One day Jesus' disciples asked him, "Lord, increase our faith." They thought that Jesus would do something supernatural that would make them full of faith. But actually, faith is the fruit of God's Word. For example, by faith in God's Word, Moses faced the Pharaoh of Egypt, fearing nothing. Faith is the active and positive response of the heart of man to the Word of God. When you hear the Word, there are four things you must do with it:

1. Believe in it;
2. Confess it;
3. Visualize it;
4. Act on it.

One of the most resonant cases is the example of Peter; as a professional fisherman, he had fished all night, but without success. His fishing business was already going bankrupt. However, Jesus appears to him in the morning and asks him to give up his boat to minister to the crowds from it; Peter gave in, after which Jesus said to him, "let down the nets on the high seas." Here is the question: how to cast the nets in the same sea where he had not caught any fish all night? That would take faith on his part in reaction to Jesus' word. Note Peter's response, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets" (Luke 5:5 NIV).

When he did, he caught so many fish that he needed his colleagues' assistance because the boat was almost sinking. The question is, "where was all that fish, all the time?" The fish came in response to Jesus' word, for, He is the Creator. All of creation responds to God's Word.

As a child of God, you need to give yourself time daily to study the Word and meditate on it. Meditation on the Word is a process

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by which it passes from the mind to the spirit of man. Through meditation, man's Spirit absorbs the glories of God's Word. One must realize that there is a difference between studying the Word and reading the Word. Reading is just skimming through, and studying gives attention to God's Word and meditating on it. Therefore, you need to spend time with it. In this day and age, where life is hectic and multimedia has taken up most of many believers' time, you need discipline and must make it a habit.

There are aspects that you need to understand about God's Word. And about this, we will learn in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER II

The Authenticity and Integrity

of the Word of God

Defining the concepts of authenticity and integrity

The word *authenticity* has to do with something being true, original; it also has to do with accuracy. So, an authentic thing is something original that isn't fake, forged, or a copy.

The Word of God carries and reveals the integrity of God. We must understand this teaching because everything that God will do for us, he will do through his Word. God's Word reveals and conveys God's integrity; you know whether or not God is faithful or upright through his Word. It means that all his faithfulness and integrity are in his Word. Integrity means the quality of being honest, one, indivisible, quality of what is one whole, not being corrupted.

For example, when we say that a person is integral, we talk about someone who lives according to established moral principles. That person who does what he says and says what he speaks, between speaking and doing there is no difference. He always delivers what he promises.

These two concepts of the authenticity of the Word and the integrity of God are essential for us to understand, especially in the times we live in now. God will not be visible to the naked eye, you will not physically see Him, but He has given us His Word and promised that He would protect and care for you. He said, "When

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you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze” (Isaiah 43:2). Understanding that God’s Word is authentic, original, genuine, and understanding God’s integrity and faithfulness in the execution of His Word, you will trust it.

In the Kingdom of God, God the Father is the Creator and Owner of all things. God the Son, who is Jesus Christ, is the Administrator, and God, the Holy Spirit, is the Distributor. God the Father took the whole world and put it in the hands of Jesus, and when we believe in Jesus and surrender our lives to Him, He distributes His blessings through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Word of God, together with the Holy Spirit, forms the ultimate authority of God. This is why, when David said that God exalted his Word above his name, it means that it’s more significant than his own name.

In Hebrew, the word name has to do with “character”; that’s why most of the names we read in the Bible have meaning. For example, Jesus means Savior, and Messiah means anointed, so Jesus Christ means anointed to save or anointed Savior.

So, God has placed his Word above his name because it is the Word that reveals God’s character. Therefore, when you trust God’s Word, you will see the manifestation of his character in your life. This is why Abed-Nego, Meshach, and Shadrach trusted in God’s character and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up” (Daniel 3:16-18 NKJV). And when they were cast into the fiery furnace of

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fire, the Holy Spirit entered there, and the fire lost its power over the three young men.

The fire only burned up the ropes with which they had bound them because they trusted in God's Word. "Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished, and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Daniel 3:24-25 NKJV).

The king couldn't describe the fourth man as the Holy Spirit because Jesus said He would send us another comforter who would be with us forever. So, the Holy Spirit only appeared to protect the three young men when they decided to trust in the authenticity and integrity of God's Word.

God's power to heal, to protect, to save, to bless, to open the ways for you will be released into your life according to the level of respect and trust you show toward the Word. Because God's Word is above your character, and He doesn't violate it. God, Himself is bound to His Word because to it He reveals His character. God cannot contradict himself; he will always fulfill what he has promised because God is a King and the King's word has power.

God doesn't violate his Word, but he may violate the way we understand it because the revelations of God's Word are progressive. This is why, when God appeared to Abraham, He told him that He was *El Shaddai*, but when He appeared to Moses, He told him that He is the LORD Almighty, Jehovah.

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When you walk with God, by faith in His Word, or in communion with Him in prayer, you will grow in the knowledge of Him and come to know more of His character. So, for you to understand how God acts, how he thinks, and how he does things, you will have to spend time with his Word.

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CHAPTER III

The Preeminence and Supremacy of the Word

1. God has exalted his word above his name

For example, Jesus said, “In my name, they will cast out demons” (Mark 16:17 NKJV). His name has the power to heal, deliver, save, and bless, but His Word is above the name. It’s the Word that makes the name work.

When God’s Word is inside your heart, and you say, “In the name of Jesus, demon go out, sickness and pain go out, may the door of blessing open,” it will happen. This is why Paul said, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16 NKJV)

When you are filled with the Word and release a word, the Holy Spirit will support that word. The problem is that many speak the Word from the mind and not from the heart. This is why we have to meditate on the Word so that it can enter our hearts. The power of the name only works when the Word takes root and dominion in your heart.

2. The Word of God reveals and conveys God's character.

The answers to what God is like, how he acts, how he deals with humanity, and how he thinks are in God’s Word. So, to know God, first of all, you have to spend time with his Word. Then, to know whether God is faithful, whether or not he can protect, heal, help, you will have to rely on his Word to test his faithfulness and integrity.

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God's contract with humanity is based on the Word; there is no way to know God without the Bible. Yet, many people don't use God's Word when they pray, but you have to learn to arm yourself with His promises. When you talk to God, learn to use His words, return to Him the words you have spoken to you. "Father, thank you because by your wounds I have been healed, thank you, because my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, thank you, because you are my Shepherd, and I shall lack nothing good."

3. The Holy Spirit is the authority behind the Word of God.

It's the Holy Spirit who executes and materializes the Word of God. When God said, "Let there be light," it was the Holy Spirit who brought the light. "Let the earth bring forth green grass, grass yielding seed, a fruit tree bearing fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in it upon the earth." It was the Holy Spirit who produced what God said. The Holy Spirit brought the birds to fly over space and the fish to the sea.

He is the power behind the Word, and He is the one who is there to perform and materialize when we confess and speak the Word. It is He who materializes in our lives the promises of God, and the Holy Spirit is the authority behind the name of Jesus. So, when I say, "Be healed," it is He who goes and removes the diseases from your body; it is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is He who makes the Word you have received materialize in you.

Do you remember when the angel appeared to Mary? "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Then Mary said

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to the angel, “How can this be since I do not know a man?” And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:31-35 NKJV)

The Holy Spirit incubated Mary’s body; she became pregnant and gave birth to Jesus. The Holy Spirit went to incubate Elizabeth’s body, and even though she was barren, she conceived and gave birth to John the Baptist from Zacharias. The Holy Spirit incubated Sarah’s dead womb, made her a mother, and gave Abraham a son. It was He who opened the red sea when Moses stretched out his hand. It was always He.

So, the Holy Bible attests, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The word “God” there is in the plural, it comes from the Hebrew Elohim, it is like saying, “In the beginning he created Gods.” And there, it wouldn’t be possible to conjugate the verb create in the singular with God in the plural. So, it means that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were involved in the work of creation.

However, even here, neither the Father nor the Son are revealed to us. The first of the Trinity to be exposed to us in the Bible was the Holy Spirit, “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep” (Genesis 1:2 NKJV).

The Holy Spirit is the first to be revealed to us because He is the authority behind the Word. When the earth was formless and empty, veritable chaos, without vegetation, with darkness covering the face of the abyss, we see in verse 3 the Holy Spirit materializing the word that God spoke, “Then God said, let there be light. And there was light.”

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The Bible says that by his Spirit, God beautified the heavens. He can beautify your life, your family's life; he can change your destiny. "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11 NKJV). When the Spirit is in you, even if you have a broken body part or a disease, He will incubate your body.

If you don't understand this point number three, you will walk in doubt and fear, always downcast. It was the Spirit who appeared there in the fiery furnace and defended the three young men.

For instance, when I declare words for your life, that word is accompanied by an authority to materialize it. That is why those who are far from the Apostle physically but can hear the messages and read the books are blessed. Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (John 5:25 NKJV).

In response to Jesus' voice, the Holy Spirit resurrected Lazarus, who had been dead for four days. It was He who, on the third day, incubated Jesus' body and brought it back to life. Know that by trusting God's Word, you are activating your character. The Holy Spirit is the one who faithfully carries out God's will.

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Matthew 24:35 NKJV).

4. Everything on earth is temporary and fleeting, but God's Word is eternal and permanent.

Everything on earth is fleeting: your problems, your sickness, your enemies, your circumstances. So, David said, "Weeping may

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endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning” (Psalms 30:5 NKJV)

No matter what you are going through now, the challenges, the giants you are facing, the mountains, the sadness, everything is temporary and passing no matter your current state.

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4 NKJV). This pain is transient; this problem is temporary; this crying is brief; this limitation is transient; this situation, affliction, hunger, debts, bankruptcy, and loneliness are transient. All your problems are timed; have a set time because there is only one thing permanent, the Word of God.

This is why Jesus said, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.” And they were exceedingly sorrowful” (Matthew 17:22-23 NKJV).

That afternoon, brothers, when the Roman soldiers whipped the Master’s body with thirty-nine whips, he was beaten, trampled, spat on, and publicly despised, they took a crown of thorns, put it on his head, pressed down by beating with a reed, those thorns penetrated his head, and blood poured out. Then, finally, they took nails a few inches long and nailed him in both hands and feet, hung Jesus on the cross. He was unrecognizable, full of wounds, with blood all over his body, damaged face. But Jesus knew it was just a matter of time. Then, on the third day, He would rise again.

You may have failed in school for several years; you may have failed in life; maybe your family and friends have abandoned you, don’t worry, everything in life is timed.

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Remember that Jesus' death had been prophesied long ago; He was coming only to fulfill the prophecies. The Jews don't bury people as we do; they open a stone and make a kind of tunnel, embalm the dead man, and put him inside the stone. The Bible says that Jesus' tomb was sealed, but the Romans didn't know God's watch.

When God's time had already been fulfilled, the Holy Spirit incubated Jesus' body, an angel came from heaven, removed the stone, and Jesus came out. Later, He appeared to the apostles and was with them for a few days. Then Jesus gave them "*Exousia*," authority, power to reign, rule, and sent them into all the world to preach the gospel.

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen" (Matthew 28:18-20 NKJV).

God has the clock for your situation. Your husband may have gone many years without calling you, without sending mail; don't cry. Instead, look up to heaven and recognize that the clock is with God.

The word "nations" in the verse mentioned above does not mean country only, in terms of physical territory; it comes from the Greek "*Ethnos*" and means "a group of people who have something in common, something that binds them together." It can be language, culture, or common goals; it can be a nation of doctors and nurses, students, teachers, carpenters, bricklayers, athletes, or

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even business people. So, where you are, you are called to tell your nation about Jesus, to win your nation.

We can look at the crisis that ravages Mozambique now, but this crisis will pass. Jesus heard the cry of the Mozambican nation. Everything that has a beginning also has an end, and the definitive peace will be established, the peace that comes from Christ. When men cannot solve things, God is called to intervene, the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, our flag.

“We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed... Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:8-9:16-18 NKJV).

What matters most is not what happens to you on the outside but what happens inside you. It is not the various problems and challenges that determine your defeat or victory, but your reaction, what happens inside your heart. You are spirit, and your inner man must be renewed day by day by the Word of God. Your body may be many years old and even old and weak, but your inner man gains strength daily through prayer and the Word of God. This is why Micah said, “Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me” (Micah 7:8 NKJV).

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Whatever problem or challenge you have today, there is already an escape from God's point of view. You may think you are in a hopeless situation, but God says to you, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV).

5. There never has been, is not and never will be a temptation, tribulation, or problem greater than your ability to bear.

What is heavy for others and makes them cry doesn't affect us; we are immovable. I pray that God's Spirit will open your heart to realize this. Have you never noticed that you have had problems in the past that you didn't know how you would get out of? But you prayed, and God stepped in, saved you, you came out and were thankful.

You must have a way of looking at life to maintain your peace and joy. Look at life knowing that there will be challenges and tribulations, but your focus cannot be on that. Jesus and the apostles also faced challenges and problems, but if He overcame the world for us, nothing can overwhelm us because our Champion has overcome the world for us. So, whatever comes against you is bread to eat; you must refuse to cry because, through Jesus, you have overcome the world.

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33 NKJV).

God's Word says, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our

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faith” (1 John 5:4 NKJV). Faith is a reaction to the Word; it’s the positive and active response of man’s spirit to God’s Word; knowing that God is faithful, whole, and never failing, you can trust the Word and release your faith.

Although there are challenges, problems, and obstacles, your focus shouldn’t be on counting the problems and challenges; your focus should not be on crying; your focus is on feeding, nurturing, and strengthening your inner man by the Word; this is the principle. Because when you invest in your inner man, meditating and studying God’s Word, the problems become dwarfs, and you become a giant.

Many people are big and strong on the outside, but in their inner spirit, they are dwarfs and children, and when they face problems, they fall down because they do not feed their inner man.

Life’s challenges are calculated on the capacity of the inner man, not the outer man. That is, life’s challenges are calculated and overcome based on your spirit, heart, and faith, not on the size and color of the skin of your body. Thus, the challenge of life has nothing to do with your physical stature but the structural stability in your inner man.

Life’s challenges are fought and overcome by spiritual giants, not physical giants.

An insignificant ant can bother and even kill a giant elephant, not because of its size. Your problem may look like an elephant, but you can overcome it by the Word of God.

Starting today, stop counting problems and start counting testimonies; every time you face a problem, say, “Father, in the name

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of Jesus, thank you because it's another testimony." When you face a tribulation, know that behind it, there is a testimony.

Life doesn't bother you, but it is you who bothers problems. So, Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NIV).

So don't cry anymore. Every situation you are going through now is a preparation for you to give a testimony.

"Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all" (2 Corinthians 4:16-17 NIV).

Keep your focus on God's Word always. When you take these words to heart, your life will change forever. So don't look at problems, don't look at your light and momentary tribulation, keep your focus.

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CHAPTER IV

How to stay focused on the Word

What is keeping your focus on the Word?

To keep the focus on the Word is to trust God's Word. You will never trust God if you don't trust His Word because it's eternal.

To keep your focus on God's Word is to abide in the word in it. Jesus told the disciples, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32 NKJV). In this context, the word "abide" means living by the Word, meditating on the Word, and thinking on the Word because God's Word is light.

This implies confessing it about myself and my circumstances; keeping the focus means confessing. Holy Scripture says, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9 NKJV).

The word "confess" here does not mean to ask for forgiveness or to confess sins. The word confess comes from the Greek word *homology* and means "to say the same thing in agreement with God," it means to say what God says, to be in agreement, to agree with God, to reproduce his words; to confess also means to speak of myself and my circumstances what God says about them.

For example, imagine I'm sick. What does God say about me under these circumstances? Well, God's Word says, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God dwells in

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you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16 NKJV). What to do? Take that word and confess, “My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit so that no sickness will remain in my body.” Keeping your focus on the Word means confessing the Word.

With these three points: trust, abide and confess, you will be stabilizing your life on the eternal Rock. The Word makes great men and women of God.

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CHAPTER V

The Word of God, the Mirror of the Believer

Dear reader, you have probably used a mirror at some time in your life or have used it frequently. When you looked into the mirror, what did you see reflected in it? Surely it wasn't someone else's face but your own.

Did you know that every single thing that exists on earth has a sound code? From human beings to vegetation, even tangible objects were created with a proper code inherent to them. God made it so that every created thing on earth reacts every time it hears God's voice.

Now, the Word of God has great power, this is the reason why Jesus Christ spoke to a fig tree (tree), rebuking it, and it withered, "Let no one ever eat fruit from you ever again" (Mark 11:14 NKJV). So, Jesus spoke to the creation. The next day, the tree was dry from the roots because in the tree was a sound code that responded to the voice of its Creator.

That is why even Joshua, during the battle, spoke to the sun to stop at Gideon and the moon at the valley of Aijalon, and so it happened (Joshua 10:12-13). Immediately, the sun and moon stopped in their places, and there was no night that day. What a miracle! For the first time, nature heard a man's voice and obeyed because the Word of God is mighty.

It's necessary to understand that we live in a sensory world where people live based on what they see, feel, and/or experience. Furthermore, realize that there is a third dimension and also a fourth dimension.

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The third dimension is the physical dimension of objects. Objects here on earth, including men, are three-dimensional because they have height, width, and length. But we, as creatures made in the image and likeness of God, have a more remarkable prerogative than objects and animals; it's that we are spirits living in a physical body.

And as spirits, we belong to the fourth dimension, or what is also called the spirit dimension. The spirit dimension or spirit world exerts influence and controls the physical world in which we now live. Therefore, anyone who gains authority in the spirit world automatically controls, manipulates, and influences things in the three-dimensional physical world.

One of the purposes of what I teach God's people every day is to make them realize that there is a divine, heavenly kingdom of God and that those who believe in it and accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior can be citizens of that kingdom. Many believers who are already citizens of the kingdom of heaven are not aware of this kingdom and, for lack of knowledge of the God they serve and worship, live frozen in fear of the devil and the apparent and passing circumstances of this devil-controlled world. Thus, they are tormented day and night by the devil, his demons, and the crises and circumstances of life. All because they don't know how to act according to God's Word or how to position themselves to walk in dominion in this physical world.

Certain things can happen to you that shouldn't happen. The question is, why do they happen? Simple, they happen because you don't understand what you are supposed to do.

Because we have lived in the physical world for so long, we have become so attached to the world of objects that we conclude that all that exists is all we see. But this is not the reality. Not

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everything that exists is visible with our physical eyes, for we live in parallel with a spirit world that controls the physical world in which we live. Because we are spirits, we belong to the spirit world where God is, from where the Holy Spirit operates. And because we have the physical body, we belong to the three-dimensional world where existing objects are tangible.

Science uses the scientific method based on observation and experimentation to study phenomena and create theories about how these phenomena work. There was a time, for instance, when they said that the sun revolved around the earth, and people believed this for many years. But then, the theory changed, and it was thought that it's indeed the earth that revolves around the sun. So, the question was, what is fixed? Is it the sun while the earth rotates, or is the earth set while the sun turns?

Physicists have concluded that the earth we are on is spherical, round. But a person who doesn't understand physics wouldn't know how to justify that the earth is round. Because non-specialists in physics cannot see the edge of the earth, they only see everything round, rectangular, or square. But they conclude that the earth has an axis, and the earth revolves around the sun.

So, the theory that the sun revolved around the earth was refuted by the theory that the earth revolves around the sun. By this, we can understand that men study certain phenomena through theories, premises, hypotheses, etc., things that we can understand by faith. The Bible says, "By faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God so that what are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Hebrews 11:3 NKJV)

You will need faith in God to understand certain things. Therefore, the Word of God becomes preeminent. It becomes

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crucial because the whole universe in which we live was created through the word coming from the mouth of God. For example, there was a time when on earth there was nothing. It was a void, a vast void, full of darkness, darkness. There was no vegetation, no plants, no biodiversity, and there was no life on earth; until God opened his mouth and said, “Let there be light, and there was light” (Genesis 1:3).

The first thing to be created on earth was light, and with his word, God created the rest of the things we see on earth today.

Therefore, the Word of God becomes greater than created objects because objects are made, but the Word is eternal. So, what I am teaching here is for you to understand that what you have experienced being on earth: the suffering you see, the attacks, the sickness, and disease, etc., no matter what it is, you can live above all these things—clinging only to the Word of God.

There are five essential things you should know about God’s Word. They will help you to better study and understand God’s faithfulness linked to the utterances of His mouth. And it’s vital that when you follow a message from God’s Word, you record the teachings and then meditate on them because your life will change as a result of God’s Word.

CHAPTER VI

Five Inherent Assumptions of the Word of God

1. The Word of God is an element of the fourth dimension, the spiritual world

By this, I mean that the Word of God is spirit and belongs to the spiritual world. It's primarily a heavenly material with the potential to materialize in the physical world. In this dimension, it's invisible to the human eye but real in the spiritual world. So, Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63 NKJV).

2. The Word of God is eternal

It's eternal because it doesn't belong to the physical world. Everything on earth is temporary and fleeting, but things are always eternal in the world of the spirits. This is why the Word of God is eternal and can change what you experience today because it carries life. So said Jesus, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35 NKJV).

3. The Word of God is living and effective

The background of this premise is that God's Word is imbued with life, and it works; it's powerful. The text in Hebrews 4:12-13 NKJV, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Effective means that it works, it operates,

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and because of this, every time the Word comes to you, it is the life of God coming to you. When you receive the Word, you are receiving life.

Many people want to see God with their physical eyes, while God comes through his Word, his Spirit. Yet, even at the time of Genesis with Adam, God did not appear physically, it was the word of God that appeared to Adam, and that word was Jesus Christ. Thus, the Scripture testifies, “And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Genesis 3:8 NKJV).

Whenever there is a crisis or trouble on earth, God sends his Word, whether brought by an angel, the Holy Spirit, or an anointed human agent for that purpose. Thus, God’s Word becomes a ladder to lift you out of whatever pit you are in. Sometimes, people go to church for the first time thinking that the man of God is going to give them water, some thread, or even oil. And when they are given the anointed Word, they don’t receive it in faith because they haven’t been trained to recognize the power of it. For instance, when there was a famine in Samaria, it was the prophetic Word of God brought by Elisha that ended the food crisis by bringing provision to the people of Israel. However, the soldier-captain of the army where the king was reclining—who refused to believe the prophet’s word, didn’t get to benefit from this provision, ending up dead (2 Kings 7).

4. The Word of God has the potential to change things here on earth.

Dear reader, understand that every time God’s Word comes to you or is spoken over you, it can cause the state of things to change. It can cause the barren woman to conceive, the unemployed man to

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get a job, and the unlucky man to find favor. Furthermore, it can bring peace to a country at war, peace to a family in crisis, and restore a broken marriage. The power of God's Word is so great that it can give a new uterus to a woman without a uterus, give a new heart to someone with heart problems, or new kidneys to someone who suffered from this problem or is lacking one. Why? Because God's Word is creative and creator. It creates new realities every time God pronounces it, and you study it, meditate on it, and confess it into your life and situations.

In every situation you are in, the answer from heaven for you will be sent through the Word. The problem is that people who are used to living in the physical world are moved only by the objects they see and thus find it difficult to believe in them. They want things that they can pick up with their hands, touch, or ingest.

That is why, when the angel Gabriel came to Mary and announced that she would become pregnant and have a child named Jesus, she wondered how this would be possible since she had had no physical contact with Joseph. She thought humanly since biologically there has to be a fusion of a man's seed and a woman's eggs for there to be fertilization, causing pregnancy.

Mary was confined to the physical world, who thought that the process could only happen naturally. However, the angel told her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35 NKJV).

The shadow of the Highest is the Holy Spirit, and it is He who carries the power of the Highest. That is to say, it would be the spiritual power that would come over the physical to modify the natural process. So, God's power was present to make Mary

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pregnant, but that power wouldn't make her pregnant without her receiving the word first. Therefore, the angel had to inform her about what would happen to her.

Know that God isn't complicated; it's man's prejudices about divinity that make Him seem complicated. He never does anything on earth without first sending His Word because that is how He works. So, first, you have to receive the Word and believe it; after you receive it, the Holy Spirit comes behind to make happen physically what it said spiritually. This means that every time God's Word comes, it doesn't come empty; it carries power - power that saves, heals, delivers, and blesses. This brings us to the fifth premise.

5. Faith in the Word is necessary for it to work on earth for our good.

Dear reader, consider this example: a seed cannot germinate and start producing without conditions. It takes faith for what God's Word says to begin to happen in your life. Therefore, you must transcend feeling-based thinking to live according to faith in God's Word.

People can leave and come to your house to hurt you, but they get sleepy and sleep on the road when they get close. They wake up in the morning the next day and continue on their way, not knowing that it was your house that they wanted. The Word has that power. And it is the Holy Spirit who materializes the Word spoken in faith.

If the Spirit comes first, he will do nothing in your life because his command is the Word. After that, however, you will have to believe in God's Word for the Holy Spirit to start working in your favor. That is why the Word of God becomes a mirror because it can change the situation you are in every time you look at it.

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Remember the mention I made about the food crisis that was solved by a prophetic word from the prophet Elisha. There was once a famine in Israel because the Assyrians had besieged Samaria, and no one could leave or enter. The crisis became worse until they began to sell pigeon dung. People who had pigeons in their houses put basins on the ground; the pigeons defecated, and the feces were sold for human consumption. In addition, they even sold donkey heads, and people ate them due to hunger. But there came a time when there wasn't even donkey meat to eat. So, two women planned to eat their children, and each one would give her child on different days to eat among themselves. The first son was killed and became a meal. The next day, it was the second son's turn, but the other woman refused to give him up. So, the one who had given her son went to complain to the king, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son." Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath he had sackcloth on his body" (2 Kings 6:28-30 NKJV).

They thought that the solution to the crisis would come from the king. At that time, I'm sure that besides the king, there were more members of the senior class of his government, people gifted with science and knowledge, but they couldn't bring a solution to the crisis. Technocracy without God wouldn't be enough to solve the problems arising from the widespread food crisis.

At that time, the prophet Elisha was there carrying the words of God. And do you remember that God's Word is eternal, living, and effective and that it has the potential to change things on earth? Yes. We have presented this in the previous premises.

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So, the king sent a messenger to Elisha to consult with a man who didn't have the science they had, but he had a God who could change the things they faced. He didn't have the chariots, the technique, or the apparatus that the rulers had, but he had angels around him to whom he could give orders, and they would execute, according to the Word. Thus, the Scripture says, "And Elisha said, 'Hear the word of the LORD; thus says the LORD, "Tomorrow about this time a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.' So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, "Look, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" And he said, "In fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it" (2 Kings 7:1-2 NKJV).

The moment God's Word is released, there in heaven and on earth, things begin to change. And the rest of the passage, we can read up to verse 20 of 2 Kings 7.

The voice of a prophet ended the crisis. And suddenly, not only was there food in abundance, but there was also gold, which at the time represented money, currency, or a symbol of wealth. Soon there was economic development in the country, the result of a prophecy. Apart from the gold, they also got many articles of clothing, which means that there was development in the textile industry in the country; there were no people without clothes. Also, they got camels and horses, so there was a development of transportation systems in the country. Thus, by the Word of a man of God, the crisis was over in twenty-four hours. However, the one who didn't believe saw the provision of food and clothing but died without these benefits due to unbelief.

See the danger of someone not believing God's Word. He will see others in the church giving their testimonies about different areas

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in which God has put blessing, and he keeps questioning why he has been in the church for a long time now, and nothing changes in his life. Such people may even distrust their man of God and the people who are witnessing; to them, nothing changes due to their unbelief.

Dear reader, it's time to start believing in God's Word now and His prophets. Finally, the people of Israel had food supplies and were freed from the crisis. The enemies fled from around Samaria, and soon there was peace. This prosperity and peace were the results of what came out of the mouth of a prophet of God.

Now can you measure the impact of God's Word, how far it can go? In twenty-four hours, everything changed because God's Word has the potential to change things here on earth. It's a mirror for us.

So, every time you study God's Word or go to church and hear words, receive them in faith and believe them. God doesn't fail, Jesus said in Matthew 24:35 NKJV, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away."

The Word of God remains in heaven forever. On earth, things come and go, but the Word is permanent. And if you hold firmly to it, you will always have a testimony. Therefore, the biggest investment you must make today is in the Word of God, to the extent that you have books, DVDs, and audios teaching the Word.

Know that what you eat determines your health, and what you hear determines what you will be. To know where you are going and how your life will end, I have to study what you have been listening to. The messages you hear will influence your life, and you will be a success or a failure based on what you hear.

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God's Word can change our character and our way of thinking. Science says that there is a certain age when a person can no longer change his character, but the Word of God can change someone, and it doesn't matter how old he is.

This world we are in will constantly be shaken by crises; only those who hold fast to God's Word will stand firm and strong. The Scripture states in Daniel 11:32 NKJV, "But the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits." Through the information in this book, I am giving you branches to cling to so that when the storm rages, you will be standing firm somewhere, anchored to God's Word. There is nothing permanent in this world; everything is fleeting, but the Word of God is permanent. And that is what you are reading now.

The text in Hebrews 4:12 NKJV confirms this saying, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Now, the Word can enter your bones and remove the disease that is there. It can penetrate the blood cells of a human being and destroy the disease virus that is lodged there. The Word of God has a speed greater than that of sound and light and can penetrate the bones and veins of man's body. Moreover, it has the potential to enter a person's skull and heal it, as well as realign the brain, reset broken bones, and realign everything that is damaged in his body.

The power of God's Word is greatly immeasurable. For example, it can enter a woman's womb, remove the myoma, and make her fertile to conceive. The Word of God penetrates the spirit, the soul, and the mind, and no creature can hide before it. It can

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work as an MRI, locating even the tiniest particles in the body and the human body's tissue cells.

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CHAPTER VII

Ministry of the Word and Ministry of the Spirit

Cooperation between the Word and the Spirit

Dear reader, it should be noted that when you teach and preach the Word, or even when you study and meditate on it, the Holy Spirit begins to work in your life through the words you hear. Therefore, you should always seek a quiet and still place to study, listen, and meditate on the Word. Surrender to the lordship and influence of God's Word. Once, Jesus went to the house of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. And Martha, seeing the Master's presence in her home, became so busy with kitchen work while her sister Mary sat at Jesus' feet to hear him teach. Martha later came to Jesus complaining that her sister wasn't helping her with the kitchen chores and that the work was too much for her alone. See Jesus' response, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:28-42 NKJV). The best part is to listen carefully to the Word of God, for it doesn't walk alone; it carries the power of the Holy Spirit. Even when you go to a church service, find a place to stay focused to hear the Word because it doesn't come empty; the Holy Spirit accompanies it as you listen to it. This process is called the *ministry of the Word and the Spirit*.

Dear reader, understand that it's the Word of God that makes possible the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. God cannot begin to work in your life without first having said something about it. There has to be a promise before there is a realization or fulfillment of it.

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God's activities accompany his declarations. To be more precise, God's operations are tied to His Word. This means that before God does something in someone's life, He speaks first. God's deeds accompany God's speeches. So, if God has already said something to you, dear reader, about your situation, no matter how messy, unstable, or rotten that problem is, the Word has the potential to change it.

The latent power of the Word of God

For example, in the book of John chapter 11, we read about the story of Lazarus, who had been dead for four days. His body decomposed and laid inside a tomb covered by a stone. When Jesus went there, Martha, the sister of the deceased, went to meet him and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." (John 11:21, 25-26 NKJV).

Christ lives in us through the Word. When Christ is in the believer's life, the believer will always have an advantage over the situation he is facing. Mary also met Jesus and threw herself at his feet, presenting him with the same unfortunate situation. Jesus went to the tomb where Lazarus lay. And, He said, "Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:39-40 NKJV).

By this, Jesus meant that whoever believes in Him will see the glory, and whoever doesn't believe will see disgrace. So, only the

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people who believe in God's Word and power can experience a life of glory.

Dear reader, no matter what illness you have, be it HIV/AIDS, malaria, paralysis, or even cancer, believe that with God, everything is possible. And, by extension, everything is also possible for the one who believes. For example, if you can believe, then you will see the glory of God. No matter how complicated your husband is, your wife or your children are, if you can believe, they will be realigned. No matter how long you have been without children, if you believe, then you can conceive. Everything is possible for the one who believes. Your life depends on a simple word; that word is called "believe" or "faith." Jesus brought us a life of possibilities in a world full of barriers and impossibilities. And, we overcome these limits imposed by nature and the devil through our faith. As the Holy Scripture says, "And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4 NKJV).

Looking at the way Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, we see the supremacy of God's Word. First, note that Lazarus was dead and buried, and Jesus, outside the tomb, simply sent the word into the tomb, telling Lazarus to come out, and he came out alive. Then He commanded him to be untied.

The question is, what brought Lazarus from death to life? The answer is simple: it was the word expressed in the phrase, "Lazarus, come out." That word was enough to take all the rot out of the man, cleanse his image, bring him out of the clutches of death, and give him life. The miracle was not only the resurrection of Lazarus but also how this miracle occurred. Lazarus walked out of the tomb but bound. The scripture says, "And the dead man came out, having his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face wrapped in a

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handkerchief. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go” (John 11:44 NKJV).

Now, if Lazarus had his feet and hands bound, how did he get out? And if his face was covered with a handkerchief, how did he see his way out of the tomb? The answer is obvious: it was through the word, the word of command emanating from the mouth of Jesus. The Master’s word gave him life and carried him out of the tomb. So, you too, dear reader, can walk on the Word and get out of any adverse situation, but the one where it seems impossible to get out of it.

The Word has great power because it is eternal; it is a creator. Also, because it is living and effective, it cuts more than a two-edged sword. It doesn’t matter what the doctor said about your health; the Word can cut cancer, destroy the virus, and give you health.

However, you must believe first, and then the Holy Spirit will come behind the Word to materialize it according to what you have believed.

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CHAPTER VIII

How to receive the Word

The text in James 1:21-22 NKJV tells us, “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

In this passage of Scripture, the Holy Spirit, through the apostle James, teaches how the believer must receive the Word to function in his life. For this purpose, one must understand that the Word of God is a graft of a spiritual life. Imagine a tree that produces small mangoes, and you want big mangoes; you don’t need to cut down the whole tree because its growth takes years. You just need to graft the branch of the big mangoes onto the trunk of the tree of the small mangoes. Do you understand now? The same happens in the spirit, with the Word.

Every time the Word of God comes to the believer, it becomes a grafting of the thing that God wants to give or produce in his life. But, unfortunately, many believers haven’t been productive in their lives because the Word does not graft them in. It has the potential to save, heal, deliver, and bless, but it depends on how you receive it.

So, there are two ways to receive the Word:

1. Receiving the Word with faith

First, one must receive the Word in faith, that is, believing what God has said and not doubting. To believe in this context means

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trusting, creating expectation, and resting in the Word. So, when you believe, you are no longer worried.

The biggest problem that many brothers have is that when God's Word visits them, they remain closed in their hearts because they are focused on a given negative situation. And, when God says that the problem is already resolved, they want to question, "How?" But you must never ask "How?" because God is our 'How.' He knows how He will do the miracle; your task is just to believe and rest in His Word. God knows how he will do what he has promised, so you leave the worrying to him and get busy praising him.

When He told Abraham that he would be the father of the nations, even though Abraham was advanced in age, the latter didn't ask God "how?" He believed only. By asking the question "How?" you are removing the method by which God acts. Because you want to know the techniques, the modalities, and the manner of operation. God has more than a thousand and one ways to get you out of a situation and get you to your destination. Just believe His Word and let Him act.

I, for example, never ask God how He will do a certain thing He has promised, nor do I question where the money will come from or how it will be. I just believe, and that's it. When He says that I will have to travel abroad on a specific date, I just pack my bags and stand ready, knowing that I will go.

I remember when I was finishing high school, some of my teachers advised me to join the Teacher Training Institute. This way, I could teach later and save money to continue with my studies. They said it was difficult to get into public universities and finish my education without stable financial conditions. They told me that I would need "powerful backing." This term has to do with

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sponsorship or patronage by people of tenure. But I said I wouldn't need it because the greatest is in me. Glory God! The Lord has made provision for me. My trajectory has always been a life of faith, in constant dependence on God and His Word.

Believe this: even if you are a woman of advanced age and in menopause, you can conceive, or if you don't have a uterus, don't question "how," just believe. Leave that part up to God. People around you may not even understand this attitude of faith. Those who have faith seem crazy or paranoid because they talk about things that aren't physically tangible but are real in the spirit.

If you are a woman, even if you have no fiancé, for the time being, you can buy your wedding dress and say it's for your wedding. This is called acting by faith. Faith doesn't work according to rational human logic and people's minds; faith goes in the reverse of logic, but holding on to God's words, believing in His faithfulness.

I remember an extraordinary incident of a church sister. She was in the delivery room at a hospital and was scheduled to have the operation to deliver by C-section because the days of giving birth had passed. However, she ran away to deliver in the church. In the eyes of the nurses and other people, it was crazy, even magical. However, seeing that the baby was born in a normal birth, they had no choice but to believe.

When God's Word comes to you because you have read it in Scripture or heard it in preaching, teaching or prophecy, immediately ignore the adverse situation: the illness, the problem, the unemployment, and rest in what God has said. Consider only in the Word of God that is superior to everything, and consider the Spirit of God, behind it, faithful. The biggest hindrance is that many brothers continue to assess the problem and ignore what God has

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said, even after receiving the Word. What you ignore in the spirit will have no way of working. You must accept the Word and mix it with faith in your heart for it to be functional in your life.

Thus, the Scripture testifies, “For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it” (Hebrews 4:2 NKJV).

It’s necessary to receive the Word with faith. So then, why are you still sad even after receiving the Word? Some people aren’t joyful and have no rest and peace because they have not believed. Because if they had believed, they would be rested. The Scripture in Hebrews 4:3 NKJV says, “For we who have believed do enter that rest.”

Dear reader, is it indispensable to worry all the time? So many people are unconcerned when they are sleeping, but I tell you, rest. Surrender all your worries to God and always trust in Him. “Casting all your care, for he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7 NKJV).

For example, I never get worried. By the way, I only know what worry is because I read it in the dictionary, but I don’t know the feeling it causes. Since I came to know Christ, I have believed in the Word and rested in Him. Even though the devil would launch a million missiles against my life and my family to see me worry, I don’t let myself worry. I bite down on the Rock, and Christ is my firm Rock. I am like the Mount of Zion that does not shake. Not that there are no winds and storms, but because I have built my house on the Rock. I agreed with the Word of God when it said, “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for in YAH, the LORD, is everlasting strength” (Isaiah 26:3-4 NKJV). Take a deep breath now, and rest in the Lord. God is working in your favor

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now, for all things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28).

How to foil the devil's plans

The Scripture exhorts us to resist the devil and guarantees a quick escape from him, “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7 NKJV). The greatest torment you can give the devil is when he launches torments and attacks, and you ignore it and confess, “The greatest is in me. The Lord is with me; it is settled. I am blessed. I am the head, not the tail. The light of God is in me. I am the light of the world...” This kind of speech frustrates the devil because he wants to see you worried, but you are celebrating. With no alternatives, the devil packs his bags and travels far away from you.

Remember that even Jesus was tempted by the devil and resisted him. The Scripture attests, “Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time” (Luke 4:13 NKJV). Did you notice the part that says, “every temptation”? It means that his attempts were exhausted, and consequently, he had to leave Jesus.

The devil left Jesus when he recognized that He had a firm hold on the Word “it is written” or “it is said.” Thus, Jesus silenced the devil based on the Word. And the same Word is available to you today. Indeed, we had to torment and frustrate the rascal of the devil. So, dear reader, trust in God and be joyful. Sing hymns and praises, celebrate God even when the devil is launching his missiles against you. “No weapon formed against you shall prosper” (Isaiah 54:17 NKJV).

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God didn't say that no tools would be made against the believer. On the contrary, He said there would be tools forged against you. However, there is a prerogative; an article in the constitution of the kingdom of heaven that favors the believer. Your adversaries can manufacture tools of sorcery, hatred, envy, death, poisoning, persecution, or destruction. This may even catch on with other people, but as far as you are concerned, "No weapon formed against you shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17 NKJV).

This certainly means that the tools will be forged and may even work against other people. However, the one that comes against you will explode before it hits you. Do you understand this now? If you do and believe, then declare with me now, saying, "Every tool prepared against me will not prosper; I am immune to the fiery darts of my adversaries." Therefore, build your faith in God's Word.

For example, if someone promises you that they will launch arrows and death strikes, don't be afraid. Know that they will manufacture the missiles, but if the missile manufactured to hit you doesn't get back to the manufacturer, it will explode before it reaches you. Even those who speak ill of you, don't worry about them because it is their job to speak, but it is up to you to believe in God and prosper in life. Therefore, the more they talk about you, the more projected you become. Their noise is the fuel needed to launch you in a promotional direction in life. The noise of your opponents is like an air chamber. The more they badmouth you, the more they fill your tires with air to make it easier for you to move on the promotional highway of life.

All these glories of the Word are available to you. Just receive the Word in faith. However, it takes an attitude of heart to receive it. This is what we will deal with in the next chapter.

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2. Receiving God's Word with meekness

“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21 NKJV).

Meekness means simplicity or humility. Therefore, receiving with meekness means receiving the Word with the attitude of a child who is a simple being and is not prejudiced. Also, it represents receiving the Word believing in what you are hearing, accepting, and digesting it in your spirit. Now, the adult is complicated in relation to a child. For example, if you offer cookies to a child, he will usually take them without question. However, the adult will question why you are offering him the cookies and what your intentions are. And, if you don't give them to him, he will want to know why you didn't give them to him. But, the child just receives and thanks you.

So, receive God's Word with simplicity, don't doubt or question, be like a child. Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3 NKJV).

When God's Word comes, don't use your human reasoning, for man's mind is too small to comprehend it and the breadth of what God can do. Instead, use faith and not human mental logic.

When it comes to receiving God's Word, always consider this Scripture, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the

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work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22-25 NKJV).

Hold this thought, “You must attend church services and study the Word constantly. However, your life will not change just because of how often you go to church, or just read God’s Word; it will change because of how often you practice what you hear in church or what you study in God’s Word.”

Someone may have been to church more times than you, but if he is not practicing, it won’t change anything. And another person who may be going for the first time, and practicing the Word, will undoubtedly come back with a testimony.

Bottom question: what are you doing with the Word? Apostles, pastors, preachers, missionaries preach and teach tirelessly, and others like me stay long hours. DVDs are made, books are written, and are in the bookstore, but few are drinking from the Word. Many brethren don’t have the DVDs, books, or CDs of the teaching messages of the Word, nor do they have the Holy Bible itself. But they want their lives to change. It will not change anything, for this is not superstition but communion with God, the Creator of the universe. Therefore, you must be a doer of the Word.

Beloved reader, if you decide that from today on, you will put into practice everything you learn in the house of God or study from the Holy Scriptures, then you will look back and see that a ladder has been placed for you to climb the steps of glorious life. You will see yourself at the top and know that you have risen by faith. Something happens in our spirit whenever we study God’s Word. That is why you must invest time to study the Scriptures and meditate on them. On the surface, it may seem that nothing is changing, but that isn’t true, for, in the spirit, something is happening. There is a transfusion

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of life and glory carried out by the Holy Spirit whenever we study the Word. It's like a seed that comes out of its wrapping; it begins to germinate when it finds a heart fertilized by faith and fertilized by meekness. Meekness irrigates the heart, faith fertilizes it, and meditation makes the Word grow and produce in your life.

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CHAPTER IX

The Word of God as the Believer's Mirror

In verse 23 of James 1, we can understand that the Word of God is a mirror for the believer. Anytime you read, study, or listen to the Word, you are contemplating yourself in the mirror. Your true mirror is the Word; the mirror is a reflector of what you are. So, if you want to adjust your image, use the mirror.

Since God's Word is the mirror for the believer, faith is to see yourself as God sees you in His Word.

Your true identity is not in people's mouths, in what they say about you, but in God's infallible Word. Therefore, if someone says you are poor, you shouldn't accept that information because God says you are rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). If someone says that you are sick, God says you have been healed (Isaiah 53:4-5). Furthermore, don't accept that you are weak because God says you are strong; you are what God says you are. The text in Joel 3:10 says, "Let the weak say, I am strong," and in Nehemiah 8:10b NKJV states that "the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Dear reader, you are protected in Christ. Therefore, you are not vulnerable because God says that He Himself will be a wall of fire around you (Zechariah 2:5). Diabolical arrows will not strike you because God says that every tool forged against you will not prosper. This is because you are complete in Christ. You are not needy or poor because the Lord is your shepherd, and you will lack nothing. By looking at God's Word in this way and adjusting to what it says about you, as a son or daughter of God, you are using it as a mirror. It reflects your identity in Christ. Therefore, your reactions should

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be based on the mirror, and after you have looked at the Word, don't forget yourself.

You are what God says you are. You have what God says you have, and you are able to do what God says you can do. Therefore, you are the end product of God's Word spoken over your life. That end product is registered on the mirror's lens, waiting for you to look at, believe, confess, and live accordingly.

This means that whatever God says about you is what you are; you result from the words. Therefore, where you are, what you are, and what you have now and will have tomorrow happens because God said so.

Remember that when God called Abraham, he had nothing, but he became somebody because he was a product of God's words (Genesis 12). So, you must locate yourself in the mirror of the Word.

The text in 2 Corinthians 4:6 NKJV explains, "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Now, every time you look at the Word of God, you see Jesus because it reveals Him, and He reflects the glory of God the Father. That is, the glory of God is in the face of Jesus, and the face of Jesus is the Word of God. So, therefore, every time you study and listen to the Word, you are seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

To find yourself, you have to look at Jesus. The question is: is Jesus now sick? Certainly not. Why? Because when we look at Him, we see only glory in Him. Looking at Christ, we see no sickness, no

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sadness, no curse, no barriers, no bad luck, no poverty; we see only the glory of God.

Dear reader, I declare in your life that from today on, whoever looks at you will see the glory of God, also.

Now, in Christ, there are many glories, but we receive only the glory that we can see in Jesus. So, if you look at Jesus and see health in Him, your life will be full of health. If in Jesus you see prosperity, your life will also be prosperous. If in Jesus you see victory, you will live in constant victory. This is because you will only live in the light of what you see on the face of Jesus, which is the glory of God revealed in the Word.

In this sense, your focus now is not to look at the devil or the demons, much less at problems; your focus is to look at Jesus. Many Christians are in crisis today because they are looking at the crises and not at Jesus. Peter sank because he stopped looking to Jesus and looked to the winds and waves (Matthew 14:30).

You will only receive the portion of glory that you see. This is why two Christians can attend the same church, use the same version of the Holy Bible, and have the same pastor but have different lives because they don't see the same things. The individual perspectives differ from each other. One only sees Jesus religiously, that is, the Jesus who died on Calvary's Cross only to save him and give him rest in heaven. So, while he is alive on earth, he is suffering, slowly waiting to rest in heaven one day. So, while we see the glory and the victory in Christ every day, it depends on what we see.

If you only see enemies, demons, opposition, and sorcerers in your mind and heart, then these can torment you every day. But, for example, if you live with the consciousness of the angels' protection,

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you will live in the light of that protection. So, it's normal for one believer to be prospering while the other is waiting to die so he can rest in heaven.

Dear reader, I'm helping you to see yourself in God's mirror. Every time I teach some message, I bring God's mirror for you to see yourself and adjust to what you see in the mirror. For example, when David looked at Goliath, psychologically, he saw victory, but his brothers looked and saw defeat.

When I was younger, I saw prosperity and glory in my family, even in adverse conditions. I would confess that I am the head, above and not below, the light of the world, hallelujah! I spoke what I saw in my mirror.

Understand this: for your life to reflect Christ, you must reflect what you see in Him.

Consider the Scripture in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NKJV, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

True, weeping lasts for a night, but joy comes in the morning. Therefore, cling to the Word, the mirror of spiritual realities with the potential to materialize what the believer sees in it.

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CHAPTER X

How to use the Word of God as a Reflecting Mirror in Life

Having learned in the previous chapters about the premises and multifunctionality of God's Word, let us now practice one thing and adjust to it. My heart desires that every day that you hear the Word of God, through face-to-face services, online, books, DVDs, or even by reading the Holy Bible, you won't forget what you have seen. The devil may try to attack you and launch missiles against you, but don't forget what you have seen; hold the Word close to you. Come situations, rivers flow, winds blow, and rains fall; you have to cling only to the Word. Say this with me, "I know who I am in Christ. And I don't forget who I am."

Below are some areas where you can adjust your life to conform to God's will, clearly expressed in His Word.

1. Seeing prosperity in the mirror

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes, He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9 NKJV).

According to the mirror, we are rich. Say, "I'm rich. Rich in dollars, euros, meticaís, and every currency of value, in the name of Jesus."

Understand that, according to the mirror we have seen, Jesus became poor so that you and I could be rich. He left the splendor of the heavens and was born in a manger, a stable among animals because, on the day Mary was to give birth, there was no room in the

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inn. And Jesus shared the accommodation with the animals. He was not born in a palace, but in a manger, so that in His poverty we might be prosperous and saved. So, don't be afraid or ashamed to confess what you are in God's mirror.

For example, if you are a young person or teenager who was born into a family with precarious conditions, you can, in faith and boldly, tell your biological parents that you are rich. The dear reader can confess that he has wealth in Christ. Wealth in all currencies. You are rich in health, peace, and glory. If you confide in faith these riches every day, without delay, you will see the manifestation of God's glory. So, use your tongue and confess in faith.

2. Seeing Victory in the mirror

Looking into the mirror of God's Word, we see victory constantly. God is victorious, and so are His. Such Father, such children.

Jesus assured his disciples, "These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33 NKJV).

We note here that Jesus Christ has overcome the world. But, for whom did He overcome it? For His children, indeed. For those who have received Him as Lord and Savior and have consequently been born again. As for being born into the kingdom of God, the mirror reflects the following, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith" (1 John 5:4 NKJV).

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Therefore, if you are born of God, then you have the potential to overcome the world. There is nothing in this world greater than your faith and your God. This is why Jesus presented us with two places and their inherent consequences:

“In the world: you will have tribulations.” The word “afflictions” employed here comes from the Greek “*Tblipsis*” and means “tightness,” denoting adverse situations that create and exert pressure on men’s lives, robbing them of quiet, peace, and rest. They are tribulations at all times and on all sides.

“In me” here, He presents Himself to us as a place. That’s right; Christ is more than a name or title. He is also a place—a place of rest, rest, and victory. You can live in this victory every day. But, as the apostle Paul said, “Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Romans 8:37 NKJV).

Following the same tune, also say, “I’m victorious, in everything. The victory is mine, in the name of Jesus. God loves me.” No matter what situation you find yourself in, you emerge victorious in the name of Jesus at the end of the day. We win before we fight.

3. Seeing Health in the mirror

Dear reader, look for a moment, in this part of the mirror: “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:4-5 NKJV).

The mirror doesn’t say that we will be healed because healing isn’t going to happen. It has already happened in the spirit, but what

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is missing is the believer's part to see, believe, and confess to manifest it physically. So, for example, if you are sick, you have to confess that you have already been healed in the name of Jesus, and if you have been healed, you remain healed. So, every day, you put your hand where you have the sickness or pain and confess that you have been healed.

In heaven, Jesus' report to the Father is that His stripes have already healed all who believe in Him. What you have to do now is this: even if you feel pain, take what the Word says and confess that you have already been healed in Jesus' name. Suddenly the pain will disappear, the tumor and cancer will disappear too. Make God remember what He has done for you.

Now, there is a particular vocabulary, a set of words that we must learn to use. The Word is an element of the fourth dimension of the spiritual world, and by confessing and keeping faith in it, you change the state of sickness to the state of health. There is a process of metamorphosis, a transformation that happens when we confess what God has already said in his Word.

Beloved reader, understand this: many brothers and sisters have been robbed of much because they haven't been taught the Word. So many even think that God doesn't care about their suffering. Others just go to church religiously, with no expectation of learning the Word and growing. One must realize that there is a teaching ministry whose goal is to build up the believer to grow and be mature in the things of God. God wants you to become a perfect man, that is, a grown man who isn't shaken by contrary winds. As you walk with God and practice the Word, you will have certain experiences that will help you build up your most holy Faith.

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The importance of transfiguration

For example, one day, Jesus took James, Peter, and John up a mountain to pray. The Scripture says, “As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen” (Luke 9:29-31, 34-36 NKJV).

The other nine disciples of Jesus died without seeing a part of His glory, which was only available to the eyes of the three with whom He went up the mountain. So you, too, can daily be transfigured and begin to shine.

This phenomenon has happened to me many times. For example, when I want to open a door of opportunity in life with my strength, and it doesn't open, I transfigure and pass on. I haven't yet taught in-depth about how to transfigure because this is a level at which the mature believer is, and there many may call them names because people are not used to seeing us transfigured. But by practicing the art of studying and meditating on the Word, you reach this dimension. It is a dimension in which your spirit surrounds and carries the body, protecting it and making it shine. It is a senior level and requires much intimacy with the Holy Spirit and surrendering to the light of God's Word. Unfortunately, many believers only live at the junior level, where their bodies carry their spirit. This is why, when there is an attack of darkness, they falter and are easily hit because they don't know the Word.

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With transfiguration, there is nowhere you cannot enter. You may be ugly in your husband's eyes, but after you are transfigured, he will see another image of you, glorious beauty. You put your resume into a company to work, and they simply say "received," the same day in the afternoon you come back already transfigured, and they forget that you went there in the morning and say that they were waiting for you to start work.

Dear reader, when you spend time listening to the Word, it enables your spirit to receive an impartation. That is, there is an induction of spiritual magnetism. The power of God that is in the Word is literally transmitted to your spirit, to your body, and your life changes immediately. Therefore, as I write this book and as you read it, I pray that the heavenly Father will open your eyes to see His glory. I pray that He will give you a hunger and thirst for His Word. I pray that He will provide you with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, know Him, and understand spiritual realities. I desire that you will grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

4. Deliverance

Notice this part of the mirror, "Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:12-13 NKJV).

Looking closely at this Scripture, we can understand that we, as believers or Christians, are no longer under the devil's control. We have been set free and transported into the kingdom of God. But to live in the light of this revelation, you must watch the mirror of the Word and conform to it. So, say with me, "Thank you, Father, for

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qualifying me to share in the inheritance of the saints in light and delivering me from the power of darkness.”

The term employed for “take away” in this passage of Scripture comes from the Greek verb “*Rhuomai*,” which means “to take someone from one place to another, from a place of danger to a place of safety or from disadvantage to advantage.” Thus, it denotes the act of bringing someone from death to life.

Now, from God’s point of view, there are certain things that He will no longer do for the believer because everything necessary for his well-being, He has already done. What is needed now is your faith to take hold and thank Him. Today, you will thank God for victory, for health, for prosperity, for deliverance.

Many brothers are trying to get out of where they were taken from a long time ago. They are trying to go to where they already are, trying to be what they already are. You should know that the devil no longer controls us because God has taken us out of the power of darkness and has transported us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.

Dear reader, your prayers should be more filled with thanksgiving, not requests based on this revelation.

Now, I understand why Paul said, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28 NKJV).

At this point, we aren’t at the level of believing but of knowing, as we live in the reality of things. The verb employed in this context for the sense of “knowing” comes from the Greek “*eido*” and means “to be aware.” So, no matter how the adverse situation presents

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itself, we know that it will produce good for us at the end of the day. All things: the sun, the moon, the stars, the sea, and everything that exists was put in place by God to produce good for us. God can use even elements of nature to fight for us. You can free yourself from certain things by simply confessing the Word of God over your life.

Understand this: you will never live in glory that you haven't seen in the Word. You can attend church, grow old and even die in it without ever experiencing the glory until you see it. Therefore, I urge you to make the church bookstore your second kitchen and build your life using the Word of God. In the kitchen, you cook meals; the word of God is also food for the spirit.

Get all the DVDs and books you don't already have and make time at home to listen to the Word. You will be amazed that in a few months, your life will be in another dimension of light for the glory of God.

The devil knows that you can attend church every day and stay long hours, but if you don't bother to listen to God's Word, nothing will change in your life. Man's greatest enemy is lack of knowledge. Man can pray and fast a lot, but the devil will bind him in certain areas where he has no knowledge. Attending church without having the Word of God at home is like rowing against the wind; there will be no progress.

When I look at certain believers, in general, I have noticed that one of the problems they have is a lack of interest in knowledge. Many don't like to know about everyday things like their country's constitution or other legal instruments in force in their countries. For example, how many citizens have the constitution of their country? Very few. With this, they are unaware of the very constitution that governs their country. This is why they may suffer

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injustices or even be unjustly condemned in the courts because they lack the epistemological basis of the legal framework to defend their rights.

Sadly, no angel from heaven will come to deliver you in this area, nor will the Holy Spirit Himself ever do that. By the way, the Holy Spirit will remind you of what you already know, and if you don't know, how will He act on your behalf? First, of course, He teaches us, but there must be a thirsty, teachable heart to learn. Jesus said, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (John 14:26 NKJV). Thousands of people say they are Christians, and some don't even have a physical or digital Holy Bible, but they want to be blessed. God's things don't work that way. God doesn't act apart from His Word; you have to have the Word. This is why the psalmist said, "Your word have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalms 119:11-12 NKJV).

Many people are afflicted by demons day and night, and they think that if they simply fast on a mountain, God will help them. He often does it when you are still a spiritual baby, but He expects you to grow in the spirit. For example, Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights, and after the fast, the devil went to tempt him. This is to say that fasting does not drive the devil away, but standing firm in the Word of God does. However, when you fast and at the same time feed your spirit with the Word (by studying the Scriptures or listening to teaching or preaching messages on DVDs, CDs, or reading from Christian books), you come out a champion after the fast. You become more than a winner and take up huge space in the spirit, conquering new territory once controlled by the devil.

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I have found that one of the ways to hide a treasure from someone is to keep it inside a book because he will not read it. Therefore, I am happy for all the brethren who have the Holy Bible (our heavenly constitution) and show that they love the Word. The Holy Bible offers various interpretations, but they cannot be just anyone's, nor are they just any. That is why God anoints certain people to explain it to you to understand what you already have in the Scriptures. Otherwise, there would be no churches; everyone would pray in their own home, with their own Holy Bible. God does not give us a vague understanding of His Word but reveals exactly what it says. And that is why we have churches to learn the Word. But in the coming times, with the advent of the second coming of Christ, each believer must become an altar of worship in these last days. Wherever you are: at home, at work, at school, or in your business, for God is Spirit and wants us to worship Him in spirit and truth, everywhere, without neglecting the assembly that is His church. We will learn about this in the following chapters.

Now the Scripture says, "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6 NKJV). Looking at Jesus Christ, we see victory, health, prosperity, protection, salvation, among other glories. Now, how to take possession of these glories or be part of them? By reading and/or listening. By believing and acting accordingly. By taking and confessing about yourself the same things God has said about you in the mirror of His Word. By thanking and praising God. Locate yourself in God's Word today. Don't look for your pain or sickness but look for your healing and health in the Word. Don't go looking for your poverty and failures or defeats in life. Instead, seek and locate your prosperity and victory from God. Invest time studying and meditating on the Word. Whether you are walking, driving a car, cooking, or exercising, nourish yourself on the

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Word through audios, literature, and other platforms that allow you to hear or read it. Feed your spirit and live gloriously every day.

Storms will come and pass, but you remain anchored in the Word. Consider these words of the psalmist David, “Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge until these calamities have passed by...they have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have dug a pit before me; into the midst of it they themselves have fallen” (Psalms 57:1, 6 NKJV). You are secure in the Word, for it never fails.

Now, raise your hands to the heavens. Don’t ask for anything right now; just thank God for what you have already given and for what I have shown you in the Word in this book. Pray. Don’t complain; praise.

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PART III

THE HABIT OF TESTIFYING ABOUT
JESUS

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CHAPTER I

Witnesses of Jesus Christ

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NKJV).

These are part of the set of words and instructions that Jesus Christ left with his disciples. To this end, He sent the Holy Spirit to empower them, enabling them to bear witness to His death, burial, and resurrection.

Jesus’ first disciples, whom He named apostles or special envoys, had a clear mission: to testify that Jesus was the true Christ - the anointed Savior awaited by Israel for thousands of years. This Jesus, who had been crucified by the Romans and hated by the clerical class of Israel’s religious constellation (the Pharisees and Sadducees) who made up the Sanhedrin, had been raised from the dead by the power of God the Father. Furthermore, Jesus’ resurrection was unequivocal proof that Jehovah had approved Jesus as the Savior, not only of Israel but of the entire world. In light of this revelation, all human beings had to repent before God and accept the once-for-all sacrifice made for the atonement of sin that had its historical fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ on their behalf on the cross of Calvary. Thus, these 12 apostles, including Matthias replacing Judas (the one who had betrayed Jesus), constituted a closed group of eyewitnesses of all the events that occurred from the baptism of John to the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

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Three of them were the pillars of the church in Jerusalem, namely: Peter, James, and John.

Now, testifying about Jesus in an environment dominated, on the one hand, by the traditional Mosaic law and customs of the Old Testament, and on the other hand, by the Roman Empire, which sometimes demanded deified reverence to the emperor Augustus Caesar. By the way, it was even risky because it went against the customs that Moses had left with the people of Israel. Therefore, the practice of this evangelistic ministry wouldn't be carried out by fearful or timid people. It required great courage, boldness, and evidence that vindicated the preachers of the Word. To do this, Jesus sent them the promise of the Father - the Holy Spirit. Here are the Master's words, "For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5 NKJV). They needed to be immersed in the power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was the greatest ministry resource that Jesus had left with them. He would be the Comforter, a word translated from the Greek Paraclete. This word denotes six synonyms representing the Holy Spirit's ministry to the disciples: Helper, Counselor, Substitute, Strengtheners, Advocate, and Intercessor. And to best benefit from the company of this Comforter, they were to have a life of prayer and intimacy with God.

It was necessary because the testimony of Jesus would not be given by mere words alone, but a demonstration of God's power was needed. For this, signs and wonders were done by the apostles' hands to prove that Jesus Christ was alive and that He is the expected Savior. Thus, when on the day of Pentecost, all were gathered together in the same place, the upper room, in prayer, God poured out the Holy Spirit as Jesus had promised, "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the

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Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Therefore, behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:45-49 NKJV).

Thus, with the help and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the apostles went about preaching the message of the Gospel everywhere, the Good News: Jesus Christ is alive, and in Him there is salvation. Thus, with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, fear was dissolved from their hearts. Thus, the will and the determination to announce salvation in Christ and make disciples were born in them. That is, to make everyone a follower, a learner, a student, and a practitioner of the teachings and way of life left by Jesus.

They understood more than anyone else that there is no salvation in any other name than Jesus. To this, the apostle Peter bore witness, who had once denied his relationship with Jesus and now, filled with the Holy Spirit and boldness, will fearlessly testify even before his detractors that Jesus Christ is Lord, the Savior of those who believe in Him. Thus the Scripture testifies, “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:8-12 NKJV).

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Thus, from mouth to mouth, the Word of God, that is, the testimony about Jesus, was being made, and miraculous signs roughly accompanied its proclamation.

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CHAPTER II

*The message transcends borders and breaks down
multiethnic and linguistic barriers*

Although Christ's message was the driving force and its proclamation, the purpose of the apostles was to give their lives for their Master; at first, they didn't understand that the salvation Christ had brought was also extended to the Gentiles, that is, to non-Jews. For them, only Jews with Abrahamic blood were to be saved. So much so that even the Spirit, in their view, was to be transferred only to Jews. This was the case in the early stages of the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. Finally, however, the twelve apostles and the early church elders came to understand that God had also extended saving grace to the Gentiles. We see this in the book of Acts 10:44 when Peter preaches in the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and the Holy Spirit falls on those who were listening to the message. The reason the Spirit descended and filled Cornelius and his house is that God knew that Peter would not initially lay his hands on these uncircumcised Gentiles so that they would receive the Spirit, so God poured it out without Peter's spiritual consent. See their admiration and recognition, "And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:45-46 NKJV). Thus, even Peter had to justify himself before the central committee of the Church in Jerusalem about what had happened to these Gentiles and how God had also opened the doors of salvation to non-Jews.

These were Peter's words, as recounted by Luke in Acts 11:15-17 NKJV, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of

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the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" In the face of this explanation by Peter, the concept of salvation for all was becoming more evident to them. And Luke records, "When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life" (Verse 18). And wherever they went in dispersion, they carried with them the same message of repentance, faith, and salvation, with Christ as the center of everything, the way for man to return to God, the Creator of the universe. Thus, the Scripture attests, "Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only" (Verse 19).

Because of this reluctance of the first apostles, who were all Jews, to evangelize non-Jews and the elders of the early Church, God raised the apostle Paul, once called Saul. This had been a fervent persecutor of the disciples, an uncompromising defender of Judaism, and an opponent of faith in Christ. On the way to Damascus, on yet another mission against the Christianity preached by the apostles and centered on Jesus Christ, proclaiming Him the risen Savior. He was converted upon meeting Jesus and became an apostle to the Gentiles, that is, to non-Jews. Thus, with the explosive, expansive, and dynamic ministry of Saul of Tarsus (now called Paul), the Good News about the kingdom of God reached the Gentiles without obligation to comply with the ordinances and laws of Moses prescribed in the Torah. Thus, for example, it was no longer necessary to be physically circumcised. Still, circumcision of the heart, in a transformation and regeneration carried out by the power of the Holy Spirit in the believer, enables the believer to be born again and have new life - eternal life. For Paul, salvation wasn't

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achieved by keeping the law, but by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ and his finished work on the cross. In Paul's view, Jesus has already done everything for humanity; what is lacking is for people to believe and receive by faith. As he would later say in Ephesus, "And even when we were dead in trespasses, he made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). For by grace are you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:5, 8-9 NKJV).

Though much misunderstood by many preachers today and resisted by the first-century church class, the message of grace forms the central basis of the atoning work done by Jesus Christ once and for all for repentant sinners. The background is that God hates sin but loves the sinner and wants to save him. Moreover, all that needed to be done for him to receive salvation had already been done. His part is to repent of his sins and dead works, and by firm faith in Christ, to receive God's offer, which translates into three gifts:

1. The gift of justice

This means that God justifies the sinner through his faith in Jesus. The term "justification" is not to be understood religiously. But, in a court of law, it's a legal term. It has the same legal value and semantic charge as the term "acquittal," where the defendant is acquitted of his accusation or guilt, thus being free from any and all punishment or condemnation. Paul himself would say the same thing to the Romans, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and

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death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:1-4 NKJV).

Grace isn’t a license for the sinner to continue living in sin, but rather a gift from God in the form of a declaration of innocence, excusing the sinner through his surrendered faith in Christ and readiness to begin a new life free from sin. Thus, with the help and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the believer can now live a life pleasing to God and walk in fellowship with Him. What was challenging in the Old Testament due to the flesh’s weakness now becomes easy with the help of the power of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is now easier and more accessible.

2. The gift of eternal life

This glorious, infinite life, the same life that God has, is available to the believer today, in Christ Jesus. The Scripture states, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16 NKJV).

This life is in Christ, and it is up to all believers, members of Christ’s church, to bear witness to this life so that more people will receive it freely. So, the Scripture declares, “He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God

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has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:10-12 NKJV). It’s a life of peace and prosperity that goes beyond the grave. The believer experiences it here on earth and after this life. That is why it is called eternal life. This life is available only in Christ.

3. The gift of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a personality. He is the third person of the Trinity, the gift of God given to all who believe in Christ. As Peter testified, “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:28-39 NKJV).

It’s the Holy Spirit who has come to take the place of Jesus today, enabling believers to live for Christ and to testify powerfully and boldly about Him. It is He who has been set up as the Lord of the harvest. As we speak of Jesus, He convicts the sinner of sin, righteousness, and sin, leading him to repentance and converting him when he believes. He is our Helper, Teacher, Counselor, Advocate on earth—the very present Help in the hour of trouble. Every time the apostles suffered persecution and needed strengthening or were faced with a complicated situation, they prayed, and God filled them with the same Holy Spirit they had received. Thus, He gave them wisdom, intelligence, words, and boldness; He was everything to them, and without Him, they could be and do nothing that God would accept.

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The good news is that you, too, can receive Him today. Without Him, salvation is not complete, for He shapes the sinner's character, causing him to change his life and transform himself. He is the pledge, the guarantee that God has given to humanity, that those who believe in Jesus and receive the gift of the Spirit are children of God. They have the seal of God that Paul, in Ephesians 1:13, called “*Sphragidzo*.” This term means “seal or mark” and serves three purposes:

1. Authentication

In the first century, and when Paul wrote his epistles, it was customary for documents or official letters or even gifts sent from one province to another to bear a seal. This served to authenticate an item that would only be seen or read after opening the seal as if it were a stamp confirming its originality and authenticity. In this vein, the Holy Spirit is described as the seal, that is, the confirmation that we belong to God. The *Sphragidzo* also served as a sign of belonging. You only belong to Christ if you have the Holy Spirit; you are only a child of God if you have God's *sphragidzo*: the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it was a general rule in the early church that everyone who believed in Jesus and was baptized in water also received the gift of the Holy Spirit. While reading this book, even now, you are receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit; God is filling you with His Spirit.

2. Preservation

The believer who has the Holy Spirit is guaranteed divine protection against all spiritual attacks of wickedness. The Holy Spirit also serves as a sign to restrain the devil and his agents from touching the Lord's anointed.

3. Safety

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With the presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, he has the assurance and security of his salvation.

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CHAPTER III

Christ's witness grows and prevails

Now, the witness about Jesus was not always a bed of roses. The first followers of Christ suffered much persecution, betrayal, hatred, and envy because they brought a new way of living that was a scandal to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks and Romans.

There were several hotbeds of heated persecution in the first three centuries after Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven. Many Roman emperors figured as gods and demanded loyal worship from all their subjects in the various territories controlled by the empire. However, the Christians presented themselves as a hindrance because they didn't accept worship images or humans as God. This apotheosis did not go down well in their eyes. Therefore, they were persecuted, massacred, and accused of things they had not done. Reason? Their faith. They believed in one God who sent his Son to die for us. Many martyrs of the faith have been men and women who chose to die to defend their faith and fellowship with Jesus. In these difficult and delicate times, they needed the help and inner strength of the Holy Spirit to endure the affront for the name of Jesus.

Dear reader, understand that the salvation and faith that you can read about and study in the Holy Bible today came to us through the blood of men and women who defended the faith once given to the saints. Today, we have democratic states and civil liberties, and freedoms of speech. In those days, there were none of these perks. It was obedience or sword. And the choice put each one on a tightrope. Confessing Jesus as Lord and Savior implied rejecting the deity of the Roman emperor. And this had its cost, which was often life-threatening. Christians were running from one ruler to another.

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In this whole process, Christianity was like a shoe in the hands of several shoemakers. Each one made his mold and his size of the same type of shoe. There was no single fixed form of Christianity because each community practiced its faith according to its interpretation of the fragments of the testimonies and teachings of the apostles and the early church fathers. Today, we have the Holy Bible in printed and digital format, as well as in audio. Back then, they had only fragments, and there came a time when it was forbidden for an ordinary citizen to have and read a Holy Bible. The only ones that existed were in a language not accessible to all: Latin.

Dear reader, we have to value the legacy left to us by those who paved the way for us with sweat and blood. With tears and toil. With prayers, intercessions, and fasting.

In the third century, Christianity experienced a turning point that shaped the way it is seen today. In 312 A.D., the emperor of the East, Constantine, had a vision of a luminous cross on his way to battle, topped by the words “*in hoc signo vinci*,” which translated from Latin means, “Under the sign, you will conquer. In this way, he understood that God was giving him victory with divine help. So, he favored the Christians and had temples built. He himself had a kind of mobile tabernacle where prayers were said whenever he went from place to place in battle. During his tenure and reign, the Christians flourished and prospered. He abolished laws that harmed Christianity and favored those who adhered to it. However, you have to realize that not only was God touching his heart, but it was also a strategy he had to unify the empire that was crumbling and dividing. Unlike other religions like Judaism, which proclaimed purity and patriotic oneness, he saw that Christianity seemed cosmopolitan and transnational, transcultural and translinguistic. It unified people from various parts of the empire, from Europe to Africa and Asia. And those who believed in Christianity constituted a multiethnic,

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multilingual, and multicultural community. Therefore, there was one common denominator among them all: faith in one Savior, Jesus Christ, and this faith's practice.

Outside of Constantine, there were other good and evil emperors. And depending on the policies of each one, Christians suffered or lived in peace. On one occasion, there was a fire in Rome, and the Christians were accused and many of them taken to the arena, where, in full view of many spectators, they were eaten by lions and other wild animals.

Despite all these persecutions, martyrdom, and threats, the message of the Gospel, the Good News of Christ Jesus, never stopped. The Word of God grew and prevailed. It prevailed over all barriers and limitations until it reached our days.

Dear reader, the reason why I brought this historical background is to help you understand that God's Word, the Holy Bible that you and I have, didn't come from accessible roads. Furthermore, you and I must treasure it and enjoy the salvation we have in Christ Jesus. And finally, I have written this brief history so that you too will be motivated to pray, fast, and carry on the testimony of Jesus Christ to people in your sphere of contact near and far, until everyone comes to hear about this wonderful Savior: Jesus Christ. And repenting from their sins and believing in him, have eternal life.

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CHAPTER IV

The power of the message about Christ

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16 NKJV).

The word “Gospel” comes from the Greek “*euangelion*” and means good news or good tidings. This is good news that gladdens the heart and leads the sinner to repentance. In the hearts of the apostles, evangelists, and first-century believers, this message was like fire burning in their bones that compelled them to open their mouths and proclaim it to the whole world. This notion concretely portrayed the general vision that Jesus Christ, their Master, had given them: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” The word “preach” means “proclaim” or “announce.” Thus, they had a message to proclaim that would be good news to those who would receive it with an open heart. So, the Scripture testifies, “But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life” (Acts 5:19-20 NKJV).

Why did God send the angel to bring them out of prison? Because of the message. They had a message that the whole world was to hear. In sending his delivering angel, Jesus’ intention was clear: to protect the message by freeing his carriers and messengers. Between the messenger and the message, the most important thing was the message. This is because there is no messenger without a message. It is the message that makes the messenger relevant. For example, messengers weren’t to falsify the message or pretend to be messengers of Christ, for this had severe consequences. As an

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example, we read in the book of Acts 19 about the seven sons of Sceva, who by imitation, tried to cast demons out of people in the name of Jesus that Paul preached. Contrary to their expectations, the man possessed by the evil spirit jumped on them by striking them and tearing their clothes. As a result, they fled from that house naked and wounded, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was glorified.

The message was so important that Jesus was willing to even from the right hand of the Majesty to release angels to guide and deliver the apostles, thus facilitating the spread of this information relevant to the salvation of souls. Unlike today, where anyone can appear and claim to be sent by God, at that time, Jesus Himself gave signs that vindicated the authenticity and integrity of the messenger. This is why Jesus' word in Acts 1:8 was, "And you shall be witnesses to me."

Now, there is a slight difference between being a witness and being a preacher. The Greek word used in this passage is "martyr." In the secular Greek world, the word martyr was a legal term used to describe those people who gave a personal testimony about events or people, usually in the judicial forum, in courts, in the course of a trial. They testified about affairs they had witnessed and had evidence of. However, he could also testify about facts they had heard about, had experienced. This is where the slight difference lies.

For example, the first twelve apostles were witnesses in a more physically personal dimension. For, they had been walking with Jesus, living, and eating with Him for three and a half years. As the apostles John and Peter can testify. John, for example, recounts his experience with Jesus as he looks at Him as God and Word of life who had become incarnate to save us. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled,

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concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3 NKJV).

On the other hand, Peter will say, “And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain” (2 Peter 1:18 NKJV).

These apostles were bearing witness to their physical experience with Jesus. The word “Martys” also refers to a person who can testify about the truth of what he heard, saw, or knows.

There was no way to stop proclaiming the gospel even when they were severely threatened. Forbidden to proclaim salvation in the name of Jesus, they could not keep silent. So, the Scripture says, “Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us” (Acts 5:26-28 NKJV). For Peter, for example, the answer was simple and upright, “But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him” (verse 29-32 NKJV).

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Paul, for example, would say, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20 NKJV). On another occasion, when he was urged not to go to Jerusalem to preach because he would be arrested, he answered, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 21:13 NKJV).

What mattered to these men of God was the message. But what was unique about this Gospel message of the kingdom of God? The answer is simple: “For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Romans 10:13 NKJV). Now, it seems so easy to call on the name of the Lord and be saved. But how are these people going to do this invocation without first having heard the message? The apostle Paul puts it this way: “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things” (verses 14-15). Christ has sent the church to proclaim good things. He calls the Gospel message of the kingdom of God about Jesus “good things.”

Therefore, the whole world needed to hear these good things about Jesus Christ and what He did for them. God himself was willing to pour out his Holy Spirit and confirm with signs and wonders the preaching of the Gospel, wherever his servants went to preach it. There was always something extraordinary that happened, whether when Philip spoke to the crowds in Samaria or when he ministered to a single man, the Ethiopian eunuch. Joy was radiant on the faces and overflowed in the hearts of those who received

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salvation. Thus, the Scripture testifies, “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing, and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:5-8 NKJV). Glory to God! The whole city rejoiced, for wherever the gospel was preached, God was manifested. In another passage, when Philip had preached the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch, the latter also received and showed the joy of salvation after his faith and baptism. This is how Luke tells us, “Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing” (verse 39).

What joy the eunuch experienced. Indeed, there is a joy, satisfaction, a *sui generis* experience that one experiences when one receives salvation in Christ. A pleasant and delightful experience that not even the pleasures of this world combined can give. It’s the joy of knowing that one is saved and free from condemnation. The joy of knowing that you are in a good relationship with God, the Creator of the universe, and have eternal life. The joy of knowing that your sins are no more.

Dear reader, you too can have the same experience by accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Furthermore, as you give your testimony about Jesus, you can also expect that God will make His power available to support you, just as He did with the witnesses and messengers of the early church.

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CHAPTER V

The message: the most important thing

The Gospel, according to St. Mark, tells what unfolded after Jesus' ascension into heaven. Here is how it is recorded, "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen" (Mark 16:19-20 NKJV).

The Owner of the message himself accompanied the messengers and the message itself, vindicating them. One must realize that the most important thing for this whole exercise wasn't the signs and wonders. That is, the focus wasn't on the signs and wonders but the message. We could ask the question: what confirmed what? Was it the message that confirmed the signs, or the signs that confirmed the message? The answer is obvious: it was the signs that accompanied the message, vindicating it. Therefore, we can see that the message of the kingdom, although simple, carries an immeasurable value in restoring communion between God and man. It's in hearing the message that saving faith comes. In this process, the regeneration of man's spirit occurs, that is, the transformation of his heart and character. He is born again into the kingdom of God and becomes a new creature.

At this level, all your sins are erased, and you are given a new file, justification before God, and the status of a son or daughter of God.

There are many preachers who, because they have misunderstood the Scriptures, advocate that the age of miracles

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ended with the first apostles and evangelists of the early church. Well, this view is erroneous, for the miraculous power they demonstrated served in part to confirm the authenticity of the message and to prove that the Jesus Christ of whom they spoke was alive. They - the first apostles - laid the foundation that is Christ. And, having successfully finished their career, they passed on to the reserve in glory, to the right hand of the Majesty in Christ.

Nevertheless, the message remains and must be preached today, more intensely and urgently than then. This is because we have the technology that they didn't have. While Paul and Peter wrote their manuscripts that became epistles with bird feathers on parchment, today, we have the development of the printing industry and computer technology. We can use these means to make the message reach more people who are physically far from us. If the LORD cooperated with them, confirming the message with signs and wonders that followed, and we must proclaim the same, then let us also hope to see the demonstration of his power as it was in those times. By the way, Scripture states that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. What He did in those times with our fathers in the faith, He still does today. He hasn't changed; the age of miracles continues. And I believe that in these last days, we will see the manifestation of the sons of God demonstrating the power of God and the character of the Spirit as never before. Furthermore, the LORD Jesus himself said, "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:17-18 NKJV).

Note one thing: Jesus was speaking to his apostles, not to believers in general. And the communication was: these signs will

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follow those who believe. That is, the apostles had already been chosen by Jesus and had received the power to heal the sick and cast out demons. Moreover, days later, they would receive the Holy Spirit. So, the signs described in these verses were for believers in general and not for the clerical constellation (Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Evangelists, and Pastors). My question is, how many believers today are performing these works or have these signs? Very few. Many clerical class gospel ministers don't even cast out demons, heal the sick, or speak new tongues. Where are their credentials? No theological certificates were required at the bachelor, graduate, master, or doctoral levels in the early church era. Still, the manifestation of the Holy Spirit confirmed the message and the messenger. Nowadays, everything is done the other way around: this is why we have cold preachers and withered believers; we need this heavenly power given by the Spirit. It can't be in a temple cage; ministers must train believers to go and witness about Christ and pray for people in their workplaces or schools and see the power of God manifested. The problem is the church's maturity because if a believer can cast out a demon or prophesy, he soon runs into opening his ministry, often without a calling. And this creates confusion in the body of Christ and delays the primary mission of carrying out the message of salvation to the world. On this subject, purchase and read my book "The Four Basic Ministries of the Believer: Secrets of Greatness in the Kingdom of God/ 2020).

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CHAPTER VI

THE LORD AND THE LORD

Cooperating with the Holy Spirit

Looking at verses 19 and 20, we find mention of the term “Lord.” Let us note, “So then after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.”

The LORD referred to in verse 19 is Jesus Christ. It's easy to understand this because the same Scripture says that “He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.” At this present moment, Jesus is in heaven representing the church before the Father and reigns on earth through us, members of his body. Even when Stephen slept, the Scripture attests that he, filled with the Holy Spirit (on earth), saw the heavens opened. When they were opened, he looked and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing there. Why was he standing if he went to sit down? Simple: to receive the spirit of Stephen who in invocation said, “Lord Jesus, receive my soul.” He, to this day, does so every time a believer ascends to glory. Now, it's from this position of authority that Jesus delegates power to the church to represent him physically. We, his ambassadors, represent the interests of the kingdom of heaven here on earth.

However, in verse 20, we read that the apostles departed and went preaching everywhere, the Lord cooperating with them, confirming the message by signs and wonders that followed. Who

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was this Lord if the Lord Jesus had already ascended to the right hand of the Majesty? The answer is also simple: it was the Holy Spirit. It's easy to notice this by reading Jesus' words of warning to his disciples, "Behold, I send you the Promise of My Father: but tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49 NKJV). Who was the promise of the Father? The Holy Spirit. It was He who came to glorify Christ by working and cooperating with us. He came to testify of Jesus, and we have been sent to testify of the same Jesus. Therefore, we both have the same mission: we speak according to His inspiration, and He confirms it, touching the hearts of the hearers to believe and be saved, demonstrating it by signs and wonders. He is with us and in us. He needs us - human agency - to work. He is our co-worker, and we need Him to have good results in our work.

Even in the face of threats and persecution, it was He who gave encouragement, strengthening, and words of wisdom to the apostles. Once, when they prayed that God would grant them to preach boldly as He stretched out His hand to heal and for signs and wonders to be done in the name of His Holy Son Jesus, God's answer was to fill them with the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Scripture confirms, "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31 NKJV).

The message was so important that God kept watching over it, always opening doors and means for it to be preached and heard by many. There were no government decrees, laws, or political or religious systems that would erase the impact of the message or stop the advance of the Gospel. Like the course of a river, which always seeks to circumvent obstacles and mountains, the Word of God was expanding more and more. The more persecutions and barriers, the greater the expansion of the Word and the more boldness the Holy

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Spirit gave to the apostles, confirming the message with various signs. Luke, the physician narrating the events in the book of Acts of the apostles, said that after observing the gusts of persecutions against the church and the determination of the apostles and believers in preaching the gospel, it seemed like gold. The more degrees of heat it was subjected to, the brighter it shone, “But the word of God grew and multiplied” (Acts 12:24 NKJV).

In another passage, we read, “So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed” (Acts 19:20 NKJV). It prevailed over dogmas, creeds, laws, decrees, persecutions, hatred, and envy. It was growing until it reached our present times.

And you, dear reader, having this great cloud of witnesses of men and women who have made their testimony about Christ throughout the centuries count until your day, what will you do with this message that can change the life of an individual, a family, and a nation? Will you keep your mouth shut, or will you open it to bear your testimony? What will you do with Jesus? The Jesus who is in your heart and who saved your soul? Will you sow your finances in support of soul-saving evangelistic and apostolic missions? Now it is your turn. Don’t be ashamed or afraid. Don’t let your hand be clenched and stingy. The Scripture says, “But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach)” (Romans 10:8 NKJV). What have you been doing in your church or local church to support God’s work? Think about it and do something about it. Invest in something eternal. You will take nothing away from all the material things you have. So, make friends by investing those resources in the salvation of souls.

In the following chapter, we will learn how to give your testimony about Jesus, wait for your contacts, and more.

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CHAPTER VII

How to give your testimony

The believer's calling

As disciples of Jesus Christ, our testimony has its main objective to lead others to the salvation of their souls. Furthermore, the testimony itself must be presented concisely and objectively, with clarity that enables the hearer to understand it and, based on this, to make a decision. This decision will be made by faith when the listener accepts and believes the message or when he rejects the message. It's necessary to understand that God has given free will to all human beings so that each one can make their own choices. This volition or free will is enormous because God doesn't interfere in the choices but gives options and suggests the choice. However, each choice has its consequences: positive if the man believes in the message and is saved from eternal damnation, or negative if he doesn't, and by virtue of that, spends eternity in the lake of fire. Jesus made it very clear, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16 NKJV). Thus, salvation will depend on the faith of the hearer. Therefore, every believer has this noble and sovereign mission to testify about Jesus. Peter stated, "Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of souls" (1 Peter 1:9 NKJV).

Dear reader, do you understand why you have to give your testimony about Jesus? Because the salvation of souls will depend on it. That is, the primary purpose of preaching the gospel is to lead the

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sinner to have faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross of Calvary, as to receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.

Many believers think that this work of evangelizing was given to the apostles, prophets, pastors, or evangelists and that since they don't have a pulpit to preach from, they have no mission in the church. This thinking is erroneous and has greatly benefited the devil, who continues to trap humanity in the clutches of sin and eternal death. The mission of soul winning has been delegated to the whole church, and it's the responsibility of each believer to contribute with their resources or time.

One thing is clear: when it comes to global evangelism, Jesus left two formulas or methods by which this mission can be carried out.

1. Evangelism through clerical ministry.

By clerical ministry, I mean the five ministries consecrated by Jesus specifically to the church. This ministry is composed of the holders of the five ministerial offices: the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher. As Paul describes in his letter to the Ephesians, "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11 NKJV). Who instituted these five offices? Jesus Christ, the Lord. To whom did He give these ministries? To the church. Can you see now? That ministry was raised in the church's service, and the church is in the benefit of humanity directly, representing Jesus Christ. Jesus is in heaven now, at the right hand of the Majesty. However, his earthly work and project are carried out by the church. Therefore, the church exercises a diplomatic mission

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on earth, representing the interests of the kingdom of heaven. Everything that God wants to do on earth, he does through the church, for this is the age of the church, and it will only end with the rapture, at a time when God will restore his covenant with Israel.

First, God called Abraham, from whom He birthed the nation of Israel through his grandson Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel when he wrestled with the angel of the Lord at Peniel. He had twelve sons, who became the twelve tribes of Israel. When Christ came to earth, the Jews did not all welcome him as a nation but instead handed him over to be crucified in a mission carried out by Roman soldiers, whose empire dominated Israel and the world. Therefore, the Gospel, according to John 1:11-12 NKJV says, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.”

Indeed, the Church is born with the death and resurrection of Christ, specifically with the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In this event, the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples who, afraid of the Jews because of Christ, were confined in the cenacle in prayer and fasting. They were waiting for the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise, that they would be clothed with power from on high to go and evangelize Israel and the world, showing that salvation and remission of sins were in Christ - the one who was crucified and whom God had raised from the dead. Thus, salvation was linked to his name.

The church is the body of Christ, composed of all those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. It can be seen as a local church or a universal church. Local, referring to a physical congregation of disciples, is called to fellowship with Jesus and make Christ known to the world through their witness of life and words.

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Thus, the Scripture attests in 1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV, “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The limit number for there to be a church, according to Jesus, is two or three people. That is the fundamental core of a church. That is why He said, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:18-19 NKJV).

Where should these people be gathered to agree? On earth. And where is the Father? In heaven. He plans that this nucleus or cell will grow until it encompasses the whole world. The word church comes from the Greek “*Ekklesia*” and means “to be called out” or literally “called out.”

It’s incredible how Jesus uses the term for the church. We are called to go out. But to go out from where and to where? Well, Peter answers, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy” (1 Peter 2:9-10 NKJV). Moreover, the apostle Paul adds, saying, “Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:12-14 NKJV).

The background here is that God has taken us out of the power of darkness headed by the devil through Jesus and has transported us by the Holy Spirit into the kingdom of light and love, which is the

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kingdom of heaven led by Christ. Now, once you are saved and free from the kingdom of darkness, it is your mission to announce the virtues and glories of Christ to the world by word and deed. Everyone must look and see Jesus manifested in you. That's why the apostle Paul said, 'And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of Jesus'" (Colossians 3:17 NKJV). Many preachers thought Paul was saying that the believer must always say, "in the name of Jesus." For example, "I walk in the name of Jesus. I speak in the name of Jesus. I eat and sleep in the name of Jesus. I work in the name of Jesus." But that wasn't Paul's intention, although, in that instruction, that part is covered.

You have to understand that the word name means character in Jewish culture and not necessarily a title. So, by saying that whatever we do in word or deed, we have to do it in Jesus' name, I meant that we have to do and speak in the character of Jesus, even when we are not mentioning the expression "in the name of Jesus." What does this mean? Well, it means that as a believer, you must learn the virtues of Christ: how He spoke, behaved, His will, and did things as if He were the one doing them. That is, to speak and act with Christ's character, in Christ's fashion, as if it were He in the believer's place. This is why God has given us the mind of Christ, to think like Him, speak like Him, and act like Him. To do this, you need to spend time with the Word, studying it, and meditating on it. Christ dwells in our hearts through His Word and His Holy Spirit. Therefore, prayer and the study of the Word must go hand in hand, as I explained in the two parts preceding this one.

We can understand this by looking at Paul's ministry. For example, it was customary that when ministering to a sick or demon-possessed person, the apostles should use Jesus' name, as Peter did in Acts 3 when he healed a lame man. As Paul himself later did when casting out the demon of divination that possessed a slave girl.

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However, we read Acts 14:7-10, that Paul healed a lame man from birth by simply saying, “Stand up straight on your feet! And he leaped and walked.” In this context, Paul healed the lame man, in the name of Jesus, without mentioning him. That is, he acted as if it were Christ himself working, giving commands for the lame man to stand up and walk. He spoke and ministered in the character of Christ.

As a believer in the local church, you must spread the gospel so that more people will leave the kingdom of darkness and come into the kingdom of light. This can only be done through the testimony of a human being. It was not by chance that the angel who came to Cornelius’ house recommended him to call Simon, surnamed Peter, who had the words by which he and his household would be saved. This mission of preaching the gospel was given to men and not to angels.

Although we have talked about the local church, it’s also essential to know that the composition of believers from all over the world forms the universal church or the general assembly of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus did not bring us a religion, but a kingdom, and it’s up to us to expand it, as members of the local or universal church, by influencing this world with the culture, the character, and the way of living and doing the things of the kingdom of heaven. This world needs healing, peace, and joy that can only be found in the kingdom of God because the devil cannot offer it. He only provides power and a temporary joy and pleasure to men, but which will sting like a scorpion in the end.

In short, the Church has been given clerical ministers from the apostle to the pastor as gifts from God to build up the work of the ministry.

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Thus, the Scripture testifies, “For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13 NKJV).

Here is the purpose for which Christ has raised and will continue to grow these senior cadres of the kingdom of God. But, first, he wants to build up the church, the believers in general, and they are to be sent to their area of influence, where they study, work, live or do business to testify of Christ.

2. Witnessing through believers: the covered ministry

A well-trained local church, where each believer knows their role as a body member, won't struggle with power. These divides exist these days because many, whether believers or preachers, have a wrong idea of ministry. They look at it as a business where they can make fame and money. This makes the church like a den of robbers and traders of the Word. At the end of the day, it has slowed down the pace of how God wanted things to be done.

Dear reader, understand this: the church isn't a place where you will take money, but a place where you will give your money and contribution so that more souls are won and administrative, missionary, and philanthropic expenses are met. It is a place where you are trained to be spiritually mature and equipped to give your testimony about Christ with more propriety and firmness.

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So, where is your pulpit or platform? Well, notice Jesus' words, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19 NKJV).

Jesus called us not to stay but to go. Each one has to go to the world. Each of us has our world, which God calls us to reach.

For example, the word "nations" in this context denotes a group of people linked by a common denominator: culture, language, ethnicity, race, profession. In other words, they are groups of common interest. By extension, we can understand nations in their territorial sense as countries and as small and large communities linked by a common goal. Thus, we can have a nation of sick people, doctors, students, teachers, politicians, street vendors, businessmen, and women, i.e., entrepreneurs, carpenters, among others. It refers to the place where you, as a believer, are inserted. For example, where you live, work, study or do business. Jesus wants to win all these nations to his kingdom, and he will do it through his children scattered and inserted in these places. That is why I have prayed that God would raise Christian politicians, engineers, millionaires, businesspeople, students, and professionals. Esther saved the nation of Israel through her insertion into the kingdom of Babylon as queen. May God raise more people with Esther's character in government palaces and in the spheres of political, judicial, and parliamentary power to make just and beneficial laws for the common good and to exalt the loving and righteous character of Christ in these places. Rulers who trust in God's power and Word and who advocate the interests of God's kingdom and the church in these decision-making places.

We must pray for this and train believers to do so, because otherwise the work of God may be limited by the anti-Christian laws

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of men and women who have no fear of God and do not recognize the papal and the importance of the church in society. The church carries peace and love and demonstrates them with social and philanthropic works, and carries emotional healing to this desperate world frozen by fear.

It was no accident that God, for example, gave grace to Daniel to be a minister in Babylon and to the three young Hebrews: Abednego, Meshach, and Shadrach to be governors. These four young men knew God had preserved and raised them to defend their kingdom in that foreign and pagan land. As a result, King Nebuchadnezzar recognized the greatness of God and proclaimed his worship throughout the empire because of the three young men who would not bend their knees in prayer to the golden statue the king had set up. Furthermore, King Darius proclaimed the giving and fear of the God of Israel because of Daniel's loyal commitment and testimony to his God. In these last days, we need men and women, young and old: citizens of the kingdom of heaven, that is, Christians who will cause the name of Jesus to be glorified in these places of eminence without fear of reprisal. Believers who recognize that they are where they are because of God's grace and divine purpose. People who will restore decaying moral values in many parts of the world.

It's in this context that you, as a believer, are called to give your testimony about Jesus.

For example, the pastor or apostle who preaches from a pulpit in the church is limited to some extent, although he is very anointed. Who makes the policies? It's the parliamentarians and often in coordination with the executives. Imagine, if they say that the name of Jesus should no longer be spoken or the number of believers to assemble should be limited, or even churches should be banned,

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what will a clergyman pastor, evangelist, or teacher do? Pray, right? Indeed, he will. He will pray and ask God to touch the hearts of the rulers. But imagine if the president, the prime minister, or the parliamentarians were born-again Christians filled with the Holy Spirit; things would be different. Do you understand now why believers must give their testimony of Christ in the places of their influence? The problem lately is that many believers, due to their ignorance of the Word and God's plans, strive to be in the pulpit and the job market: in business, science, academia, the cultural and social arts, the music industry, the media - in its various formats - from news, movies, Christian soap operas or in places of political decision-making, there are no Christians. And those who are there behave dumb, deaf, and blind, as long as their bank account and pocket are healthy. They forget that God has the power to raise and dethrone someone.

Dear reader, understand that you too have been called. You may be a medical believer and serve God as a doctor or nurse, caring for people. God loves people, and His call is connected to them. We see this with the example of Tabitha, also called Dorcas, who had no pulpit to preach in the church. She wasn't an evangelist, pastor, apostle, or prophetess, but she read a need in the house of God and answered her call. She made clothes for needy children and widows in the church, supplying the church's physical and material needs. Because of these works that spoke louder than her mouth, she was raised from the dead by Peter's prayer, at the tearful request of the widows to whom she had been a blessing. How many women were dying back then? Probably many. But why was she the only one resurrected, according to the record Luke gives us? Because of her works. Even Luke, who wrote the Gospel that bears his name and the book of Acts of the Apostles, was a physician who accompanied Paul on his missions and was helpful to him.

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Every believer is essential, for every member has its place and function in the body. The same applies spiritually to the church of Christ.

Starting today, go to work, school, or your business with this mission in mind: to testify of Christ. First, you must live like Christ, obeying and practicing the Word so that they will look at you and see something different. Then, with your example and words, give your testimony.

The Gospel is like a seed

The Gospel message is like a seed. Not everyone will accept or believe it the first time. But don't give up; keep talking about Jesus and the kingdom of heaven.

I remember several people whom I evangelized in school and in the neighborhood who did not accept the message at the time. But years later, I saw them in the church where I minister and others in other ministries. They came and said, "Apostle, at that time, I was blind and didn't understand, but now I see that you were right. That message has been bothering me for quite some time, and even when I lie down and sleep, I dream about it. So, I decided to surrender my life to Jesus, and today I am saved. Thank you, man of God." When I hear this kind of testimony, it makes me very happy in my spirit. It is a unique feeling, something that not even money can pay for: the satisfaction of knowing that a soul has been saved through me. One of the mistakes that many believers make is to say to someone, "I invite you to my church." This approach is not correct because the person may refuse to come to your church. You should talk to him about Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God and not about your

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denomination. Some people have phobias with churches because of something that happened to them, or they weren't treated well. These are human failings, not Jesus'. Jesus never fails because his love never fails.

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CHAPTER VIII

3 Steps to Evangelism

The Gospel is like a seed. Of course, not every seed we cast into the earth germinates and produces. But even so, the farmer never stops sowing in his field.

For those who evangelize, their mission is to speak and leave the rest to God. For example, there are three crucial things to do when we sow a seed:

1. First, we prepare the ground.
2. Second, we sow the seed.
3. We do the irrigation.

Step number one:

Prayer

We have no power over the process of how the seed dies and germinates. That is up to the soil and God.

The same also happens when we go to evangelize. We prepare the ground through prayer and intercession. Paul exhorted Timothy, “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence” (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NKJV).

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Intercessory prayer plays an indispensable role in the ministry of Evangelism. Even Jesus had to exhort his apostles about this role when he said, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38 NKJV).

Who is the master of the harvest now? It is the Holy Spirit. He came to testify of Jesus, and we have also been sent to testify of Jesus. We both have the same mission and the same goal: to lead humanity to salvation in Christ. That is why we have to pray. When we pray, the Holy Spirit prevails in the people’s hearts to whom we speak so that they believe. He works in their hearts, convincing them of sin, righteousness, and the need for salvation. As a result, he produces saving faith in their hearts. How wonderful! We are not alone; we have the company and help of the Holy Spirit, the One who walked with Jesus and with the apostles of the early Church. He is with you now. That is why we prepare the prayer.

For salvation to occur, the preacher must be anointed when speaking, and the hearer must be anointed when listening. So no matter how powerful the message and the messenger may be, the hardened heart of the hearer must be softened. And only the Spirit can make that happen. So, we need to pray always. “Father soften the heart of this man or woman that he or she may believe and be saved, in Jesus’ name.” No matter how good the seed is, there will be no production without the ground being fertile.

After praying and fasting, we go to the second step.

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Second step:

Share your story of the Gospel

Here we can already evangelize the person or give our testimony.

In this step, you can use various methods. For example, you can take DVDs and CDs preaching God's Word to people to listen to in the hospital, in jail, at school, or on the street. If the anointing of the Spirit is there, something will happen.

You can also use pamphlets or posters, or you can do it orally. In this regard, there are two things you can do:

1. Tell the whole story of salvation in Christ

Here are six crucial points:

A. A healthy communion between God and men (Kingdom)

In the beginning, God and man were friends. God created the heavens and the earth. He gave man dominion over the earth and everything in it. The man had fellowship with God, and because of this fellowship, he had access to the peace, joy, health, and life that God had in heaven. The earth was a colony of the kingdom of heaven given to man to manage. The man wasn't to become sick, poor, or die. God breathed into his nostrils the proper breath. He

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lived based on the Spirit that God had given him because he had fellowship with the LORD.

B. Sin and the breach of communion (Sin and death)

Man disobeyed God's voice by eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and consequently became disconnected from God. Because of sin, man carries on his head a death sentence, eternal death, that is, spiritual death. He has fallen from the place of dominion because he has lost fellowship with God. In this condition, he is vulnerable to the devil and is separated from God. Because of one man's sin - Adam, all human beings were born sinners and separated from God, the source of their life. We all need a Savior. We cannot save ourselves. The wage of sin is death.

C. Christ's death and blood (God's love)

Because of His great love for us, God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us on the cross and pay the price for our salvation. The blood He shed on the cross of Calvary can wash you from all your sins and make you a new creature. Jesus paid the price necessary for you and me to be saved and restored to God our Creator and Savior. God loves the sinner but hates sin. To that end, He designed a plan in which His Son Jesus would be punished on the cross in place of all sinners who believe in Him. God wants to save you today. To do this, you need to repent of your sins. Recognize that you have sinned against Him and accept Christ as your Savior and Lord.

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D. Faith in Christ (Faith)

By accepting that Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary for your sins, you can receive forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life today. You don't have to pay anything, for Christ has already paid the price; just accept His sacrifice. So, believe with your heart and confess Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior.

E. Restored communion between God and men (Justification)

Jesus died, was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead. It is only in Him that there is salvation. By believing in Him by faith, you can be justified by God. God loves the sinner, but being just, He punishes sin because the wage of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus. Justification means that you are declared innocent by God by virtue of your faith in Jesus. Thus, you receive eternal life and will never again be condemned.

F. Dominion over circumstances (grace to reign with Christ).

Having accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are automatically taken out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and love in Christ and receive God's grace. God's grace is your unmerited favor. You and I deserved God's punishment, but Christ was punished in our place. God's grace can

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enable you to live above the circumstances of this world, including the devil, sin, and demons. You receive authority to cast out demons and to live in peace with God without fear of condemnation.

Consensus question:

“The brother/sister accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior?”

If the person responds positively, then ask them to repeat this prayer with you:

“Lord God, I repent of my sins. I ask You to forgive me. I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary for me for my justification and salvation. I accept Christ now into my heart as my Lord and Savior and receive eternal life in my heart. I confess that Jesus Christ is my Lord, and from this day forward, I will live for Him all the days of my life. Thank you, Father, for saving my soul. I am a child of God. I am a new creature. I have been born again”.

2. Tell your personal testimony

Another thing you can do in the act of evangelism is to give your own testimony of what Christ has done for you. One of the practical examples of those who used this method was the Apostle Paul. He sometimes told how he was a persecutor of Christ’s church because of his ignorance and overzealousness for Judaism. Look at his statements, “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward

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me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Corinthians 15:9-10 NKJV).

Paul had been a zealous defender of Judaism and received letters of authorization from the high priest to persecute Christians and arrest them. For him, the disciples of Jesus constituted a frontline movement that threatened the rules and laws instituted by Moses. In Paul’s view, the preaching of salvation in Christ Jesus constituted a deviation from a nation that had to obey the law of the Torah. On his way to Damascus to arrest more believers of this new movement of Christians, he came across a light that made him blind for three days. Jesus appeared to him and said, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” In this walk, he was changed, had a new heart, and became not simply a disciple of Jesus but a great advocate and expansionist of Christianity.

The zeal he once had for Judaism was converted to Christianity. Paul wrote more epistles than all the apostles who were with the Lord and walked with Him physically. To him, we owe almost seventy-five percent of the foundations of the Christianity we have today, according to what the epistles tell us. Without St. Paul’s epistles, we would not have an accurate understanding of the gospel and God’s plan of salvation for humanity, especially for us Gentiles, that is, non-Jews. Thanks to Paul’s tireless work and the arrests and persecutions he endured for the gospel, we have this solid and firm foundation on which we base our faith today: Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, Paul was taken up to the third heaven - to paradise - and was shown glorious things and heard ineffable words. Even the apostles Peter, James, and John, who were the pillars of the Jerusalem Church, did not clearly understand the expansive plan of salvation that also included the Gentiles. Paul had to rebuke Peter

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on one occasion for not accepting Gentiles publicly, for fear of being thought evil by the zealous Old Testament Jews. In his epistles, Peter made a comment that denoted the very high and profound level of the message of grace preached by Paul, “And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures” (2 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV).

Paul’s testimony was very impactful because it revealed the greatness of God, who transformed his heart from an uncompromising persecutor of the church to a persistent and prolific preacher of the Gospel who opened many churches and established a Christian community that spread from the Middle East to Asia and Europe. Paul’s legacy is inescapable when it comes to the salvation of the Gentiles, which is why he called himself an apostle to the Gentiles and firmly defended the faith and God-given ministry.

In many of his evangelistic interventions before the Jews, Paul told his testimony how on the way to Damascus, he met the Lord Jesus and how He changed the purpose and direction of his life. His testimony was so powerful that it led many who once knew him to believe in Jesus and accept this Way.

Dear reader, like Paul, you too can use your testimony of the before and after to testify of Jesus. The problem is that many brethren are ashamed to declare what Christ has done in their lives. But Paul always said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,

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for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:16 NKJV).

Step 3:

Intercessory prayer

Step number 3 is prayer. Why do we repeat prayer twice here? Simple, because it's by prayer that we do the watering of the seed. Do you now understand why Jesus would wake up early in the morning and go to a deserted place and pray before starting his day and his itinerant ministry? Because he wanted to spend time with Father. But also, after ministering, he would go to a mountain and pray. I believe that in many of those prayers, He interceded for people. This is why Miracles, signs, and wonders accompanied his ministry. The fact is that you cannot undertake the work of evangelism without first praying and then praying.

The salvation of a soul is a spiritual battle against the devil and his kingdom. That is why Jude, not Iscariot, exhorted, “And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh” (Jude 22-23 NKJV).

Dear reader, what would you do if someone took away the plate you have been eating for years or took the meat off your plate at mealtime? Logically, you wouldn't be satisfied. This is the same thing that happens with the devil when we do evangelism. We are pulling souls out of hell, out of the devil's clutches, into the kingdom of

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God. For this ministry to succeed, we need to raise a large army of intercessors to pray on our behalf and on behalf of the people for whom we battle spiritually.

Dear reader, did you know that many people prayed for you, even for your salvation? People you don't know, and they don't even know you, but they were touched and moved by the Holy Spirit to intercede even with fasting, weeping, and tears for the salvation of souls so that God would soften their hearts. This isn't a merely philosophical work, just spoken and finished or convinced someone with your rhetoric. Paul said, "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4 NKJV).

Once you have proclaimed the gospel or shared your testimony and experience with Christ, it is time to rest and let God work. The subsequent step is to continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will cause the message to impact the sinner's heart and work in him until he believes and is transformed. Praying is like watering a plant. The growth doesn't depend on you but God. The same happens in evangelism. A person's transformation is the fruit of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Word of God. It never withers; it's effective. It can stay in a person's heart for a long time while they resist and refuse to go to church and believe in Christ. But you must not stop praying. Pray for the people you know and for the people you don't know. Prayer is like a heavenly rain that allows the Holy Spirit to work legally in the hearts of men. He is responsible for the process of change and transformation of a person. Paul said, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach

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ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:3-5 NKJV).

When we pray for the lost, the Holy Spirit removes the veil, that is, the scales that have covered the eyes and hearts of the unbelievers so that the light of Christ's glory may shine on them. Therefore, we have to pray continually.

CHAPTER IX

The ethical posture of a preacher

Some things to consider.

1. When telling your testimony, don't exaggerate. Be truthful and honest;

2. In telling your testimony, praise Jesus and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit;

3. Pray in your heart as you give your testimony that the Holy Spirit may touch the heart of the person you are speaking to;

4. Be considerate to people.

Start by greeting the person and showing interest in them. Because of the challenging times the world is going through, many people are frustrated and worried about their lives and their future. So, you should start by greeting them and asking how their family, work, studies, etc., are doing. Have the attitude of someone who comes to help. We see a practical example in Philip. The Scripture says, "So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him" (Acts 8:30-31 NKJV).

You can notice in this context that the eunuch had an open heart and needed someone to help him understand the Scriptures he was reading. It took the Holy Spirit's instructive voice to Philip for him to take an interest in that man and begin a conversation that

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would culminate in the salvation of his soul. We see the same example with Jesus, the Master, when He dialogued with the Samaritan woman in Sychar, “Go, call your husband, and come here.” He showed that woman that He had the water that would give her eternal life. At the end of the day, the woman and many in the city of Samaria accepted Christ, believing in Him as the Messiah.

5. Don’t use big words or technical expressions that are difficult to understand. Instead, know that the goal of communication is to get the message across and be understood.

6. Avoid philosophical discussions or fights. You have been called and sent to testify of Jesus and not try to convince people, arguing and fighting with them.

7. Don’t be ashamed of your past, for it no longer exists. The blood of Christ has erased it.

8. Have good manners and respect towards people.

9. Be a joyful and excited person about the kingdom message. On the other hand, a frustrated and sad person cannot adequately preach and communicate the Good News of the kingdom of God.

10. Be humble. A proud person cannot be an effective witness for Christ, for he runs the risk of becoming an island. Look at Paul’s words, “To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you” (1 Corinthians 9:22-23 NKJV).

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11. Study (read) the environment and adapt to it in order to get the message across.

Respect the culture of the person you are evangelizing so that the filter of their heart is open to hear and receive the message. In June 2008, I was in an area called Muda in Cheringoma, Sofala province. We were a group of about four young people who would do a training seminar for pastors and church founding leaders. I was the only one from Maputo, and my colleagues were from Sofala. All of us were young people full of faith and expecting to be used by God to save souls, heal the sick, and cast out demons. The seminar was to last one week, so we had made our camp there in an area away from the city among trees, a rural area. The pastor-host in whose church we would have the seminar was very hospitable to us, and we camped in the backyard of his house near the church. The seminar started at 8:30 am and ended at 5:00 pm daily, and we had sessions with a 45-minute break. Most of the pastors participating in the training were seniors and adults. So, on the first day at dinner, we were served impala meat. I had never eaten that kind of meat in my life. But, you know, when you have a missionary life, you shouldn't question what is on the table; just pray, give thanks, and eat. Don't despise what the other eats because that can close those people's hearts to hearing your message. I sat at the table together with my colleagues to eat. The host pastor, who was almost sixty-something years old, was also at the table.

When they served us dinner, they brought a bowl full of impala meat and xima (a dough made from cornmeal or sorghum), which was xima flour. Naturally, the old pastor wanted to be the last to eat. So, it was up to us young people to start serving each one individually: the same pot of xima and bowl of curry was available to everyone. I took a small piece of meat and put sauce on my plate. Two of my colleagues did the same. However, one of the colleagues

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took a large piece of meat that contained the most prominent bone. In the Sena culture, that piece of meat is only eaten by the older people and not the young ones. But my colleague had made a mistake, and I saw the disgust on the old man's face.

The next day, when we were at the table again for dinner, the old man moved away from us and went to sit alone with two others at a wooden table they had made. The old man's sudden change of attitude seemed strange to me. While I was thinking about what this meant, I heard the old man commenting in Sena language, which in English would translate to, "Young people nowadays have no respect; they eat the old man's bone." My colleague's attitude meant that, throughout the seminar, the old people paid no attention to him whenever he was ministering. Still, my other two colleagues and I got along well. I even heard, "The young people of Maputo have a lot of respect for the elderly." Throughout the seminar, the power of God was manifested, and many souls were saved and blessed. In the end, the old man called me and said, "God bless you." And I said, "Thank you."

Dear reader, I brought you this example to understand that it isn't just telling the message; it's necessary to have a proper posture because it plays a dominant role in our interlocutor's reception. For example, if they have made food that you don't eat, have the wisdom and manners to deny it and not offend their morals. Perhaps you fast to justify why you won't eat. The most important thing is to be humble and invite other people.

12. Create curiosity

You have to be conversational and create curiosity in order to be a good communicator of spiritual truths. Once, a man decided to get the attention of the sellers and buyers in a marketplace to hear

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the word of God and exclaimed, “I can walk on water like Jesus. Want to see?” Suddenly, the whole world came out and made a circle around him to see this extraordinary individual who has the power to walk on water. When he saw that they had already shown interest in him, he took out a five-gallon drum of water and poured it on the ground, saying, “Look, I’m walking on water.” Then, as they cheered, he began to speak about Jesus Christ, and many gave their lives to Christ.

Dear reader, practice the habit of talking about Christ on the bus, at school, in a marketplace, or at work, creating curiosity. This can start from a natural element, which can help explain spiritual things. For example, Jesus used many parables of fishermen, sowers, vinedressers, with the ultimate purpose of explaining to people about the kingdom of God.

13. Share a testimony that motivates the non-believer to accept Christ

Another thing to keep in mind is that our testimony must not cause scandal but rather a motivation so that the person who is going through a situation that you have already been through can see that if God transformed you, He could transform his life as well. In the beginning, always keep in mind the goal of witnessing: to glorify God. When we are evangelizing, we need to exalt testimonies that focus on personal character transformation. This is very important because the purpose of salvation is to restore man’s relationship with God. For example, behavioral change and habits concerning a life free of various vices, family restoration, sentimental restoration.

Furthermore, it becomes relevant to demand or underline testimonies that, for example, show how much the life of a bad, rigid, addicted, cursed, or spiritually tied person can be changed. One who

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was an alcoholic, a drug addict, and trapped in various manifestations of sin can be transformed. For the case of Paul, for example, we see a radical life change in every way, and he wasn't ashamed to praise the power of Christ - Redeemer. The background in these testimonies is how his life was tied up, and faith in Christ Jesus brought him to change. Testimonies show how Christ gave him peace, joy, new life, and a reason to live. God is powerful and can transform a person's life and character. Be sure to focus your testimony on Christ. That is, make your testimony Christ-centered and not self-centered.

14. Share the love of God with people

It's of paramount importance to share God's love with unbelievers. One of the problems in evangelism is that many believers and preachers have used a more frightening approach, which intimidates the non-believer and threatens him with the message of hell. But that isn't what we have been called to do; our mission is to preach the Good News and demonstrate God's love to sinners. God is righteous, so He condemns sin and will take the devil and unrepentant sinners to the Lake of Fire. God didn't make the Lake of Fire for man but the devil. However, the man who rejects salvation in Christ is heading toward eternal damnation.

On the other hand, God is love, and He wants to save the sinner. Therefore, it's up to him to choose his eternal destiny: the new Heavenly Jerusalem or the Lake of Fire. People won't go to the Lake of Fire because God doesn't love them, but because they have rejected God's love manifested in Christ Jesus. Therefore, we have to announce God's love to people - the unselfish love.

Indeed, the cure for this corrupted world full of distrust is God's love. However, many preachers and believers think that if

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they scare people with the message of hell, those people will accept Jesus out of fear and be saved. This approach is stripped of the true gospel; God is love, and if we proclaim his message, we have to profess his love as well. God's motivation is love. He heals, protects, delivers, blesses, and saves us because he loves us. To frighten someone into accepting Jesus is the same as a woman agreeing to marry and live with a man out of fear of being killed, not out of love. In this kind of relationship, she will not give herself completely body and soul. The Scripture clearly states, "Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4 NKJV). When the light of God's love and goodness shines in a man's heart, he falls on his knees and surrenders to God's love. He recognizes that he hasn't been a good person or hasn't lived a righteous life worthy of salvation, but he is thankful for God's love and receives grace to change his life and please God. This is why Paul said, "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:14-15 NKJV).

God's love is powerful. It's so high that it's impassable. So vast that it's immeasurable. It's so powerful that it's invincible and so deep that it is unfathomable. The revelation of God's love to man transforms him and carries him into God's arms. No wonder the Scripture says, "But in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Neither height nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Preach the love of God, and lives will be transformed. Meditate on God's love and live in the consciousness

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of this love, “God loves me, even though I don’t deserve it, He sent Jesus to die in my place so that I can live for Him.”

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CHAPTER X

Spread the Good News

The message of the cross is folly to the Greeks and scandal to the Greeks. To the religious, it is a scandal, and to the wise men of this world, it is an aberration, a madness. They think we are brainwashed, but we know, as Paul said, that the message of the cross is salvation for the whole world. So, the Scripture testifies, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18 NKJV).

The power of God to save man and restore his fellowship with Him is in the cross of Calvary. Therefore, we have to preach the message of the cross. It proclaims to the sinner that all who have sinned have been deprived of the glory of God. But that God, out of His immense love, sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to hang and be crucified on the cross and by His death to pay the price required with His blood for our redemption.

The mention of the cross says that God condemned and defeated sin and all its consequences: death, misery, poverty, want, weakness, defeat, sickness, the devil, and his entire hierarchical structure. Now, your part is to accept this fact, believe, and receive the eternal life available in Christ Jesus. Just believe and be saved. As Paul and Silas said to the jailer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31 NKJV). The cross reveals God’s love for humanity and vicarious sacrifice for fallen humanity. Tell the sinner that the price for him to come out of sin and be forgiven has already been paid. Tell the sick that the price for him to be healed has already been paid. Tell the poor that the price to be prosperous and out of misery has already been paid.

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Tell the demon-possessed that the price to be free from demons and curses has already been paid. Tell everyone around you that eternal life, salvation, the gift of righteousness, and the gift of the Holy Spirit are already available in Christ Jesus. That's why it's called the Gospel, that is, Good News. It's excellent news. Will you be silent about this news that can transform a life and release the miraculous power of God? My question is, what will you do with the Jesus that is in your heart? Will you release Him to save and heal, or will you be ashamed to speak of Him and say you are a Christian? Paul said, "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16 NKJV).

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PART IV

THE HABIT OF PARTICIPATING IN THE
CONGREGATION OF SAINTS

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INTRODUCTION

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25 NKJV).

The habit of attending church services is a vital part of the believer’s life and represents a mark of Jesus’ disciples. The first followers of Jesus Christ were called “Christians” in Antioch when it was observed that their manner of being, speaking, and doing things resembled that of their Master. In Acts chapter 2, the Spirit descends on all those gathered in the upper room, and they are all filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in other languages and glorify God. Thus, the Church was born, a group of men and women on a divine mission: to expand the kingdom of God through their testimony about the Lord Jesus Christ. They were united and had the habit of gathering regularly to worship God and to hear the word taught by the apostles. As time went by, more men and women from various walks of life and social classes were converted and became part of this heavenly family made up of regenerated people, that is, people who had been born again by virtue of their faith in Christ. Now, one of the repeated practices they had was the habit of gathering together as the Church.

Since we live in the last days leading up to the imminent return of the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Scripture urges us not to forsake our congregation. It’s essential in developing God’s love in our hearts and in Christ’s vision to bless, protect, and save humankind.

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The following body of text deals practically with this very vital topic for the stability, development, and growth of the Church of Christ: the habit of participating in the congregation of the saints. This was an indispensable habit that even when there were persecutions against the Church, they were always looking for ways and mechanisms to gather together to praise, worship God, and share the word of salvation and spiritual strengthening. This part talks about the practicality and relevance of the current Church following the same principles and vision that our fathers had in faith. The reader will learn why one should regularly attend Church services, the benefits, and how to imitate the faith of the apostles, prophets, and believers of the early Church to obtain the same or even better results than they had. Your faith will be strengthened, and your vision of the Church's role on earth will be broadened. As a result, your spirit will be enlightened, recharged, and programmed for a glorious life in the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

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CHAPTER I

Why should you attend Church services regularly?

Because the church is a family

When a believer surrenders his heart to Christ and is born again, he is welcomed into the church family.

They thus become a new member of the heavenly family that makes up the body of Christ on earth. In this sense, there is a need to develop the habit of participating in the local or universal assembly of the Lord's church. For lack of knowledge that the church is a family and the fact that times are challenging to hold services in-person results in the reduction of many believers' dedications, which affects their spiritual growth. A child born into a family is more likely to develop better in every way than one who is born, grows up, and lives on the street. Their behavior is not the same since both have not had the same upbringing.

When Christ established the Church on earth, He set up a spiritual family where its members are linked by common elements: the same faith, the same Lord, and the same Spirit.

Thus, the Scripture attests, "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:12 NKJV).

This Scripture categorically states that we are one body as a church, and that body is called Christ. The revelation underlying this proposition is that the church on earth is a living organism

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composed of thousands of believers who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. And by accepting Jesus, they have been born again into the kingdom of God and became integral parts and members of a spiritual family or community. That is why we call each other brothers and sisters. How do you call someone a brother with whom you do not share some degree of kinship or affinity? Simple, we share a degree of kinship, and this is spiritual. This is easy to understand if you keep in mind that in Christ, we are one and have one heavenly Father and drink of the same Spirit. Thus, ethnic barriers, language barriers, racial or regional differences are set aside, for when God looks at us, He doesn't see an African, European, American, or Asian. He doesn't look at the color of our skin but rather at the state of our spirit - His children, the fruit of Christ's blood, who died for us all to bring us back into fellowship with God the Father.

John was shown a multitude of people from various ethnicities, and languages, and nations in Revelation. He had been shown in the vision the number of the twelve tribes of Israel that numbered 144,000 people who were in heaven. These were Jews, descendants of Abraham. But one of the elders spoke to John, saying, "Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" (Revelation 7:13 NKJV). In his narrative, John says, "And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Verses 14-17 NKJV).

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Salvation in Christ has allowed a new family of human beings to emerge, united by the Holy Spirit and faith in Christ. In the early church era, Christians scattered around the world formed small communities of believers that always came together to worship God and share the Word and bread. As time went on, and with evangelism programs, these groups grew into large communities of believers composed of people from various tribes and races, and languages. This multiethnicity, multiraciality of multilingual communities came from different parts of the empire during the Roman Empire. The puritanical-racial religions like Judaism didn't readily accept the idea of the mixing of races; therefore, they were isolated. However, Christianity presented a living organism, different and dynamic. Christianity isn't a religion but a relationship between God and regenerated man. As I explained in the previous chapters, Jewish Christians initially did not accept the idea that Gentiles could also be saved and be part of the community. This reality became workable and practical, thanks to the hard work of the apostle Paul. He evangelized Jews and Gentiles and established various communities, i.e., churches from the Middle East to Asia and Europe. Moreover, he wrote letters to these churches to strengthen their faith and outline the way of life that Christ wanted them to have according to the revelation that God had given him. Therefore, we have letters written to the church in Rome, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Philippi, Colossae, and others.

At the time, some churches assembled in the homes of certain brethren who opened their doors for the purpose. Thus, the church wasn't seen as a physical building made of blocks, reeds or sheets, or any other building material. Instead, it was seen as an assembly, a congregation of believers united by faith in Christ. The important thing was that they should gather together for the worship of God and spiritual strengthening.

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Nowadays, some people advocate that it's no longer necessary to gather together because people can pray alone in their home or office, even because God is spirit and is simultaneously everywhere. These ideas, although they have a religious and pious tone, are fallacious and erroneous. They are the fruit of people who do not know the meaning of a church and the purpose for which Christ installed it on earth. We have read before and seen that the church was a body with members in Paul's view. Now, when has an arm alone been considered a body? Members individually aren't a body; they are only members called by their name. To be called a body, there must be a union of members. Do you understand now? The issue of unity is fundamental. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:19 NKJV). Jesus is in the middle of this union; by the way, He is the union itself, the connecting link. Today we can call ourselves brothers and sisters without being of the same biological family, but we are of the same spiritual family and united by the blood of Christ.

The unity of the members forms the church, which is why we should gather together in the name of Jesus. In one of his epistles, Paul praises the work of his co-workers and encourages churches established in the homes of some brethren. Thus, the Scripture testifies, "Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. I implore Euodia, and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life" (Philippians 4:1-3 NKJV).

Paul planted and established several churches and considered their members his joy and crown. What were these churches?

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Assemblies. Note that these assemblies can be considered from two points of view:

1. Local organization:

Here is when the term “Church” is used in the singular. For example, the Lord Jesus said, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18 NKJV). Jesus used the term in the singular “Church” and not “Churches” in the plural because he designed the global collectivity of all believers on earth. He was looking at the church as a whole, although knowing that it can be viewed from a local or particular point of view. Since He was its Founder, He didn’t establish many churches, but one church. This unitary vision of Jesus should serve as a basis for unity in the body of Christ globally. The devil has managed to put division within the church because of the ambition, selfishness, and pride of men who seek to achieve their personal goals and not accomplish the work that Christ has commissioned us to do. It is essential to point out that there is a difference between the church and the ministry. Ministry is the visionary work given to a man of God in the service of the church and/or humankind. Therefore, the word ministry means work or service, as understood from the Greek term “*Diakonia*.” There are different kinds of ministries given to various men and women of God. As the Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 12:6 NKJV, “And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.”

Ministry defines and delineates the scope of a minister of the gospel given by God, the Lord. So, Peter was called and given the ministry to the Jews, but Paul was called and given the ministry to

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the Gentiles. Each sought to glorify their ministry by performing it successfully to the glory of the Master, who had called them. Thus, Paul says to the Church in Rome, “Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:15-16 NKJV).

In this passage, Paul reveals that Jesus made him a minister of the gospel. For whom was he raised? To the Gentiles. Notice something here? Paul was a man who was focused and firm in his convictions and his calling. He did not want to have work in vain. If he had focused on his ministry in Israel to the Jews, it would have run in vain because this was Peter’s ministry. So, he focused on ministry to the Gentiles. Many of the times that he focused on Jerusalem, he went through various arrests and squeezes. You must understand that his heavenly reward will be given to the gospel minister based on running in his lane and not in others’ lanes. The problem today is that anyone goes out of his house and says he has been called and is a minister of the gospel, with no divine credentials, and people follow him to perdition. The pressure from people to perform miracles and prophesy and demonstrate the power of God has led to ministers of God acting out of emotion to please the people, disobeying God the Lord. The gospel minister is primarily accountable to Jesus, who called him and must keep this in mind to avoid losing focus because of competition.

Many pastors fight among themselves because the other has a church with more members than he does. So, some leaders even go to the witch doctors seeking power to do God’s work. How will you ask the devil for permission and authority to serve God, whose vision is to destroy the devil’s work? Thus, believers are bound by

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demonic covenants that pastors make to grow their churches and achieve ambitious desires. Even in some cases, some pastors do works of witchcraft to harm others. Why this fight between ministers of the gospel? Because they don't understand the meaning of ministry nor what the Church means.

Dear reader, understand this: the church does not belong to anyone in particular. It belongs to the Lord. She is one and universally united by the Holy Spirit. Ministries belong to each man of God to serve the church, but the church is members; it is people.

Paul said in the text to the Ephesians 3:6-9 NKJV, "That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ."

Paul was clear about his ministry, the grace, and the gifts he had given him. When God calls a person and gives him a ministry, he also gives him grace, an ability, charisma, and power to fulfill that ministry. When the vision of a ministry has no provision, it is a sign that that vision is not from God. Then you must review your vision or your calling. God is not messy. He is planned and organized. Provision and grace are given to the minister in the place where he has been called to serve. And it is in the fulfillment of that ministry that he will be crowned or judged.

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The Church of Christ is one, so there has to be a union in its body. However, this unity depends on several factors:

- A) First, all must come to the unity of the faith in Christ.
- B) Second, to have the same understanding of Christ.
- C) Third, everyone must be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- D) Fourth, everyone must be filled with God's love.
- E) Finally, everyone must understand that we are brothers in Christ.

Only God can make this possible. It isn't an exercise that a man can do. However, throughout all this time, each minister of the gospel must fulfill their calling according to the grace that has been given to them.

So far, we have seen that the church is one and is composed of all believers, born again, filled with the Holy Spirit, and coming from various parts of the world. This is how the church was seen in the first century: a community.

2. Church as diverse communities of local believers, scattered throughout the world.

We have already seen the church concept in the generic sense used by the Lord Jesus Christ to refer to the living organism composed of believers throughout the world.

Nevertheless, we find in the Structures numerous references to the concept of the church in the plural. We can see some cases. Paul, writing to the Galatians, said, "Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead), and all the brethren who are with me, to

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the churches of Galatia: Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:1-3 NKJV).

Notice that Paul wasn’t addressing this letter to a single church but the churches in the province of Galatia. Thus, we see clearly in this text that several groups or communities of Christians were grouped in different locations, but that made up a single church with its leadership installed by Paul, each of them to build up the brethren in the faith in Christ.

In another text, we read, “Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality” (2 Corinthians 8:1-2 NKJV). Paul writes this letter to the Corinthian church, urging them to know how to sow their resources to supply the needs of the work of God and the saints. However, to encourage them, he uses the example of the churches of Macedonia, which were communities that were not materially wealthy, but which had a generous heart, ready to support the work of God. For this reason, God caused his grace to abound upon them and prospered them. We notice in this text also the plural use of “Churches.” It implies that they were more than a community or congregation of believers in this City.

The use of the term “churches” in the plural doesn’t run away from the notion that we have learned about a single global or universal church instituted by Jesus on earth. Quite the contrary, it hints in detail at the localized identity of these communities according to a geographical place where they assembled. For example, several believers may spread over provinces, states, cities, districts, towns, and even neighborhoods in a given country. It would be challenging to congregate all these people in one physical

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place for a worship service. Because of the difficulty of gathering them in one place, they may be located in different areas. Still, they are united by a common denominator: the vision of Christ, faith, and the Holy Spirit. When I speak of faith in this context, I don't just mean *pistis* as individual belief, but rather as a set of Christian doctrines that establish the way of life according to the gospel of Christ. It is easy to notice this by looking at the different epistles that Paul wrote to other churches. In some, he solved specific problems, such as sexual immorality in the Corinthian church and the strengthening of the message of salvation by grace and not by the observance of Mosaic rituals in the churches Galatia.

For example, to Ephesus, Colosse, and Philippi churches, Paul lays out a Christian ethical code on how believers should behave like a couple, family, workers, or employers. He also expresses his prayer for them to be strengthened and corroborated with power in their inner man. There were instructions, exhortations, and guidance given to each church according to their need for spiritual strengthening and growth. Some churches even met in the homes of certain generous brethren. Even when the apostle Peter was arrested, the prayers that set him free were made in the home of Mary, the mother of a man named John Mark. Thus, the Scripture testifies, "So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:12 NKJV).

Paul established various communities of believers on his missionary journeys, including Jews, Greeks, proselytes, and others. These communities were called "churches." Therefore, we can deduce that the church of Christ is composed of all those who, by faith and new birth, have received salvation. All of them are globally called the universal assembly. The text of Hebrews 12:22-23 NKJV explains, "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the

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living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

This text captures the general idea of the concept of the church: universal assembly of saints. The word “universal” means global or world or even international. Thus, carrying the sense of a general picture. When he looks at believers scattered across the earth and separated by geographical locations, of family captured by God but united spiritually (unlike the people of Israel who had arrived at Mount Sinai where there was smoke and the shaking of the mountain, and the people were afraid to hear God speaking to them); in the New Testament, we as a church have arrived at the Heavenly Jerusalem and are in the presence of thousands of angels who protect us and minister for us. We are the universal assembly of God.

This notion of a universal assembly of believers makes us understand that there is also a local assembly of the saints. This can be called a “local church” where believers regularly gather in a physical space to worship God. And, when we want to refer to these local assemblies, we can use the term “churches” in the plural.

So, up to this point, we can see that the church’s notion refers to a gathering of people in a particular place in the name of Jesus. Jesus is the central theme when the church gathers. Therefore, there is a need for every believer to develop this habit of gathering with other brothers and sisters in the faith and not isolating themselves from the body. The background here is that by accepting Christ as Lord and Savior and being born again, you come to belong to a community of brothers and sisters in the faith: to a Christian family. Therefore, you should make it one of your priorities to participate in the services and activities of the church. The first church, also known

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as the early church, was born as an assembly when the disciples were gathered together in the same place. This is how the Scripture tells us, “When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all together in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Note here the words “they were all together,” “in one place” and “the whole house.” The gathering was together. Still, the benefit was individual as a result of this gathering. That is why the tongues of fire fell on “everyone,” and all were filled with the Spirit.

There is a corporate anointing that comes upon the church whenever the brethren gather in the name of the Lord. This anointing spreads to all and benefits each and every congregant. This kind of empowering anointing can only be experienced in the context of a meeting, congregation, i.e., the church. The genesis of the church itself is based on the notion of the assembly. And this notion carries with it a sense of belonging. This is why the church is a spiritual family.

Although he prays a lot and studies the Word alone at home, he loses much more when he dissociates from this congregation as a believer. The speed of a car doesn’t depend on just one wheel but all the wheels together. How will the body run without one of its legs?

We need each other. That’s why the text in Hebrews 10:24-25 NKJV encourages, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some.” That is, already in the first

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century, some believers liked to isolate themselves from others and had made it a custom, “I am saved, I don’t need to go to church, I pray alone at home and don’t need any church.” This thinking is wrong and detrimental to their health and spiritual growth. Even Paul needed Ananias when he was converted to baptize him and introduce him to the ministry. Jesus needed John the Baptist. Don’t miss the corporate anointing that God pours out when we gather in church to hear the Word, praise and worship the Lord as a family. We are a family.

When we come together as an assembly, we polish ourselves to be brighter as the light of the world and more flavorful as the salt of the earth. As an assembly, we deliberate God’s will on earth and strengthen the fulfillment of his purposes on earth. “Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Thy will be done here on earth as it is in heaven.” Only the Church has the authority and power of Christ to fight wars, restore lives, homes, and marriages, and heal society of the evil that ails it. Only the Church of Christ has the divine power of attorney to represent Christ on earth and defend the interests of the kingdom of heaven, stopping the works and plans of the devil in the lives of humans. The Church fulfills a role on earth that an individual believer cannot. Therefore, understand that the Church is not just an individual, but the gathering of people in the name of Christ. Only then will it be seen as Church in a congregational context, not an individual one. Individuals are members, not a Church. However, those members belong to the Church and become the Church when they are gathered together in the name of the Lord.

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CHAPTER II

Church: a place of communion of saints

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25 NKJV).

The above Scripture encourages us not to leave our congregation, as is the custom of some. Now, if leaving your congregation is the custom of some, then implicitly, it must be our custom not to leave it. What congregation is the Scripture referring to here? To the Church, obviously. This custom is configured in a habit: the habit of congregating regularly. We have already seen in previous chapters that gathering was part of the life of believers in the early church.

Moreover, the church shouldn't be considered from the point of view of individuals separately, but from their gathering together in a given place in the name of the Lord Jesus, for it represents a body called Christ. This was the perception that the apostles and the believers in the early church had, and it should be the same for us as well. Therefore, the Scripture urges believers not to stop gathering together, especially now that we see that Day approaching. What Day is the word referring to in this text? To the Day of the Lord, that is the second coming of Christ.

By the Spirit, the writer of the text in Hebrews was already prophetically predicting the circumstances and moments that would come to earth at the coming of the second coming of the Lord. One of these circumstances would be the difficulty for believers to gather

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together for various reasons. It could be because of the persecution to which the church would be subjected (they experienced this several times) or because of government policies that would place restrictions on this divinely ordained exercise of Christ.

These days, even the prosperity given to immature believers can lead them to create habits that keep them away from the church. For example, many have been so busy with various tasks from Monday to Sunday that they no longer have time for fellowship with the brethren in the church. And the more time goes by, the more busyness and burdens come, and the believer gradually drifts away from the body's life, which is the church and the activities in the house of God. Many find this normal and create a habit of distancing themselves from the church, claiming lack of time. As time goes by, your love for God grows cold, and the passions of this world take root in your heart, to the point of suffocating your fellowship with God.

Consequently, their life and spiritual development is so affected that they no longer pray or study the Word of God. They believe that one day they will have time for God; what they don't know is that they are increasingly dissociating themselves from their local church and losing that corporate warmth and anointing. What is it worth to you, winning the whole world and losing your soul?

One day, I watched a National Geographic documentary (a program that presents animal biodiversity and wild and aquatic ecosystems). I watched how a lioness was hunting a herd of zebras. One thing caught my attention: while the zebras were in the pack, the lioness didn't attack; she just roared, frightening them. Frightened, they started to run away, and the one that was left alone, disconnected from the rest of the herd, was caught and served as a meal for the lioness. See the danger of being disconnected from your

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body. Of course, the lion or lioness will not always attack the one left behind, but that scenario brought light to me to what happens in the spirit. Peter said, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9 NKJV).

Satan is described as a roaring lion seeking prey. For what, to play with you? No. He comes to swallow, to swallow. He is a destroyer. It is no accident that God encourages us to gather together because, united, we make the spiritual strength needed to stop the devil’s plans on earth. And, as the Church, we resist the devil by faith in the Word and unceasing prayers. That’s why you should develop the habit of attending church services to hear the Word and feed your spirit, build up your faith, and strengthen other brethren. Even if you are not a preacher or a pastor, did you know that just your presence in the congregation can be a source of encouragement to someone? It’s true, for every member in the body of Christ has their place and function. Your testimony of life in Christ can serve as the basis for restoring a brother in the faith.

One of the biggest challenges today is that love has become cold. The absence of love creates distrust between brothers, thus generating friction and barriers between members of the same congregation. That is why Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples if you love one another” (John 13:34-35 NKJV).

Where can the world look and see this kind of love for others? In the church. This is the most fantastic mark that Christ gave us, that identifies us as Christians, for he who doesn’t love doesn’t know

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God because God is love. Therefore, God manifests his love to the world through the church, touching it, healing it, and restoring men and women to his kingdom. Thus, as a congregation of saints, the Church plays a leading role in the stability and maintenance of the earth's peace and well-being.

Jesus is physically in heaven now, but his project for the salvation of humanity is carried out by the believers who form his church on earth. And the unity of these believers is essential for God's projects to be fulfilled. The problem is: how will there be this unity when each one stays in his corner and doesn't want to congregate? Each one has his own Holy Bible and doesn't want to be in communion with his brothers? From an individual and self-centered point of view, it even seems normal, but from God's plan on earth, to restore the world through Christ, it is a counterproductive attitude. This is why every believer desires that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven and not man's will. The Scripture says, "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20 NKJV).

One of the reasons that many believers become disengaged from the body is pride or a struggle for a position within the congregation. This thought already existed even in Christ's time, as the disciples argued among themselves to know who was the greatest among them. Jesus had to take a child and place him in their midst, saying that whoever wants to enter the kingdom of God must become like a child.

In this context, He was referring to a child's attitude toward an adult—for example, simplicity, humility, and the predisposition to forgive and carry on. Adults are no longer like this, they can even be angry all day, and when they are like this, they don't even

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communicate. This is where communion among the saints dies. We find brothers and sisters in the church who don't speak to each other or greet each other but profess to be Christians and servants of Christ. It should not be this way. That is why Paul counseled, "Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:26-27 NKJV). It's pure hypocrisy to pretend to love God while holding a grudge and resenting your brother and not greeting him. What is God worshiping?

Dear reader, note the words of Jesus, "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First, be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:22-24 NKJV).

Looking at this passage of Holy Scripture, we can notice that Jesus favors better relationships among the brethren of the church rather than the offerings and tithes that we may give. This is not to say that one shouldn't bring offerings and tithes to the church, but it should come out of a pure and loving heart before God. The health of the relationship between the brethren in the same congregation is vitally essential for the overall health of the body of Christ and the fulfillment of the plans on earth.

Dear reader, as far as you are concerned, there should be no brother or sister that you hate in the house of God. You must practice the art of having eyes and tongue of love. Everything we give to God must come out of an attitude of gratitude, humility, and

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consideration for others. By the way, we are members of one another, and the health of one is the joy of all; however, the sickness or pain of one can affect all. This is why the Scripture in Hebrews 10:25 NKJV exhorts, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Ethical code in the church:

How the brothers should interact within the Church

Understand that the relationships between brothers and sisters are vital and indispensable in the church because the church is a place of fellowship. Even in the Old Testament, unity was already seen as a catalyst and binding element of brothers and sisters. It attracts God’s blessings. Thus, we read in Psalms 133:1-3 NKJV, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing—Life forevermore.” Indeed, unity attracts God’s blessing when brothers and sisters live in union practicing God’s love.

Dear reader, look at the church as a commuter train. It may have passengers, some sitting in the front cabin, some in the middle, and some in the back. It has a driver who directs it. The passengers, for instance, shouldn’t argue and fight with each other inside the bus. Otherwise, they will delay their journey, even harming the owner of

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this transport and his company. Whoever sat in the back seats shouldn't envy or hate the one who sat in the middle or front seats, because in the bus travel, everyone moves at once and all arrive at the destination at the same time. What counts is the maintenance of the bus so that it circulates and continues to take more passengers to their destinations. In the same logic, Jesus set up the church on earth as a means of spiritual transportation so that all who believe in Him won't be lost but will have eternal life. The church is like Noah's ark that came to be a life preserver for all troubled by the devil. Therefore, all new converts or brethren should find support, motivation, and love in the congregation. The old brethren shouldn't feel overshadowed by the new ones because the reward of eternal life is extended to all.

New believers often don't grow in the church because of groupings, that is, little cliques created inside the church. Especially when some old brothers and sisters develop wings and want to control the church, dictating what the pastor should or shouldn't do. This attitude is wrong and not worthy of people who have been born again.

Dear reader, understand that the church isn't a democracy; it's the extension of the kingdom of heaven on earth. The problem, especially in urban centers and big cities, is that most believers in these places have democratic thinking. They think that in church, whatever they want should happen and, if they can't find a chair to sit on, they abandon the service complaining, "The pastor is taking too long, it's too hot, and I can't stand up." They are so self-centered that they even influence the message that the pastor should or should not preach. Unfortunately, many pastors allow themselves to be affected by this kind of attitude because they are wealthy brothers and sisters, men, and women of means, who bankroll the ministry. You can't discriminate against brothers in the church because of

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their financial status because a man's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions but his fellowship with God. Most of these kinds of brothers with this democratic thinking do not stay permanently in one church. They are itinerant, looking for where the pastor accommodates their interests and satisfies their ego. They like front chairs and show up and only contribute under certain conditions imposed on themselves. They even belittle the work of the ministry workers and servants. They are not patient and think they can buy a ticket to the stands of heaven with their money. Jesus said, "It is hard for the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." Not that we shouldn't be rich, but because when wealth goes to our heads, it breeds pride and turns off fellowship with God. We need money to advance God's work. By the way, the church should be the wealthiest institution on earth to help the needy and finance the expansion of the gospel.

The wealthy brethren, for example, should help others who do not have so that there is balance in the church. The apostle James dwelt much on this matter to the point of declaring, "What does it profit, my brethren if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:14-17 NKJV). The church demonstrates pure love between brothers and sisters that make the world seek God through it. It's the only institution on earth with the potential to be honest, pure, and demonstrate a non-interesting love for humanity. There is no living organism on earth, more dynamic, capable of confronting the devil spiritually and defeating him than the church.

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One day in the year 2015, a group consisting of some men and women of status came. They suggested that I put chairs in front of them so that they could sit comfortably because they were potential ministry partners. They also stated that I should move the church headquarters from Boane to Maputo City since the brothers in Boane were of a low-income class, and I should be in the metropolis. I answered them, “In this ministry, there is no distinction between poor and rich or one ethnic group superior to another. I am an apostle to all, and I prefer to stay with these poor people to enrich them with the revelations God has given me until they become rich too.” Thus, I solved a potential problem that would have negatively defined my ministry and the church’s life. Surprisingly, months after those brothers left the ministry and from 2015 to the present year of 2021, I have heard that they have already changed churches like clothes, and others live in the world. But those so-called poor people, for whom I worked and prayed, are in Christ until today. They are standing firm and strong, prospering in their businesses, families, and jobs.

I remember one of the sisters named Matilde, who sold roasted peanuts on the street to be able to feed her family because her husband had a disability. He had had an accident at work in South Africa, where he worked, and couldn’t walk. In addition, he had metal plates in his legs, and the wife played the role of father, mother, and provider for the family. When the couple came to church, the man was wearing crutches, and I prayed for them. Weeks later, South African lawyers called the man by phone, telling him that his compensation had come out. Surprise to the couple: it was a figure in millions of rands. The miraculous fact is that he was regarded as a disabled person and received his compensation while he had already been healed by the power of God and was walking without any support. The couple was so immensely grateful to the Lord Jesus that they brought a seed that helped build the temple we had. They

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humbly asked my advice, and as a result, they started a couple of businesses that changed their lives from poor to middle class. Their wife even got her driver's license, and they acquired family and business vehicles. To this day, they are humble and faithful members of the church.

The background here is that you cannot belittle a brother or sister just because they lack financial resources; God can change their lives and surprise many. So likewise, there should be no racial discrimination or discrimination because of social status.

For example, within the church, we are all brothers and sisters, but there are those brothers to whom God has given the grace to lead others in the way of the Lord. Namely, the ministers of the gospel deserve respect, prayers, and support in every way because they give their lives and time for the sake of all brothers and the world in general.

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CHAPTER III

Types of communions

The believer has two types of communions: the vertical communion and the horizontal communion

1. Vertical communion

Vertical fellowship is that which the believer establishes between himself and God and is translated into prayer. The Apostle Paul said, “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV). The believer needs to know that he has been called to a life of intimacy with God. That is why Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit to enable us to have vital contact with the divine essence in us. So says the apostle John: “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3 NKJV).

The main point here is that God has restored fellowship with the born-again man. Through faith in Christ, we have been washed by his blood transported into the realm of fellowship with the Father. This fellowship is personal; therefore, the believer can anywhere pray, study the Word, meditate on it alone. But don't forget that salvation is individual, and therefore fellowship is unique too. You must have moments alone with God to study the Scriptures and to pray. On this point, read the habit of prayer. This is a top-

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down fellowship from God to man and a bottom-up fellowship, that is, from man to God.

2. Horizontal communion

Horizontal fellowship is established between the believer and other believers. This is why John said, “Which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us...” (1 John 1:3).

Looking at the lives of believers in the early church, we often see how brothers and sisters in the faith carried out this kind of relationship. So, we read, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized, and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. So now all who believed were together and had all things in common” (Acts 2:41-44 NKJV).

This Scripture shows what the community of believers did in these meetings with an emphasis on the following activities:

A) They persevered in the apostles’ doctrine.

They gave their attention to the message taught by the apostles. This kind of fellowship happens in the church where God sends an

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apostle, teacher, prophet, or pastor to teach the Word to the brethren.

So you too, dear reader, make a habit of going to hear God's Word and persevere in the teachings given by your spiritual leader. Do you understand now why you should develop the habit of attending the congregation of the saints? The Holy Scripture says, "But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel" (Psalms 22:3 NKJV). Therefore, when we are together in God's house and praise or worship him, we are mutually strengthened in the Lord by this exercise. This is why David said, "I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord. Can you imagine: a king who had everything in life but still remembered his Creator and was in the habit of going to the house of the Lord?"

Being born again, the believer needs to be under the teachings of a man of God for his spiritual edification and training to embrace ministry. Even with online services, we still need face-to-face services because you cannot raise children at a distance or online. The mother's lap is necessary. The milk of the Word is essential, and our physical gathering is vital because it creates a union that creates tremendous spiritual power capable of changing seemingly impossible circumstances. That is why the Church in Mary's home prayed, and an angel was sent from heaven to release Peter from maximum security prison (Acts 12:5).

Dear reader, understand this: there is a difference between growing up and being educated. Many believers and even preachers just came out of nowhere and haven't been spiritually educated. They think that having spiritual gifting is everything, but you need to be trained and educated to maturity; for that, you need to be under the teachings of a man of God. That is why Paul exhorted Timothy, "And the things that you have heard from me among many

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witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2 NKJV). That is why Paul called Timothy his son.

B) They were united and had a healthy fellowship until rifts arose in Acts 6 over meals.

C) They ate together, sharing everything they had in common. Therefore, there were no poor among them.

D) They had corporate prayers.

In the early Church, believers prayed together for various matters concerning the church’s life or the brethren. Jesus put a lot of emphasis on the prayer of agreement, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven” (Matthew 18:18 NKJV). This kind of prayer is compelling. That is why there is a need to join the brethren in the church to pray and intercede. For example, suppose some family, sentimental or related problem troubles your life as a believer; you can expose this situation before the mature brethren and agree and pray. Without delay, you will see tremendous results. Learn how to do this. Just be careful not to tell your intimate life to immature, gossiping brethren, at the risk of having your life in a public newspaper. We see this power of corporate prayer manifesting itself, first with the apostles in the text in Acts 4:29. When they were severely threatened and restricted from teaching in the name of Jesus, they prayed unitedly, and God answered right away. Note the narrative, “So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said, “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them...Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to

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heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus” (Acts 4:24, 29-30 NKJV). This was a joint prayer of men of God who were feeling threatened. The principle here is that they were united in the same purpose and spirit. See God’s answer, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness” (Verse 31).

Did you notice here the words “the place where they were assembled together”? What was that place? Physical place. No one can prevail alone, no matter how anointed. For lack of this understanding, James was killed by King Herod when the church had tremendous power to effect change through prayer. It’s essential to learn this principle, don’t let the devil fool you into thinking you can grow spiritually alone and put the brakes on your plans. You need to be in a congregation and pray with other brothers and sisters of the same faith.

The second instance where we saw this power of corporate prayer in operation is in Acts 12, when the church, through prayer, freed Peter from prison. There is power in the church, Christians who understand this can bring about change in all spheres of personal, social, and national life on their knees - in prayer. If there is an issue that concerns many people: accidents, illnesses, a family member in the hospital, or war or anti-Christian laws - get together with some brothers and sisters, even if it is in someone’s home or your home, and pray in faith, united in the same spirit, and you will see results not long after. The fact is that prayer goes up to heaven in the form of a collective dispatch made by Christ’s ambassadors in the territory called earth. We are Christ’s ambassadors on this earth, and we have power when we are united, so even the great apostle Paul, with so much anointing he had, that even his handkerchiefs

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and aprons healed the sick, asked for prayers from the churches. “Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one” (2 Thessalonians 3:1-3 NKJV).

If Paul and the other apostles needed the joint prayer of others, how much more so do we in our times! If we, the church of the 21st century, want to see the same manifestations of God’s power as then, we have to do the same things they did: pray together.

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CHAPTER IV

Why there are rifts in the church

Dissensions within the church can significantly delay the church's mission on earth, which is to make disciples. Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19 NKJV). The word disciple means "pupil or student." But what is this pupil? It's a student of the Word and an imitator of the way of life of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we have to imitate the Lord in how we speak, behave, and live. The apostle Paul said, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11 NKJV).

Jesus was and still is God, but He emptied Himself so that He could take the form of a Servant and was obedient unto death on a cross. That is why the Father exalted Him and gave Him a name above all names and has dominion over the three worlds: heaven, earth, and under the earth. In Him, we can notice aspects related to humility, obedience, servant's heart, and love of neighbor. Therefore, all believers should imitate Jesus.

As I mentioned before, there are three main reasons why there are rifts in the church:

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1. The pride derived from some social status

Dear reader, you must realize that in the church, we are all brothers and sisters. There is no greater status than to be a child of God and a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. We all acquire this citizenship when we accept Christ as Lord and Savior of our lives. This is why Paul said, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20 NKJV). The word “city” employed by Paul here comes from the Greek “*Politeuma*” and means “citizen.”

This concept reveals the highest status a believer can have, for Christ did not come to install a religion, but rather a kingdom—the kingdom of heaven on earth, which is expanded through the church. Therefore, we can see the church as a body of deputies of the kingdom of heaven whose mission is to carry the words of God (the laws of our country, the kingdom of heaven) and to teach men on earth to live according to the will of the heavenly King. This is why Jesus urged us, “But seek first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” What things? Clothing, housing, food, and what to drink. With these words, Jesus wants us to put our focus on his kingdom and the predisposition to live a righteous life before him. As a result, the heavenly Father gives us favor and grace in the affairs of this life on earth so that we can prosper in all that we do. Therefore, you should rejoice greatly in being a citizen of the heavenly kingdom and have fellowship with the Father.

Once this concept is understood, there is no reason for pride within the church. For example, if a brother is blessed by God and has been elected president of a nation, ruler, businessman, or prominent leader in this world, he should not leave the church just because he has changed status. He should continue to congregate as

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our brother, but that a brother who has distinguished status in this world because of the grace God has given him. So other rulers and/or business people or teachers, magistrates, etc., will be won to Christ and come to the church. However, what we have seen is the opposite of this picture presented here. When a brother becomes a ruler, he disassociates himself from the church and is won to the world instead of using that platform to glorify God. He begins to look at the church's brothers as sub-human beings and the pastors as starving people, forgetting that these prayers have been offered for him to get where he is.

The same happens with brothers who become businessmen, academics, university or secondary school teachers, members of parliament, or even renowned musicians. When they reach this status, most of them change and transition from the kingdom of God to the kingdom of darkness and use their talent, knowledge, and charisma in the service of the kingdom of darkness, thus dissociating themselves from the community of saints. And they begin to think that the brethren in the church are backward or say that they can't go to church services because religious or Christian people will see them. They start to feel ashamed of being Christians and don't want anyone to know that they are also church members. Suddenly they have no time left; they are too busy and think that the church might hold them back by robbing them of what they would invest. The question remains: what is it worth for a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?

Dear reader, if you as a believer are graced by the heavenly Father to be something in this world, do not forget your origins. Faithful brothers and friends are in the church. Outside, you will have many friends in good times, but when you are between the sword and the wall, you will want God when it is too late. Scripture exhorts, "Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while

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He is near” (Isaiah 55:6 NKJV). The world works like a well; the further away from God you are, the deeper you descend into the abyss.

So don’t let your social status take away your heavenly identity and lose your soul. Be humble. The other brothers and sisters in the church should intercede, pray for those whom God so graces, for, it is beneficial to the kingdom of God. It’s a joy to know that a leader or someone of social status is our brother in the church and maintains his Christian moral values. Nobody should hate brothers who are a blessing to the church.

2. The greed for power and first seats

Another reason that leads to rifts in the church is greed. The purpose of the church is the salvation of souls. Jesus once told a parable about the need not to seek front seats when invited to a party. The church is the place of celebration: celebrating our salvation and independence from sin and the devil. Don’t seek to sit up front forcibly; follow the church’s protocol whenever you go to a church service. Workers should also not sell seats in the church in exchange for monetary values or material goods like clothing or even food. The church is not a marketplace or exchange house. Some believers leave the church claiming that someone ripped out their chair or had nowhere to sit. In Jesus’ time, only the Master sat, and the disciples stood listening to the Word.

So, if you have a seat at the church service, sit down and obey the protocol created. If you have arrived a little late, don’t make noise or create a distraction when you are teaching the Word. Instead, cherish the moment of the ministry of the Word because the Holy

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Spirit will be moving at that moment, and He doesn't like distractions. So, look for a quiet place where you can hear the Word, feed your soul, and praise God. Avoid getting into unnecessary arguments, and don't leave the church because a brother offended you. By the way, the way to the kingdom of heaven does not pass through that brother's house but is Jesus the Lord.

3. The democratic and independent spirit of some believers

As I explained previously, the church is a kingdom, and it's only the will of God expressed in his Word that should prevail. Therefore, don't pursue your own interests, but what is beneficial and healthy for the whole church body. Don't leave the church just because the uniform chosen for a specific event was not to your liking or because the painting of the temple didn't look good in your eyes. Don't leave the church simply because the chair where a servant was sitting gave it to another brother, and you had no seat that day. But first, have an open and cooperative heart with the activities of the church. Try to know the days of worship, the church's weekly, monthly, and/or yearly programs, see how you can participate or help. Furthermore, try to read the church's needs and the burdens of God's work and help in whatever you can. Read the conditions even if the pastor doesn't express them publicly, see what is missing or in what you can help to advance the work of God.

Understand that all the brothers in the Church are important because Christ died for them, but not all are useful. The useful ones are those who support the work of one or the other, those who are God's partners in the expansion of his gospel. So, be helpful. See if your pastor, apostle, or missionary has something to eat or wear and

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be a blessing. Paul said, “Let him who is taught the word share in all goods with him who teaches” (Galatians 6:6 NKJV).

Many brothers are unaware of the challenges and battles their spiritual leader goes through for their cause.

For example, men of God are often hated and persecuted, and maligned because they have prayed for and delivered a person from family covenants and other kinds of spiritual prison. What do you think those people who benefited from your suffering will do against your pastor? They will try to blacken his image by persecuting him. What harm has he done? The good he did for you, the sleepless nights, and the days spent fasting. Besides being men of God, they are also human and need your prayers and moral and material support. The fall of a pastor can lead to the fall and destruction of a ministry. The Scripture says I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered” (Matthew 26:31). Be a sheep that brings joy to its shepherd. When Paul and Silas were arrested and flogged in Acts 16, what harm had they done? None; Paul had merely delivered a little girl from a demon of divination. She was a slave, and she became free. But this freedom, and her happiness, cost Paul harassment and imprisonment. Have a heart that knows how to cooperate in the church’s affairs for the good of the whole body and the glory of God.

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CHAPTER V

Church: a place of edification of believers

“The words of the Lord Jesus Christ addressed to Simon that yielded promotion to Peter established a foundation on which the work begun by the Lord on earth would be built: the Church.

Notice his words, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18-19 NKJV).

Up to this point, there was no church as we see it today. So, it was before Jesus died on the cross, defeated the devil, shed His blood of remission, and rose from the dead. However, He makes a prophetic statement to Simon about what would happen not long after He made those pronouncements, “I will build my Church.” Jesus assigns the surname “Peter” to Simon because the Spirit inspired him to declare that Jesus was the Messiah, the awaited Christ - the Son of the living God. “You are Peter” “And upon this rock.” The words “Peter” and “rock” don’t mean the same thing in this context, but they have an interconnection. Peter comes from the Greek “*Petrus*” and means “rock,” a building stone. However, the word “rock” has a broader and even more significant meaning. It comes from the Greek “*Petra*” and means “boulder” or simply “rock.” And it’s particularly this rock that serves as the foundation for the building of the house that is the body of believers throughout the world. This rock is Jesus Christ. Isaiah had already said the

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following hundreds of years ago, “Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal” (Isaiah 26:4 NIV). This term was allusive to God, and no other person could claim ownership of it.

Jesus took on the function and role of Christ that God’s people had been waiting for thousands of years, even though they didn’t recognize or receive Him as the Messiah in their entirety as a nation. He is the eternal Rock; He is God. When the people of Israel were thirsty in the desert and Moses struck the rock so that they could drink of the water, that rock represented and typified Christ. Therefore, God was angry at Moses for bruising the rock a second time when God had said he should just speak. Why did God do that? Simple, because Christ would die and rise again only once for sinners, and that was the word of God made flesh. He cannot be wounded twice because He cannot die twice. The water that came out of the rock typified the Holy Spirit - the Water of life that Jesus would pour out to all those who would believe in Him. Jesus is the central theme of the Holy Scriptures because of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. Jesus said before the Samaritan woman, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. Everyone who drinks of this water (of the well) will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water that I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:10, 13-14 NIV). Jesus promised to give living water to that woman if only she would ask, and she asked the Lord, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water” (Verse 15). What was that water? The Holy Spirit of God gives life to all who receive it.

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Dear reader, you too can ask for this living water that emanates from the Rock that is Jesus, and He will fill you, quenching your thirst. Without the Holy Spirit, you cannot experience a glorious life full of the supernatural. You need Him to live, breathe, walk, and win every day.

At a feast in Jerusalem, already on the last day, Jesus stood up and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. And this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37-39 NKJV).

When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, He made it possible for human beings who believe in Him to receive this wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit - this source of eternal life. A life of glory, victory, health, and peace emanates from the person of the Holy Spirit. The only thing that the recipient or beneficiary needs to have is thirst. This thirst translates into a burning desire that the believer must have for spiritual things, for the Word of God.

Dear reader, the moment you read this book, you are being filled with the Holy Spirit. Something extraordinary is happening in your life right now, and from now on, your life will never be the same.

This eternal Rock doesn't wear out with time; it's available today, and you can build your life upon it.

The apostle Peter was graced, for he became the first human stone to be placed on this Rock, and we are part of that building today. Peter understood this so much that he wrote, “You also, as

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living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5 NKJV).

In this passage of Scripture, Peter considers believers living stones and not dead ones. Glory to God! You and I are living stones built upon the Rock, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if the Rock that serves as a foundation for the building is Jesus and believers are living stones built upon it, then the whole rock together with the living stones have the same name: Christ. Christ means the “anointed one,” and every believer born again by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit is also anointed. This is why we have authority over the devil and his kingdom of darkness. Based on His confidence in the building material and His firmness as a rock, the Master said He would build His church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. It’s a fact, as a church, we have tremendous power capable of destroying the gates of hell and freeing the lives of thousands of people bound by the devil in sin, addictions, curses, and sickness. We are anointed.

You are anointed because the same life that the Rock has also passed on to you. Dear reader, have you ever stopped to think about this? From Jesus’ point of view, His greatest power was delegated to His church. This is not a poor, weak, and fearful church that timidly faces the sorcerers and the devil. Thousand times no. This church knows its role and spiritual covering, which has power against the forces of darkness. It must go forward, reaching the nations of the world for Christ and demonstrating God’s power and love to fallen and suffering humanity.

As you read this book, you are being recharged in your spirit to stand up as a spiritual giant and wear your spiritual armor to reign in Christ Jesus over the forces of evil. The watchword has already been

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given, “And the gates of hell did not prevail against her.” It is long past time that the church has been on the defensive, playing the victim of the circumstances of this world, and letting the devil walk his class on earth, confining and restricting the operations and advancement of God’s kingdom. Now is the time for Christians to stand up, for God is raising a great spiritual army of men and women of bold faith who will believe the impossible and do feats in the name of Jesus. Believers who will lay hands on the sick and heal them, and who will know how to put the devil to flight. Believers who will destroy the works of darkness and shine as light in this world. This power lies in the members’ unity in prayer and their maturity in understanding the power and grace and angelic contingent they have been given. A church that will go outside its four walls to rescue souls caught in the devil’s teeth in various sectors of public and private life. This is the picture of the glorious church that Christ wants to see, a church without blemish or wrinkle, or resemblance.

How do we reach this stage of spiritual maturity and Christ-consciousness? The answer is simple: through edification by the Word. This is what the Scripture says, “For the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12 NKJV).

That is why Jesus gave some to be apostles, others to be prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers to achieve this end. And the proper place for this exercise of edification of believers is in the church assembly. For each church, God has given ministers that I mentioned above. Therefore, the church needs to value its ministers who are sent to it for its edification.

Dear reader, understand once more why you should attend church services regularly? For your spiritual enlightenment. Jesus expects that you will be enlightened until you become mature, that

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is, a perfect and immovable man. Every day that you attend services or listen to messages, you make an eternal investment in your soul. You are building up your faith. The text in Jude 20-21 NKJV says, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

There is a most holy Faith on which you must be built up, and it's that faith that is born in you when you hear the Word of God and put it into practice.

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CHAPTER VI

The Word of God, the construction material

Notice Jesus' words, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24 NKJV).

Remember that God looks at us as buildings that are filled by the Holy Spirit and sanctified for God's spiritual habitation; it's a fact. If you are a building to be built, the foundation on which it is erected must be Jesus - the Rock. But how do you build on the Rock? The answer lies in the passage we have just read. Jesus is the Rock, and His Word is the building material. The resilience of a house or a building doesn't depend on its outward beauty but on its ability to withstand the weather. As a believer in this world, over and over again, you may face storms of life. Your victory or defeat will depend on how you will put God's Word into practice.

A Christian's resilience doesn't depend on how many years he has been in church but on how he can use God's Word to silence the devil. Many say they have their Bibles and don't need to go to church because they can read by themselves at home. They are wrong, for that is not how God wants things to happen. Even in the persecuted times of the early church, only the believers went around taking the word with them. Still, the apostles stayed in Jerusalem to continue to build up their brothers and sisters in the faith. In the many places where Christian communities had been established, the apostles, especially Paul, visited them to confirm them in the faith. The word confirm means to strengthen or edify. Thus, there was an anointing that was transferred to them. This is why Paul said to the

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Romans, “For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me” (Romans 1:11-12 NKJV).

Dear reader, can you notice here that there is something called “mutual faith”? Where can this faith be found or experienced? In the Church, obviously. Why should it be the regular habit of every believer to attend meetings with the brethren and not to isolate himself? By isolating yourself, you lose a lot of spiritual glories.

The apostles, in their missionary journeys, had two purposes:

First: evangelize to new converts and establish churches or communities of believers, where the Spirit would allow them to pass through. And, once these communities of believers were established;

Second, they made visits to confirm the brethren in the faith. So, we read, “So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren” (Acts 15:3 NKJV). You see the joy they gave to these converted brethren?

In the following chapter of Acts, we read, “And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily” (Acts 16:4-5 NKJV).

Even today, God wants the churches to grow in number, with more souls saved and delivered and lives transformed.

We see the term “confirm” all the time. And as I explained earlier, this process denotes the act of strengthening, encouraging,

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and lifting someone's faith. This is why Paul told the Romans that he wanted to see them communicate to them some spiritual gift. So likewise, men of God convey some spiritual gift to the churches. This strengthening or impartation of grace that the churches received could be done in several ways:

1. Through teaching words

In some places, the apostle Paul, for example, could spend years teaching. In Corinth, the Scripture says, "He went out from there and entered the house of a man named Titus Justus, a servant of God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. And Crispus, the synagogue ruler, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians, when they heard him, believed, and were baptized. And the Lord said to Paul in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you, for I have many people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Acts 18:9-11 NKJV). The words that the apostles taught carried life, and the believers were encouraged and received spiritual gifts just by hearing a man of God speak. So, we read in Acts 10:44 that while Peter was speaking in Cornelius' home, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the message.

2. Through the imposition of hands

The apostles' hands contained such a tremendous anointing that they received the Holy Spirit when they laid them on believers. So, when Philip evangelized in Samaria, and the people believed and were baptized in water, the church in Jerusalem sent Peter and John. They laid their hands on the believers to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts

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8:14-17). The same happened when Paul went to the city of Ephesus; he found disciples there who had never heard of the Holy Spirit. After talking to them about Christ and baptizing them in water, he laid his hands on them, and they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6).

Spiritual confirmation is essential for a believer's stability. And attending services helps you to stay strong and activated in your spirit.

I remember the year 2012 when I was teaching in the church. Before I left home, I prepared to teach a powerful and simmered message in my spirit. However, when I arrived at the temple and went up to the pulpit, the Holy Spirit gave me another one and told me that I should teach that one. I obeyed. At the end of the service, a woman came up to me and said, "Apostle, I had already prepared some poison to go and take it and die, because I am full of problems, but today's message has freed me, and I am not going to commit suicide anymore." See the importance of attending the services; if she had not gone to the service that day, she probably would have committed suicide, and God decided to save her through the message. You don't always need a touch; it is quite likely that just by hearing a word from the mouth of a man of God, your spirit and cheerfulness will be lifted and your will to live restored. It's no accident that the Word of God urges us not to leave our congregation. And the Church is the place of spiritual enlightenment, where the weak are seen and come out strengthened, and the person's character is molded.

Dear reader, whenever you go to worship services, be a word hunter. Jesus said that the one who hears and practices the Word would be compared to a prudent man, that is, a cautious man, who built his house on the Rock, and it withstood the pressures of the

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winds, the rain, and the rivers. This denotes problems that come from all corners, like streams of water to destroy and bring down the believer. He only endures depending on the building material with which he was built, which is the Word of God. So, for example, if some fear comes to you, you can use the Word of God and say, “I refuse to be afraid, in the name of Jesus.” If God’s Word is inside you, you will believe it and remember that God repeatedly said, “Do not fear.”

It’s in the church where your soul is built up, and your life is polished in every way. You build your financial life by sowing into God’s work and being good stewards of God’s blessings. You build up your marriage by loving your wife and the wife being submissive to her husband, as God’s Word prescribes. The Word has answers to all of man’s concerns. Have an open heart and be edified.

Now, the one who hears the Word and doesn’t practice it, Jesus compares him to a foolish man who built his house on the sand. Then, rain fell, rivers flowed, and winds blew against that house, and it fell down completely (Matthew 7:26-27).

God anoints men and women to explain the mysteries of his kingdom. And to be under one of them, learning the Word in a spiritual family will be a valuable deposit you will be making in your spiritual life. You become more prepared to face life’s challenges and overcome them because you have been built up.

Finally, understand that the purpose of edification is for growth and maturity. These translate into stability in life, where you are not shaken by anything in this world, nor by false doctrines, because you have built your life on the Rock that is Jesus.

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CHAPTER VII

How to evaluate the spiritual growth of the believer

Spiritual growth should be the intrinsic desire of every believer in Christ. The Scriptures show us that God's plan is for the believer to grow. Paul said, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22 NKJV).

This Scripture reveals one of the purposes of spiritual growth built up to God's dwelling place in the Spirit. To that end, the believer must be well-adjusted so that he will grow. This means that on the Rock that is Jesus, each believer is cemented into a place appropriate for him. Because of this placement, the believer grows to be filled with the Holy Spirit and fit for every good work that brings glory to God. Therefore, there should be no competition or fighting in the body, for we complement each other in Christ and don't compete. When there is competition, there is no growth or progress. When each member recognizes their place and function in the body, we complement each other; as a result of this process, growth emerges spontaneously.

Now, it is essential to note that the believer's growth depends on his cooperation with the Spirit of God. He must study the Word and put it into practice so that the Spirit of God can use it to

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strengthen and equip him. That is why you have been placed in the body and can only grow well adjusted, being in the body, in interconnection with the other members.

God wants you to be built on the Rock and knows that while you are still in this world, contrary winds will blow; challenges and crises will come with momentum against this world, and you need to stand firm and strong like a house built on the rock.

Spiritual growth can be compared to physical growth, but it cannot be measured similarly. For example, when a person eats well, this can be seen in the development of his body; he becomes healthier and more active. And when he exercises regularly, the results can be seen in his muscles that either bulge or get his body in shape. So physical growth can be observed and evaluated with physical eyes.

Spiritual growth entails other evaluation parameters since one cannot see man's spirit or soul with physical eyes. So, how to evaluate growth? The answer is simple: Through spiritual stability and the ability to resist the attacks and fiery darts of the evil one. The believer, for example, can sing, preach and dance very well; but how does he react on the evil day when everything seems to be against him simultaneously? Many get into panic mode, lose faith, and surrender to the devil. Others resist the devil, and the devil flees; as James said, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7 NKJV). But how will you resist if you are not edified and don't have the necessary tools or, if you have them, you don't know how to use them? Instead, you even flee with the weapons of warfare God has given you and are frightened by the devil and crises even though you are a carrier of the Holy Spirit. Like a soldier who has large-caliber, supersonic weapons, but because he doesn't know how to use them, he flees in fear of someone coming against him, using sticks and

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stones. This is why Paul, edifying the church in Ephesus, said, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:10-12 NKJV).

Paul shows here that our adversary is spiritual, sly, and uses subtle tactics, so we need to approach him spiritually. This is why he adds, “Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand” (Verse 13). This is where spiritual growth can be measured: resist and stand firm until the end of the evil day.

As employed in James 4:7, the word resist comes from the Greek word “*anti-histemi*.” This term is derived from two words, “*anti*” and “*histemi*.” The word “*Anti*” refers to the idea of being against and preventing an adversary’s advance. “*Histemi*” means “to raise, make sit, establish, balance, or stand.” So, the word “*anti-histemí*” refers to the idea of a person who stands on a foundation to stop the enemy’s advance. In essence, the believer must have a solid foundation to set firm feet to make headway in life, even in the face of opposition and challenges. And what is this foundation that God has given to the believer? It is the Word of God; the Word is the building material that builds the believer.

The challenges that come into this world will never stop; there will always be something we must fight. This is why Jesus said, “In the world, you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33 NKJV). You must be in Christ, always, and in Him you will stand firm. To do this, you need to receive grace - divine enablement - and grow in it. Therefore, Peter

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preached, 'But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18 NKJV).

Spiritual growth translates into more knowledge of Jesus and, as a fruit, increases the believer's faith. Now, faith produces a life of peace, rest and quiet, because you know that God is in control. Furthermore, spiritual growth translates into grace. That is, you are given the grace to be able to resist the devil. In the desert, when Satan came to tempt the Lord Jesus, He used the knowledge of the word to silence him, and the devil went away from Him.

God does not want you to live in panic or fear. He has given you a life of rest and prosperity, but with that comes responsibility: maintaining the joy and peace that He gives. How to maintain it? By daily application of the knowledge of the Word and the inner strengthening that the Lord's grace produces in the believer's heart. That is why the Lord said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

These days we see believers who experience interspersed moments of joy and sorrow; of peace and panic; of faith and fear; of victory and defeat; of highs and lows, creating a dichotomy of mixed emotions. What do I mean by all this? Well, it's normal to see a believer joyfully testifying about what God has given him and then the next day complaining pitifully because of persecutions in the service. As a result of his spiritual weakness, he prefers to lose his job because they are not strong inside. Furthermore, we see believers witnessing marriage one day and then complaining about a lack of peace the next. We see them witnessing divine healing, and the next day they are complaining of relapses. Where is the firmness? Where is the consistency? Where is the determination? Where is the maintenance of all these glories? They lost because they were not based on the Word of God.

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Understand this, dear reader, the only way to keep the blessings that God gives you and resist the devil effectively is to be enlightened on the Word and develop a healthy fellowship with the Lord in prayer. The problem is that when they are blessed, and their lives begin to go well, some believers no longer go to church meetings because they claim they don't have time for it. They no longer pray or study the Word. As a result of this, they give the devil free space to attack and defeat them.

One thing is certain: every level of glory you attain carries your own spiritual responsibility and divine equipment to resist the pressures and attacks that the devil and principalities throw at people at that level. You don't want to sit for your high school exam when you are still in the second grade of elementary school. You will float unless you are gifted. Life's exams are given according to each stage we reach. The type of dark spirits we face daily have a hierarchy depending on the level of glory we have achieved. For example, in the temptation of Jesus, a shallow demon wasn't sent to do it; it was the CEO himself: the devil. In Daniel's spiritual combat for Israel-Jerusalem in Babylon, it was not a mere demon that held the nation back, but the prince of Persia, that is, a principality of the kingdom of darkness that influenced the human king and the nation in which they lived. The physical liberation of the nation required spiritual freedom from the principality that controlled it and influenced the political decisions made by the king or emperor. So, people who seem not to have the problems that the wealthy have, but not really, the spiritual and personal level they are at should make them realize the kind of spirits they are dealing with. Why would the devil send a principality or a prince of darkness to control a neighborhood when it can influence a larger territory? For that, he sends the shallows. Even God had to send the Archangel Michael to free the nation of Israel and free the other angel who the prince of Persia imprisoned.

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For a better understanding, analyze this scenario: will a man living in a 9-room mansion have the same expenses as a person living in a type one house? Of course not. The maintenance of each house differs in costs, including the security of the house itself. Following the same tune, the believer's spiritual growth determines his level of achievement, and the level of achievement determines the kind of life and challenges he will have.

That is why Scripture urges us to build ourselves on the Rock, for surely winds will blow, and rains will fall, and rivers will flow with one purpose: to bring us down and destroy us. Our permanence will depend on our capacity to resist and to stand firm and unshakable.

Because of this, you should develop the habit of attending services or church meetings regularly. Your understanding of the Word is good, but you are strengthened even more in union with other brothers and sisters in the faith. Five fingers make a fist, and a fist thrown with force has a devastating effect. Now, not one finger can be damaged if it wants to do what a fist made up of five fingers can do. The momentum of the destructive force of five fingers combined is much greater and more advantageous than one finger that wants to go into the boxing ring alone.

Life is like a spiritual boxing match; the one who stays on his feet is the strongest, the sharpest, and the one who manages to knock down his opponent, reducing the number of rounds.

Dear reader, it's you who must defeat the devil, not the other way around. Jesus has already done His part, defeating him on the cross, but you need His knowledge and grace to keep the victory won and given to you by the Lord.

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CHAPTER VIII

Church: a place for believers

The early church and the current church: a perspective of progress

“For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12 NKJV).

In my book “The Four Basic Ministries of the Believer: Secrets of Greatness in the Kingdom of God 2020,” I made an in-depth and exhaustive study about the ministries that the believer has in Christ. Therefore, I advise you to acquire this book to complement the knowledge you will gain in this particular one.

In my observations and missionary and apostolic journeys, I have found that most believers have no concept of what Christ has called them to do inside and outside the church - understand the church as an assembly or gathering of the saints. The lack of this knowledge reduces the potential that believers have that, well polished and utilized, could contribute on a large scale to the expansion of Christ's projects on earth. In this particular chapter, my goal is to enlighten the reader to know that he needs improvement to carry out the work of the ministry to which God has called him. About the technicalities of this ministry and how to exercise it. I advise you to study the book mentioned above and to save time, I won't approach this subject in this chapter since there is a collection

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that contains this information. However, I try to awaken in the believer a burning desire to look at the Church as the training place for Missions. Having this understanding, I create the habit of attending church meetings regularly.

The early church will always serve as a reference point and example of what the church in the 21st century should be. However, on us rests a greater responsibility because they didn't have today's technological facilities. The exercise was more arduous because the apostles and evangelists had to walk on foot or ride donkeys or mules in their missionary journeys in the service of the Church. Ships and boats didn't have the same speed or developed systems as ours. We are talking about the first century in the Gregorian calendar. Only from the late 18th century and early 19th century, specifically in England with the advent of the steam engine in the textile industry and locomotive, did the world begin to experience the industrial revolution. In the late 20th century and early 21st century, we live in a technological era of a world more digitalized than ever.

A letter from Paul to the churches in Ephesus or Galatia needed to be hand-made. It physically carried to the destination, in an exercise that could take many days of travel. Today, we can have Christian books in various formats: printed, digital, or even in audio format. And accessing these works doesn't take the same amount of time as in those days. So, in terms of technological facilities, we are at a greater advantage than they are. By the way, they saw our days and wished to live in these times we are in now, but we were given this grace. A question may arise: why is it that they seem to have done so much more than us and to have experienced so much of God's power and the supernatural than we do today? There are several hypotheses in terms of answers; however, I emphasize and highlight here some factors:

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First:

They had a clear understanding of the church, its mission, and the power that supported it.

Second:

They had intimate communion with the Holy Spirit and depended on Him for everything.

Third:

They were determined and willing to bear the consequences of their declaration of faith.

Fourth:

They were united and knew the value of a man of God.

Fifth:

They were very urgent in winning souls because time was short. There was not much religious freedom to practice their faith in a world dominated by the Roman Empire that divinized its emperors and Judaism that severely persecuted the Christian movement. For

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them, a person had to hear the gospel, believe, be baptized immediately, and go and give his testimony, even if this meant losing his life in defense of his faith.

Sixth:

They were not materialists like the current Christian movements have been. Nowadays, people only go to church because they want to be blessed with a car, a house, a business, a job, and compare each other. Accordingly, they use material possessions as the yardstick for measuring spiritual growth.

What they had, they shared with those who didn't, and there was balance among the brethren. They avoided as much as possible that there was anyone in need in the church. Even in times of drought or famine, the Christians in the wealthy churches would make collections and send them by the apostles' hands or those approved by the apostles; and these seeds were channeled to help the brethren in need. Moreover, the churches didn't let their pastors go hungry; on the contrary, they contributed to the assistance and support of the apostles' missions and supplied the needs of the brethren scattered in various churches.

Seventh:

They committed to the faith they had embraced, and it was not social position or economic status that would keep them from God and fellowship with their brethren. Even businesswomen like Lydia, who sold purple, supported the work of God (Acts 16), accommodating God's servants.

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Eighth:

They had regard for the men of God and believed in the words they spoke. They didn't want as many private meetings and oils that today's believers demand. It wasn't like today that anyone who has a dream, and it happens, wakes up and says he is a prophet and opens his ministry to make money. There was a sacrifice for the work and a price to be paid. The men of God had authority, and not like now that many believers have a democratic behavior and are always roaming from church to church looking for where they can accommodate their interests and not the will of God. They want people who will itch their ears, scratching their minds with messages that please them and exalt the ego of believers but don't transform the heart or mold the character. Believers must surrender to the will of God with joy because this is very important.

Ninth:

They were united in prayer and knew how to congregate even in the homes of other brethren to pray for specific social issues and the preachers of the Word. At that time, it was not easy to have a public place always open for church meetings because of persecutions, but even so, they managed to gather for praise, the Word, and to pray, whenever the need arose.

Tenth:

They were hospitable. They knew how to welcome guests and had generous and loving hearts. Nowadays, the love of many has become so cold that even members of the same family distrust each

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other. Because iniquity is multiplying, it's complicated today to trust a brother or sister in the church as it was in the early church days.

Now, all in all, the context in which they lived was different, and the world wasn't as polarized as it is today. It was a more unified world, centered on the Roman empire, with rigid rules and laws that, roughly speaking, didn't favor the flourishing of Christianity or the practice of faith. It was a world dominated by paganism and polytheism, where several gods, especially the Greek and Roman gods, were worshiped. The sun, the moon, and the elements of nature, in general, constituted a range of deities to be cherished. Therefore, being a Christian and maintaining the purity of your fellowship with Jesus needed a lot of determination and intimacy with the Holy Spirit. Contrary to the Christian communities that exist today that seek their own interests and wills above the will of God, prayer, communion, obedience to God, love of neighbor, and support of the work of God.

I pray that God will raise us in the church of Christ today with the same feeling that was in the early church. And in these days of great revival and the great harvest of souls, we will see the glory of God manifested more than ever before. The Covid 19 pandemic has resurrected in many believers the need to pray and the urgency to preach the gospel and win souls for the kingdom of God. Many fallen believers have awakened to the need to purify their lives, align their character, and return to the original gospel in preparation for the rapture. The gospel is being echoed in various parts and by various methods. We must continue to pray and engage in the work of the ministry.

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CHAPTER IX

Training for Missions

Dear reader, you must realize that the church serves multi-sectoral and multi-faceted plans concerning the kingdom of God. One of these purposes is that of training believers for the work of ministry.

Each believer is called to contribute to Christ's macro and micro plan in expanding the Kingdom of God. His contribution depends on his understanding of his place and role in the body, which is the church.

God's plan is not that you just go, sit down, sing, dance, hear the Word, and then come home, and that's it. Not necessarily, He wants you to be built up to maturity and trained for the work of the ministry. So, the word that Paul used, "wanting the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry," does not necessarily mean that the believer has to be perfect, even though he is in Christ; it has to do with equipping, equipping, or ministry training.

Now, this equipping is not something that will come from the outside, from what the believer does not have at his disposal, but rather the training of how he can use the tools God has already given him in Christ Jesus. Thus, for example, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ are equipment available to the believer.

The church serves as a mission field where he uses the man of God to train new converts when they are very mature, to be sent out to serve. It's from the church where future missionaries, evangelists, and pastors adequately prepared for the work will come out.

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The spiritual leader needs not to be selfish but rather recognize those God calls within the church and commission them for the work. There are many souls to be saved and lives to be transformed. As Jesus said, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matthew 9:37-38 NKJV).

One of the reasons why there has also been strife within the church is that some men of God and spiritual leaders don’t listen to the Holy Spirit and end up smothering the people that God Himself has raised to expand the ministry. And when this happens, the pastor stops in the pulpit to preach against these brothers, thus killing their spirit or will to serve God. As a result, some disengage from the ministry and seek new pastures, and others retreat and return to the world, becoming pagans. In some cases, if the pastor hears that those left are continuing in another ministry or God is using them mightily, he curses them. He binds them spiritually, harboring hatred and envy against them. This kind of attitude is typical of spiritual leaders who don’t understand the purpose of the church or the will of God. They are like a duck that lays eggs, and instead of hatching them into chicks, she eats them before they hatch. This has created some embarrassments that even create a field for the devil. What kind of pastor is full of hatred and envy but continues to profess the name of Jesus? The church is not a man’s business but Christ’s. We must let God use whoever He wants, whenever He wants.

Some of the young believers who leave the ministry could have been useful in creating new cells and expanding the gospel within the vision that God gave to the general pastor. This attitude isn’t new, for even King Saul sought to kill David when he heard God was with him. Thus, the church’s mission stops because the leader’s focus is no longer on training to send but on tracking and locating those God is raising and murdering their calling. So, in many cases,

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God withdraws from that church and leaves the pastor at the mercy of the devil. Full of systematic theology but without the power of God; full of theory but without the Spirit. As a result, the church decreases in number and ends up becoming a cube of the pastor and his nuclear family because the believers that God had sent and the people He had raised to use are gone. The sheep scatter, and the pen becomes empty, full of grass and snakes' dwelling place.

The best model is that of Paul with Timothy, Paul with Titus, and Paul with Philemon. These three young men were leaders of churches planted by Paul; they were loyal and obedient. They knew from whom they had received the anointing, grace, and commissioning. It is essential to be under the guidance of a man of God as a believer. You cannot walk alone, for that is dangerous.

Looking at the early Church, we see that God preserved the Church in Jerusalem even with the persecution against Christ's disciples. The believers were scattered, but the apostles' Church was in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Why did God preserve the Church in Jerusalem? Because it served as the training base and center of the church's spiritual operations. It was the training ground for the exercise that would be done outside the church.

When I speak of the believer's ministry, I don't just mean the evangelistic branch, but a whole set of responsibilities and tasks that believers have. For example, where you work, study and live, the people there need to be reached. How will this be done? By God sending a believer there who is part of that circle. However, for the believer's witness and mission to be effective in these places, he needs to be trained; for this and other purposes, the Church serves as a training ground for missions.

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The four dynamic processes for Church growth

So, we can see four processes that take place in the church constantly:

1. Evangelism

Through this process, new converts are brought into the church every day. This work is the fruit of the testimonies given by believers about Jesus in the places where they work, live, study, or have spheres of contact. Furthermore, this work is the fruit of the evangelism and mission programs designed by the church management and carried out by the servant body and/or together with the believers regularly. Therefore, with this process, people will always come to the assembly, to the meetings.

2. Spiritual edification

We seek to strengthen the believer's faith and continually consolidate his fellowship with God with this exercise. This process is carried out by teaching the Word of God in church services. One must realize that inside the church, one doesn't preach but instead teaches. Preaching is done outside to bring lost souls into the kingdom. Preaching is to proclaim, that is, to announce the good news of the kingdom of God and salvation in Christ, while teaching is to explain for understanding and growth. In the church, through the teaching of the Word, the believer learns to behave and have an ethical Christian posture where he is inserted. Likewise, he learns to have and use spiritual tools to resist the devil and his infernal attacks.

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3. Training for missions

This is to equip believers to give their testimony about Christ effectively and to help in the programs inherent to their mission as members of the body of Christ. For this purpose, the church should have programs or theological courses to train these brothers even of short duration. In this process, believers can ask the leader questions, and he can answer them. Whereas in regular worship, it's usually challenging to do this because of the service dynamics. The communication is one-sided: the minister in the pulpit is speaking to believers through the Spirit and the Word of God. Who should be in this group? Those believers who are already mature and handle well the Word of truth and whose lives are an example in the community of saints; are trained to be sent out to fulfill point number one, mentioned above, and other church programs.

4. Sending out in missions

The Scripture in Acts 13:1-4 NKJV says, "Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then, having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus."

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We notice in this text that the Spirit separated Saul, also called Paul, and Barnabas, for Missions. But note that although it was the Holy Spirit who called them, He didn't violate the order or human structure of the Church leadership in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas had to have the hands of the Church elders on them to bless and commission them to go. On the other hand, we notice here that there was a lot of spiritual sensitivity on the part of the elders of the Church, to be able to hear the voice of the Spirit and read God's will and call upon these two men before sending them out. Because all spiritual and human protocol was obeyed, they were sent out within blessing; so much so that their mission was successful. We see later how Paul confronted a magician named Berjesus and declared blindness upon him. And soon, the man was blinded and stopped hindering the Lord's righteous ways. Thus, the proconsul Sergius Paul accepted Christ into his life (Verses 6-13).

One must realize that the call obeys protocol, and the believer cannot, of his own free will coupled with personal selfish ambition, self-send himself. He needs the blessing.

Dear reader, have you noticed here that the church is a living and dynamic organism? It isn't something static and dead. There is much that God is doing through the Holy Spirit within the church. Of course, God also calls people from outside the church to his work, but it has been a result of those going out of the church into missions.

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CHAPTER X

Church: a place of healing for humanity

The Scripture in Acts 5:14-16 NKJV says, “And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least Peter’s shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also, a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.”

Looking closely at this passage, we can see the role that the church plays in healing society. It plays an indispensable role in restoring hope to man when he has exhausted all scientific and human resources and means to cure his ailments. The fact is that the enemy of man is the devil, and this enemy is spiritual. It is in this spiritual dimension from which he launches his missiles and deadly arrows against humanity. And humanity disconnected from God and ignorant of the spiritual world finds itself trapped in a dead-end. Just when it finds a solution to one disease, another appears, and so on. Man finds himself struggling against the invisible. Not finding the definitive answer, despair and panic take over his heart, paralyzing his life and dreams.

Now, this is when the church presents itself as the spiritual hospital to solve spiritually caused problems. Spiritual problems are only solved spiritually and by spiritual means. Demons will never show up on an X-Ray or MRI scan. Even though they are fine and thorough cuts, they cannot detect the presence of an evil spirit. And this is how the devil has interfered with many people’s health, be it physical or emotional. Unfortunately, no human entity or organism

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on earth outside of the church can stop the devil because man operates on the physical-material plane, and the devil works on the spiritual plane. And it happens that the spiritual world controls and influences the life of the material world. Only those who gain mastery in the spiritual arena control and live well in the physical world. The Church is the only entity endowed with the spiritual means to stop the devil and halt his plans.

Jesus, in His earthly ministry, healed many sick people and cast out many demons. So, the Scripture attests in Acts 10:38 NKJV, “And how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil because God was with him.” Who was oppressing people with sickness and disease? The devil. And who freed people by healing them? Jesus Christ. Jesus’ earthly ministry is so full of accounts of miraculous healings that John even went so far as to say that Jesus had many miracles not written in his Gospel manuscript. He said that if he had written them all, there would be no room on earth to contain the volume of these accounts (John 21:25). This statement by John only brings into focus the notion of how Jesus focused his ministry on healing the ills that sickened and afflicted the people.

The text in Mark 5:25 narrates the adventures of a woman suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years. She had suffered at the hands of several doctors and had spent her entire fortune, but she went from bad to worse each time. Finally, however, when she heard about Jesus Christ and his work, faith was born in her heart, and she went and touched the hem of his garment and was immediately healed.

In the text in Luke 13:11-13 NKJV, we find another case, this time a woman who had been bent over and could not stand up for

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almost eighteen years. And Jesus, seeing her in the synagogue, said to her, “Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity... and immediately she was made straight.” Already in Mark 5:1-15, we read about a man who had dementia caused by a legion of demons. All attempts to tame him through chains and fetters were unsuccessful. He lived in the cemeteries screaming and cutting himself with stones. It took an encounter with Jesus for the man to be set free and his mental sanity restored. Thus, he was healed and in a tremendous psychological state, got dressed, and returned to his family.

Jesus was a walking hospital that healed physical and emotional diseases. However, the greatest disease he removed on the cross was the spiritual one: sin, the mother of all the suffering that came to man when he became disconnected from God and fell from dominion. As a result, Jesus brought the kingdom of heaven - a kingdom of peace, health, and life. During the three and a half years of His ministry, He concentrated on teaching about this kingdom and demonstrating the power that was in it. In this way, He was destroying the devil’s works, which included the sickness, misery, and torment with which the evil one afflicted and to this day afflicts men disconnected from God. This is why the Scripture in 1 John 3:8 NKJV says, “For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” In fact, from the perspective of Jesus Christ, healing the sick, casting out demons and saving was a process that summarized the works of God. God wants good for humanity.

Matthew, for example, recounts the itinerant ministry of Jesus and what He did for the people. Thus, we read, “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matt. 9:35 NKJV). In his time, when he was physically on earth, there was for Jesus no incurable

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disease. That is why the crowds followed him, seeing the relief he gave them and the hope he brought them because the lame could walk, the blind could see, the deaf could hear, and the poor had the Good News preached to them. Jesus was and continues to be the answer to the problems of humanity. He quenches our thirst and our hunger and completes us. He is everything a man needs.

Looking at the ministry on earth, we can see how much damage the Lord has done to the kingdom of darkness, taking men and women out of the devil's hands into the kingdom of light and love.

CHAPTER XI

Jesus delegated his authority and empowered the Church

Before his ascension into Heaven, Jesus called his disciples and gave them all authority over the devil and sickness. Then, he sent them out to preach the gospel to all nations. The Holy Spirit would fill his physical absence, and on the physical plane, He instituted the church to represent him and carry on the work he had begun.

His promise to Peter continues to resonate to this day, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18-19 NKJV). Thus, Jesus instituted the church as the body of believers, those called out to belong to his kingdom. All his authority and power were delegated to the church. The church is Christ’s embassy on earth, representing his interests and doing what he himself would do if he were physically here.

In this way, the church becomes the light of the world and the salt of the earth. It’s through the Church that God preserves the life of humans on earth today. Of course, the devil hates humans and wants to destroy them. But in his evil forays, there is one who stops him, neutralizes his plans in the spiritual arena, and specializes in spiritual matters: the church of Christ - the Christians.

The church has tremendous power on earth that no human organization has. The problem is that many believers are not yet aware of this authority because they haven’t been trained in spiritual things, not matured in the Word.

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In the Book of Acts 12, the church experienced the power of prayer for the first time when it moved the descent of an angel from heaven to free Peter from a maximum-security jail and save him from the assassination plot that King Herod had hatched. The church can stop any and all incursions of the devil into the spirit world. It is she who preserves the earth to this day; even those who don't believe in Jesus are benefiting from the church's presence on earth. After the rapture, when the church is taken away from the earth, there will no longer be a judge in man's favor, and those who are left will live through the darkest and most terrible times that have never existed since the earth was created.

Dear reader, have you ever wondered how many accidents happen and demons drink people's blood? How many couples get divorced, and how many depressed people commit suicide? Where to seek help and emotional healing for people who can no longer trust another human being because they have been disillusioned and disappointed? In the church, obviously!

This is why we read in the text from Acts that sick people were brought from various surrounding cities to Jerusalem to the feet of the apostles, and the apostles healed them and cast out many demons. The church was a mobile medical brigade, so much so that even Peter's shadow, as it moved, was cast over the sick, and they were healed. What glorious memories were lived in the era of the early church! Jesus hasn't changed. He is the same yesterday and today and forever.

To this day, He continues saving and healing the humanity of believers through the church.

The church is an emotional hospital, a spiritual rehabilitation center.

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For example, in our ministry, I have prayed for several young drug addicts who were smoking heavy drugs and couldn't quit. They often had been arrested, and while under the influence of these drugs, they would steal and even kill over small things. But by God's power, they have been set free, healed, and restored. Women who couldn't have a home, and men who could not be with a woman because of spiritual curses, have been set free and married and now live as a family and are happy. Through the church, thousands of sour marriages are restored, and families are reconciled. The church destroys hatred and envy and all the effects of witchcraft on people. The church is a place where people find peace of mind - as there is nowhere else on this earth.

Hope for people who are full of problems and trying to end their lives is revived in the Church, and thousands of people gain smiles and a will to live.

Moreover, people who once lived with fear, despair, and anxiety to the point of insomnia, are set free in the Church, and the peace of Christ fills their hearts - and they sleep like babies.

What about those unlucky men and women who put in their resumes looking for a job without success, but after going to church and receiving prayer, the black cloak of bad luck was removed from their lives, and they began to enjoy God's favor? Time would be too short for me to narrate the benefits of the church's presence on earth in detail. It is truly an emotional hospital that heals a person's soul.

Through the preaching and teaching of God's anointed Word, faith in the supernatural is born in the hearts of men and women, and through this faith, they begin to live a life of peace, joy, quiet, victory, and prosperity.

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Finally, the church is like a workshop of life: where people enter as carcasses, damaged, and leave recomposed. They come in destroyed and leave rebuilt; they come in as tails and leave as heads. They come in defeated, and they come out victorious. It's a place of restoration of all kinds of lost hope, where the impossible becomes possible; it's a place of joy. If the world knew the value of the church, everyone would cherish it, and even governments would value it. For example, how many people do the police arrest over and over again, but they never stop committing the same kind of crime? The Church can help, through prayer and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to free and restore these people. The presence of the Church can even help the governments of this world to have peaceful citizens, reducing the crime rate. The church can even help businesspeople have honest workers, just as it can help workers have wise and honest pastors. A good Christian is also a good citizen of his country and does not engage in acts of violence or vandalism. He is a peacemaker and contributor to the welfare of his country, state, province, city, or district.

Beloved reader, if you were not a member of Christ's church, become one starting today. Be part of this family that Jesus established on earth. The Church is vital. The Word taught in it can lift the downcast and heal the brokenhearted. People who were sad and bitter found relief and joy in the Lord's church. It is through the church that human beings experience heaven on earth. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 NKJV).

Because of this, it's essential that you, as a new creature in Christ, create and cultivate the habit of always attending church meetings. Don't ever leave the church. Don't leave the congregation.

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CONCLUSION

Dear reader, I believe you have been blessed by reading this tetralogy that makes up the four essential habits of a new creature in Christ.

The background brought in this compilation of four works is that the believer, through faith in Christ and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, is a new creature. New creation because he has been born again in his spirit, in his inner man for the kingdom of God.

This new birth erases all sin, removes the old man, and clothes the believer with a new nature: the divine and holy nature in Christ. In this process, Christ becomes a place of salvation for all those who want to draw near God. Christ is a meeting place between Jesus and the church. Through Jesus, man has contact with God again, and through Him, God reaches out to man, restoring him to a new fellowship after the first fellowship had been broken because of the sin of the first man, Adam. The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, and his sin led all humanity adrift, disconnecting them from God and leaving them vulnerable to the devil and sin. Through sin, man was left with his character and nature corrupted and on the way to destruction. However, God, out of His love, sent Jesus to save him. This salvation involves the regeneration of man's spirit. This spirit is born again and makes him a new creature, filled with the Spirit of God and eternal life.

Now, once saved, he becomes a member of a heavenly family: a citizen of God's kingdom. In order to develop and live gloriously in this world, he needs to carry out four essential habits as a new creature.

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Finally, here are the main ideas that the dear reader should retain in each of the parts of this piece:

First: the habit of praying:

This habit strengthens man's communion with God, raising his spiritual sensitivity so that he hears the voice of his Creator and effects changes to the apparent circumstances of this world. The life of prayer is the habit of all the great men of God who have walked this earth, faced challenges beyond the human capacity to solve them, and in all things overcame. Communion with God is the source of life, strength, and fortification for the believer; without prayer, he would be like a fish out of water, losing his spiritual oxygen.

Second: the habit of studying the Word of God:

When man sinned against God, his spirit became atrophied, and he lost his spiritual hearing faculty. In other words, he stopped hearing the voice of God. Through regeneration, man's spirit is recreated in Christ and given this ability to hear the voice of his Creator and be guided by it. In this sense, the Word of God becomes a lamp to his feet and a light to his path. Furthermore, the Word of God is the spiritual food that nourishes, equips, and causes spiritual growth. Therefore, the believer must develop this excellent habit of studying it regularly and format his way of living, being, and seeing the world from the perspective created by it. Just as the physical organism cannot live without food, so the spirit of man cannot live without being nourished by the Word. Now, hearing the Word of

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God provokes faith in the believer; it is what guarantees his daily victory over all the forces of darkness and all the circumstances of this world. Hearing the voice of God is like having a spiritual compass that constantly guides you on paths of victory and success. Therefore, as a believer, it's now up to you to develop this habit of studying the Word and living by it. This is the essence of having this habit as an integral part of your life because the answers to all questions of life are in the infallible Word of God. It's eternal, living, edifying, and changing things here on earth. Everything passes away, but it's eternal and permanent. Those who hold fast to it will be strong and do great things.

Third: the habit of testifying about Christ

When the believer is born again, he no longer belongs to this world; he is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Have you ever stopped to wonder why God doesn't take believers to heaven as soon as they are born again into God's kingdom? Why does He leave them in this corrupted world, where the devil and demons operate daily? The answer to this question is simple but missional: God wants to influence this world until the kingdoms of the Gentiles become the kingdoms of His Christ. He keeps you here because he wants you to be a soul winner, a believer who exercises the ministry of evangelism. Through you, as a member of the church, God wants to reach the world for you, demonstrating his love and grace. Thus, it becomes your mission to read the opportunities God gives you and win souls for Christ. Scripture says, "He who wins souls is wise" (Proverbs 11:30 NKJV). So, develop this habit of speaking about Christ through the way you live and through your words. There is someone out there outside the Church who needs to be saved, and God has chosen you to do the work. Be free from all fear and shame.

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Receive now the grace and boldness to speak about Christ. Bring this joy to the angels in heaven, that they see a soul saved through you. Jesus came into this world, died, and rose again for one purpose: to win souls. Now that you are saved, it is your turn to save others. Your mission is simple: open your mouth and speak the message empowered by the Holy Spirit and can transform a life.

Fourth: the habit of participating in the congregation of saints:

The born-again believer is a being who belongs to a spiritual family - the church. The church is made up of members, each of whom has his place and function. The unity of these members is vital for the fulfillment of God's purposes on earth. So, as a believer and an integral part of the body of Christ, you should take the time always to attend church services and meetings. The benefits of this habit are numerous. For example, there is a corporate anointing that God pours on believers when they are gathered together, which raises their level of spiritual awareness.

Furthermore, the church is a place of enlightenment where, through the teachings of your pastor, apostle, or spiritual leader, your faith is built up, and you face the challenges of this life with your head held high and walk with mastery through the knowledge of God's Word. Finally, your presence in the church strengthens other brothers and sisters, and in this exercise, you too are strengthened. In the end, all body members go out equipped for the whole work and to represent Christ wherever you are.

The Church is an emotional hospital where spiritual and emotional problems are solved, and physical issues such as diseases

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of the soul and body are healed. What is impossible for man becomes possible for you as a member of the body of Christ. It's through the church that the kingdom of God expands on earth. As Jesus said, "Upon this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." You cannot isolate yourself; on the contrary, you must have fellowship with the brethren. If prayer strengthens the communion between man and God, the connection in the church strengthens the mutual faith of its members.

Finally, the church is a training center for missions. As a believer, you have a mission in Christ; you have a job to do, which goes beyond just going to sit, sing and dance in church. However, in the church, under the teaching of a man of God, you are prepared, equipped, and sent out to do God's work, thus fulfilling the work of the ministry. Therefore, you must develop this habit of assembling with the brothers. In your schedule, make time for this and know that you belong to a vast family made up of all God's children throughout the world.

In summary, these four habits are essentials to the believer's life. So, from now on, be intimate with God through prayer. Intimacy with God is your strength, the source of life. The Word of God is your mirror, reflecting what you are and what you have in Christ Jesus: you are rich and not poor, strong and weak, above and not below. You are more than a conqueror in Christ. There is no need that God cannot supply. Look at yourself and say what God's Word says about you. Then, as a believer, make it your habit: tell other people about Jesus, be a soul-winner. You are a soul-winner. Wherever you live, study, work, or do business is your pulpit; that is your opportunity to lead others to Christ, saving lives. As David once declared, "I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD." Our feet have been standing Within your gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem is built As a city that is compact together,

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Where the tribes go up, The tribes of the LORD, To the Testimony of Israel, To give thanks to the name of the LORD” (Psalms 122:1-4 NKJV). You, too, must develop this joy of gathering with the brethren to hear the Word, share testimonies, and praise God as a family, the spiritual family.

These four habits taught in this book will make you a balanced believer, having intimacy with God, a student of the Word, a soul winner, and an active member of God’s family.

Now, raise your hands, and thank God for all these revelations. You are a living stone built on Christ, you are strong inside, and you are unshakable. So, what are you waiting for? Start today to cultivate these four habits and be a balanced believer.

May God bless you richly

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Onório Cutane

He is an apostle, a teacher, and prophet, with an apostolic-prophetic calling. He is a humble servant of God with a dynamic ministry of teaching, healing, and deliverance, which has helped many people get rid of the kingdom of darkness into God's kingdom of light and love.

Thousands of people have been blessed by his ministry and have experienced a victorious life through his anointed biblical-based teachings. Furthermore, he is the founder and president of the Nations for Christ Ministerial Church Inc.

He has held massive evangelistic crusades called “Heavenly Atmosphere” that have carried the manifested presence of the Holy Spirit wherever he goes to minister. Apostle Onório’s mandate is to expand the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and prepare the Church for the second coming of Jesus Christ. He is the leader of a growing ministry with cells in Africa, the Americas, and Europe.

He is the author of the bestseller “God’s medicine: How to Receive and Maintain Divine Healing,” which has brought divine healing to many. In addition, apostle Onório was the pioneer of one of the first evangelical television stations in Mozambique called “KINGDOM TV.”

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DEDICATION

To Christians who hunger and thirst to grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To the ministers of the Gospel who need spiritual and structural foundations to grow their ministries and stabilize the Lord's church within and outside their physical territorial jurisdiction.

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To my Lord Jesus, for his eternal and unconditional love for me; and for the salvation of my soul.

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OTHER BOOKS ALSO BY APOSTLE
ONÓRIO CUTANE

1. **Do Not Break the Wall:** Secrets to Living under Divine Protection
2. **God's Medicine:** How to Receive and Maintain Divine Healing
3. **Grace to Reign:** Principles to Living in God's Grace and Reigning in Life
4. **The Lordship of Jesus and the Kingdom of Heaven:** How to Live above the circumstances of the world
5. **The Good Fight of Faith:** How to Fight and win: secrets of constant victories in spiritual battles
6. **The Revelation of Jesus Christ:** Who is Jesus Christ? Identity, Mission, and Mandate
7. **The Four Basic Ministries of the Believer:** Secrets to greatness in the kingdom of God
8. **The Model Father:** 11 essential responsibilities of a father
9. **The Spiritual World:** Understanding how Spiritual Forces dictate the Life of Humans on Earth

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