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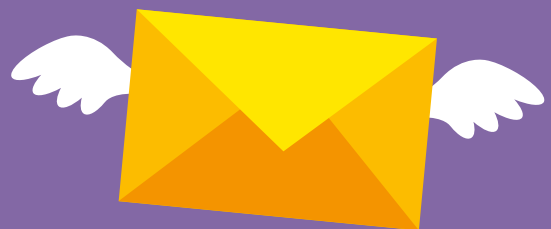
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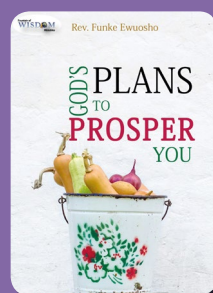
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WISDOM DIGEST

Wisdom Digest is published by the Fountain of Wisdom Ministries (FOWM) as a forum to share the ministry of Rev. Kola and Funke Ewuosho and others as God leads. It is also published to inspire, inform and cultivate the involvement of readers worldwide to share in the establishment of God's covenant in the earth through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is distributed freely and supported by partner contributions and donations. All contributions are gift-aid tax deductible.

If you have been blessed by this issue of Wisdom Digest, we would like to hear from you. Your prayers and support in any form are greatly appreciated.

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Heart to Heart

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

It is with great joy that we write this cover letter for our latest edition of the Wisdom Digest; the magazine that carries the messages God has given us as we seek to create a forum where God's people can flow with Him. We are committed to seeing God's plans and purposes fulfilled in your life. He needs your participation with Him for these purposes to be fulfilled. Your acquisition of wisdom and understanding will put you in a good position to cooperate with God for His will to be done in your life. Remember the prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray? Part of it was "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". Matthew 6:9-11 (NKIV) – "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread." God planned for the earth to be a reflection of heaven. The rebellion of man in the Garden of Eden affected this and Jesus came to restore God's original intention and plans. Walking in the reality of the finished work at Calvary goes a long way to equip us to walk in the victory that has been made available to us in Christ.


This Wisdom Digest edition is a special one as it contains several of our past articles. We trust that you will take the time to study through them and be built up to walk in victory in every aspect of your life. We also use this opportunity to thank our partners who support us financially as their support is what helps us to publish the magazines and distribute them freely to everyone on our mailing list. Why not consider being one of our partners if you are not one already? Also, if you know anyone who may be blessed by this magazine, feel free to ask them to send us their details so that we can send them this magazine and subsequent editions. Finally, help share this with your family and friends. Please join us on all available social media platforms where you can be blessed and built up. Watch us on YouTube and Vimeo, connect with us on Facebook and Twitter, and share our messages with others. FOWM is here to disciple nations and with your help, we can do just that. Thanks for your support!

God bless and strengthen you as you obey His Word; as you study through this edition of our Wisdom Digest. Stay strong in the Lord.

*Jesus is Lord,
Rev. Kola & Rev. Mrs. Funke Ewuosho
For FOWM worldwide*

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Thy Word... Light Unto My Path

Rev. KOLA EWUOSHO

THE ENTRANCE OF THY WORD GIVES LIGHT.
(Psalm: 119:130)

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105). Years ago, we studied the subject of strongholds and how they affect our thought processes and therefore our decisions, actions and hence outcomes in our lives. We saw that, unless the Lord opens our eyes to see these strongholds and their influence upon our lives, we will remain in the dark concerning these things. We learnt to cry out 'Lord, light my candle'. When God's Word gains 'forceful' entrance into our lives and brings light into us, strongholds show up in our minds and we are enabled to see them for what they really are: 'things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God'. (2 Cor. 10:3-5). The psalmist says 'thou wilt light my candle' (Psalm 18:28); and the book of Proverbs says 'the spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly'. (Proverbs 20:27). How we need light in these days. Jesus says we should be careful that our lights do not become darkness. (Matt. 6:23). When we allow hatred, bitterness and a critical attitude, the 'light' in us becomes darkness. The light of the Gospel must shine in the midst of darkness. Darkness means spiritual ignorance. It can imply sinfulness and the secrecy that sin compels us to harbour when we yield to it. The light we need is that which God grants as His Word gains entrance into our hearts. The conditions of our heart matter if we are to receive the light from God's Word. Many read what they believe rather than believe what they read. They read with their religious or lascivious sun glasses, depending on who they are.

The first thing that the prince of darkness wants to do is to quench the light inside the believer. The light does not shine with all its brightness from the start; it starts as a small glow that needs to be fanned into flames. If there is no hunger for God, the light can easily go out. When Eve was speaking to Satan, he tried to snuff the light out with a question, 'did God say?' When the light in us becomes darkness, then the darkness will be great. **The following are some heart conditions that will enhance the entrance of the Word to bring light to us: hunger, humility, meekness (teachableness), intimacy with God, the fear of God and understanding godly boundaries.**

HUNGER

In the natural, hunger is a sign of a healthy appetite. Spiritual hunger is also a sign of spiritual health. This needs to be cultivated in the place of desire and prayer. Feeding oneself with natural junk will affect natural appetite. The same is true with spiritual appetite if spiritual junk is fed on. We were made in the image of God and designed to depend on Him. In His redemption plan, we are designed to be conformed to the image of His Son Jesus. Since God never forces Himself

on us or forces us to do what we do not want to, we need to sincerely cultivate this quality, called hunger for God. The psalmist says, 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God'. (Psalm 42:1).

HUMILITY

Humility is taking our place in God's scheme of things. Many find it tough to take their rightful place in God. What you have was given, so what is there to boast about? Jesus exemplified humility as He healed the sick, raised the dead and still said 'the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do'. (John 5:19). Peter went from saying to the man born blind 'look on us' (Acts 3:4), to saying 'why look on us, as if by our holiness we made this man whole?' (Acts 3:12). That was humility. He did what he did and gave the credit to the Lord like Jesus did to the Father. Humility includes knowing that we are not the source of the things in our lives; we are channels in the hands of God.

MEEKNESS

This is teachableness. When we know that there is still so much that we do not know and we are willing to learn, we stay teachable. We realise that it is not just our intentions that matter, but the actions that need to be corrected. We are quick to repent and forgive others. Both humility and meekness come from the same root word in the Greek. They are from a word used to describe a war or race-horse, a stallion, under the control of its owner or master. Humility implies endurance and meekness implies perseverance in obedience to God. "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way". (Psalm 25:9).

THE FEAR OF GOD

If there is one virtue that ranks high in God's agenda alongside the others already mentioned, it is the fear of God. This is the true foundation for a lasting and genuine walk with God. Once again these virtues need to be nurtured. I have always believed and preached that our lives should be built on the Word of God.

The one quality that will cause the Word of God to remain a final authority in our lives is the fear of God. Walking in the fear of God is to have a healthy reverence for Him. It is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 9:10). Little wonder why wisdom is a scarce commodity amongst many today. The fear of God causes us to esteem God's Word as precious, worthy of our submission and deserving of our surrender to the demands in His Word. The Word carries the ability to overrule our human feelings as we subject all things in us to His expectations of us. We are not robots and He is not asking for a mindless, thoughtless obedience but an intelligent and willing acceptance of His authority to rule over us as Lord. Without the fear of the Lord, the presence of

the Lord will not be a regular occurrence in our lives. Joseph had the fear of the Lord, experienced the presence of the Lord and he knew his boundaries. He avoided sinning against God when he was given opportunity to have an affair with Potiphar's wife. His intimacy with God and his understanding of boundaries produced in the young man a strength that could carry him through the falsehood he had to face.

INTIMACY WITH GOD

Intimacy needs to be cultivated in any relationship we desire to have it in. Intimacy is a function of love. The scriptures say, "You shall love the Lord thy God with all your might, and mind" (Matthew 22:37); and "If you love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15). The proof of love is keeping the commandments. Our love for God will drive us to obedience. Loving God should be the basis of our obedience to Him. Real intimacy with God is guaranteed when we balance our love for God with an honour and respect for Him. This comes as a result of our fear of God. There are things that hinder intimacy. These include; not wanting to be vulnerable before another, fear of rejection, fear of being taken advantage of, suspicion and fear of ulterior motives. The love of God and the love for God are antidotes for these hindrances. When we get born again and filled with the Spirit of God, the love of God is shed in our hearts and by revelation, the Spirit of God impresses on our hearts just how much God loves us. As we study and apply God's Word in our lives, our knowledge of Him increases and we grow in confidence towards Him. We cultivate intimacy by desiring to communicate regularly through all kinds of prayers: adoration, supplication, thanksgiving and worship. Then we ask Him questions and maintain communion with Him. Intimacy does not just happen; it takes time to build it. All the factors mentioned here will lead us to intimacy and our discernment will be sharper as we grow in grace.

LIGHT UNTO MY PATH

When the Word gains entrance into the human heart, light from God breaks into the life of the person. That light now shines and reveals the path to tread upon. This usually happens in many ways. One of these ways is when the Holy Spirit quickens verses of scripture, or an image of an event in the Word. Impressions, perceptions and intuitions come in here. The Word becomes the 'raw material' that the Spirit of God can use to give us direction. Many get mislead here as there are many voices and different sources of impressions and perceptions. Since His Word can be a light to our path, our interaction with the Word is a necessary foundation where our perceptions and impressions are concerned. Just as the body and mind of man can be developed to carry out some unusual feats, the spirit of man can so be developed to do some things too. The words Jesus speaks are spirit and (contain or are full of) life. (John 6:63). Meditation, confession and application of the principles and instructions in God's Word will develop the human spirit. The human spirit will better cooperate with the Holy Spirit to carry out God's will on earth. The human spirit is capable of educating the mind whilst the body simply follows instructions from the spirit through the mind. There are areas we need God to reveal the certainties to our hearts. We need to settle in our hearts that God is a good God. (Jeremiah 29:11). New creation realities and our new position in Christ also need to settle in our hearts. We have been translated into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. (Colossians 1:13) The authority vested in us as believers needs to be settled in our hearts. (Luke 10:19). These foundational understandings hold us in good standing as we are processed into the destiny God has for us.

PROCESS

Progress in God is accomplished through process. This is what we go through experientially in our challenges as we seek to obey God fully. They are steps we take, principles we internalise and adjustments we make as we grow into the pure and holy habitation for God. God wants to dwell in us and demonstrate His power in and through us. We pass the tests and become who He wants us to become. All that the men of old went through that were documented, have a message for us in our time. A path is that which others have walked on. When we face our giants we remember David. When rejected we see how Joseph handled it in his time. Their process becomes our prophetic direction. If they came out successful then we can anticipate the same outcome they had. Another reality we see is that our process has phases. Recognition of what phase we are in and how to go through it is one of the advantages we have when we have the light of God at work in us. Joseph's coats represent different phases of his life. The coat of many colours represented a 'beginning' phase for him. The coat of slavery in Potiphar's house represented another phase. The prison clothes represented another phase. Then, coming before Pharaoh, he had to change his coat again. It is usually the hiding phase that enhances internal dealings.

BE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE

There is a price to pay and a position to take for the privileges to be enjoyed! This statement has become a popular slogan in our churches in Nigeria especially after it was made popular by the music a gospel artist there. There is a price tag on any and everything. When the price is too high to pay, the privileges begin to diminish. When we read "freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8), it is based on the supposition that we have cultivated a lifestyle that has positioned us to 'freely' receive. That lifestyle is the price you pay. Jesus' disciples were told to freely give as they had freely received, but they became His disciples as they left all to follow Him. Without being His disciples they would not have 'freely' received whatever He told them to 'freely' give. Jesus' blood was shed for our salvation. He paid with His life. We pay a price with our faith and obedience to bring this salvation to others. Those who receive pay a price by their believing and adjusting their hearts in repentance to begin the process of salvation. The process continues as they are willing to keep having heart adjustments and become willing and obedient too. Discipleship involves learning, following, obeying and honouring the Lord. We should become cost-minded rather than benefit-minded if we are going to have lasting results. Look for the price and be willing to pay it. Daniel prayed for 21 days before the angel showed up. He had been released from the first day Daniel prayed. The church in Jerusalem prayed without ceasing until Peter showed up. What if they prayed for 30 minutes then all went home to sleep? What did the apostles have in mind when they refused to be distracted from 'prayer and the ministry of the Word'? (Acts 6:4). Are we willing to pay the price? It is when we are in fellowship with the Holy Spirit that He will help us to know and pay the price. All we need to do is obey Him. The path God has for us is not without a price. Many have the notion that God's will is easy or for softies. Far from the truth. It is for those who will endure hardness as a good soldier and for him who seeks to please Him who enlisted Him (2 Timothy 2:3-4). His Word, Spirit and grace are sufficient to reveal as well as empower us to do His will as it is revealed on the mountain top. We should be willing to go through process, grow in grace and learn to cultivate the lifestyle that keeps paying the price. With these, His Word will indeed be a light unto our path and the entrance of it will keep giving us light. We need this light to navigate accurately in life to see His Kingdom come and His will done.



The Power of the Blessing

Rev. FUNKE EWUOSHO

Proverbs 10:22 says, “The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, and adds no sorrow with it.” Psalm 133:36 says, “...for there the LORD commanded the blessing...” The first thing to note here is that we are not talking about ‘a blessing’ or ‘blessings’, but “the blessing”; that is, the blessing of the LORD! In this article, we are looking at the POWER of the blessing of the LORD.

The first thing God did right after He created Man was to bless them. Genesis 1:28: “Then God blessed them and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion...”. Right after the flood, “God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1). In Genesis 12, God had told Abraham to get out of his country and his family to a land that He would show Abraham. Verses 2 and 3 say, “I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing, I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” We must note that in all the instances referred to above, the blessing of the LORD upon the individuals produced some things. For instance Man (male and female) was to become fruitful and to multiply; to fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion over everything else God created. God said He would bless Abraham and make his name great! Our text, Proverbs 10:22 says, “The blessing of the LORD makes ones rich.” In Genesis 24:35 the servant of Abraham testified before the family of Rebekah, “The LORD has blessed my master greatly and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants and camels and donkeys.” Moses warned the Israelites in Deuteronomy 8:18, “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.”

The blessing is what produces the blessings that we see; that is, the physical and the material things in our lives! It is the blessing that makes one rich; and not the other way round. Some Christians think that it is the riches that make them blessed, so when they don't have money or other material things, they think they are no more blessed. In Genesis 26, there was famine in the land where Isaac dwelt, he wanted to leave but God said in verse 3, “dwell in this land and I will be with you and bless you...” In verse 12, we are told Isaac sowed in that same land and in the same year, reaped a hundred fold: “and the LORD blessed him.” That tells me that a blessed man could live in a land where there is famine but the blessing of God upon him will produce maximum results if he puts that blessing to work! Please note that it was the blessing that made what Isaac sowed to produce a hundred fold!

The Bible tells us that Isaac became so prosperous that the Philistines envied him. They stopped the wells which his father's servants had dug. They drove him away from among them and Isaac pitched his tent in the “Valley of Gerar” and he dug again the wells of water which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. He found a well of running water there. You cannot stop a blessed man even if you stopped his wells. It did not matter where Isaac dwelt, what mattered was the blessing; so he prospered even in the “Valley of Gerar”. The Philistines kept striving with Isaac over the wells and he kept leaving the wells for them until they got tired of striving with him. Isaac kept moving away from strife and he kept digging new wells until he got to his “Rehoboth”. “And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called it Rehoboth because he said, “for now the LORD has made room for us, we shall be fruitful in the land.” I tell people that a blessed person does not strive because it isn't about the wells, it is about the blessing – the robe does not make the monk, it is the other way round; a blessed man is a secure man; no one can take from you what produces the riches. You carry that with you wherever you go.

The blessing works in the most adverse conditions.

Adversity can't stop the blessing. In fact, the blessing thrives in adversity! The blessing has a way of attracting opposition. Isaac so much prospered that the Philistines envied him, quarrelled with him, were in enmity with him and they drove him away from their midst. Did Jesus not say in Mark 10:29 that we shall reap a hundred fold and what we gave up for His sake and the gospel's in this time...with PERSECUTIONS! Psalm 112 says the man who fears the Lord is blessed, wealth and riches will be in his house; and in verse 10; “the wicked will see it and be grieved...” In interpreting the parable of the sower, Jesus said: “tribulations or persecution arises because of the word...” (Matt. 13:21). This is why many Christians shy away from walking in the blessing.

Abimelech told Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than us” (Gen. 26:16). What could make a man become mightier than the indigenes of a land in which he was a foreigner – the blessing of course! God had blessed Abraham and said to him: “your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies” (Gen. 22:17). The same blessing was pronounced upon Rebekah, the wife of Isaac: “And may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them.” (Gen. 24:60) The word ‘posses’ in the Hebrew means, to inherit, to seize, to occupy, to possess. Psalm 112:2 says the descendants of the blessed man will be mighty on the earth. It was the blessing upon Abraham and his descendants that made them flourish in the most adverse conditions in Egypt. Exodus 1:12 says the more their task masters afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew and the Egyptians were in dread of them. Listen to what Haman's wife told him; “if Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you

will not prevail against him but will surely fall before him.” (Esth. 6:13). If Haman had heeded his wife’s warning, he would have saved his life. King Ahasuerus said, “Indeed, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he tried to lay his hand on the Jews.” (Esth. 8:7). Can you see Abraham’s seed once again possessing the gates of those who hate them? What was Haman’s undoing? “...he tried to lay his hand on the Jews”. Isaiah 54:15 says, “Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.” And in verse 17a; “No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and everyone which rises against you in judgement you shall condemn.”

The Philistines realised that they couldn’t stop Isaac because what was producing what they saw was beyond the natural and was unstoppable! In Leviticus 25, God commanded the Israelites not to sow in the seventh year. He told them to keep His statues and judgements and they will dwell in the land in safety and in verse 19: “Then the land will yield its fruit and you will eat your fill”. Compare that to Genesis 3:17-19 after the fall of man- “Cursed is the ground for your sake, in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field, In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground...” Also, after Cain had killed his brother, God said to him, “So now you are cursed from the earth, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you.” (Gen. 4:11, 12). Note that, the blessing on the one hand, makes your ground or field to yield its fruit to you – not scantily but to your fill, and the curse on the other hand makes the ground not to yield its strength, but to produce thorns and thistles! In Leviticus 25:22, God told the Israelites that He would command His blessing on them in the sixth year and the land will bring forth produce enough for three years since they were not to sow until the eighth year. God had them covered till the ninth year when the next harvest would be. Elisha told the widow of Zarephath; “For thus says the LORD God of Israel; “The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.” (1 Kings 17:14).

The blessing of the Lord is multi-dimensional.

It covers every area of our lives – spiritual, physical, material, etc. You can glean that from Deuteronomy 28:1-14. Exodus 23:25 – 26: “So shall you serve the LORD your God and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land, I will fulfil the number of your days.” Jesus said in Mark 16 that those who believe, if they shall take any deadly thing, it will by no means hurt them. Also, Luke 10:19 says, “Behold, I gave you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” The Bible tells us that Abraham died in a good old age, “an old man and full of years and was gathered to his people.” (Gen. 25:8). That is part of the blessing – “I will fulfil the number of your days.”

The blessing is stronger than the curse!

In Numbers 23, Balak invited Balaam to curse the Israelites, and Balaam told Balak that God had already blessed Israel and wouldn’t change His mind about that. In verse 20, he said “Behold, I have received a command to bless; He has blessed and I cannot reverse it.” Truly no weapon formed against you shall prosper. Psalm 55:22 says God shall never permit the righteous to be shaken! (See also Psalm 125:12; 37:32, 33). Romans 8:31 – (NLT) says; “If God is for us all, who can be against us? Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for His own? Will God? No! He is the One who has given us right standing with Himself. Who then will condemn us? Will Christ Jesus? No, for He is the One who died for us and was raised to life for us and is sitting at the place of highest honour next to God,

pleading for us”.

So powerful and important was the blessing that the LORD commanded Aaron and his sons to bless the children of Israel, saying to them: “The LORD bless and keep you. The LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” (Num. 6:24-26). Note peace (Shalom – Heb.) means; completeness, wholeness, peace, health, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquillity, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord. In Isaiah 53:5, we see that the chastisement necessary to bring us ‘peace’ was upon Jesus. In Luke 2:14, in announcing the birth of Christ, the angels said, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth be peace, goodwill toward men.”

God had promised Abraham that in him shall all the families of the earth be blessed. The Jews are the natural descendants of Abraham and they walked in his blessings naturally. Jesus said He was sent to the lost of the house of Israel. In healing the woman with the spirit of infirmity, Jesus said to the ruler of the Synagogue; “So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom satan has bound – think of it – for eighteen years be loosed from this bend on the Sabbath?” (Luke 13:16).

Yet Hebrews 2:16 says Jesus came to help the seed of Abraham. So, how do we who were not Jews by birth come into this blessing? Galatians 3:13-14 says, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law...that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” So, we receive it through faith in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:9: “So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” Galatians 3:26: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ”; and verse 29 says, “And if you are Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” Ephesians 2:12-13 says clearly, “that at that time you were without Christ being alien from the common-wealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” And verses 18 and 19 say, “for through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with saints and members of the household of God.” Praise God! Stop looking down on yourself. Stop seeing yourself as a second or third class citizen! You are a fellow citizen, Amen!

Psalm 133:3 tells us what the blessing boils down to – “life forever more.” Did Jesus not say, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10). Let’s put it sharply, the curse has a threefold assignment – stealing, killing and destruction; and the blessing, that is the life Jesus came to give to us, makes us free of those things! John 1:4,5 tells us that, the life is the light of men and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend or overcome it. Romans 8:2 says the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death.” 1 John 5:11, 12 says: “And this is the testimony that God 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 (or, the life)”.

The choice is therefore ours – life or death, blessing or cursing. We can choose life so that both we and our descendants may live! (Deut. 30:19). Anyone who has received Christ has chosen life over death and the blessing over cursing. God did not send His Son to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through Him. (John 3:17).

“Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you.” Isaiah 60:1-2.

Entering Your Prophetic Destiny

Rev. KOLA EWUOSHO

We see in Isaiah 61:1-4 that our Lord Jesus recognised His purpose and matured into the fulfilment of His purposes in the Father God. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil.

In John 9:1-5, we see that God had a plan for our Lord Jesus Christ. It included the virgin birth and the moulding of His character under the oversight of Joseph and Mary. He was also led by the Holy Spirit to prepare for His assignment of manifesting the life, power and mercy of God to the Jews and then the Gentiles. The will of God culminated on the cross where He bore all that mankind deserved; every sickness, disease, shame, punishment and eventually death, not to talk of poverty, rejection and all kinds of things involved in what sin attracts to the human race! He rose from the dead victorious and is seated at the right hand of the Father, where He lives to make intercession for us. That was the prophetic destiny and purpose God had for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He took our place in Divine Exchange, He became our Divine Pattern, being an example for us to follow; and He came also as the Divine Revelation of God's love to human kind. We are admonished to look unto Him in Hebrews 12:1-3.

Our prophetic destiny is that which God ordained for us. God expects us to discover and then participate in the development necessary to fulfil His divine purposes for us. God has plans for every one He created and we have the power of choice to choose either to cooperate and participate with Him or do otherwise. Our journey to our prophetic destiny starts with us being born again and coming into relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We make progress as we receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with new tongues according to Acts 2:4. We are all born of God at the new birth with certain gifts, potentials and dispositions that await our discovery and development. God's plans for us are good; not evil.

Jeremiah 29:11-13- "For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome. Then you will call upon Me, and you will come and pray to Me, and I will hear and heed you. Then you will seek Me, inquire for, and require Me [as a vital necessity] and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart."

It is not up to God alone if we are going to fulfil the destiny He has for us. He told them to seek Him in prayer so that

His plans for them would come to pass. Our nature, nurture and culture have moulded us into what we are today. Our present lifestyle is a function of our beliefs, thoughts, words, actions and attitudes. All these affect the results we are getting in every aspect of our lives.

We need to know what is at work in us so that we can do what it takes to overcome the things that are detrimental to God's purposes in our lives. We also need to know the help and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. On one hand, we need to take responsibility for whatever we see operating in our thoughts, emotions or attitudes. On the other hand, we need to know how to yield to the Holy Spirit to help, teach and strengthen us in our journey to fulfil destiny. See John 14:26; 15:26 and 16:13-15.

The Holy Spirit is our helper, teacher, standby, advocate, strengthener and comforter! Sometimes, conflicts help us identify what may be at work in us.

There are two stances needed in every area of our lives: the 'yielded' stance and the 'take charge' stance. We need wisdom to know which stance to take at different seasons in our lives. The yielded stance is when we allow God to show us what is at work in us and what may give the enemy a foothold in us. Sometimes it is ignorance, carelessness or laziness. At other times, it could be pride, fears or self-centeredness. He will also help us to overcome them if we let Him.

The 'take charge' stance is when we take courage in God to press into His revealed will for our lives! This is where we plan, set goals and dream His dreams and do what His grace enables us to do to accomplish His will for His glory. Read Isaiah 55:6-12.

Ingredients for Fulfilling Destiny

Since we have a clear knowledge of who our enemy is and what His strategies are, we need to cultivate the lifestyle that can keep him away from influencing us contrary to God's will for our lives. He uses the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life to affect our lives, hearts and expectations. See 1 John 2:15. He also uses the world's systems and his cohorts in every way possible to achieve his aims of stealing, killing and destroying. These can only happen if we allow him. We are told to give him no place. See Ephesians 4:27.

As we learn to yield to God as well as take charge, the following issues will enhance our fulfilment of the destiny God has for us.

(1) Our Prayer Life

Read the book of Ephesians 6:10-18.

Ephesians 6:18 - "Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God's consecrated people)."

There are all manner of prayers and they serve all manner of purposes. There are rules that govern the different types of prayers that exist. We need to learn and build a solid life of prayer, engaging in the different types to get all round results in every area of our lives.

Philippians 4:6-7 - "Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (=definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God. And God's peace [shall be yours, that tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and being content with its earthly lot of whatever sort that is, that peace] which transcends all understanding shall garrison and mount guard over your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

So we have thanksgiving, praise and worship as a form or aspect of prayer. Petition, supplication, intercession and the prayer of agreement are other types of prayers (I recommend the message pack on 'The Essential Prayer Guide Kit' by my wife, Rev. Funke, from our website www.fowm.org or from our nearest office). We need to know and apply the principles that govern each type of prayer so we can receive definite answers to our prayers. Heaven usually acts after earth has taken the initiative to act by asking, declaring or demanding! When we stir ourselves up to lay hold on God, we receive a response from Him. He knows our needs, yet He wants us to ask of Him-before He does it! He has given authority to mankind as far as this earth is concerned. See other scriptures like Mathew 16:16-19 and 1Timothy 2:1-4.

(2) Our Heart Condition

Jeremiah 17:5-10 - "Thus says the Lord: Cursed [with great evil] is the strong man who trusts in and relies on frail man, making weak [human] flesh his arm, and whose mind and heart turn aside from the Lord. For he shall be like a shrub or a person naked and destitute in the desert; and he shall not see any good come, but shall dwell in the parched places in the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. [Most] blessed is the man who believes in, trusts in, and relies on the Lord, and whose hope and confidence the Lord is. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters that spreads out its roots by the river; and it shall not see and fear when heat comes; but its leaf shall be green. It shall not be anxious and full of care in the year of drought, nor shall it cease yielding fruit. The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly perverse and corrupt and severely, mortally sick! Who can know it [perceive, understand, be acquainted with his own heart and mind]? I the Lord search the mind, I try the heart, even to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

The state of the heart plays a major role in whether we fulfil our destiny or not. When our hearts are no longer focused on the Lord as our source and we no longer trust Him, we tend to cultivate heart conditions that are not conducive for the destiny of God to be unfolded in our lives. We see this in many Bible characters. For example, Joseph did not allow bitterness against his brothers to affect his service as a slave in Potiphar's house, not to talk of his wife's offer! The condition of our hearts usually plays a part in whether we fail or pass our tests in life. We are encouraged to guard

our hearts with all diligence. Joseph must have guarded his heart and hence passed his tests while in Potiphar's house! Genesis 39:7-9.

Read Proverbs 4:20-27.

We guard our heart by keeping a watch over what we allow into it, by watching our words and ways! If we get God's Word richly into our hearts we cannot go wrong. Our heart is the core of our being and whatever we allow in there will affect our entire life!

(3) Hunger for God and a Hunger for Souls!

What are our passions? Our hunger for God should supersede any other passion we may have. We are told to glory in knowing God! Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled! Where we direct our passion is also our choice. The decisions we make can direct our hunger! The psalmist said "as the deer longs for water so my soul longs for God". We play a part in what our soul longs for! It all starts with a decision. We need to decide today to love the Lord with all our heart, soul and strength and then begin to fellowship with Him by His Word and in prayer. If we dedicate times for these activities and allow every opportunity to deepen our love for Him, our hunger for Him will increase! With this, comes a hunger for souls. When we love God, what He loves affects us! He loved the people of this world so much that He sent His Son to die for them; so we also begin to have a hunger to see more people come to the awareness of what Jesus was sent to do! We will be willing to endure hardness, like a good soldier, and persevere in what we do to see the results we desire. We must pay attention to developing the necessary skills to carry out our work in life, as well as God's will for our lives. We all need to develop our leadership, communication and time-management skills as we press into God's destiny for our lives.

(4) Our Word-Life

A working understanding of God's Word is a vital part of our fulfilling destiny. The Word needs to be rightly divided and applied as we meditate on it, confess it and let it govern our thinking processes! We even judge prophecies by our knowledge of the Word. We need to give the Word final authority in our lives. When God's Word carries authority in our lives, it will be able to change things in us that we may not be able to change ourselves. The Word should dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16-17).

The Word will grow in us as we lay aside everything contrary to the Word and replace the things in us with the Word of God! James 1:21-25.

John 8:31-32 - "So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples. And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free."

We walk in the truth only to the extent that the truth is in us. The truth gets into us as we digest it, through meditation, acting on it and sharing it with others. 3 John 1:1-4.

Our soul is the depository of all our experiences in life. We need to let God replace some of the bad deposits that have been made in our soul by walking in the truth of God's Word! Amen.



Living by Faith

Rev. FUNKE EWUOSHO

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." (Gal. 2:20) This verse tells me that God expects me to live my life on earth by faith in Christ. It is obvious that if we are going to make it as Christians in this world, we are going to have to live by faith (not in ourselves, not in the world's system or in any other thing) in Christ Jesus! "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 4:4-5). I believe it is time to revisit the subject of faith in spite of the abuse that has gone on. After all, we cannot throw away both the baby and the bath water. The Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6) and "by it the elders obtained a good testimony" (Heb. 11:2). I think the reason why good testimonies are getting harder to come by in these days is because a lot of Christians have lost touch with the genuine faith life! (1 Tim. 1:5, 19). We need to go back to the basics of living by faith in Jesus Christ.

The Bible says "the just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17, Heb. 10:38, Gal. 3:11) and in Habakkuk 2:4 "the just shall live by his faith." This tells me first and foremost, that faith is meant to be the lifestyle of the believer, not what we do now and then or a panic button we press when we are in trouble. As a matter of fact, I suggest that if you haven't been living by faith before trouble comes, don't try to! ***If David had not killed the bear and the lion, it would have been presumptuous of him to try to take on Goliath.*** What you do at such a time is to ask around for prayers to get out of the trouble and then you can start building your faith. "He will not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast (i.e. fixed), trusting in the LORD. His heart is established; he will not be afraid..." (Ps. 112:7-8). This implies your heart must be fixed before evil tidings come; that is the only guarantee that you won't be afraid. "In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you" (Is. 54:14). All that stems from having been already established. I need to quickly say that one way to get your heart fixed or established is by studying and meditating in the Word of God. "But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper" (Ps. 1:2-3).

Now, what does living by faith mean in practical terms? I will try to explain this under five headings. ***Living by faith means:***

1) Living by the Word of God

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4) Did you notice it says "every word", not just a few words or favourite words; and "proceeds" not proceeded? We must live by every Word that proceeds from God's mouth.

What does it mean to live by the Word of God? I suppose it means, among other things, having one's life regulated, controlled and sustained by the Word of God. It means lining up your life with the Word of God. It has been said that faith isn't faith until it affects your daily thinking, speaking and conduct. Living by every Word of God is acting on it in spite of contrary evidence or what others might be saying. For example, God told Noah to build an ark when it had never rained before and he did it (Gen. 6:14). ***Faith is having your life sustained by God's Word.*** Peter walked on water because Jesus asked him to come. That word sustained Peter's weight on water until he began to doubt and be afraid (Matt. 14:28-31). Abraham left his country, his family and his father's house to go to an unknown land because God said so. And that Word sustained him all through! Elijah was told by God to go to the brook Cherith and then to the widow in Zarephath and he was sustained throughout the famine period (1 Kings 17:8-15). If you would live by every Word that proceeds out of God's mouth, you will have food on your table, money in your pocket and your future will be guaranteed! You can literally live by the Word God speaks to you. Jesus demonstrated during the temptations that His life was regulated and controlled by God's Word. He showed that the Word of God was the final authority in His life. He said repeatedly to the devil, "it is written" (Matt. 4:4,7,10). The Word of God created such a boundary around His life, which Jesus wasn't going to cross even when He was hungry! The Bible says "where there is no vision the people perish" (Prov. 29:18 KJV) or "the people cast off restraint" (NKJV) or "they run wild" (NLT). The life of faith is a disciplined lifestyle.

2) Believing what God says to you

Ordinarily, to believe simply means "to accept as true or conveying truth". God said to Abraham that his descendants shall be uncountable when as yet he had no child. The Bible says he believed God and God counted it to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:16). ***To believe God means to accept His Word as true***—whatever He says to you or about you - and to be persuaded that God's Word

is true. It also means to agree with God and His Word. When Mary was told by angel Gabriel that she was going to be the mother of the Lord, she answered the angel, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). "Stop quarrelling with God! If you agree with Him, you will have peace at last and all will go well for you" (Job. 22:21 NLT). Jesus would ask someone in need of a miracle, "Do you believe I am able to do this?" (Matt. 9:28). He said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid, only believe" when they told Jairus that his daughter was already dead (Mark 5:36). Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfilment of those things which were told her" (Luke 1:45). Jesus said, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23). He also said certain signs will follow those who believe the Word of the Gospel (Mark 16:17-18).

3) Trusting God

Trust means a 'firm belief in the reliability of truth, strength, etc. of a person or thing; also, the state of being relied on'. Trusting God therefore means relying on and depending on Him. It implies putting one's entire weight on Him, abandoning oneself on Him completely and committing oneself totally to God. It is said that living by faith is like jumping from a high rise building believing that, before you land on the ground, there would be a swimming pool or something to cushion or catch your fall. It's putting yourself in a place where if God didn't catch you, you would fall; if He didn't help you, you would fail. "Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for You are my praise" (Jer. 17:14). Believing God and His Word will lead you to trusting Him. You don't rely on what someone if you didn't believe in what they said in the first place! The Bible says, "It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18) and Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that He should lie. He is not a human that He should change His mind. Has He ever spoken and failed to act? Has He ever promised and not carried it through?" (NLT). "Let God be true and every man a liar." (Rom. 3:4). The Apostle Paul was one man who trusted absolutely in God. He said, "Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us" (2 Cor. 1:9-10). **God not only has a desire to do what He says, but He has the ability to do so.** Sometimes, friends want to help but might still fail – the Bible says that the arm of flesh shall fail. I tell people that, when dealing with God, it is okay to put all your eggs in one basket – in fact, that is the only way to deal with God acceptably. "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chr. 16:9) or "whose hearts are fully committed to Him" (NLT). (See also Hebrews 11:6) Do you know that Jesus went to the cross fully trusting God to raise Him up from the dead? "For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:10). Romans 8:11 also tells us that God was the one who raised Christ from the dead. The truth is, if you can't trust God to keep His Word to you here on earth, I wonder how you could trust Him with your eternal destiny!

4) Not walking by sight

Faith is a supernatural force. It deals with the supernatural. When things don't make sense, they can make "faith". "For we walk by faith not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7); "That is why we walk by believing and not by seeing" (NLT). Note here that

'sight' refers to physical sight. Jesus told Thomas "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). The Bible says, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1) or being "certain of what we do not see" (NIV). **We don't see them with our physical eyes because they exist in another realm – a realm that can't be accessed by the natural or physical senses.** The Bible talks about the mature, who have their senses trained to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:14). It seems to me that every one of our five physical senses (i.e. sight, taste, touch, smell and sound) has its spiritual equivalent. The Bible says that Moses endured or persevered because he saw Him who is invisible (Heb. 11:27). You can't see something which is invisible with your physical eyes, can you? Remember when Elisha asked God to open the 'eyes' of his servant to see that those who were with them were more than those who were against them? (2 Kings 6:17). The Syrian army had come to capture them but in the realm of the spirit they were surrounded by hosts of angels. The Bible says that God will give His angels charge over us to keep us in all our ways (Ps. 91:11). We might not see them but they are there, praise God!

Moses endured because he saw Him who is invisible. Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame, because He saw the joy set before Him (Heb. 12:2). Abraham didn't waver at the promise of God through unbelief because he did not consider his dead body and the deadness of Sarah's womb (Rom. 4:19-21). He kept his eyes on the promise and the One who had promised. Focus produces strength; what are you focused on? Elijah said to Ahab, "I hear the sound of the abundance of rain" (1 Kings 18:41). He wasn't speaking from the natural stand point because, after saying that, he went to pray earnestly for the rains to fall. God said He had given to Abraham and his descendants all the land which he saw (Gen. 13:14-15). You cannot possess beyond what you can see or envision with your spiritual eyes. There is a limit to what you can see with your physical eyes and that can limit you in your walk with God.

Also, more often than not, what we see with our physical eyes can be so discouraging or daunting, that we would need to switch to the invisible realm. In the physical, Abraham could only see his dead body and Sarah's dead womb; Elisha's servant could only see the Syrian army and he knew that he and his master were no match for them. How much we need our spiritual glasses!

5) Be hopeful

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1). Hope means a favourable and confident expectation. It has to do with the unseen and the future – "But hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (Rom. 8:24-25). Hope describes the happy anticipation of God, the ground upon which hope is based ("Christ in you, the hope of glory" Col. 1:27) and the object upon which hope is fixed (i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, 1 Tim. 1:1). The Bible says Abraham hoped against hope, so he became the father of many nations (Rom. 4:18 KJV). That is, he hoped against natural hope. There is natural hope and there is supernatural hope! For example, when a man's body is dead sexually and the woman's womb is dead, there can be no hope in the natural that they can still have a baby. If they were to have any hope at all, it must be supernatural. That kind of hope can only be based on the

Word of God, not on anything in the natural! "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience (perseverance) and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

As you focus on God's Word the Holy Spirit injects you with hope.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). That hope becomes an anchor for your soul (Heb. 6:19) in the storms of life and in the face of contradictory evidence. The Bible says that we should rejoice in hope of the glory of God and hope does not disappoint us because of the love of God (Rom. 5:2,5). God is truly a God of hope. Satan is the author of hopelessness. Even in the gloomiest and darkest hour, God's Word still brings hope to us. Adam and Eve fell and right in the midst of the curse, God still brought a message of hope to them – the seed of the woman was going to come and bruise the head of satan (Gen. 3:15). The Bible says God subjected

the whole creation to bondage in hope of deliverance and we were saved in this hope (Rom. 8:20-24). Paul prayed that the saints in Ephesus might know what is the hope of God's calling (Eph. 1:18), that is, "the prospect before those who respond to His call in the Gospel." Christ in you, the hope of glory. "Moreover whom He predestined (i.e. to be conformed to the image of Christ,) these He also called, these He also justified, these He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). I don't think this is about the sweet by and by; I think it is about now! Because Jesus, before He went away, said to the Father, "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one" (John 17:22). The life of faith is a life of joyful expectation of good and not evil. God says His plans for us are not for evil but for good, to give us a future and an expected end! (Jer. 29:11).

In conclusion, living by faith is living a life of obedience to God which is made possible by; committing to His Word, believing His Word, trusting in Him, not walking by sight and expecting His Word to be fulfilled in our lives.



notes

Study Topic:
Key Scriptures:
Points to Ponder:

Lessons:

Study Topic:
Key Scriptures:
Points to Ponder:

Lessons:

Study Topic:
Key Scriptures:
Points to Ponder:

Lessons:

You can make notes from your study time here.

You may submit your questions to office@uk.fowm.org using 'WD1801' as the subject

Receiving Your Healing

Isaiah 53:3-6 - "He was despised and rejected and forsaken by men, a Man of sorrows and pains, and acquainted with grief and sickness; and like One from Whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we did not appreciate His worth or have any esteem for Him. Surely He has borne our griefs (sicknesses, weaknesses, and distresses) and carried our sorrows and pains [of punishment], yet we [ignorantly] considered Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God [as if with leprosy]. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities; the chastisement [needful to obtain] peace and well-being for us was upon Him, and with the stripes [that wounded] Him we are healed and made whole. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has made to light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all."

The sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross brought about many things for us who believe. He was punished for our forgiveness, bruised for our healing and by His stripes we were healed! He became poor that we through His poverty might be rich. He bore the curse of the law for us that we might come into the blessings of Abraham.

One of the provisions of the cross is healing for our physical bodies. He bore our sickness and diseases, our grief and sorrow and by His stripes we were healed.

Just like many provisions of the cross of Christ, many still suffer for not knowing how to receive what has been provided. Provision needs to become an experiential reality. Healing has been provided for us, but how do we receive the healing in our bodies?

Proverbs 4:20-23; "My son, attend to my words; consent and submit to my sayings. Let them not depart from your sight; keep them in the centre of your heart. For they are life to those who find them, healing and health to all their flesh. Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life."

God's Word will minister healing and health to every aspect of our flesh (human body). Laying on of hands is another way to receive your healing. A prayer of faith is another way. What is important is for you to know it has been provided; so God is not withholding your healing from you! His Son suffered on the cross to make it available to you.

The law of faith is the law that activates the provisions under the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus. We employ this law in coming into relationship with God through Christ. It is found in Romans 10:9-10; "Because if you acknowledge

and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses (declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) and confirms [his] salvation."

With the heart we believe and with the mouth we confess unto salvation. The word salvation in the Greek includes safety, soundness, healing and wholeness. So our hearts need to believe and our mouths need to proclaim our healing! Jesus lauded to this principle in Mark 11:23-25 when He said that when we speak to the mountain to move and believe in our hearts, what we say shall come to pass, and we shall have whatever we say! That formed the foundational understanding of prayers of faith. Believing, saying and expecting results. So say what God says in His Word and believe it with your heart and expect God's power to make the difference.

Steps To Receiving Your Healing:

1. Find out the scriptures that promise you healing. It's already provided.
2. Meditate on these scriptures regularly, speaking them to yourself and building your confidence in the power of God conveyed through His Word.
3. Pray, believing you receive your healing. Start thanking God for His power to effect a healing and a cure in your body.
4. Command the sickness or disease to leave your body and speak to your body to receive healing.
5. Start acting and thinking like the healed, believing that the power of God is at work in you as you maintain your faith. Don't stop taking your medications if you are on any until you have evidence that it's no longer needed. God is your healer; medications try to facilitate your natural healing process. If you are starting to receive divine healing for the first time, do not stop taking medications during the process.
6. Give God the glory for the healing you are experiencing. And share your testimony to encourage others.

Friends of FOWM

GREETINGS FROM BRAZIL! We would like to share a testimony about our mentors and pastors, Revs. Kola and Funke Ewuosho. We are grateful and blessed to have met them. Over the last of couple of years, we have learnt things that we never thought we could! We have walked with God for over 10 years, but the pastors' teachings have helped us to be rooted and grounded in the right foundation. We have learnt not just to declare the Word but believe and understand God's purpose in our lives, and find our roots in His Word. Through the magazines and materials that they have given us, we have learnt principles that have helped us to improve and align our priorities in order to build and grow a solid and stable ministry, family life with our son and in our finances. We see that our lives are changing and are transforming through this channel (FOWM) that God put in our lives. With grateful hearts we give thanks to Revs. Kola and Funke, for their lives and ministry. We pray that God may give them strength to continue to serve God wholeheartedly.

God bless you,

Pastors Ana and Manuel. (Victoria, Espiritu Santo – Brazil)



The Future for FOWM in Latin America

FOWM's vision for Latin America is to see the lives of people be transformed in the knowledge and wisdom of God's Word to fulfil His will. **Our commitment to building and nurturing good relationships with the natives, has given the ministry an opportunity to work with leaders and churches.** We desire to build up the body of Christ in every nation. We are also working on translating our ministry materials into Portuguese.

We are grateful to God for the privilege to be used by Him in the nation of Brazil. FOWM appreciates your monetary and prayer support for God's Kingdom to advance in the nations and for His glory to be made manifest.

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Beauty For Ashes

Isaiah 61:1-4 says: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified." And they shall rebuild the old ruins, They shall raise up the former desolations, And they shall repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations."

Let's take a closer look at the first part of verse 3: "To console those who mourn in Zion..." This implies that there would be those who are mourning in Zion - the house of God! Mourning is not necessarily a negative or an evil thing. Jesus said those who mourn are blessed because they shall be comforted (Matt.5:4). When Nehemiah heard about the deplorable state of Jerusalem; that its wall was broken down and its gates were burnt with fire, he "sat down and wept, and mourned for many days... fasting and praying before the God of heaven." (Neh. 1:3,4). The Bible actually says it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting and the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning (Eccl. 7:2,4).

The focus isn't the mourning but what will be accomplished in the end - comfort! "To all who mourn in Israel, He will give beauty for ashes, joy instead of mourning, praise instead of despair. For the Lord has planted them like strong and graceful oaks for His own glory" (Is. 61:3 NLT). The Message Bible says, God will rename them "oaks of Righteousness; planted by God to display His glory". Psalms 102:16,17 says: "For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory. He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, And shall not despise their prayer."

It is not what happens to you that matters but how you come out of it.

"So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, sorrow and sighing shall flee away. I even I am He who comforts you." (Is. 51:11,12). The Bible says they shall return... I like to tell the devil, "I will be back" and I won't come back the way I left but stronger and more powerful! The ransomed of the LORD shall return and come with singing, with everlasting joy. Psalms 126:1-6 says: "When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, We were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with

laughter, And our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, And we are glad. Bring back our captivity, O LORD, As the streams in the South. Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him."

Like they say, "tough times never last, but tough people do!" The pain, the tears, the devastation, the set-back, etc. isn't everlasting but the joy that would come out of it is everlasting. "For His anger is but for a moment, His favour is for life; weeping many endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Ps. 30:5). You must be determined to come out of your mourning better than how you were before you went in. "Instead of your shame you shall have double honour, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be theirs." (Is. 61:7). The Bible tells us that the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning. The Lord restored Job's losses; He restored what was captured from Job. The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before! (Job 42:10).

It is not how you started that matters, but how you finish!

"Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly." (Job 8:7). God says in Jeremiah 29:11, "I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out - plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for." (The Message Bible). Isn't it comforting to know that we serve a God who knows what He is doing? When Joseph submitted himself to the dealings of God, he must have trusted that God knew what He was doing. What of Daniel, when he was being thrown into the lions' den? What of the three Hebrew guys, when the king commanded that the fire be made seven times hotter and they were thrown into it? These folks must have believed that God surely knew what He was doing! God says "I know what I am doing. I have it all planned out...". The Amplified Bible says, "to give you hope in your final outcome." I like that phrase: "your final outcome." The Bible says "Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is made better. The end of a thing is better than its beginning, the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." (Eccl. 7:3,8). The Apostle Paul said "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding 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 Cor. 4:17, 18).

Your problem is just the beginning of something greater in God!

It does not have to be a stumbling block for you but should rather be a stepping stone to greater heights. When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He told His disciples that the sickness was not unto death but for the glory of God (John 11:4). That is, death wasn't going to be the final outcome, but the glory of God! Remember, the Bible says we are the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. Jesus told Martha that if she would believe, she would see the glory of the Lord (John 11:40). A man was born blind and they asked Jesus whose fault was it that he was born blind. Jesus said it was neither the man's sins nor his parents', but that the works of the Lord be revealed in him. (John 9:1-3). We must not be focussed on what the devil is doing or on the negative things around us, but rather be focussed on what God can and wants to do in that situation. Jesus went on to say "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day, the night is coming when no one can work." That should be our own attitude too - a commitment to participating with God in what He wants to do! We don't just sit around, rather we must rise up and start participating with God if we are to see our situation turn around, and see God turn our mourning into dancing. Surely, God wants to console those who mourn in Zion by giving them the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; so that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that the Lord may be glorified - that is their final outcome! Job said, "But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10).

Isaiah 61:4 says, "And they shall rebuild the old ruins; they shall raise up the former desolations and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations." Who are the "they" that shall do these things? The same ones who mourn in Zion of course! That means they are going to get involved with God in the recovery and restoration process. God wants to give them beauty for ashes. Ashes are the left-over or aftermath of a devastation. After a fire you have ashes, rubble, ruins, etc. The Message Bible says, "They'll rebuild the old ruins, raise a new city out of wreckage, they'll start over on the ruined cities, take the rubble left behind and make it new." Hallelujah! God can make something out of that total wreckage. He can turn your mess into a message. He can make a testimony out of your tests! "For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory." (Ps. 102:16). Isaiah 60:15 says, "Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, So that no one went through you, I will make you an eternal excellence, A joy of many generations." Amen!

Don't allow yourself to be completely overwhelmed by your problems. It is okay to weep, but you must also rise up and begin to build! Nehemiah wept and mourned many days but he also did something else; he fasted and prayed in his mournful state (Neh. 1:4-11). And God heard his prayers; "He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, And shall not despise their prayer." (Ps. 102: 17).

God gave Nehemiah favour with the king and Nehemiah was given the permission to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild it. Nehemiah invited others to join him. He said to them "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the

wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach. And the people replied; "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to this good work." (Neh. 2:17,18). So, Nehemiah and the people rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem!

David had a situation in which the city of Ziklag where he lived was attacked and burnt with fire by the Amalekites. They also took captive all the women and children while David and his men were away, fighting. David and his men wept until they had no more strength to weep. David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him. The Bible says, "But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God". He also inquired of God as to what step to take. God said to David "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all." David and four hundred of his men pursued the Amalekites and they recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away. (1 Sam. 30:1-20).

Your attitude to what happens to you and your disposition to your trials will determine greatly how you come out of it.

It is easier to sit around weeping than it is to rise up to begin to "rebuild the old ruins, raise a new city out of wreckage, start over on the ruined cities and to take the rubble left behind and make it new." You don't need to run away from your problems. If you do, you will face them again. You must learn to face them! David ran towards Goliath. Someone said, if the devil is after you, you are probably facing the wrong direction; turn around and face him! The Bible says David attacked the Amalekites from twilight until the evening of the next day. "So David recovered all..." (1 Sam 30:17-18). That is the attitude and disposition that will recover all; as opposed to the one that sits down and wonders why things are going wrong. David said, "I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. I have wounded them, So that they could not rise; They have fallen under my feet. For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me." (Ps. 18:37-39). A lot of folks 'down tools' when they are going through challenges in their lives. That should not be the case if you are to see God turn your captivity around. "Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him." (Ps. 126:5-6).

Even in your tears, you can still sow and in your weeping, you can still be bearing seed for sowing; that is the guarantee for a joyful harvest! A farmer who doesn't put any seed in the ground has nothing to look forward to. God said, as long as the earth remains, seedtime and harvest shall not cease (Gen. 8:22).

Do you maintain a positive attitude despite of what you are going through? The Bible says you should count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience in you and when patience has run its full course, you will become mature and complete lacking nothing (Jas. 1:2-4). The Apostle Paul admonishes us to rejoice again and again! (Phil. 4:4). Nehemiah 8:10 says, "for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

"And in that day you will say: "O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away,

and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, is my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.'" Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation." (Is. 12:1-3). No wonder David couldn't hear from God until he first of all encouraged himself in the Lord. If you don't first encourage yourself in the Lord, before trying to inquire from Him, you will only hear from your pain, your hurt, your bitterness, your confusion, etc. You will definitely not from God! But, how do you encourage yourself in The Lord? Jesus told 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). The Amplified Bible says, "I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you". What you listen to and meditate upon will determine whether you have joy and peace or not; the choice is yours. You could focus on the negative like the Bible says in Lamentations 3:19-20: "Remember my affliction and roaming, The wormwood and the gall (or bitterness). My soul still remembers And sinks within me." But you could also turn around and focus on the positive - "This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 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!" (Lam. 3:21-24). The psalmist commands his soul to bless the Lord and not to forget all of His benefits (Ps. 103:2). When you meditate on the benefits

of the Lord you will be encouraged and have enough motivation and strength to come out of it victoriously. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:6-7).

Are you going to come out bitter or better?

Joseph came out better. He told his brothers: "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them." (Gen. 50:20-21) Joseph's brothers were afraid that now that their father was dead, he would hate them and fully repay them for all the evil which they did to him. Job was another example. The Bible says, "And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before." (Job 42:10). Jesus commanded His disciples to love their enemies, to bless those who curse them, to do good to those who hate them and to pray for those who spitefully use them and persecute them (Matt. 5:44). 1 Peter 3:9 says "not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."

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Receiving Spiritual Impartation

Rev. KOLA EWUOSHO

How do you receive spiritual impartation for kingdom living?

Spiritual Hunger: Jesus said those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are blessed, because they shall be satisfied. Gideon was hungry for the move of God and he was used mightily of God to bring deliverance to his people. We must know that God is more willing to see miracles happen than we are but He is waiting on us to position ourselves through deep spiritual hunger. Past moves of God happened as men positioned themselves through deep hunger, not just because God decided to move.

Asking: Jesus said he that asks, receives (Matt.7:8). James 4:2 says, "You do not have, because you do not ask God". God gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. Solomon asked God for wisdom and he got it! What we ask for shows what our priorities in life are.

Purposeful Interaction and Discipleship: Acts 4:13 says, "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus". Discipleship is not a loose or socio-political association, it is focussed, purposeful and the connection must be divine.

Service: Jesus said "anyone who wants to be great must be the servant of all". God always creates opportunities for service around us to bring us into our destinies. Joshua was called the servant of Moses; Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

Hearing the Word: Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Luke 5:17 says, "As Jesus taught the Word, the power of God was present for Him to heal the sick!" In Acts 14, a man received the faith to be healed as he heard Paul preach the Word.

Carrying out Divine Instructions: Mary said to the people who needed wine, "Do whatever He tells you" (John 2:5). They got the miracle by obeying His instructions. The widow got a miracle of debt cancellation by carrying out Elisha's instructions. The widow of Zarephath and her son were miraculously kept through the famine after she obeyed a divine instruction. Peter got a breakthrough when he obeyed Jesus' instruction to launch into the deep!

Giving: No other church shared with Apostle Paul in the matter of "giving and receiving" except the Philippian Church and Paul said they shared with him in God's grace. He said to them, "Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account". Our giving can cause spiritual deposits to be made into our accounts.

Laying on of Hands: Jesus said that those who believe in Him will lay hands on the sick and they will get well (Mark 16:18). Paul said to Timothy, "fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands (2 Tim. 1:6). In the Old Testament things like inheritance, authority, honour and favour were passed on to people through the laying on of hands!

However, these factors don't automatically position us to receive. Hands may be laid on us without us receiving anything. Some folks give but their conditions don't change. What determines our receiving is our heart condition. In the parable of the sower, it was only the seed that fell on good soil that produced fruit. Jesus said the seed is the Word and the soil is men's hearts. The good soil are those "who hear the Word and accept it" (Mark 4:20). Proverbs 4:23 says the issues of life flow out of hearts! We must not just serve; we should also have a heart of service! We must have a giving heart; a heart that is humble. We need a regular heart check if we are to walk in spiritual impartation!

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Handling Financial Crisis



We could compare times of financial crisis to the times of famine in the Bible. Famine was caused at different times by different factors –
[i] *The natural* (Gen. 12:10; 26:1; Acts 11:27,28)
[ii] *Man-made* (2 Kings 6:24,25; Prov. 11:26; Amos 8:4-7)
[iii] *God's judgement* (1 Kings 17:1; Jas 5:17,18).

And we could relate to all of these in our times. The first thing we must settle in our heart is that no matter what the cause of the famine or financial crisis is, God's will is for His people to be sustained in it. "Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy, To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine." Ps. 33:18, 19.

"Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved." Ps. 55:22. To sustain means: to maintain, to nourish, to provide food, to supply the means necessary for living, etc. It primarily suggests "to measure out a provision of food" i.e. to provide. Right after Elijah declared God's judgment, the Word of the Lord came to him announcing his own provision! (1 Kings 17:2,3). God sustained Elijah, the widow and her household throughout the famine - the bin of flour was not used up nor did the jar of oil run dry UNTIL the famine was over! God sustained the Israelites all through the wilderness for forty years; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell. (Neh. 9:21).

In times of financial crisis like this, we are not meant to panic like the people of the world. Jesus said men's hearts will fail them from fear and expectation of those things which are coming on the earth. (Luke 21:26). God does not want us to be moved by the things happening around us. He said He will shake the heavens and the earth, indicating the removal of 'things that can be shaken, so that the things which cannot be shaken (i.e. the Kingdom of God!) may remain (Heb. 12:26-29). Every man-made thing, helpful as they may be while they last, will be shaken. Our faith should not rest on the wisdom of men but on the power of God! (1 Cor. 2:5).

Those who will not be moved by the crisis are: [i] those who have learnt the secret of putting their trust in God (Ps. 125:1; 121:1-3; 46:5); [ii] those who have learnt the secret of dwelling in His presence (Ps. 27:1-6; 23:4-6; 91; Is. 43:2); [iii] those who have learnt the secret of enquiring in His temple, seeking His face for solutions (Ps. 27:4, 8, 9; Ps. 73:16-19). Elijah said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand," (1 Kings 17:1). Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. We must keep our ears glued to the mouth of God, if we are to live above these times of financial crisis.

God has established certain principles by which His people would prosper in spite of any famine of financial crisis.

1. The Seed Principle or Giving

Right after the flood, when everything had been destroyed apart from Noah and his family and the animals saved in the ark, God said that while the earth remains, seedtime and harvest shall not cease (Gen. 8:22). No matter how bad things are, don't stop sowing or else there will be no harvest. Isaac sowed in the time of famine and he reaped a hundredfold – what if he hadn't sown? "He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap," (Eccl. 11:4) and in verse 6, "in the morning sow your seed and in the evening do not withhold your hand..." (See also Eccl. 11:1-6; Ps. 112; Ps. 126:5, 6)

2. The Principle of Obedience

Jesus likens the man who comes to Him, hears and obeys His saying to a wise man who builds his house on the rock. The house remained standing even after the storms, winds and rains had come and gone (Luke 6). God told Isaac not to go to Egypt but to dwell in the land of the Philistines in spite of the famine. Isaac obeyed, he sowed in the same land and reaped a hundredfold in the same year! The widow of Zarephath obeyed the Word of the LORD through Elijah and she was sustained throughout the famine (1 Kings 17). Isaiah 1:19 says "if you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good of the land."

3. The Principle of Using What You Have

When the widow went to Elisha in distress because the creditors had threatened to take her children, Elisha asked her, "what do you have in the house?" (2 Kings 4:2) She said "nothing...but a jar of oil." Note that it is what you have in your house, in your possession and at your disposal that God will use to turn your situation around! Contentment looks inward, covetousness looks outward. God will not use what you don't have. He will use the talent, the gifting, the resources – physical, spiritual, mental, human, etc., within your reach, to bless you. You must reckon with what you have. Begin to value what you have. David used his stones and sling to kill Goliath. God used the staff in Moses' hand to part the Red Sea. Elisha used the jar of oil the woman had to perform the miracle. He said to her, after all the vessels had been filled with oil, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt, and you and your sons live on the rest". (vs. 7)

4. Divine Revelation

In Genesis 41, Pharaoh had two dreams and Joseph was called upon to interpret the dreams. There was going to be seven years of abundance that would be followed by seven

years of famine, God not only gave the interpretation of the dreams through Joseph but also the wisdom as to how to handle the years of abundance and the years of famine.

In this one story, you can see: [i] the place of divine revelation – the things revealed to us are for us and our children (Deut. 29:29); [ii] the place of using what Joseph had (i.e the gift of interpreting dreams); [iii] the place of divine wisdom. Note that divine revelation always leads to divine instruction or else what is revealed would be of no benefit to us. When they acted on Joseph's instructions they were sustained through the famine. Elisha told the widow to sell the oil, pay her debts and live off the remaining! Divine revelation also demands from us a lifestyle of hard work, diligence and discipline. A man who is diligent in his world or 'prompt in his business' will stand before kings and not before unknown men (Prov. 22:29).

Divine revelation also demands accountability from us. The widow, after she had filled all the vessels with oil, reported back to Elisha. When Joseph interpreted the dreams, Pharaoh did not 'take it on from there'; he made himself accountable to Joseph in that area. A lot of times God can often give you divine ideas to get out of your predicament (Gen. 30:31).

5. Wealth-Distribution Principle

The church responded to the famine, prophesied by prophet Agabus, by sending relief to the brethren living in Judea (Acts 11:29; Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:13-18).

The Bible tells us that if one member suffers all the other members suffer with it. (1 Cor. 12:26). In Acts 4:34,35, no one lacked in the church because those who had possessions sold them and the proceeds were distributed by the apostles to each one as anyone had need.

When famine hit the world, and there was food in Egypt as a result of Joseph's influence, Joseph pledged to his brothers that he would provide for them and their little ones (Gen 50:21).

God arranged the Body of Christ in a way that there should be no lack in the Body! If we would follow that plan of wealth-distribution, there wouldn't be any lack anywhere! If we understood this principle, we wouldn't indulge in wastage. After the miracle of feeding five thousand men, Jesus commanded His disciples to gather up the remaining food, "so that nothing is lost." (John 6:12).

In addition to all of this, in handling financial crisis, you must know who you are and whose you are! You must factor in the supernatural, the power of the blessing and the power of God's favour upon His people (Ps. 5:12; Deut. 8:18; Prov. 10:22).

From the very first day at the Restoring True Womanhood (RTW) conference held in Kano, Nigeria, in March 2018, I had begun to be so blessed! Rev. Funke took the charge where she talked about the different women in the Bible. She said, "God prepares you for what he has prepared for you"; and

she went on to say that we have to understand process as believers. I completed my youth service and I have been looking for a job; but the waiting period was looking difficult until I attended this conference! I now understand that there is a process before the end-product. On day two of the conference, Rev. mum took a message she titled 'No Holding Back' (which was the overall theme for the conference). She listed some things we hold back from as Christians; one that touched me so much was the fear of failure, which could stop us from trying. I had just written an exam and I didn't get my desired score, which left me in fear. But after this message, I was delivered completely and I decided I would go back to retake that exam, believing that I will pass with distinctions because this time, fear would not play a part. In the course of the conference Rev. mum also shared a message she titled, "It's Time to Move Forward". One thing she said that blessed me was, "the comfort you receive from God can be used to comfort others". This has been happening to me lately! I recently graduated and in my job search, I received so much comfort from the Holy Spirit. I now find myself encouraging others and helping them

to boost their faith. The feedback I have had has been amazing. I find myself talking to others as though I already have the job. I know that it is the peace I have found with God and His Word that has enabled me to encourage others.

This conference made me a better and stronger lady. I trust God completely and allow Him to comfort me; He radiates through me and through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, I can comfort others despite what I am going through!

Rosemary

Testimony



How to Handle Trials and Tribulations

The last days which we are in, are characterised by the news of the operations of Satan on a large scale. Nations, regions and individuals are not spared. The level of contradictions happening in many lives gives one some concern. These last days are also designed by God for His people to experience victory at a level unprecedented in history. We need to know how to turn trials into victories and how to turn pressures into paths of pressing into greater heights in God. Let us start by establishing what and where the pressures are coming from.

Luke 8:11-15 – “Now the meaning of the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God.

Those along the travelled road are the people who have heard; then the devil comes and carries away the message out of their hearts, that they may not believe (acknowledge Me as their Saviour and devote themselves to Me) and be saved [here and hereafter]. And those upon the rock [are the people] who, when they hear [the Word], receive and welcome it with joy; but these have no root. They believe for a while, and in time of trial and temptation fall away (withdraw and stand aloof). And as for what fell among the thorns, these are [the people] who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked and suffocated with the anxieties and cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not ripen (come to maturity and perfection). But as for that [seed] in the good soil, these are [the people] who, hearing the Word, hold it fast in a just (noble, virtuous) and worthy heart, and steadily bring forth fruit with patience.”

Mark 4:14-20 – “The sower sows the Word. The ones along the path are those who have the Word sown [in their hearts], but when they hear, satan comes at once and [by force] takes away the message which is sown in them. And in the same way the ones sown upon stony ground are those who, when they hear the Word, at once receive and accept and welcome it with joy; And they have no real root in themselves, and so they endure for a little while; then when trouble or persecution arises on account of the Word, they immediately are offended (become displeased, indignant, resentful) and they stumble and fall away. And the ones sown among the thorns are others who hear the Word; Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless. And those sown on the good (well-adapted) soil are the ones who hear the Word and receive and accept and welcome it and bear fruit—some thirty times as much as was sown, some sixty times as much, and some [even] a hundred times as much.”

The trials come for the Word's sake. Satan wants to get the Word out of us, so the trials come to do just that. Three out of

four times the Word is taken out or rendered unfruitful in the heart of hearers. What a ratio! One of the methods employed is through trial or pressure or tribulation. What are we to do?

James 1:2-5 – “Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations. Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience. But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing. If any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of the giving God [Who gives] to everyone liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or fault-finding, and it will be given him.

Romans 5:3-5 – “Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us.”

Counting it joy and maintaining our joy in the face of our trials is one sure key to overcoming them. The next step to overcoming our trials is to keep at doing the Word and not withdraw or become aloof to it. Be a doer not just a hearer of the Word. Yes forgive, walk in love and pray for the one who offends you. Whatever is causing the pressure, apply God's Word and allow the pressure of obedience to the Word be what prevails in your life. You will then see internal fortitude and strength built into you! Perseverance, character and hope born of God's love for you and in you is then built up. The Word you are acting on will become so real to you; it will become part of your character! Is this why Peter advises us to arm ourselves with the mind to suffer?

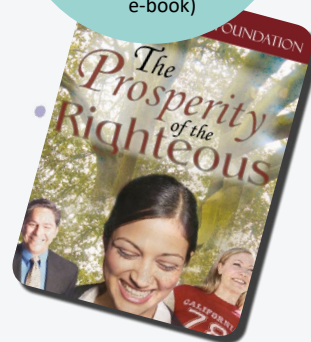
“So, since Christ suffered in the flesh for us, for you, arm yourselves with the same thought and purpose [patiently to suffer rather than fail to please God]. For whoever has suffered in the flesh [having the mind of Christ] is done with [intentional] sin [has stopped pleasing himself and the world, and pleases God], So that he can no longer spend the rest of his natural life living by [his] human appetites and desires, but [he lives] for what God wills.” (1 Peter 4:1-2)

So go ahead and win on every side. Your confession should be stronger and your victory is guaranteed on the finished work of Calvary. Spread the news around; we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus our Lord! Amen!

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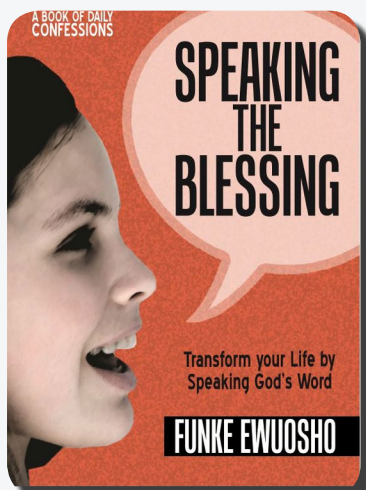
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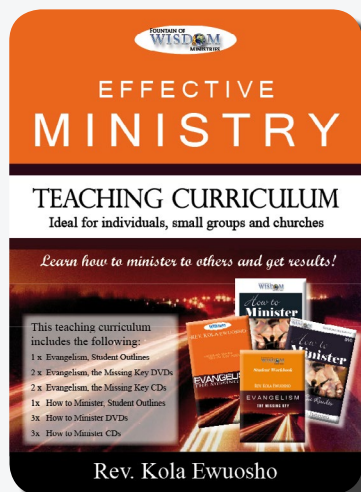
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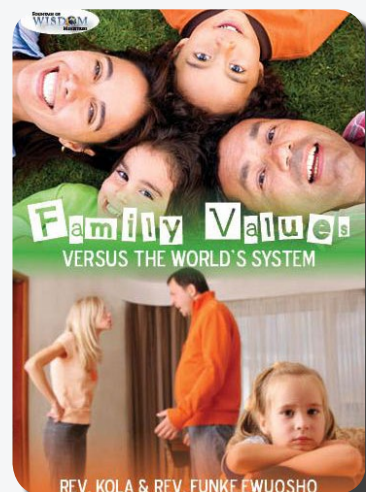
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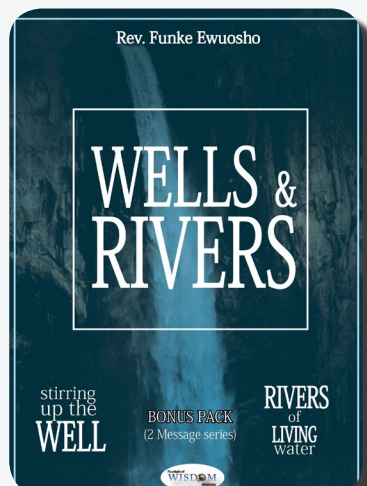
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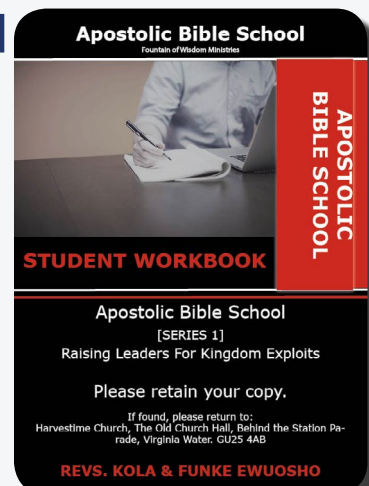
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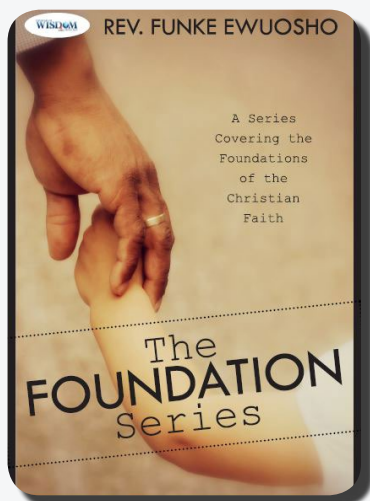
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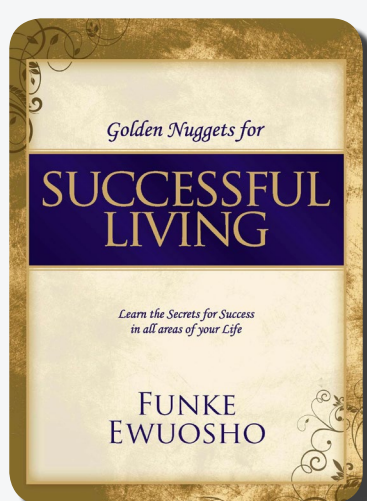
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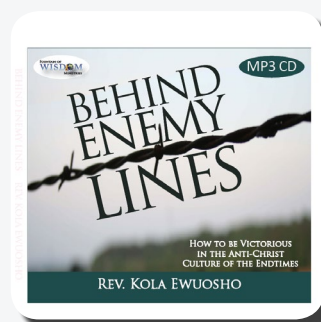
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Walking in Prosperity and All-Round Success

Rev. FUNKE EWUOSHO

God wants you to be successful in life! His will for you is prosperity. God wants you to walk in favour and freedom in every area of your life. God's will for us is not partial success but all-round success; "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2). God said to Joshua, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (Josh. 1:8)

God wants us to prosper in everything we do! Yes, in everything! Therefore, whatever we do is worth doing well; if it isn't worth doing well, it isn't worth doing at all. Wherever you are, whatever you do, God wants you to have good success. In Psalm 1:3, the Bible says that the man who delights in God's law and meditates constantly in it, shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water "and whatever he does shall prosper". To 'prosper' means, "to push forward in various senses, to go over, to be good, to be profitable." The Bible says that Isaac sowed in the land of famine and in the same year reaped a hundredfold, and the LORD blessed him. "And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great." (Gen. 26: 12,13). God wants you to prosper in WHATEVER you do! What then could ever be your reasons or excuses for not prospering or succeeding in whatever you do?

Joseph was a man who had every reason not to have prospered or succeeded in life. He was sold as a slave by his own brothers! The Bible says in Genesis 39:2-4, "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper (to be a success) in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority." Remember that Joseph was the great-grandson of Abraham, God's covenant friend! Here he was, not as a master, but a slave to an Egyptian master! Yet the Bible says that the LORD was with Joseph and he was a successful and prosperous man! Some people believe they are not prospering because they are not their own boss or because they are working for a non-believer. Potiphar saw that the LORD was with Joseph because he saw that the LORD made all that Joseph did to

prosper. That was a good testimony in itself. Joseph served Potiphar and he was promoted. Some people see their job as a limitation or a hindrance to their progress or promotion in life. On the contrary, your job could be a channel and a stepping stone to other things that God has for you if you would have the right attitude. Proverbs 22:29 says, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." (KJV). Another translation says "a man who excels in his work (or is prompt in his business) will not stand before unknown (or obscure) men". The Message Bible says "Observe people who are good at their work; skilled workers are always in demand and admired; they don't take a backseat to anyone." Joseph was obviously a very diligent man. He served his master diligently; he was prompt in his business. No wonder he was promoted to being the overseer of Potiphar's house. Also when he was in the prison, the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners and all the prison affairs, and the LORD made whatever he did to prosper (Gen. 39:22-23).

Diligence and hard work always pay off.

It's only a matter of time! Diligence literally means, "a threshing sledge" (i.e. having sharp teeth). It therefore implies determination, eagerness, sharpness, quickness, readiness, skilfulness, etc. Proverbs 10:4 says, "He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich." Proverbs 12:24 says, "The hand of the diligent will rule, But the lazy man will be put to forced labor." These verses tell us why some people are poor and are in financial or economic bondage. The Message Bible is as spot-on, it says, "The diligent find freedom in their work; the lazy are oppressed by work" (Prov. 12:24). How true! Did we ever see Joseph complain on the job? Did he ever try to draw any attention to himself? Don't forget that this was a guy so loved and 'spoilt' by his father back at home. He had never been a slave before, yet he was able to adjust as such in a strange land. Joseph found so much freedom in his work in Potiphar's house and in the prison, that all he got was favour and promotion!

A lazy man will always complain on his job about anything and everything, and is always full of excuses. Have you ever heard the saying; "A lazy man is always angry with his tools"? Proverbs 26:13; "The lazy man says, "There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets! As a door turns on its

hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed." Remember that for every excuse you give to yourself as a reason for not succeeding, there are people who have faced similar or even worse situations and yet have succeeded. No reason is good enough. You can succeed in spite of the obstacle. Challenges are meant to be overcome. Hurdles are meant to be scaled. You can convert stumbling blocks to stepping stones. Lazy folks are always full of ideas but no action. They are too lazy to translate their ideas into profitable actions. They usually have nothing to show for their lofty ideas. Proverbs 26:12, 15-16 (The Message Bible); "See that man who thinks he's so smart? You can expect far more from a fool than from him... A shiftless sluggard puts his fork in the pie, but is too lazy to lift it to his mouth. Dreamers fantasize their self-importance; they think they are smarter than a whole college faculty."

"A lazy life is an empty life, but "early to rise gets the job done." (Prov. 12:27 – The Message Bible)

James 2:17, says faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Verse 18 says "I will show you my faith by my works." Proverbs 13:4 says, "The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich." Have you ever heard the saying, 'If wishes were horses, beggars would ride'? Lazy folks are too lazy to work out their ideas. Diligent people plan their work and they work their plan! Proverbs 21:5; "The plans of the diligent lead surely to plenty, But those of everyone who is hasty, surely to poverty." Lazy people are too physically lazy to carry out any plan. They just can't be bothered with details. Remember, diligence isn't just about hard work but also means being sharp, being on the cutting-edge, being skilful and being determined. Diligence is paying attention to details. If you jumped into anything without careful planning, you will also find yourself jumping out as quickly as you jumped in! Proverbs 27:23,27; "Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, And attend to your herds; You shall have enough goats' milk for your food, For the food of your household, And the nourishment of your maidservants."

Have you noticed the connection between diligence and prosperity? You must make up your mind to succeed and be your best in whatever you do. Ecclesiastes 9:10; "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going." Remember that before the fall, Man was put in the garden to tend (i.e. dress or cultivate) and keep it (Gen. 2:15). God had planted a garden and made trees to grow out of the ground; there was also gold and other precious stones buried in that garden. The garden was full of potentials and God put Him there "to dress it and keep it" (KJV). "Dress" here meant 'to work, to serve, to labour, to till, to bring to pass'. It was man's responsibility 'to bring to pass' what God had deposited in that garden. We must take note that work isn't a curse! However, when man fell, the bible says, "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil (KJV – in sorrow) you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground..." (Gen. 3:17-19). That was a different scenario from Genesis 2:15. To 'toil' means to work long or laboriously without commensurate results. It implies putting out so much and bringing in so little. It connotes something negative. That wasn't God's original idea about work. Ps. 127:1-2; "Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise

up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep."

The curse was that the man shall eat of the ground in sorrows all the days of his life (Gen. 3:17 KJV).

In Luke 5:4; Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep and let down his nets for a catch. But Peter answered Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word, I will let down the net". And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish..." This story shows us the difference between 'toil' and 'work'. Working without grace can be a toil. Peter had been fishing before on his own. "Unless the Lord builds a house, they labor in vain, who build it" (Prov. 127:1). God still expects us to build; He still expects us to work but not without His blessing. Someone said 'one word from God can change your life forever'!

Remember, it is the blessing of the LORD that makes one rich, without sorrow (Prov. 10:22). Christ has redeemed us from the curse, so that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us. Jesus wore the crown of thorns to redeem us from the curse. Your ground is no longer cursed! You don't have to eat out of it in sorrow anymore! It shall no longer bring forth thorns and thistles for you; and you don't have to eat bread in the sweat of your face anymore! It was the blessing of Abraham that made Isaac to sow and reap a hundred fold in the land of famine. It was the blessing that made Jacob prosper under a fraudulent master, who had changed his wages ten times! It was the blessing that made Joseph prosper in Egypt – in Potiphar's house, in the prison and in the palace! God said to Abram in Genesis 12:2, "I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing." The patriarchs were not only blessed, they were a blessing to others, Joseph was a blessing to Potiphar, to the prison warden and to Pharaoh. Jacob was a blessing to Laban. You are an asset, not a liability. You are a blessing to someone, and not a burden. Laban didn't want Jacob to go; he said to Jacob, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake." Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it." (Gen. 30:27-28).

You must begin to change the way you see your job and also the way you see yourself. The way you see yourself is the way you will behave and also the way others will see you. "For as he thinks in his heart, so is he..." (Prov. 23:7). If you think you are a burden and a liability to others, so you are! If you see yourself as 'grasshopper', that is also how others will see you. Don't let what you see or experience affect who you are. Laban changed Jacob's wages ten times, but that didn't change Jacob's fortune or future, because Jacob didn't allow Laban's ways to change who he was! He said to Laban's daughters, "And you know that with all my might I have served your father. Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me." (Gen. 31:6-7). Did you notice that Jacob wasn't lazy? He served Laban with all his might. Joseph also served Potiphar. There should really be no excuse for laziness or slothfulness on your job – especially if you want to succeed in life. Jacob didn't serve half-heartedly; rather he served with all his might. Some people are forever looking for new jobs, and so they don't work with all their might. Jesus said if you are faithful in least, you are also faithful in much and if you are unfaithful in least, you are also unfaithful in much. He said, if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, nobody will give you what is your own. Jesus also said

no servant can serve two masters, because he will either be loyal to one and despise the other. (Luke 16:10-13).

Are you serving two masters while on your job?

Are you busy serving your own interest while you are on your job, or you are serving wholeheartedly? The answers to these questions will help you know if you are being faithful in another man's business or not. This calls for us having a change of attitude towards our job. We should be grateful to God for our job, instead of complaining about it. Remember, there are people out there who don't have a job or who would rather have your job. Your job is a channel through which God can, and wants to bless you! He wants to prosper you in whatever you do. "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand..." (Deut. 28:8). If you are doing nothing, then you aren't giving God the room to bless you financially! You can be happy on your job, instead of being put into forced labour (Prov. 12:24). You don't necessarily have to change your job or be miserable because you can't change it. You can change yourself – your attitude, your disposition, your orientation and your belief-system. You can find freedom in your work instead of being oppressed by it. Remember, Joseph was a slave and a prisoner – yet he was prosperous! You don't have to be the boss to be happy! You can be happy where you are, on the way to where you are going. What are the things you can learn where you are now, on your job? That is what it means to see your job not only as a channel, but also as a stepping stone to greater heights. Zechariah 4:10 says, "For who has despised the day of small things?" Small things have the potential of becoming big things if we would handle them right. We must pass the test of 'small things' to move forward in life. God won't commit big things to us, if we aren't faithful in small things.

How do you handle the phase you are in right now?

That will determine if you will ever get to the next phase and how you will handle it, when you get there. I believe that Joseph learnt some skills as a slave and as a prisoner which prepared him for the challenges he faced as a Prime Minister later on in life. He must have learnt leadership skills, management skills, people skills, etc. Don't ever waste your trials, rather let them work for you. You can become better prepared and equipped for your future. James 1:2-4 (The Message Bible): "Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way." Imagine if Joseph had tried to get out of Potiphar's house or the prison, prematurely? One thing is for sure, he wouldn't have made it to the palace and if he did, he would have made a big mess of it! Change your attitude towards work. Work to develop yourself. Work to become a better person in life. Work to contribute to your world and to be a blessing to others. You must have a healthy attitude towards your work and work in general. Jesus said, those who labour and are heavy laden should come unto Him and He will give them rest. How? "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me... For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). He does not want us to be oppressed by work! Ecclesiastes 10:10, 15: "If the ax is dull, And one does not sharpen the edge, Then he must use more strength; But wisdom brings success. The labor of fools wears them, For they do not even know how to go to the city!"

If you are being oppressed by your work, rather than finding freedom in it and enjoying it; you might need to learn a few things that could help you make the necessary adjustments. Remember, work is not a curse and it isn't an option! There is no way round it.

God's will for you is financial freedom!

Proverbs 22:7 says, "The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower is servant to the lender." Part of God's blessing on Israel is that the Lord will open to them His good treasure, the heavens to give rain to their land and to bless the work of their hand, and they shall lend to many nations but shall not borrow (Deut. 28:12). In Deuteronomy 8:18, Moses commands the Israelites to remember the Lord their God, because it is He who gives them the power to get wealth that He may establish His covenant, which He swore to their fathers. 'Power' means, vigor, strength, force, capacity, etc. It means capacity or ability, whether physical, mental or spiritual. It is therefore, in acknowledgement of God being the source of their wealth that the Israelites respond to Him in their tithes and offerings.

After Abram's battle against the King of Sodom and his allies, Melchizedek the Priest of God Most High met him with bread and wine and blessed Abram and also said "And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand" (Gen. 14:19-20). That is, Abram's victory wasn't first because he was strong and smart but because God delivered his enemies into his hand. And Abram gave Melchizedek tithes of all he had from the battle. In Genesis 28, when God appeared to Jacob, he made a vow to God and said "...and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." (v. 22b). Take note that all this was before the Law! Moses said they should remember that God gave them the power to get wealth and not begin to say in their hearts that their power and might made them wealthy (Deut. 28:17-18). To the patriarchs, tithes and offerings were not a matter of the Law (as a matter of fact, they did them before the Law), it was done in recognition and acknowledgement of God, as their source. Abel brought the first born for his flock and their fat to the Lord, before the Law (Gen. 4:4). Proverbs 3:9,10 says, "Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine." The key word there is 'honour'. God wants us to honour Him with our giving. The Bible says the Lord respected Abel and his offering. I believe, because it was done with honour. We don't give to God as slaves but as children of God. Tithe with love and joy in your heart. "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor. 9:6-7). The Amplified Bible says: "for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, "prompt to do it") giver [whose heart is in his giving]." If we would prosper financially, we must also be diligent in our giving, not only in our work. 2 Corinthians 9:8 goes on to say; "And God is able to make all grace (every favor and earthly blessing) come to you in abundance, so that you may always and under all circumstances and whatever the need be self-sufficient [possessing enough to require no aid or support and furnished in abundance for every good work and charitable donation]." (Amplified Bible). Did you notice verse 8 starts with 'And'? That is, it doesn't stand alone, it must be taken

with the preceding verses. Paul was therefore saying to the Corinthians that if they would do their part in giving bountifully and cheerfully, God's grace will abound towards them and they will have more than enough for themselves and others! God multiplies every seed sown (verse 10). We could see the same trend of thought in Philippians 4:15-19; they shared with Paul concerning giving and receiving, they sent aid for his necessities. "Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:18-19). In verse 17, Paul spoke about the fruit that abound to their account; but what account was he talking about? In Matthew 6b, Jesus talked about laying treasures in heaven. Seems to me every believer has a heavenly account – "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:4). One of the ways we make deposits in our heavenly account is by giving – giving to support the work of God, giving to the poor, giving to support missions and missionaries, etc.

How then do we draw on our heavenly account?

Remember, they are kept for us and not from us! However, 'NO DEPOSIT, NO WITHDRAWALS'. We draw by ASKING.

Matt. 7:7-8; "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." Also James 4:2 says, "...Yet you do not have because you do not ask." Jesus said in Mark 11:24 that whatever things we ask when we pray, we should believe that we receive them, and we will have them. The key word in these verses is 'ask'. We must be bold enough to ask. When you need to withdraw money from your bank account, you simply ask. Secondly, you need to create the channels. God is the source, and He wants to bless the work of our hands (Ps. 1:3). He wants to give us creative ideas that can generate money. Remember, the power to get wealth is not only physical and spiritual, but also mental. Your job, your business, your investments, etc. are examples of channels you could create.

In conclusion, God wants you to prosper and to walk in financial freedom. "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John. 8:36). He wants you to be prosperous and have 'good success' (Josh. 1:8). God wants you to be victorious in life. (1 John. 5:4). "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place." (2 Cor. 2:14). Amen!



notes

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Maximising Your Leadership Potential

Rev. KOLA EWUOSHO

“Let no one despise (look down on your youthfulness), but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine (teaching). Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” 1 Tim. 4:12-16.

The Apostle Paul was saying a lot to Timothy, his disciple, who had taken on leadership responsibilities in the above passage. Amongst other things, he is saying to us that we should understand the potentials that lie within us and not to be carried away by externals; to give ourselves to the aspects of life that enable us to generate the right kind of influence (leadership); to become single-minded in our focus as we give ourselves entirely to these things. Finally, he warns about the potential dangers in the race we are in. These summarise what we are studying in this article.

Understanding the Potential Principle

Almost everything that God created has the ability to undergo changes that can cause something else to be born. This is because the Creator designed His creation with potentials to reproduce and become the raw material for another. What God speaks to is the source for what He creates and all things have the same components and essence as the sources from which they come. For example in Genesis 1:11, God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth and it was so.’ The earth here had potentials to produce grass, herbs, fruits and seeds. If you had seen the dry land called earth just before God said it should bring all these forth, there is no way you would have known it had the ability to produce such. God who created the earth knew what He had built into it (potentials) so He called forth and the hidden abilities of the earth were awakened by the voice of the Creator! The same can be seen of the seas as creatures were brought forth from it too (see Genesis 1:20-25). The earth also brought forth living creatures. All things must be maintained by the sources from which they came.

It's important to realise that everything that came out of something else depends on the thing it came out of. Grass depends on the earth for its nutrients. The living creatures also depend on the earth for its food. The things that were

brought forth also had potentials to reproduce after their kind. God is really omnipotent! Full of potentials! When God was to create mankind He made us out of Himself and in the same way we need to depend on God for our sustenance. Every disconnection from source has the potential to cause death. Since God is a Spirit, when we became disconnected we were termed spiritually dead though physically alive. So we see that every created thing has potentials but man has great and almost unlimited potentials as we were created in the image and likeness of the omnipotent God. The earth produces the grass and herbs according to the Word of the Lord. The herb has fruit and the fruit has seed and the seed has the potentials to repeat the cycle as it enters the earth to reproduce the grass and herb again. The seed of everything is in itself. The potential principle simply states that, given the right conditions and process, the seed can reproduce itself. You have untapped potentials. As you yield yourself to God's Word and process, you can reproduce your qualities in others. There is more to your life than meets the natural eye. Would you like to develop your potentials? There may be music in you yet to be tapped. Who knows if you carry solutions to many of life's problems within you? There are untapped abilities within you waiting for your decision to develop them.

Understanding the Role and Need for Leadership

Many believe that leadership has to do with being at the top of an organization. This is not true. Leadership has to start with a simple desire to make life a little better for someone else. It is the ability to influence others for their good and the good of the society at large. You don't need a title to be a leader. Many problems in the world today are opportunities for leaders to step in and make a difference. Sadly there are not many leaders prepared for the challenges we face. You do not need a title to operate leadership principles. Everyone's level of leadership will impact the level of success they can enjoy in their lives. Leadership principles are life transforming principles that will enhance your life and the lives of people around you. Everyone needs to be developing in areas such as time management, goal setting and cultivating work ethics that not only work hard but work at the right things. This will enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The personal development industry is full of good stuff that can help us set goals and stay motivated to achieve them. Mark Sunburn's book titled “You Don't Need a Title to be a Leader” is a good one along these lines (another author renowned for leadership development is John Maxwell). In his book, Sunburn lists out six principles of leadership, which are as follows:

1. The power of self-mastery. 2. The power of focus. 3. Power with people. 4. The power of persuasive communication. 5. The power of execution. 6. The power of giving.

You cannot lead others if you do not master yourself by keeping the promises you make to yourself and exercising the necessary discipline over your words, thoughts and actions. You don't give what you do not have. To lead is to start by leading yourself to do what you know is right. The more you expose your mind to developmental principles and apply yourself to practise, the more you will begin to take your life to new levels of fulfilment and achievements. Your life will be focused and you will have something to pass unto others as you learn to communicate and develop others for their good. Servant leadership will be very fulfilling as you learn to maximise the impact your life is making in the lives of those around you. "Serve wholeheartedly as if you were serving the Lord not men" (Ephesians 6:7). You get the best out of others when you give the best of yourself.

Some Problems and Pitfalls in Leadership

The foremost problem in any developmental process is the problem of pride. It is the downfall of many. It acts as a blind spot in many lives. Insecurity, inferiority complexes or superiority complexes are all effects of pride in people's lives.

Not recognising other people's roles and potentials: others were designed by God to contribute into your life as well as those that receive from you. When you do not recognise their role in your life you short change yourself.

Presumptuousness: When we do not think through on issues either through laziness or carelessness we tend to become

presumptuous. Many people fall into this pitfall when they stop listening to constructive criticisms and continue to develop themselves. Life is meant to be lived by keeping our perspectives right; maintaining a healthy relationship with God and people; and keeping our feet on the ground.

Maximise Your Leadership Potential

Leadership is your God-given ability to influence other people for their good. Maximising it starts by recognising that you have it; then you can guard and protect your potentials. The potency of God in you is His wisdom, presence and power in you. How you steward these and make them available to bless others as God helps you is the key to maximising your potentials. Guard this treasure in you from critics and all who may want to make light of your potentials in leadership. Cultivate and feed your potentials by feeding on good literature that can build leadership principles firmly in you. Be one who acts on what they learn. Through your lifestyle, cultivate an environment that is conducive for your growth. Stay in the place of intimacy with God and live by faith as you seek to be a blessing to others. Seek to serve others with what God has given you.

To maximise you must read, study and have clear goals and objectives that will challenge every potential in you. Through your words and actions based on God's Word, create an environment conducive for healthy growth. Give yourself to the challenges you face and decide to be a winner not a loser, a victor and not a victim of your circumstances. Your decision and power of choice is your key to turning things around in your life. Christ did not die for us to become or experience failures, so whatever you are facing in life, with the help of God stay positive and be victorious.

notes

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Walking in Love and Peace With All Men

Rev. FUNKE EWUOSHO

For the purpose of this study, 'all men' will be put under four categories.

1. Your Neighbour

In Matthew 22: 35-40, a lawyer came to Jesus and asked "What is the greatest commandment?" Jesus replied, "The greatest and first commandment is 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.' And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang the Law and the Prophets."

So there is a first and a second; they are not the same.

The cross is made up of two components; the horizontal and the vertical. The vertical one is God-ward, and then there is the horizontal. The Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments: loving God with all your heart, with everything you've got, and then loving your neighbour as yourself.

Matthew 7:12 (NKJV)

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Galatians 5:14

"For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'"

Whatever you want people to do to you, do also to them.

Romans 13:8-10 (NKJV)

"Owe no-one anything, except to love one another. For he who loves another has fulfilled the Law. For the commandment 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not be a false witness, you shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, summed up, it is the same, namely that you shall love your neighbour as yourself.' Love does no harm to a neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilment of the law."

If you love your neighbour, will you be a false witness against them? If you love your neighbour, will you commit adultery with their spouse? If you love your neighbour, will you covet what belongs to them, no matter how much you like what they have, and no matter how much you don't have what they have? You won't covet what they have.

I remember some people met my husband and said: "we were looking for Harvestime Church but we couldn't find it, and we are now in 'so-and-so' Church and we are committed. My husband said, 'stay where you are.' If you

love your neighbour, you don't covet their members. They could come if they wanted to, but you don't go around coveting any church's members. We are Nigerians, and there was a certain church where there were quite a number of Nigerians; and whenever we visited (maybe we were invited to speak there) we made sure we did not interact with the members in such a way that would make any of them would want to come to us. If you love your neighbour, you don't go around coveting what is theirs. Love does no harm to a neighbour.

Who is then your neighbour? A lawyer asked Jesus this question (Luke 10:29). The Bible says "But he, wanting to justify himself, said 'Who is my neighbour?'" Jesus told him of the man journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho who was attacked by thieves. The priest and the Levite passed him by (like most people would do) but a certain Samaritan stopped and helped him. The Bible is always deliberate in the use of words. Why a Samaritan? Like the story of when Jesus met a Samaritan woman; and similarly, when Jesus healed the ten lepers and only one came back to say "thank you". There are things to learn from that. In the story from Luke 10, the priest and the Levite did not stop to attend to this man who was left for dead at the roadside by those who attacked him. It was a Samaritan who stopped, had compassion on him and took care of him. Jesus asked, "so which of those three do you think was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?" The lawyer answered "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him "Go and do likewise." If you look at that story closely, the one who was a neighbour was the one who showed mercy. That also tells us that if you turn it the other way round, **anyone who you are in a position to help to mercy and compassion to, that is your neighbour.** Your neighbour is not necessarily somebody who is next door to you; it is not about geographical location. It is somebody who you have the opportunity and the power to do something for. It is very easy for you to pass by somebody next to you because you are thinking that your neighbour is somebody else. From that story, your neighbour is anybody you have the opportunity to help and are in a position to do so.

Jesus said "don't only greet those who greet you." For example, if you are coming off the plane and you see a woman carrying a baby, do you offer to help? There was a time when I was on a plane and some passengers were looking for their camera and couldn't find it. I got so involved in looking around and helping them that later on they asked me, "are you a Christian?"

Proverbs 3:27 (NKJV)

“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so.”

That is why Jesus said “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, you do also to them.” In the context of Matthew 7:9-12 the discourse was this: “Which of you, being evil, if you son asked you for fish, would give him a serpent; or if he asked you for bread, would give him a stone? Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them.”

So what is the link between that statement and your prayer life? When it is in your power to do good, you do good. It is therefore not difficult to imagine that when it is in the power of God to do you good, He does you good. That is the truth. God knows how to give good things to those who ask Him. I believe this is the connection. Any time I am praying and thinking as much as God wants to help me, I do not withhold anything good from anyone, and I don’t expect God to withhold any good thing from me. The Bible says ‘God gives grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly before Him.’

Proverbs 3:28 (NKJV)

“Do not say to your neighbour “Go, come back and tomorrow I will give it” when you have it with you.”

There is nothing wrong with thinking about something - don’t make a rash decision. But do not taunt people by saying “I’ll give it to you tomorrow.” The Bible says (Prov. 3:29) “stop plotting evil against your neighbour, for he dwells by you for safety’s sake.” God doesn’t treat us that way, nor should we treat others as such.

James 2:15-16 (NKJV)

“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one says to them “Depart in peace and be warmed and filled” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?”

1 John 3:17 says, “If you see anybody in need, do not shut your bowels of mercy.”

The condition is, ‘when it is in your power to do good’. You can’t take what is not yours to give to somebody else. Don’t give away your wife’s shoes without asking her! Don’t volunteer your husband. Whatever is in your power to do, you do it, without breaking other laws. Avoid going on a guilt trip or being motivated by guilt. Watch out for manipulation, intimidation and control. Remember also that we don’t ‘play God’ over anyone. We must point people to God ultimately. Also, recognise the difference between the felt needs of people and their real needs. In other words, don’t just keep giving them fish; try to teach them how to fish. Also, if somebody is hungry, don’t try giving them faith; give them food. After they have eaten, you can talk about faith.

2. One Another

John 13:34-35 (NKJV)

“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 have love for one another.”

Who was Jesus speaking to here? He was speaking to His disciples.

John 15:12-13 (NKJV)

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, to lay down his life for his friends.

1 John 3:16 (NKJV)

‘By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us, and we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?’

‘Lay down your life’ as an expression, means to lay down your comfort, your choices and preferences, your desires and your pride. Whatever you need to lay down, lay it down. The Bible says ‘present your bodies a living sacrifice’. You don’t need to be dead – be alive!

Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV)

“Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.”

John 12:13 (NKJV)

“You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.”

Jesus didn’t practise false humility. He said “I am.” The Bible says ‘Jesus, knowing who He was and where He was going, stooped down and washed His disciples’ feet. He didn’t deny who He was. “If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done” (verses 14-15). The Bible says ‘The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is her husband.’ Ephesians 5 says, ‘Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself’.

Jesus said “A new commandment I give unto you.” Why is it new? What is the difference between the old one and the new one? The first is ‘love your neighbour as yourself.’ The second is ‘love one another as I have loved you.’ Some people say about the first one: “Well, I don’t love myself anyway, so I am allowed not to love my neighbour.” But the second one says ‘love one another as I have loved you’, so even if you don’t love yourself, it’s okay! How? By laying down our lives and giving ourselves. ***We must learn to give ourselves to one another: lay down our pride, our fears and insecurities, our preferences.*** Note also that love is a commandment from God; not an advice, a suggestion or a good idea. It is a commandment because it is compulsory. That means that if I am not doing it, I am breaking God’s commandment. I am an offender and I can repent of not loving others. It is also a commandment because it is directed at your will. Commandments are directed at our will, not at our feelings or opinions. If we were asked “do you feel like loving your neighbour?” I am sure the answer would be “no”. Do you feel like giving up yourself and your own desires? Do you always feel like cooking dinner? That is why the new commandment to love is not ‘as yourself’, but ‘as I have loved you’. ‘As I have loved you’ means ‘as I lay down my life.’ The Bible says “do everything without complaining or murmuring”. Sing a new song and making melody to the Lord, giving glory to God!

1 Corinthians 13: 1-3 (NKJV)

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I

have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing."

The phrase 'have not love' (as opposed to 'feel' not love) is repeated three times. Love an action (Romans 12: 9-13) as well as a noun: 'have love for one another'. Examples of this include: 'love your neighbour as yourself'; 'love one another as I have loved you'; 'husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church'.

3. Your Enemies

A third category of people you should love is your enemies (if you have any). This is not talking about Satan, but human enemies; those people who backbite and go behind your back when you are due for promotion, and people who speak evil about you.

Matthew 53: 43-48 (NKJV)

"Jesus said "You have heard that it was said 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy'. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the sons of your Father in heaven. For He makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors (in other words the gentiles, or unbelievers) do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? For you shall be perfect, just as your Father who is heaven, is perfect."

Romans 12:14-21 (NKJV)

"Bless those who persecute you. Bless, and do not curse. Repay no-one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath. For it is written: "Vengeance is mine. I will repay", says the Lord. Therefore, if your enemy hungers, feed him. If he thirsts, give him a drink. For in so doing, you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

This doesn't mean you should heap the coal on your neighbour's head. It says 'in doing so you will heap coals of fire on his head'. In one of the psalms, David says "if God is dealing with your enemy, don't rejoice, or else God will stop dealing with him and turn on you." In giving your enemy food or drink, your motive should not be to heap coals of fire on his/her head. If you are loving your enemy, it should not be your motive to roast them. You should not be overcome by evil, but always overcome evil by good. Don't get on the same level as bad people. When someone is cursing, don't get on their level and begin to curse.

Romans 12:14-19 (MSG)

"Bless your enemies. No cursing under your breath allowed. Don't hit back. Discover beauty in everyone. If you've got it in you, get along with everybody. Don't insist on getting even. That's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging" says God. "I'll take care of it."

Matthew 5:38-42 (NKJV)

"You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", but I tell you not to resist an evil person. Whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go with you one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you, do not turn away."

Matthew 5:38-48 (MSG)

"Here is another old saying that deserves a second look: 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.' Is that going to get us anywhere? Here's what I propose: 'Don't hit back at all.' If someone strikes you, stand there and take it. If someone drags you into court and sues for the shirt off your back, gift-wrap your best coat and make a present of it. And if someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practise the servant life. No more 'tit-for-tat' stuff. Live generously. You are familiar with the old written law 'Love your friend' and its unwritten companion 'Love your enemy'. I'm challenging that. I'm telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true, God-created selves. In a word, what I am saying is "Grow up." You are Kingdom subjects, now live like that. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously towards others, the way God lives towards you."

Have you met someone who thinks they are smart? If you know someone is being sarcastic, let them carry on. They know what they are doing, and you know what they are doing, but they don't know that you know. I remember Kenneth Hagin saying that there was one woman who kept him on his knees most of the time. There are some people who are so problematic that they just teach you some humility. They teach you to manage your temper, they teach you self-control. At the end of the day, they bring out the best in you.

Lessons on loving your enemies:

1. God's wisdom is not to make you the enemy's punch-bag, or a doormat. For most of us, that is what we are afraid of. "I don't want my husband to take me for granted." "I don't want my wife to take me for granted." There is a fear of being taken for granted. God says in Romans 12: "I will do the judging. I will take care of it. Leave it to me." Whatever you are afraid of, just lay it down. Sometimes, when two forces collide, somebody needs to give in. Somebody needs to be Christ-like and be the one to take the beating. If somebody doesn't do that in any relationship, that relationship is not going to work. When that happens, the other person will learn to do what is right. Learn the wisdom of God in this. God is not planning for you to be Satan's whipping bag, or for you to be taken advantage of. As the Message Bible says, 'where is that going to get us? How far are we going to get with that kind of a lifestyle? It is not going to get us anywhere'. It would end up in the divorce courts. If you are just friends, you are going to break up and go your separate ways. It doesn't matter who decides to step down. Jesus said "you call me Lord and Teacher, and look at what I have done." Who is the one to have the love of Christ in him? Be the one to say "OK, I will lay it down." Get the wisdom of

God in this.

2. You will become better and not bitter.

3. You will overcome evil with good. When you do such a thing, especially when you do it with the right motive, you are doing it as unto the Lord. The Lord will speak to that person. God will get to that person, and by so doing, you will overcome evil with good.

4. Also, you don't take on the enemy's nature. When you try and get even with people, and become bad like them, you are taking on the wrong nature.

5. It gives you an opportunity to demonstrate and exemplify the Kingdom life. Also, when you don't fight your own battles, you give God the room to fight for you. Some examples from the Bible include Joseph and his brothers. Also David and Shimei, when Shimei was cursing David and some people wanted to kill him, but David said "leave him alone. Maybe God will turn his cursing into a blessing for me." Another example is David and Saul.

4. People Outside Your Group

This category includes people who are different from you, or those outside your group or party. We all have our camps, our little groups. Take note of this: in Galatians 5 v.20, the Bible talks about the works of the flesh. One of them is dissensions. The Old King James version calls it 'seditions', other versions have 'dissensions' or 'factions'. The Amplified Bible says 'divisions', 'party spirit'. That's okay in politics, but not inside the church. 'Dissension' is discord arising from dissent.

1 Corinthians 3:3-5 (NKJV)

"For you are still carnal. For where there are envies, strife and diversities, and divisions among you, are you not behaving like mere men? If you are saying "I am of Paul" or "I am of Apollos" are you not carnal? Who then is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed as the Lord gave to each one."

Let's see some examples:

Luke 9:49-50

"The disciple said "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow us." But Jesus said to John, "do not forbid him. For he who is not against us, is on our side."

People don't have to be in your group or follow you. Let's look at the choleric nature. They are described as, 'my way or the highway'. 'You either agree with me, or you are not a good person.' 'If you are a friend of someone who is not my friend, you are not my friend.' 'If you are hanging out with somebody I am not hanging out with, then you are not my friend.' You should wake up to the fact that somebody might not like you, and the fact that they don't like you does not mean that they want to kill you. They have the freedom not to like you.

People do not have to be in your clique. ***You must know that other people besides you are doing things, and you don't have to stop them. People should have the freedom to be themselves.*** So Jesus was saying "they don't have to follow us".

There is another example in Numbers 11:26, when God told Moses to bring 70 men so that he could put his hands on them, and the Spirit that was on him could come upon them. There were two men, Eldad and Medad, who were

listed among the 70 but didn't go to the tabernacle where the action was taking place. They remained in the camp. The Spirit of the Lord also came upon them in the camp, and they were prophesying. Joshua, Moses' assistant, said "Moses, forbid them!" Moses said to him (Numbers 11:29) "are you jealous for my sake? Oh that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" The flesh always feels comfortable with people in your own small group. God is big enough to operate in the tabernacle and in the camp at the same time. We don't know why Eldad and Medad were in the camp and not in the tabernacle, but God released his Spirit upon them. He saw their heart. The Bible says in 1 Samuel chapter 16 that God looks not upon the outward appearance, but He looks on the heart. Let your heart be right. Don't judge and don't try to copy others.

Galatians 2:8 (NLT)

"For He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised (i.e. the Jews) also worked effectively in me towards the Gentiles."

You must learn to appreciate the diversity of grace at work in others.

1 Corinthians 12: 4-6 (NKJV)

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences in ministries, but the same Lord, and there are diversities of activities but it is the same God who works all in all."

1 Corinthians 12:11 (NKJV)

"But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one according as He wills."

How do we deal with people who are different from us, people who hold different opinions and views? How do we treat their opinions and views?

Here are points to ponder on: people have a right to be different; they have a right to have different views and opinions; and you can learn from others. Without others, we are not complete and we don't have the complete picture (Hebrews 11 v.39-40). It is like a group of blind men holding different parts of an elephant and one of them thinks the trunk (or another part) is the whole of the elephant. We only prophesy in part, we only know in part. What you can learn from reading Romans chapter 14 is to not look down on others or on their point of view. Don't look down on people or despise what they have to say, or what they have to offer. Even a dead clock is right two times in 24 hours. People have a right to their own preferences.

Romans 14:19 (NKJV)

"Therefore let us pursue the things that make for peace, and the things by which one may edify another."

The word 'edify' means to 'build up'. We could put it in contemporary language and ask ourselves: when we get together, do we talk about things that unite us or separate us? Let's pursue things that make for peace. For example, if I'm in the Labour party, and you are a Conservative, we don't have to talk about those parties. There are more things that unite us, that will edify us and build us up. I was once in a meeting where somebody brought up the question of whether women should teach. I said "God is the owner of the anointing, and if He chooses to anoint women, that is His

business.” I don’t know if women should be teaching or not, and I don’t know if they should be prophesying or not, but if He puts His Spirit upon them, who are we to judge? God said “upon my man-servants and upon my maid-servants I will pour out my Spirit.” Praise God! Paul was dealing with some internal problems and issues in the Gentile church when he said those things. Pursuing peace is a major key to harmonious relationship.

Hebrews 12:14 (NKJV)

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”

Psalms 34:12-14 (NKJV)

“Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.”

1 Peter 3:10-12 (NKJV)

“He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Romans 12:9-10, 18 (NKJV)

“Let love be without hypocrisy, abhor what is evil, cling to what is good, be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honour giving preference to one another.

“If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live peaceably with all men.”

Ephesians 5:21 (NKJV)

“Submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord.”

James 3:17 (NKJV)

“For the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

Philippians 2:3 (NKJV)

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself.”

Attributes of Love

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NKJV)

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely,

does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

The word ‘never fails’ means ‘never comes to an end.’

Galatians 6 verse 2 says we should bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.

The word translated ‘love’ in all the categories is still the same word ‘agape’, not ‘phileo’. ‘Love your enemies’, ‘love your neighbour’ and ‘love one another’, all use the word ‘agape’. Agape is the love of God, the love that the Bible describes in 1 Corinthians 13. That is the love that does not fail, the love that does not come to an end. Every other kind of love – ‘phileo’, ‘eros’, etc. is human love that will come to an end. The love that does not come to an end is the love of God. That is the love with which the Bible says you should love your enemies, love your wives, your neighbour, and one another. That is ‘agape’. It is a supernatural, unconditional love.

Romans chapter 5 verse 5 tells us that this love, the love of God, has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The love of God has already been poured out in my heart by the Holy Spirit, who was given to me. Jesus said in John 14:17, ‘The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive... for He dwells with you and will be in you’. The world cannot receive the Spirit of Truth, therefore they don’t have this ‘agape’ love. That love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and the Bible says the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit because it neither sees Him nor knows Him, but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

The love of God has been shed abroad and has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Let us stir up the consciousness of that love. ***That love that will not end is the love of God. You may not always be fond of someone, or excited about someone, but you can love all the time.*** That love of God, the ‘agape’ love, the unconditional love, has been poured out in your heart!

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