

# WISDOM DIGEST

Fountain of Wisdom Ministries  
Issue WD1902



## ENJOYING YOUR COVENANT PRIVILEGES

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## THE END OF A THING IS BETTER THAN ITS BEGINNING

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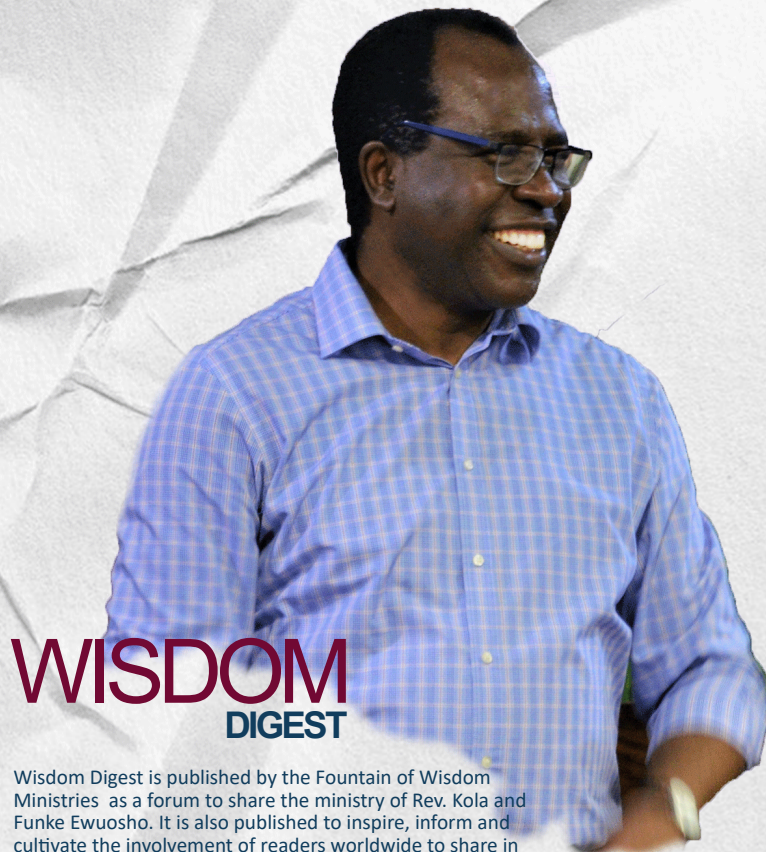


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# Heart to Heart

WITH REVS. KOLA & FUNKE EWUOSHO  
(CHIEF EDITORS)



## WISDOM DIGEST

Wisdom Digest is published by the Fountain of Wisdom Ministries as a forum to share the ministry of Rev. Kola and Funke Ewuosho. 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 a free magazine, supported by partner contributions.

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

Please send us names and addresses of friends you would like to receive a copy of this magazine. If you would like Fountain of Wisdom Ministries to be a blessing to your church, fellowship or region, please contact a FOWM office.

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Dec. 2019

*Dearly Beloved,*

It is our joy to present this magazine in fulfilling the vision of the Fountain of Wisdom Ministries (FOWM), to "create a forum where God's people can flow with Him in understanding and wisdom". This vision is to help His people fulfil the plans He has for them. We are doing this in many ways and this magazine is one of such ways. As we enter the celebration season of the birth our Lord Jesus Christ, we are reminded of all that He came to do on earth. He came to restore us back to God, the Father. He paid the price for such restoration through His death, burial and resurrection. He came to ensure that all the Father has in store for us can be experienced by us. By His stripes we are healed. He became poor that we through His poverty might become rich. His sacrifice made it possible for a new covenant to be in place for our advantage.

God's plans are designed to ensure that we can participate with Him in seeing to the expansion of His kingdom here on earth, and bring an end to the works of darkness. Your faith plays a major part in your life and what you will experience here on earth. Let your faith stay strong!

In this magazine we trust you will be blessed, inspired and encouraged to rise up and fulfil the destiny God has for you as you also help others to do the same. Various articles are included to help you understand what belongs to you in Christ and overcome the challenges you face and impact other lives around you. The glory of the Lord is indeed risen upon you!

Please help get this magazine into as many hands as you know will be blessed reading it. Visit our website [www.fowm.org](http://www.fowm.org) for more inspiring articles and products.

Happy reading!

Rev. Kola & Rev. Mrs. Funke Ewuosho

# WISDOM DIGEST

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## WLT BIBLE SCHOOL

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Rev. Kola Ewuosho share more about our  
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# UNDERSTANDING & ENJOYING OUR COVENANT PRIVILEGES & RESPONSIBILITIES

REV. KOLA EWUOSHO



The word *covenant* is usually used to describe a binding agreement that people enter into with each party understanding their roles and committing to playing their parts so that the blessing of the covenant can be enjoyed by all concerned. Covenants are entered into with purposes in mind. They are well thought out as the consequences can be very serious in cases where agreements are broken.

There is an old story of two villages who came into covenant relationship with one another for the purpose of benefiting one another with what each village is known to produce. Let us call them village A and village B. Village A is a farming village and village B is known to be a hunting village. Through their leaders they decided to come into a covenant relationship wherein the hunting village would hunt for both villages and the farming one would do same for both. Village A would have supplies from the hunting village, which would in turn be supplied with the farm produce from village A. This way both villages are blessed by the labours of one another and both enjoy benefits that they otherwise would not have enjoyed. The process involved in making covenants may differ from place to place but some things are common to all. There is the swearing of oaths and giving of promises by the representatives of each party (as well as the mixing of blood in blood covenant relationships). The representatives go through the process as the villages come into covenant relationships with one another. The relationship is binding and any breaking of agreements may be met by strict punishments or even death to the offender.

## **Covenant Relationship with God Almighty**

In the relationship between God, the creator, and the human race, God has been known to have initiated certain covenant relationships.

### ***With Noah...***

Genesis 6:5-9 (AMPC)

*The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination and intention of all human thinking was only evil continually. And the Lord regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved at heart.*

*So the Lord said, I will destroy, blot out, and wipe away mankind, whom I have created from the face of the ground—not only man, [but] the beasts and the creeping things and the birds of the air—for it grieves Me and makes Me regretful that I have made them. But Noah found grace (favor) in the eyes of the Lord. This is the history of the generations of Noah. Noah was a just and righteous man, blameless in his [evil] generation; Noah walked [in habitual fellowship] with God.*

Genesis 6:17-22 (AMPC)

*For behold, I, even I, will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy and make putrid all flesh under the heavens in which are the breath and spirit of life; everything that is on the land shall die. But I will establish My covenant (promise, pledge) with you, and you shall come into the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh [found on land], you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of fowls and birds according to their kinds, of beasts according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind—two of every sort shall come in with you, that they may be kept alive. Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and you shall collect and store it up, and it shall serve as food for you and for them. Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.*

When God initiates the covenant relationship with the human being, He instructs, promises and then makes His power available for the implementation of His purposes in that relationship. On the part of the man (referring to both man and woman), he believes and then carries out actions of faith, as he walks in obedience. In fulfilling the purposes of God, he experiences the power of God. The shedding of blood is usually initiated by God but implemented by the man involved. The men are known to raise altars of worship and surrender to God as well as come into full alignment with His purposes for the covenant relationship. Man builds his hope on the covenant promises and experiences the blessings of the covenant relationship as he operates in believing and obeying the demands of the covenant with God.

Genesis 7:23 - 8:3 (AMPC)

*God destroyed (blotted out) every living thing that was upon the face of the earth; man and animals and the creeping things and the birds of the heavens were destroyed (blotted out) from the land. Only Noah remained alive, and those who were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed [mightily] upon the earth or land 150 days (five months). AND GOD [earnestly] remembered Noah and every living thing and all the animals that were with him in the ark; and God made a wind blow over the land, and the waters sank down and abated. Also the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the gushing rain from the sky was checked, And the waters receded from the land continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had diminished.*

Genesis 8:20 - 9:1 (AMPC)

*And Noah built an altar to the Lord and took of every clean [four-footed] animal and of every clean fowl or bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. When the Lord smelled the pleasing odor [a scent of satisfaction to His heart], the Lord said to Himself, I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination (the strong desire) of man's heart is evil and wicked from his youth; neither will I ever again smite and destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. AND GOD pronounced a blessing upon Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.*

Read Genesis 9:7-17 (AMPC)

**With Abraham...**

Genesis 12:1-4 (AMPC)

*NOW [in Haran] the Lord said to Abram, Go for yourself [for your own advantage] away from your country, from your relatives and your father's house, to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you [with abundant increase of favors] and make your name famous and distinguished, and you will be a blessing [dispensing good to others]. And I will bless those who bless you [who confer prosperity or happiness upon you] and curse him who curses or uses insolent language toward you; in you will all the families and kindred of the earth be blessed [and by you they will bless themselves]. So Abram departed, as the Lord had directed him; and Lot [his nephew] went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.*

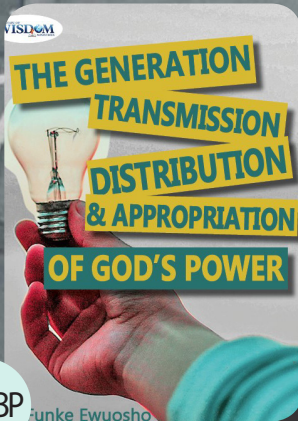
Genesis 15:1-9 (AMPC)

*AFTER THESE things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am your Shield, your abundant compensation, and your reward shall be exceedingly great. And Abram said, Lord God, what can You give me, since I am going on [from this world] childless and he who shall be the owner and heir of my house is this [steward] Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram continued, Look, You have given me no child; and [a servant] born in my house is my heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, This man shall not be your heir, but he who shall come from your own body shall be your heir. And He brought him outside [his tent into the starlight] and said, Look now toward the heavens and count the stars—if you are able to number them. Then He said to him, So shall your descendants be. And he [Abram] believed in (trusted in, relied on, remained steadfast to) the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness (right standing with God). And He said to him, I am the [same] Lord, Who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees to give you this land as an inheritance. But he [Abram] said, Lord God, by what shall I know that I shall inherit it? And He said to him, Bring to Me a heifer three years old, a she-goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.*

**WHEN GOD INITIATES THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HUMAN BEING, HE INSTRUCTS, PROMISES AND THEN MAKES HIS POWER AVAILABLE...**

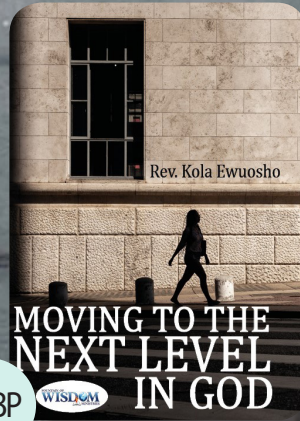
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# HAVE YOU BROWSED OUR E-STORE LATELY?



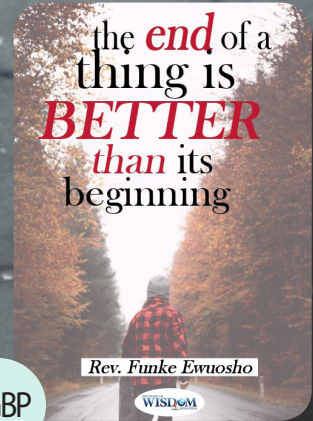
24GBP

God's power has already been made available to us. But without knowledge and understanding, we deprive ourselves of this power. When we understand how the power of God works, we can get it to work for us in the areas we need it. In this powerful message by Rev. Funke Ewuosho, gain some life-changing truths that will establish you and equip you to generate, transmit, distribute, and appropriate the power of God!



6GBP

Becoming a believer is just the first step.. How many souls are you planning on leading to the Lord? What are you doing to participate with God for what He wants to do? Philippians 3:10 (NKJV) says - "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection..." In this powerful message, you will be inspired to move to next level God has for you, and receive the knowledge and tools you need. Be blessed!



9GBP

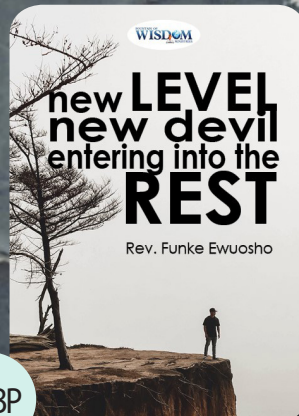
Ecclesiastes 7:8 says - 'The end of a thing is better than its beginning...' (NKJV). Job 8:7 also promises that though the beginning may be small, the latter end shall greatly increase! We need faith more than ever before in these end times! We must rise up and speak to the things coming against us saying, 'your end will be greater than your beginning!' Whatever you are going through, God wants to do you good in the end.

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12GBP

Do you know that you are called, appointed and anointed to do God's will here on earth? We must live with a sense of purpose and calling. In spending time with God, we begin to discover His mysteries and callings. In this powerful message Rev. Kola shares principles and keys that every believer that is called, ought to know and experience. Listen and be blessed!



9GBP

No matter where you are, there is another level in God. For us to enter into the rest God has for us, or get to a higher level in your walk with God, we need to walk in diligence and obedience. For example, as a new believer, God in His mercy will shield us from things, but as we grow spiritually, we are able to handle more challenges. Thank God that for every new level, there is greater authority! In this powerful message by Rev. Funke Ewuosho, receive encouragement and tools that will help you enter into the rest God has promised us, no matter the circumstances!



5 GBP

God is not is not done with you yet! God isn't done with loving you, blessing you, healing you, teaching you, moulding you, using you, etc. And He's not going to be done until the day Christ returns- "And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns." So, don't get tired, don't be satisfied and don't stop; there's is still much more that God has in store for you. In this teaching, Rev. Funke will also be talking about embracing the right mind-sets and attitudes to life.

Genesis 15:18-21 (AMPC)

*On the same day the Lord made a covenant (promise, pledge) with Abram, saying, To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates—the land of The Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, The Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, The Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.*

Read Genesis 17:1-19 (AMPC)

We see God honour His Word to His covenant partners, demonstrating His power on their behalf to fulfil His covenant expectations. Abraham had his name changed and went on to believe God concerning the promised son, Isaac. He also had to pass his test when he was told to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.

### The New Covenant

Our covenant with God was made possible through the sacrifices of our Lord Jesus Christ whose blood was shed to ratify the new covenant. His body was broken to make healing available to us. He took our place so we can take our God ordained place in the family of God. The covenant is between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father God. We are beneficiaries of the covenant as Jesus Christ was our representative in the covenant. He came to restore mankind to what God had in mind from the beginning of creation. We were made in the image and likeness of God. Through sin, we lost the glory of His image and presence, but Jesus came as the express image of God to take our punishment and restore us to the image we had lost in Adam's fall. Now we are designed to grow into conformity to Christ, the image of God the Father.

Matthew 26:26-28 (NKJV)

*Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper*

*(Mark 14:22–26; Luke 22:14–23; 1 Cor. 11:23–26)*

*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Read Hebrews 8:6-13 (as seen in Jer. 31:31–34)

The entirety of our relationship with God is based on the new covenant. This covenant is made on our behalf by the Lord Jesus Christ, who stands as our representative before the Father God. His blood was shed, His body was broken and He took our shame, sin and rejection so we can share in this relationship with God through Him. Now we have many things working for us and we have built our hope, confidence and future on this covenant.

We have an enemy who will try to discredit our God by using the weakness of our flesh so that he can keep us in bondage and stop us from giving God all the glory that is due to Him.

It is to the extent that we know who we have become, what we have received and what our assignment in life is, that we can do exploits for God as we rely on the covenant. God's purposes are designed to be fulfilled through His covenant relationships with mankind. He gives His Word, goes through the rituals involved with covenant-making with His covenant partner, then expects our hope and confidence in His covenant to become our basis for carrying out His will on planet earth. The new covenant was between our Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father.

All that we become are part of our privileges in Christ and our obedience to God defines our relationship with Him. We are who God says we are, we can do what He says we can do and we have what He says we have. These are all because of the covenant of grace we have through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Enjoying our covenant privileges demands the following:

(A) Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and receiving Him as our Lord and Saviour is the entry point into this covenant with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This brings us into our privileges of the covenant: our new identity; the new authority we have; and the new relationship of sonship we have with the Father God as we become part of His family and part of the church our Lord Jesus is building today.

Ephesians 2:4-10

*But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

(B) We also need to align our lifestyle with values based on the covenant we have with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our thoughts, words and actions should be based on His Word.

1 Peter 3:8-12

*Called to Blessing*

*Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 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. For*

*"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."*

(C) We need to develop the desire to please God in all areas of our lives. This is done through obedience, staying teachable in humility and receiving all the Spirit of God would have us know and apply in our lives.

(D) We need to be battle ready against all the works of the enemy through warfare prayers as well as confronting thoughts that are contrary when they come up in our minds.

# THE ENTIRETY OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS BASED ON THE NEW COVENANT...

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...*

Read Ephesians 6:10-18

Seek to give God all the glory in everything, through worshipping regularly and acknowledging His help and guidance in our lives, as well as in our daily devotions.

We impact our world through evangelism, helping the poor and healing the sick. These represent our responsibilities in Christ as a result of our covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We also add value to others in Christ as we serve them through the avenues of the local church. Those who receive Christ as their Lord and Saviour are welcome to become part of the local expression of the church Jesus is building.

Mark 16:15-18

*And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."*

Matthew 16:15-19

*He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*

We are destined to be conformed to the Son, reflecting the Father in His fullness.

Colossians 1:9-18

*Preeminence of Christ*

*For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

Romans 8:29-30

*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

As we meditate on these scriptures and begin to act on them and depend on the Holy Spirit of God in us to lead, teach and guide us, our prayers will become more effective as we take our place in God's family, allowing Him to have His way in and through us.

We shall grow up into Christ and carry out the plans and purposes of God as we fulfil our assignment and bring glory to God. Whatever we are called to do will be made known to us as we fellowship with His Word and Spirit. We shall be enjoying our privileges and carry out our responsibilities in the covenant we have with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rev. Kola Ewuosho

## WINNING VALUES:

1. *Integrity* - Proverbs 22:1
2. *Faithfulness* - Proverbs 20:6
3. *Consistency* - Ecclesiastes 11:1-6
4. *Contentment* - Exodus 20:17
5. *Giving* - Luke 6:38
6. *Relationships* - 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

# WINNING CORE VALUES ATTITUDES &

Rev. Funke Ewuosho

## WINNING ATTITUDES:

1. *What is your attitude towards God and the things of God?* - Matthew 6:33
2. *What is your attitude towards life?* - 1 Corinthians 7:29-31
3. *What is your attitude towards people?* - James 2:1-4
4. *What is your attitude towards power?* - Ephesians 6:9
5. *What is your attitude towards money?* - 1 Timothy 6:6-10
6. *What is your attitude towards your words* - Proverbs 25:14
7. *What is your attitude towards authority?* - Ephesians 6:2-3
8. *What is your attitude towards work?* - Ephesians 6:5-8

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the *end* of a  
thing is  
**BETTER**  
*than* its  
beginning

REV. FUNKE EWUOSHO

**A**s the year rolls to an end, there couldn't be a more encouraging word to end the year than this- **"The end of a thing is better than its beginning" (Ecclesiastes 7:8a)! You might have started the year in a sad way, or maybe the year has been quite rough and difficult and hasn't quite gone the way you had expected. This is a word of encouragement for you.**

The first encouragement to draw from this verse of scripture is that, whatever has a beginning has an end! No matter how long it lasts for, it won't last forever. The Bible says, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5c); and "Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy" (Psalm 126:5 NIV).

The believer should be rest assured whenever they are confronted by the enemy or any adverse situation, that he will be defeated because, "When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19c). Remember, when Pharaoh went after the Israelites with choice chariots and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over them (Exodus 14:7), they all perished in the sea! The enemy might have brought out his choice weapons against you, and it might seem like all hell has broken loose on you, but remember that the bigger the attack, the bigger the defeat of the enemy and the bigger your victory! The Bible says, "Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God Himself" (Philippians 1:28 NLT).

However, the more exciting news is that not only will the enemy be defeated, but God's Word says you will come out of the situation the better for it! When the Israelites left Egypt after a long period of slavery and hardships, they didn't leave empty handed- "The Lord brought His people out of Egypt, loaded with silver and gold..." (Psalm 105:37 NLT).

God's plans are to prosper His people and not to harm them; to end their captivity and to restore their fortunes. He wants to give us double for all our trouble. Whenever the enemy attacks us, his aim is to steal, kill and destroy; but God's plan is always to do us good at the end of every test that we face (Deut. 8:16).

Notice that our base text says 'the end of a thing is better than its beginning'. God said the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former (Hag. 2:9). The Bible says, "Though your beginning was small, Yet your latter end would increase abundantly" (Job 8:7); and "The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day" (Prov. 4:18 NIV).

God will not only restore to you what you have lost or what was stolen from you- which would have been good enough' but He promised to restore double to you! He said He will give the former and the latter rain in the same month (Joel 2:23). Not only shall you reclaim your former possessions that were taken from you, God says, "even today do I declare that I will restore double your former prosperity to you" (Zech. 9:12 Amp). The Lord restored Job's losses and gave Job twice as much as he had before- "Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42:12a).

Also, Job lived for another 140 years after his trials, and he died an old man, full of days! (Job 42:16-17). "Instead of shame and dishonor, you will enjoy a double share of honor. You will possess a double portion of prosperity in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours" (Isaiah 61:7 NLT).

Experiencing a better ending is, however, not automatic though it is God's will and plan for us! **We will, therefore, be looking closely at three key factors that we must embrace for this to be a reality in our lives.**

**i. Patience** i.e. perseverance or endurance.

"The end of a thing is better than its beginning; the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit" (Ecclesiastes 7:8). Whenever one is going through a tough time, a day feels like a year. It's therefore humanly difficult to be patient. Ishmael was a product of impatience; rather than waiting for the son of promise, Abram agreed to Sarai's proposal to have a son through her Egyptian slave, Hagar. The Bible says we should imitate those who inherited the promise, through faith and patience (Heb. 6:12). Notice, it's not faith *or* patience; but faith *and* patience! Some people think when you are in faith, you don't need patience. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the parable of the widow and the unjust judge, the judge said, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me' (Luke 18:4c-5). And Jesus described the widow's persistent attitude as faith! The Bible says, Abraham obtained God's promise after he had patiently endured (Heb. 6:15) - not *before*, but *after* he had patiently endured. Abraham's story would have ended differently if he hadn't endured patiently; "But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:4).

Some people think once they've done what God says or fulfilled the conditions, they wouldn't have any need for patience. But that's not true, because the Bible says, "For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36); "and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13c). Job was a good example of someone who was tried in every area- his family, his finances, his health and his relationship with God (which was the major bone of contention); but he stood fast. As the Bible records, "Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful" (James 5:11). For you to see the end intended by the Lord for you, you must learn to endure and persevere. Good things- even better things- come to those who wait! "It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord" (Lam. 3:26).

**ii. Hope**

'Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope. Even today I declare That I will restore double to you' (Zech. 9:12).

No matter how adverse or negative the situation looks, in order to accomplish a better ending we must maintain hope! The first thing the enemy tries to steal from us when we're going through tough times, is hope. Nobody who has hope in them would ever give up or take their own life. God's thoughts towards us are to give us a future and a hope (Jer. 29:11). Hope is an anchor for our soul (Heb. 6:19); it gives us assurance and stability.

*Continued on page 14...*

## YOU MIGHT HAVE STARTED THE YEAR IN A SAD WAY OR MAYBE THE YEAR HAS BEEN QUITE ROUGH AND DIFFICULT, AND HASN'T QUITE GONE THE WAY YOU HAD EXPECTED - THIS IS A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOU...

It's important to note that we are talking about spiritual hope and not natural hope and it is often necessary to differentiate between the two! Natural hope is based on natural realities, e.g your salary, your age, your qualifications, your pedigree, your race, etc. It is based on what you can see. The Bible says, "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. 8:24c-25). Natural hope isn't wrong in itself, but it's limited and can be limiting; it doesn't count in the face of spiritual challenges or opposition!

Spiritual hope on the other hand, is based on God's Word. The psalmist said, "I hope in Your word" (Psalm 119:114c). The Bible also says, "the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled" (Rom. 15:4c NLT). Spiritual hope isn't wishful thinking; rather it has a full assurance (Heb. 6:11). Hope and faith go hand in hand; faith is the substance (or assurance) of things hoped for (Heb. 11:1a). Hope that is based on God's Word doesn't disappoint us because God watches over His Word to perform it (Rom. 5:5 and Jer. 1:12)! We are told to "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23).

Abraham's story is a good example of spiritual and natural hope. The Bible says, "who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken" (Rom. 4:18a). That is, contrary to natural hope, Abraham, in spiritual hope, believed. There was nothing in the natural to give him hope; not only was Sarah's womb dead, but his body was now also dead!

Hope gives us joy and peace. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him" (Rom. 15:13 NIV). These are two key elements we need to maintain when going through tough and rough times. God's peace guards our hearts and minds (Phil. 4:7); and His joy gives us the strength to persevere (Neh. 8:10). Jesus, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross; despising the shame (Heb. 12:2). And no matter what we're going through, we can "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:2c).

The Psalmist said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). The 'rod' could represent the Word, and the 'staff', the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, comforts and strengthens us by giving us hope through the Word of God- "that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13c).

### iii. Covenant-Mindedness

"As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you" (Zech. 9:11-12 NIV).

God is a God of Covenant; He operates by the Covenant. When the children of Israel cried out to God because of their bondage in Egypt, God remembered His Covenant with their fathers- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob- and acknowledged them (Exodus 2:23-25). God didn't just hear them because they cried out, but because their cry triggered the covenant! Some people think that if they could just cry loud and long enough, God would do something about their case. No - what makes God hear us is His Covenant.

### *God works by covenant and not by feelings*

Jesus healed and performed miracles, being moved by mercy and compassion. Blind Bartimaeus cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark 10:47c). God's compassion and mercy are beyond mere feelings; they are based on His covenant!

When Jesus healed the woman who had the spirit of infirmity, He said, "So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound (think of it) for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" (Luke 13:16). Jesus healed that woman based on God's covenant with Abraham. The Bible says Jesus came to help the descendants of Abraham (Heb. 2:16). Thank God, we have also become Abraham's descendants through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:29)! Also, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:13-14a).

The night before the Israelites were to leave Egypt, God told them to kill a lamb per family and apply the blood on their houses. He said, "Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13). Note that it was their faith and obedience that made it work! What if they hadn't applied the blood like they were told or had gone out of their houses, contrary to God's instructions (Exodus 12:22)? When the spies swore to Rahab that she and her household would not be destroyed, they, however, told her that the oath would only be binding on them if, when they entered the land, she had tied the scarlet cord in the window through which she had let them down, and had brought all her family into the house (Josh. 2:17-18). How does this apply to us currently? Jesus said, "this is My blood of the new covenant" (Matt. 26:28). So we can also apply the blood of Jesus on our houses and the houses of all those who are connected to us. The 'hyssop' we use to apply the blood is our tongue: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony" (Rev. 12:11a). We must believe and constantly confess what the blood of Jesus has accomplished for us. The Bible says Christ has obtained redemption for us by His own blood- not with the blood of goats and calves (Heb. 9:12). In addition to our constant confessions, we must also regularly partake of the Lord's Table. God commanded that the Passover be observed as an ordinance for the Israelites forever (Exodus 12:24).

# NO MATTER HOW ADVERSE OR NEGATIVE THE SITUATION LOOKS, IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH A BETTER ENDING; WE MUST MAINTAIN HOPE! THE FIRST THING THE ENEMY TRIES TO STEAL FROM US WHEN WE'RE GOING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES, IS HOPE.

And it wasn't a coincidence that Jesus instituted the 'Holy Communion' during the Passover meal with His disciples (Matt. 26:26-27). And the Bible says, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

## **We need to know what Christ has redeemed us from so we can take full advantage of our redemption:**

(i). He has redeemed us from the hand of the enemy (Psalm 107:2). "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 12:11a). As the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt, the Father has also delivered us from the power of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of His Son, Jesus (Col. 1:13).

(ii). He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, by becoming a curse for us (Gal. 3:13-14). The curse of the Law is threefold; spiritual death, poverty, sickness and diseases. For spiritual death, He's given us eternal life (John 3:16; Rom. 8:1-2); for poverty, He's made us rich (2 Cor. 8:9); and for sickness and disease, we've been healed by His stripes (Isa. 53:4-5; 1 Pet. 2:24).

(iii). He has redeemed us from (premature) death- "He redeems me from death" (Psalm 103:4b NLT). He promised to satisfy us with long life (Psalm 91:16). Also, the Bible says, "He sent out His Word and healed them, snatching them from the door of death" (Psalm 107:20 NLT). Job was snatched from the brink of death and we can see the semblances of Christ's redemptive work in this account...

"Yes, his soul draws near the Pit, And his life to the executioners. If there is a messenger for him, A mediator, one among a thousand, To show man His uprightness, Then He is gracious to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom'; His flesh shall be young like a child's, He shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him, He shall see His face with joy, For He restores to man His righteousness..." (Job 33:22-26).

Christ came to fulfil all the conditions for our redemption. Jesus is the Mediator (Heb. 8:6; 12:24) and Guarantor of the new Covenant (Heb. 7:22). He is our ransom (1 Peter 1:18-21); He is our Righteousness; He was made sin for us so that we might become God's righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Cor. 1:30).

So, like Job you can say, "God has delivered me from going down to the pit, and I shall live to enjoy the light of life" (Job 33:28 NIV). The Bible says, "In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:4-5 NIV).

We can, therefore, expect a lot of good things in our lives, in the light of the Covenant. We can expect God to respond to us every time we call on Him because by the blood, we are guaranteed access to the presence of God (Heb. 10:19; 4:16). We can expect to be forgiven whenever we confess our sins (Col. 1:14; Heb. 12:24; and 1 John 1:9); to be healthy and be healed when we're sick (3 John 2; Matt. 8:16-17); to prosper; to be satisfied with long life; to overcome the devil whenever he comes against us; to be delivered from all our troubles (Psalm 34:19); etc.

Because of the blood of His covenant with you, God said He will deliver you from your captivity and restore double to you; so expect the end of this year to be better than its beginning!

And if you're not yet in covenant with God, you can be today. What you need to do is to believe with your heart that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died for your sins and that God raised Him from the dead. Then receive and confess Him with your mouth as your Lord (John 3:16; Acts 16:30-31; John 1:12; Rom. 10:8-10; and 1 John 5:4-5). Welcome to a covenant relationship with God!

God bless you  
Rev. Funke Ewuosho

## **WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US FROM, SO WE CAN TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF OUR REDEMPTION...**

# HOW TO BE A GODLY INFLUENCE

REV. KOLA EWUOSHO

**I** In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend (overcome, understand or quench) it" (John 1:4-5).

The battle between light and darkness has been the battle of influence throughout the history of mankind. Part of God's purposes in the life of any one is to influence others. This word signifies our purpose on earth. Some influence can matter for eternity. God's influence through us has an eternal purpose. The word 'influence' has been around for a long time and its effect is seen throughout history. Both positive and the negative influences can be seen to characterise the history of mankind (for good or bad respectively). Everybody is being influenced by someone or something, no matter who you are. Nobody is an island unto him or herself. We see it all around us. Everyone is also contributing something in influencing others. The question is not if we will influence others, but what kind of influence we will generate in the lives of others.

On a more personal note, our success in life is very dependent on our ability to influence others. Leadership expert, John Maxwell, says leadership is influence and believes that our leadership lid can determine the level of success we can attain in life. Babies learn the power of influence as they cry for attention; young lovers learn how to influence each other; and parents seek to influence their children for their good. We all need to influence and are influenced by others in many areas of our lives. We need to be careful how we influence others and how we allow ourselves to be influenced by others. Christians are left on earth by God to generate a godly influence that is so powerful, its effects are seen all over the world. God has given us all the ability to influence and be influenced and how we exercise this potential power is up to us. If we harness it for good, we are successful, otherwise we shall have ourselves to blame. So let us discover, develop and deploy this potential power given to us by God and use it for His glory, for the good of mankind and in fulfilling God's plans and our personal goals.



### WHAT IS INFLUENCE?

To influence is to change people's thoughts, actions and beliefs. 'Hard power' for influence is when we use hard consequences like punishments or repercussions that are not desirable. When authority is exercised with this in mind there is power to influence but the heart is not necessarily touched. With 'soft power' we receive influence that touches the heart not just the mind. 'Hard power' can change the mind not necessarily the heart. There are times when that is the right kind of influence to use. So many times, that kind of influence can bring corrections and adjustment to young children. 'Soft power' is when the heart is touched and there is willingness to be influenced from the heart of a person. Amongst nations, we see the use of sanctions as a means of influencing some changes in these nations. The question is, when is 'hard power' less or more effective than 'soft power'? In this study we shall be looking at 'soft power' for influencing others. We influence people through writing, speaking and acting. It is up to us to use our influence for godly purposes and for His kingdom. How do we get people to change their thoughts, actions and beliefs? We cannot, unless they give us the 'permission' to do so. The question is how do we earn that permission? When we can connect with people and care for them and are sensitive to them and their needs and they see that we value them, they then give us the gift of influence: "I am going to allow you to lead me". With this, people willingly agree with you and go along with you with all their heart. People tend to trust you as they come to know you. Equally, they tend to distrust you if you abuse their trust. This is true in marriage, in church leadership and in business. We walk into every new relationship with a certain amount of trust equity by default. What we do with it makes all the difference. Invest in relationships wisely!

### CHARACTER AND SKILLS

There are two basic reasons why people will allow you to influence them: character and skills. Who we are is our character and what we can do is our skills. Our being and doing are two areas we generate great influence. High skills and quality character will lead to greater influence. The character traits people will like to follow are as follows: integrity, generosity, gratitude, excellence, optimism, passion, tenacity and friendliness.

Some skills include: communication, relationships, self-management, and knowledge. Some people-skills will help in managing people and the pressure of handling their problems. Both can be developed.

One of the greatest of all character traits is humility. I will share some of the reasons why this is so.

- Until you can be managed well, you can't manage well, and being managed definitely requires humility.
- You are not leading well until you put the needs of others before your own, which requires humility.
- You won't invest time in others until you realise you're not the center of the universe.
- You won't be a learner or listener without humility which can lead to stagnation and you miss out on important feedback; receiving and making the most of constructive criticism definitely demands humility.
- You won't improve unless you realise your need for it, which requires humility.

Humility is not feeling bad or low about yourself. Rather, it is having a realistic picture of who you are, and not thinking of yourself more highly than you ought to. No wonder the Master says if we would be great we should stoop low to serve others.

### SALT AND LIGHT

Jesus calls believers, salt and light in Matthew 5:13-14 and Luke 14:34. Salt mixes with and influences whatever it comes in contact with. It sweetens and preserves. Jesus is the light of the world. When He comes into our lives we become lights ourselves. Darkness represents ignorance and the bible says darkness cannot overpower light. Light represents development and enlightenment. Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50). Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know you ought to answer each one (Col.4:6). We have all been affected by our nature, nurture and environment. It's time to let our new found relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ affect us so thoroughly that we can in turn influence others for Christ.

*Continued on page 18...*

# ONE CHRIST-LIKE LIFE HAS THE POWER TO INFLUENCE MANY FOR YEARS TO COME...

**CHRISTLIKENESS:** The character of Christ, if developed in us, is the reflection of the nature of God in us. We were made in the image of God and Jesus Christ is the express image of the Father God, according to Hebrews 1:3. We are destined to be conformed to the image of the Son, in character and power. All the best of characters are found in Christ. One Christ-like life has the power to influence many for years to come.

Sin as a nature was crucified on the cross of Christ on our behalf so we can now receive a new life and hence develop a new character - Christlikeness. It is possible to develop character traits through hard work and determination. Secular literature encourages us to take certain traits and seek to develop them. This is a possibility as some have succeeded in doing so. As Christians, when we have received the nature of Christ into our hearts, we endeavour to yield to that nature rather than develop something external to us. We feed that nature by feeding on God's Word; we exercise that nature by our heart-felt obedience to God, by loving one another as He loved us. We learn to forgive, endure and hence develop the character traits that are found in Christ.

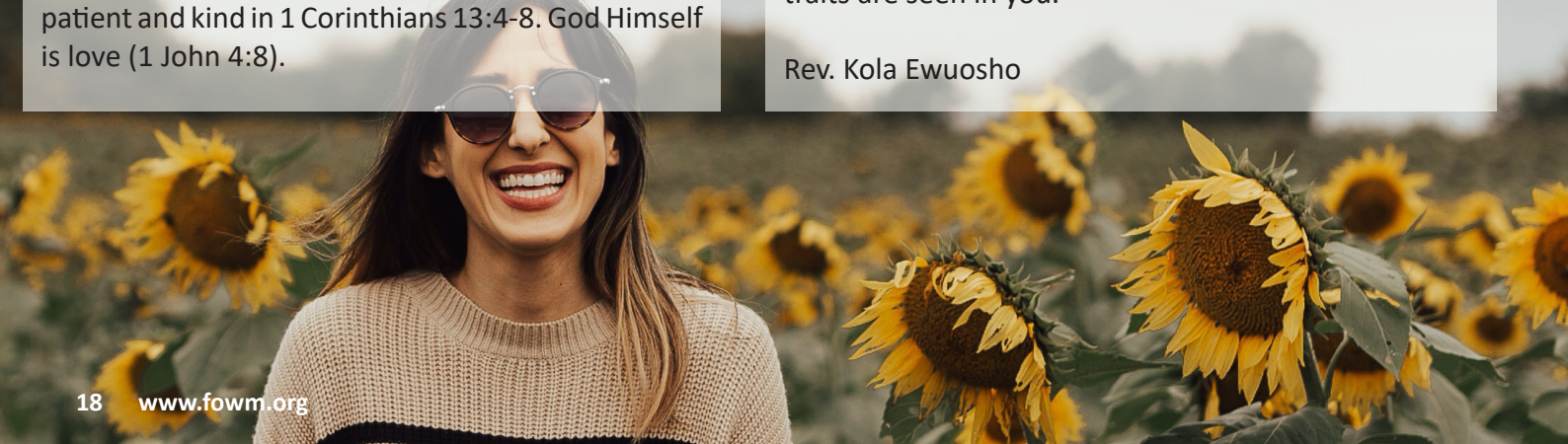
All the character traits found in the book of 2 Peter 1:5-8 are to be developed in us as we yield to the nature of Christ in us: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue (a quality that elicited preeminent estimation for a person, intrinsic value, moral excellency), to virtue, knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love". No wonder we are helped to understand that love is patient and kind in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. God Himself is love (1 John 4:8).

## Major steps in becoming a person of Godly influence:

- 1.** Be genuinely born again: receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour and allow God's Word to be final authority in your life. When you yield to God's authority in your life, you are equipped to become a godly influence in the lives of others.
- 2.** Become a worshipper of the Almighty God. When God takes His rightful place in your heart and life, you will find a greater effectiveness in your ability to influence others with His love, power and wisdom.
- 3.** Feed on the Word of God regularly. Through study and meditation, we digest spiritually God's Word into our lives, speaking to ourselves as we take in loads of His Word is part of our feeding (Psalm 1:1-4).
- 4.** Be a doer of the Word: walk in love; cast your cares; use your faith; do good to others; overcome evil with good; watch the thoughts you permit yourself to think; and enforce God's Word into your life.
- 5.** Be a person of prayer: Ephesians 6:18 says to be prayerful. Let your prayers be in accordance with the Word of God.
- 6.** Develop other traits and skills necessary for your success in life and be a developer of other people too. Develop your leadership skills as well as your communication skills and live your life with a passion for excellence. Learn time-management and goal-setting skills.
- 7.** Build healthy relationships with others and seek to be a blessing to others. Influence others for God and for their own good.
- 8.** Become a constant learner. Learn from your mistakes, from other people's writings and always seek to share with others what you are learning. Be a student of life and a student for life. There are things to learn and to unlearn, and thing to add to and remove from your life.
- 9.** Love God and love people. People know when they are genuinely loved. Be a lover of people.

People will give you the gift of influence when these traits are seen in you.

Rev. Kola Ewuosho



# IN MEMORY OF BILLY GRAHAM 1918 - 2018



## ***A VISIT TO THE BILLY GRAHAM LIBRARY....***

In the month of July 2019, my wife and I took a trip to Charlotte, North Carolina in the USA. I was invited to speak at the bi-annual conference of the Christian Union, Alumni of the University of Benin, Nigeria.

After the conference we were taken to a large compound that was housing the Billy Graham library and other monuments to the legacy of this great man and his wife, Ruth Graham. We saw their burial sites too. Billy Graham led many people across the globe to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The multitudes of people at his crusades were a testament to His legacy.

At the library, we saw videos of people coming to respond to the altar call he gave asking them to give their lives to Jesus Christ. It was quite inspiring to see videos as well as photographs and hear comments about what God accomplished through one man's complete obedience to God's call on his life. Then we saw many books written by him and so many undeniable proofs of God's power working through someone who would dare to obey Him and give their all to serve God's purposes in their lives. Even now, seeing, reading and hearing what God did through this man still has the potential to lead people afresh to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To God be all the glory!

Rev. Kola Ewuosho



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