The Seven Components of the Will of God

Rev. Olusola A. Areogun

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ABOUT THE BOOK

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

The Seven Components of the Will of God is a treatise from the stable of Reverend Olusola A. Areogun, and this book brings the understanding of the will of God to your doorstep. Many Christians have sought to know and do the will of God for their lives, but up until now they've not understood the critical details of the will of God for them. This book dissolves your doubts and removes the dross from your silver.

With 30 chapters of revelational knowledge, you will no more be in the dark as touching the will of God concerning your destiny, your calling, your career, your family, and whatsoever you put your heart to. If you mean business with God, and you don't want to end up less than what God planned for you, then you have the right book in your hands!

In this book, discover

- the divine purpose for your life and resources
- the components of wisdom
- divine strategy
- what is greater than prayer
- how not to lose your place

BEWARE! THIS BOOK WILL INCREASE YOUR SENSITIVITY AND ACCURACY IN THE WILL OF GOD FOR YOU IN LIFE AND DESTINY.

INTRODUCTION

The Seven Components of the Will of God is an unabridged version of the revelations that God showed me as touching the matter of the will of God. Many Christians stumble at the purpose of God because they do not understand the will of God, but from now on you don't have to be ignorant of the will of God on any matter.

The seven components of the will of God are *purpose*, *timing*, *place*, *strategy*, *people*, *measure,* and *generation,* yet you need a detailed understanding of how these components work together in order to get everything that God has ordained for you before the foundation of the world. When you finish reading this book, you will discover that you don't have to be agitated on any matter because the will of God will be done. You only have to labour to discover it and align yourself to it.

You should approach this book prayerfully and with attention to details because many of the statements you are about to read came directly from the womb of the Spirit of God and as such your goal should not be to rush to the end of the book; instead, get a marker, mark critical statements, and make it a guidebook and a reference book. This is one book you will need to read more than once. Banish confusion from your life and see God work wonders of accuracy in your life, calling, career, and destiny.

Yours in Him,

Olusola A. Areogun

Osogbo, Nigeria

August 2011

PART I

DIVINE PURPOSE

CHAPTER 1

Understanding and Walking in the Power of Purpose

The most important subject that a human being has to grasp is the understanding of divine purpose in order to fulfil his or her reason for being on the earth. Let us look at I Timothy 2: 3-4:

> for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Now these verses tell us that God wants two things to happen to every human being:

1. That all men should be saved. God wants you to be delivered from sin, from the devil's captivity. He wants you to be delivered from futility, from vanity, and

from a wasted lifestyle. He wants people to be saved and to be maximised.

2. He wants people to come to the knowledge of the truth. The Bible says, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

There are seven things that I believe that God wants every man to know; ignorance in these seven things will make a man less than what God wants him to be. Now it is possible for a man to be less than what God makes him but it is impossible for a man to be greater than what God makes him. Paul said, "I am what I am by the grace of God." It should be your determination, and that of every person that 'I will not be less than what God ordained me to become.'

1. Understanding purpose

The first thing that God wants every human being to know is their purpose on the earth—the purpose of God behind your life. The Bible tells us in

the book of Ecclesiastes 3: 1—

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

There's a purpose attached to everything that God makes. God doesn't do anything purposelessly; He is a God of purpose. Behind every step, behind every statement, behind every action of the Almighty God is a divine purpose. The Bible says something concerning the subject of purpose in the book of Romans 8: 28-30:

> And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
>
> For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
>
> Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Now look closely at what the Bible says in verse 28: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called *according to his purpose*!"

If you can find the purpose of God for your life and enter into that purpose and walk in that purpose, there's nothing the devil can do against you that will be your injury. Everything that happens to you from that moment on will be for your good.

Look at Joseph, the young man discovered the purpose of God for his life at the age of seventeen and shared his revelation with his brothers, and they thought they were going to get rid of him. From that point onwards, everything they did to him negatively became another step in the fulfilment of the purpose he had discovered. The Bible says in the book of Proverbs 29: 18—

> Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

The word 'vision' there is not the dream in the night *per se*. What the Bible was referring to there is that where there's no redemptive revelation of your

purpose, where there is no prophetic communication of divine purpose to a man, there is destruction, there is wastage, and there is aimlessness. *That is, if you get into anything that has no vision or a prophetic revelation of redemption and the purpose of God for that person or for the people involved*, it will waste those people.

God wants us to understand this very well that the first question you ask when you get anywhere—in your place of work, in church, or in marriage—is 'What is the vision here?' because wherever you cannot find a vision and expression of the purpose of God, there will be wastage and destruction. But when you find a vision and serve a vision, wherever, whether in the secular or in the Spiritual realm of life, nobody can use you; the vision will make you. Let me repeat that: 'Wherever you find a vision and you serve that vision, nobody can use you, that vision will make you.'

Joseph served the vision in the house of Potiphar, and he was made the prime minister in that place. He didn't go to any school of management studies but he was made; the man may have thought he was using him. But the reason why many people

don't give their best to what they are doing is because they are not sure that God actually wants them to be doing that thing. But when you understand the purpose of God for your life, it makes all the difference in the world. So that's the first thing that God wants everybody to understand. In the book of John 18: 37-38, Jesus standing before Pilate made a very powerful statement:

> Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice
>
> Pilate saith unto him, what is truth? . . .

Remember we said at the start that God wants every man to know the truth. After you are born again, he wants you to come unto the knowledge of the truth and the knowledge of the truth includes the revelation of these seven components of the will of God. The first of these is Divine Purpose.

Jesus knew his purpose; he knew why he came to the world. He had many offers to become the

king. In fact, the Bible says in one place that when he perceived that people were coming to make him king, he went up to a high mountain. This shows that there's something higher than being made a king by men. Jesus knew that there was something higher than being made a king by men, that there's something higher than whatever the world had to offer.

Beloved, the Bible calls it the *high calling of God*. No matter what you become in the world, until you discover the purpose of God for your life, you are still operating in the low calling. Joseph became the prime minister but the post of prime minister was just a platform for the high calling of God upon his life. The high calling of God for Joseph's life was to be the saviour of the nation of Israel, to preserve the lineage of the Messiah.

Esther became queen of Babylon, one of the most powerful offices in those days. But it was a platform to fulfil the high calling on her life. Her high calling was to be saviour of the nation of Israel. Nehemiah was the king's cup-bearer, the most trusted position in the land of Babylon at that time because in order to kill the king of Babylon, all you

need do was to bribe the king's cup-bearer, poison the wine, and the king would die. He was occupying a high position, but the position was a platform for him to fulfil his high calling which was to rebuild the fallen walls of Jerusalem, and he became fulfilled when he started rebuilding the walls.

Look at life, and you'll see that everybody has a low calling and a high calling. The high calling is the purpose of God for your life; the low calling is the platform, achievement, and accomplishment on the earth that gives you the opportunity to know and fulfil your high calling.

Many Christians have entered great offices in the human society and most of them did not discover the purpose for that platform in the purpose of God. They didn't inquire to discover—*why did God make me a governor? Why did God make me a high official? Why did God make me this? Why did God make me that?* God gives you a platform in the human settings to fulfil a divine purpose. It is when you fulfil that purpose that you actually become fulfilled. That's the high calling. Paul said that he became such a wonderful person in Judaism but he didn't enter the high calling until he met Jesus. Look

at Philippians 3: 12-15:

> Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus
>
> Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before
>
> I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus
>
> Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

This tells us that one of the marks of mature Christianity is that a man is not just celebrating promotion but he's walking in the purpose of that promotion. In Genesis 50: 20, Joseph's brothers thought he would kill them since he had become prime minister, but Joseph knew the purpose:

> But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

That is a man who understood God was using the situation to work out His higher purpose for his life. Joseph knew that God planned that high purpose and calling for his life as a saviour, and he's not going to retaliate now. Thirteen years earlier, he was at the mercy of his brothers—a seventeen-year-old boy apprehended by his brothers who put him in a pit but didn't know that they were sending him to fulfil destiny. Thirteen years later, they met him as a thirty-year-old prime minister with their own lives in his hand, but he had discovered purpose.

When a Christian gains promotion and he's just thanking God for the promotion, you need to understand that promotion is not just a breakthrough. There's a purpose behind that promotion. Move beyond the breakthrough to the purpose of the breakthrough and start living in the purpose. That's maturity. Paul said, 'As many as be matured, let us have the same mind' (Phil. 3: 15). What is that mind? It is the mind that understands that there's a high calling of God that you should press unto. This same Paul rose to the heights of religion in Israel in those days, and when he was saved, he discovered the purpose why he was brilliant. He wrote two-thirds of the New Testament.

God wants you to know your purpose. Lack of understanding of a man's purpose leads to wastage; that's what the Bible says in Proverbs 29: 18: *"Where there is no vision, the people perish."* If you get to a place and you can't find vision, leave that place. If you get inside a church, and there's no vision there to serve, then leave. Find a place that you can find a vision to serve. In marriage, find the vision of marriage and serve. Don't complain about your husband; don't complain about your wife. Serve the vision of marriage, and the vision will make you. Serve the vision of the place you are, and you'll see that the vision will make you for a great role later in life.

> Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also am apprehended of Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3: 12)

This tells you that when Jesus was saving you and before Jesus saves anybody, there's something in His mind as to why He saved you. You are saved for a purpose; you are saved for a reason; you are redeemed for a reason; you were delivered for a purpose. And until you discover that purpose, you

are not yet living, and you cannot be totally fulfilled. Remember that there's a high calling and a low calling. Many people struggle with Paul's statement in Philippians 3: 13-14:

> Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before
>
> I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Does it mean that some people have a high calling and others a low calling? No. No calling is superior to another. They are only different from each other—just like you cannot say the husband is superior to the wife; they are just different. There's difference in assignment and difference in placement, but that does not mean superiority. When somebody says that the apostle is superior to the prophet, the prophet is superior to teacher or pastor, and so on, that's a misunderstanding of what the Bible is saying in that area. There is, however, a high calling for everybody. The high calling of God is the purpose of God for whatever He has given to you. Until you press into the purpose of God, you are not walking in

the high calling of God for your life.

Joseph became the Prime Minister of Egypt; the position was not the high calling of God for Joseph. The high calling of God for him was the purpose for God making him the Prime Minister; and he did not walk in the high calling until he fulfilled the purpose for which he became Prime Minister.

Esther became the queen of Babylon, but the throne was not the high calling; the purpose of being the queen was the high calling. In Esther 4: 13, we see how Mordecai moved Esther into the high calling of God for her life. I believe that many people today, especially precious saints of God, need to be propelled into the high calling of God for their lives. Mordecai knew that God had a purpose for making Esther queen. Although the name of God does not appear in the book of Esther, you see the influence and the sovereignty of God supervising human affairs like He does in our lives today. And so Mordecai now answered:

> Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

(Esther 4: 13)

Remember, we said the mark of maturity is to discover the purpose for blessings. When a Christian is celebrating blessings, promotion, and achievements without discovering the purpose for it, he exhibits the mark of childishness. The true mark of maturity is to walk in the purpose of the blessings of God.

Thank God for the moves of God, but there is a purpose behind them. God is waiting for majority of Christians who are still celebrating breakthrough to move into the purpose of breakthrough and start walking in the power of the purpose of that breakthrough so the kingdom can move on; they too can move on and fulfil the joy of the heart of God for giving them that role.

There are Christians in great positions today like Esther, and Esther could have remained in the palace, being chauffeur-driven and enjoying the comfort of the palace. If Mordecai was a greedy pastor, he could have just been enjoying the privilege of the uncle of the queen. But he had a concern; he saw the purpose of God and was being driven by the purpose of God, not by the applause of men. He was driven by the purpose of God for his people, the Jewish nation.

Look at what he said to Esther in verse 14:

> For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Mordecai didn't say 'at such a time as this'; he said, "*for* such a time as this." God had been preparing Esther *for* such a time as this. Beloved, I don't know where you are presently in life, but I know *God is preparing you for a time*. Remember, I said the first thing that a man must know is his purpose in life.

Mordecai was sensitising Esther to her purpose for being a queen. That is a mark of maturity: discovering purpose. That is a mark of the high calling—walking in the purpose for the calling of God. Walking in the purpose of being a pastor is the high calling of the pastor's ministry, walking in the purpose of being an evangelist is the high calling of being an evangelist, walking in the purpose of being a singer or a choir member is the high calling of a choir member, walking in the purpose of being an usher in

church is the high calling of an usher, and walking in the purpose of God for being an officer in a secular place is the high calling of God for you.

God can give you a platform in the secular society or a platform in the church. The purpose for that platform is the high calling itself, and walking in the high calling is what brings joy to the heart of God. You will see scattered throughout the scriptures, men and women who discovered their purpose. For example, Nicodemus was a silent disciple but he had come into a high relationship with Pilate, the governor. And when Jesus was crucified at Calvary, only that man had the connection to secure the body of Jesus for a decent burial. He discovered the purpose for his connection to the governor. He didn't just see it as a walking in popularity and enjoying privileges from the Roman Empire, he saw that it was meant to give the Lord Jesus Christ a decent burial. He discovered the purpose for his wealth.

In Mark 14, a woman called Mary broke an alabaster box of ointment and poured the content on the head of Jesus. Judas immediately said, 'Why this waste?' The Spirit of Judas is the one that tells you

that you are wasting your life walking in the purpose of God. A man carrying a vision from God is superior to a man who has materials. Materials can be lost but a vision that is properly pursued will speak at the appointed time. The Bible talks of the merchant who was searching for pearls and found a pearl of great value, and sold all that he had to buy the pearl. The purpose of God for your life is a pearl of great value, and it is worth all that you presently possess.

Paul had risen to a great height; if he had wanted money, he could have settled down in the Sanhedrin council; if he wanted popularity, he had it, but he discovered there is something higher than that. When the multitude wanted to make Jesus king, he went up higher. Beloved, you can go higher; there's something higher than what this world has to offer you. The Bible tells us that Moses considered the role of a deliverer for Israel (a slave tribe in Egypt) greater honour than the throne of Egypt itself. To be a Pharaoh was to be worshipped as god, but Moses saw something bigger than that.

Beloved, God always offers you something more than the world ever offers. It's a sad thing in the heart of God today to see the devil buying the

destinies and the purpose of God for the lives of many Christians with the tangible things of the world. Jesus was offered the world by the devil in Matthew 4, and he rejected it. In John 6: 16, men wanted to forcefully make Jesus king but he refused; he went up a higher mountain. What Jesus was telling us by that action is that the purpose of God is higher than prosperity; prosperity without an understanding of purpose is really poverty. The only thing that is superior to blessings is the purpose of God. And God wants His people to come into an awareness, a revelation, and into an understanding of that purpose and live for it.

That is when your life really becomes powerful; that is when your life becomes meaningful. Purpose adds meaning to your life. When a man does not understand his purpose, does not discover it, does not participate in it, his life becomes meaningless. Then many destructive things become attractive to him; even suicide becomes attractive. But you'll never see a man walking in the power and the strength of divine purpose contemplating suicide; NEVER, because purpose will eject such a thought from the heart and mind of the man. Here are the things that God wants man to know, and we'll be

looking at these things in details:

1. God wants a man to know His *purpose*
2. God wants a man to know his *timing*
3. God wants a man to know his *place* in life
4. God wants a man to know his *method* or *strategy*
5. God wants you to know your *people*
6. God wants you to know your *generation*
7. God wants you to know your *measure*

CHAPTER 2

Timing

The second thing that a man must know is his time in life. There's a time attached to the purpose of God for your life. You must know your timing. David said, "My times are in your hands." Jesus said, "My time is not yet come, but your time is always ". . ." Mordecai told Esther in Esther 4: 14, "Maybe you have come to the kingdom *for* such a time as this", 'maybe you were prepared and groomed secretly by God for such a time as this.' Beloved, this is your own time as well. This is critical if your living on the earth is not to be a waste.

> To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.
>
> He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. (Eccles. 3: 1, 11)
>
> Not as though I had already attained, either

> were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus
>
> Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before
>
> I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus
>
> Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. (Phil. 3: 12-15)

In Philippians 3: 15, it says, 'Let us therefore, as many as be mature, have this kind of mind.' The kind of mind he refers to is the mind that is pressing on towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God—the discovery and pursuit of the purpose of God. That is the high calling of God for any human being—the purpose of God for his life. You have different platforms to operate on the earth, but the platform that a man has is not the same as the purpose of the platform. We looked in the previous chapter at Joseph as a Prime Minister and Esther as a queen. Those are earthly positions. But the purpose for which Joseph became a Prime Minister, and the

purpose for which Esther became a queen is the high calling of God for their lives. So the mark of maturity is seen in the man who is pressing towards discovery and pursuit of divine purpose. Therefore, a person who is not mature will not be thinking like that; he will just be celebrating earthly positions and blessings without discovering the purpose for them.

Although Jesus' disciples were not young men, he called his disciples children on a number of occasions. Every time he referred to them as children, you'll discover that they were running away from the purpose of God for which he called them. He called them children in John 21 after he died, and they went into a room and hid themselves, and Peter backsliding, said, "I go fishing." Jesus called him to be a fisher of men, but by that time he said, 'I'll go back to fish.' Thus, when Jesus met them, He said, "Children, do you have any meat?" *God calls a man a child because he doesn't understand divine purpose*. And on other occasions, he referred to them as friends. He said, 'I call you friends because all that my father has given to me, I've shown to you, there's nothing I'm keeping from you.' (John 15:15) When you walk in the understanding of divine purpose, you will move higher in your walk with God

and relate with God at a higher level other than children.

Remember, we're looking at seven things that a man must understand about the will of God—the seven components of the will of God. Firstly, you must understand your purpose, and we saw that Jesus understood His purpose. Secondly, you must understand your timing. Every purpose of God has a time attached to it.

> I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower, and I will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am approved
>
> And the Lord answered me, and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it
>
> for the vision is for appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. (Hab. 2: 1-3)

The second thing that a man must understand is his timing. God sets times for us to do things in life. Many things in life will happen not because you did anything or struggled for it but because the time for

them has arrived. Nothing compares to a man whose time has come in the programme of God for his life. Nothing can stop him if that man doesn't stop himself. In John 7, we see the understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning time.

> His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest
>
> For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world
>
> For neither did his brethren believes in him. Then Jesus said unto them, my time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. (John 7: 3-5)

Jesus says 'my time' and 'your time' because His brothers at that time had not discovered the purpose of God for their lives, and they didn't even bother about it. Their time was always ready; they always had time for everything but because Jesus had discovered divine purpose and was walking in it, He knew that He didn't have time for everything and that He was living a timed life.

> And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there
>
> And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage
>
> And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, they have no wine
>
> Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. (John 2: 1-4)

Jesus was walking conscious of divine timing. He said that everything that concerned Him had a time attached to it. In Esther 4: 14-16, Mordecai told Esther, 'If you think you will escape by sitting in the palace as a queen and not respond to the call of purpose, God will raise deliverance for the children of Israel from another quarter. But who knows, may be you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this.' Men are created by God for a time, and what makes the difference many times is your response to time. Your time has come and you respond to it. You move at the appropriate time. Many people delay and miss their time; I pray you'll not miss your time in the programme of God in Jesus' name.

Although Israel is God's chosen people, the Bible gives the reason for their suffering several atrocities in the history of mankind; no other nation has suffered like them. It is because they missed their time; Jesus came for them, but they did not accept him; they refused him. The time of their peace came but they did not accept him!

> And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it
>
> Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes
>
> For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,
>
> And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. (Luke 19: 41-44)

Many blessings of God's people are timed by God. If you ought to be in church on one Sunday,

and you decide otherwise and your blessing comes, you miss your time of visitation. That time of visitation would have turned everything round in your favour. There's a time of divine visitation when it comes as seasons of special blessings for individuals, for family, for a nation, for a church, or for a group of people. If, however, you are not sensitive to time, you may be doing something else at the time that God is visiting, and miss Him. When a man misses time with God, the devil keeps appointment with him. That's what happened to the children of Israel; He said, because they missed the time of their visitation, their own day in the programme of God, the time will come when their enemies will cast a trench about them. And you look at all that Israel has gone through. The Roman people came to lay the city down in the world war. Hitler and the Nazis of Germany did all sorts of nasty things to them because they missed their time. May you not miss your time in Jesus' name.

Ecclesiastes 8: 6 tells us that wisdom is made up of two things, namely, time and decision:

> Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

A man who is wise understands time. If man doesn't understand time, he will be foolish. Verse 5 says, "Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgement." Remember, the first thing you must discover is your purpose, and to your purpose, there is both time and judgement. Judgement there is talking about decision. *Wisdom is composed of 80 percent* ***timing*** *accuracy and 20 percent* ***decision*** *accuracy*. In 1 Kings 13, the only blot on the record of David, was when he was supposed to be at the battlefield but sent Joab. The Bible says 'At the time whent kings go to battle, David stayed back at home and sent a representative and he saw a woman bathing.' And what should not have been a temptation to David became a temptation because he was at the wrong place at the wrong time. Imagine a brother pastor who is supposed to go to church on Sunday and says he wants to take rest at home and his former girlfriend comes to catch him at home, though he never planned to commit adultery. Many people never planned to do some evil, but because

they didn't walk conscious of timing, they kept appointment with negative things. God has a time for everything concerning you, and the things concerning your life have time to them. That's why the Bible says that one of the blessings of being filled with the Spirit is the ability to redeem time.

> Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord
>
> And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reproves them… (Eph. 5: 10-11)
>
> See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise
>
> Redeeming the time, because the days are evil
>
> Where fore be ye not unwise, but understanding what is the will of Lord is. (Eph. 5: 15-17)

And you achieve that as is laid down in verse 18 *" . . . be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess but be filled with the Spirit;"* One of the blessings of being controlled by the Spirit of God in our lives is the sensitisation of our spirit and our nature to the timing of God. The time of God is different from the time of men. Jesus said in John 7 "my time has yet not come but your time is always ready." Only the

Holy Spirit helps us to be sensitive to the timing of God for our lives. God wants us to redeem the time so that we don't waste our lives on the earth. We only have time to do the will of God and fulfil the purpose of God. And it's my prayer for you that you fulfil God's purpose for your life and not waste time in the name of Jesus. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

KNOW YOUR PLACE

On the subject of understanding and walking in the power of divine purpose, we have established the fact that purpose is superior to prosperity, and prosperity without purpose is really poverty. And we are looking at various things that a man must know if he must fulfil his purpose on the earth and live a successful life. We have dealt with two things that a man must know, namely:

1. You must know your purpose
2. You must know your timings

Don't miss your time in purpose and destiny. God creates a man for a time. The third thing you must know is *your place*. The programme of God for your life is connected to places. There's a place for everybody. There's a place called 'THERE' that you're headed for, and you must know it and not try

to fulfil your purpose in the wrong place.

The story of the life of Joseph explains this clearly to us that there is a place God planned for the fulfilment of your purpose. Joseph saw a vision of himself as a leader at the age of seventeen. He saw the sheaves of his brothers bowing down to his, but he had to discover where. Although Joseph was promoted to the house of Potiphar, he recognised that *that* was not the place; he was still a houseboy in the house of Potiphar. If he tried to bring that vision to pass in Potiphar's house, he would have lost his head. If he tried to bring it to pass in the prison yard, he would have lost his head. He waited until he got the palace before he started walking in the fullness of the dream and the plan of God for his life. You should recognise that there's a place and time; you need to only wait and be patient.

How about David, the king of Israel? The anointing that David received in his father's sitting room in I Samuel 16 was an anointing to learn how to hear God, and not to start speaking for God; an anointing to deal with personal problems, not with problems in the lives of other people, to help and train him, and prepare him for the throne. And later, he

became the king because he recognised that anointing was not to rule over his brothers. It was not even to rule over his father. As soon as he was anointed in I Samuel 16, the Bible says he went back to the sheepfold to tend the sheep; he recognised that God was just giving him signals concerning his future. He was not in his place yet; he was still going to get to his place. Everybody has their place, and it's my prayer that you will also get to your place in Jesus' name.

There's a place for everybody. Today, many people are toiling in the wrong place. There are people who are moving and deciding because of money or economic reasons. God never planned that your movement should be determined by economic considerations. God planned that your movement should be determined by divine leading. As God's people, we do not follow the world but we follow the directions of the Holy Spirit, and when you are led by the Spirit of God, He leads you into rest and safety. He leads you into prosperity, into your greatness, and into fulfilment. Don't lead yourself; let the Holy Spirit lead you. When you read Psalm 23, you will see a clear picture of a sheep following the shepherd. It starts with "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not

want.”

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

And it ends with “Goodness and mercy shall follow me, all the days of my life; I will dwell in the house of the Lord.” Now goodness and mercy will only follow the sheep that is following the shepherd. Goodness and mercy doesn’t just follow a man for the sake of it. Many times, as God’s people, we like to end our church services and meetings with ‘goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life’; this doesn’t just happen because we confess it but because we follow the shepherd.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

When I’m following the Shepherd, He’s leading me to a place, and because I’m following the Shepherd, goodness and mercy is following me. Understand that the third thing you must know is *your place*. There’s a place for you in life.

CHAPTER 4

KNOW YOUR STRATEGY

You must know *your strategy* for the fulfilment of God's assignment for you. All these seven things are tied to each other. That's why we are dealing with them now, and as we go along in the study, we'll be dealing with each one of them separately and in detail. You should seek the face of God to find out each component of His will; you should also continuously seek the face of God to know how each one relates to the other for you.

You must know *your strategy*. Ecclesiastes 8: 5-6 says,

> Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgement
>
> Because to every purpose there is time and judgement, therefore the misery of man is great upon him.

Many people are missing time and judgement, so

they are always walking in sorrow. They wonder maybe God created them to be failures. No! God did not create anybody to be a failure, but success in life and destiny is determined by accuracy in timing and judgement. You must be accurate in timing and judgement, and it's not your own time. Many people are missing it because they are setting time for God. Look at prayer, for example: lots of people pray and set time for God, saying, 'God, if you don't give me a husband this year, I'm going to backslide.' That's wrong; praying like that gives the devil room to attack you. *You see many times when people turn some things into breakthroughs for God's people; they actually deceive them.* For example, getting a life partner is not supposed to be a breakthrough for a child of God. Life partner is part and parcel of the programme of God for your life. Once you get born-again, God has a plan for you to marry; if you grow enough, you'll get to the place where God will bring the person you are to marry.

There are some issues that God has taken care of so that if you keep being faithful to what God has assigned you, you don't need to worry. Many people

get under pressure because they compare themselves with other people. Comparison and ego in life and ministry or destiny are very dangerous things. We live in an age where people copy things. Don't just copy others. Don't look at another person's journey and attempt to run your race in a similar manner. When you start comparing yourself with others, you stop running your race and start running the other person's race. Ecclesiastes 8: 6 says, "Because to every purpose there is time and judgement, therefore the misery of man is great upon him." Every man must find out the timing of God and His decisions. 'Judgement' is talking about the strategy: 'How does God want me to do it?' It's one thing to discover your purpose; it's another thing to discover the timing, and yet another thing to discover the strategy as to how you are supposed to do it.

When Samuel received a word from God to go and anoint a king in the place of Saul, he asked the Lord, 'Saul is already king. Saul is crazy, and if Saul hears, he may kill me. What do I do?' And God gave him a strategy, saying, 'Say you have come to sacrifice.' Many times, God is waiting for us to ask

Him, and He's going to tell us. He has His strategy for everyone to fulfil the assignment and the dream that he has placed in our hearts. He didn't plan for anybody to fail. Either people are unfaithful, or they are doing what God didn't tell them to do, because the Bible says in Psalm 127, "Except the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain that build it." *That this thing can be built but the labour has no reward in heaven because God never told them to do it in the first place.* God holds the office of the designer and builder of the house. He didn't contract the job of building His house to anybody. All of us are co-labourers with Him. He says, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He only assigns responsibilities to us, and we have to wait upon him and do it together with him. He does it through us. We need to understand that if we are going to walk in the purpose of God, we will walk together in divine concert of unity that doesn't need any human arrangement.

In Matthew 10, see what the Bible says concerning this subject. Here the Lord is commanding his disciples to go and preach:

> These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, go not into the way of the gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not
>
> But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 10: 5-6)

What would have happened if they went to the Samaritans? He told them not to go there. There's a strategy he gave them—go and preach, but don't go to this place, don't go to that place. And verses 7-11 says,

> And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand
>
> Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give
>
> Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,
>
> Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, not yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat.
>
> And into whatsoever city or town ye enter ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and

there abide till ye go thence. (Matt. 10: 7-11)

Here, Jesus was giving them the strategy on how to live when they go. Also, the package of the commandment of God to man contains the strategy that is to follow. Many people don't receive the strategy from God; they look around to see what is working. That a strategy works for someone does not mean it will work for you. Don't copy the move of God in somebody else's life. You can't copy that: you'll get in error. Many people have done so, and they're walking in error today. That God told somebody to pray for the sick in a manner doesn't mean that's how you should also pray. Find out from God what He wants you to do and be sure that what you're doing is what God has sent you for because we will give an account of what God told us to do and how we're doing it.

CHAPTER 5

YOUR PEOPLE, YOUR GENERATION, AND YOUR MEASURE

We are studying the subject of understanding and walking in the power of divine purpose and the seven things that a man must know and be aware of if he's going to live a fulfilled life on the earth. Remember, success is not determined by what people say about you but about what God says concerning you. Success is not a relative term. Your success is not relative to another person's success; it is rather relative to God's programme and purpose for your life. This understanding will deliver you from the spirit of competition and comparison. It will set you free and allow you to be what God wants you to be. It will also help you pursue the programme of God for your life with strength and purpose and integrity of heart, and at the end of the race, you will receive a crown.

Several years ago, the Lord dealt with my heart

and said there is either of two things waiting for every one of us at the end of this race: either a crown or a cry. The Lord says that there are people whose tears He is going to wipe away from their eyes when they meet him because they will look back and see the opportunities they missed and all the things they ought to have done on the earth and will cry. And there are some that the Lord is going to place a crown on their head, saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." I pray that when you stand before the Lord at the end of your race, He'll place a crown of glory, a crown of reward upon your head, and congratulate you for running a good race in the name of Jesus.

We have dealt with four things you must know, namely, your *purpose*, your *timings*, your *place,* and your *strategy*. The fifth thing you must know about the will of God for your life is what I call *your people* —the people that you are sent to, the people that you are raised up to bless. In Joshua 1, the Lord said something to Joshua there that will benefit us:

Now after the death of Moses the servant of

> the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying
>
> Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. (Josh. 1: 1-2)

Verse 2 tells us a number of things: 'Moses my servant is dead' means the man might have died but the *God of the man of God* is still alive. What God is communicating to Joshua is that He is a God of continuity. There is no break in the programme of God; the same programme to take the people of God to the Promised Land is still continued. 'Moses has finished his own part, Joshua. Now it's your time, it's your turn.' The time had come for Joshua to fulfil all what he had been preparing for, the very things God had been training him for. Remember that there's a time for everybody, and you must be sensitive to rise up to the call of God upon your life when the time comes. That is what makes a man a vessel unto honour. The Bible says in II Timothy 2 that a vessel unto honour must be fit for the master's use, must be sanctified, and must be ready when the master needs it. If a man is not ready when the master needs him, then he's no more a vessel unto

honour.

Joshua, the man, was ready, and God said, 'Go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people.' *Thou and all these people*—regardless of who you are, whether you're a pastor, a housewife, a banker, or whatever you are in life, you should understand that you are raised up by God for a people. There's a people whom your rising up to fulfil your purpose and destiny will affect positively. Many people assume that it's only pastors who are raised up for a people. Many of the people whose stories we read in the Bible were not even in the full-time ministry. Joseph was a Prime Minister of Egypt, but you should remember that *purpose* is that thing which the world cannot offer you. The only thing that the world can offer you is a platform, a position, maybe popularity, power, and prestige but those things are not purpose. Purpose is the reason for that thing. Joseph became the Prime Minister, but the purpose of the Prime-Ministership was the high calling of God for his life —to bless the people for whom he was raised up.

Joseph was raised up to preserve the people of Israel and the lineage of the Messiah. That

understanding helped him to live for his people and fulfil that purpose. In Genesis 50: 20, his brothers came to him and begged him but Joseph said, “You meant it for evil but God meant it for good to save much people at this time as you have seen.” Joseph knew he was living for a people. Beloved, understand that you’re living for a people; you’re not just living for yourself. Don’t live for yourself; that is too small a living. Jesus Christ came to die for the world, and that is what everybody is supposed to be doing. You are raised up for a people; Joseph knew that. Look at Esther; in Esther 4, we read that she knew that she was raised up for the people of Israel to do something for them that will preserve the lineage of the Messiah, and she did it. Today, we remember her for it.

Nehemiah was a cup-bearer in the king’s palace, a most trusted position in the country, yet his people and the city of his God was suffering. And he caught a vision of the people he was raised up to bless. Your rising up to pursue the purpose of God for your life and your rising up to use your position for the purpose for which God gave you, will affect the

people. Don't disappoint the people waiting for your rising. There are people who will neither know Jesus nor enter into their destiny until you enter into yours. Destinies affect destinies, purpose affect purpose. The purpose of God for your life will affect the purpose of God for other people. Until you rise up and begin to walk with strength, purpose, and integrity in the purpose of God for your life, other people may not be able to enter into their own, or they may be delayed because of your delay. Jesus' entrance into His purpose and walking in the purpose of God for His life caused the apostles to enter into their own purpose. He said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." And they, entering into their own purpose, caused other people to enter into their purpose. All of us are walking in purpose because some people have walked in the purpose of God for their lives.

The devil is always seeking to attack the purpose of God for our lives. He doesn't mind what he will offer for a man, provided he can steal the purpose of God for his life, and because he will keep the people who are depending on the fulfilment of

your purpose from entering into their purpose. The world can offer you anything in replacement of your purpose. In John 6: 15, people came to forcefully make Jesus a king—a great position in the world. In Matthew 4, the devil offered Jesus all the glory of the world, saying, "If you fall down and worship me." He wanted to collect the purpose of Jesus. He tried it many times, but the Lord never submitted to it. He knew he must go to the cross. He came to die and die for a reason. He saw all of us. He was dying for you and I, he wasn't dying for himself. He was dying for us; he gave his life for us. He said he has come to give his life for many; he knew it.

You must know that you are raised up for a people. Don't live aimlessly, don't live carelessly. The world can offer anything to get a man's purpose, and many people are submitting their purpose because they don't understand this. Don't submit your purpose. Be like Naboth to whom Ahab said, 'Give me your father's vineyard, I want to turn it into a vegetable garden; I will give you something like it' (1 Kings 21). There's nothing like your purpose; your purpose is unique to you. God designed you for it;

God created you for it. Don't let the devil collect it from you. Nothing in this world can be worth your purpose.

Live for that purpose; understand how the present platform you are today will give you a platform to fulfil divine purpose. Succeed well, fulfil what God has given you to do, and do it well. Joseph succeeded well as a Prime Minister, and he used that platform to become a saviour. Esther was a queen and she also used it to become a saviour. Daniel was a statesman and he used that platform to fulfil the prophetic office. The prophecies of Daniel are still affecting the programme of God on the earth today. Scattered throughout the scriptures, you'll see that God is not interested in giving positions for positions sake. God has a plan for all the families of the earth, but he chose a man. And that man must understand that purpose and be willing to pay the price to walk in that purpose so that all who are attached to his life in the programme of God can move into the programme of God for their lives.

YOUR GENERATION

The next thing you must know about the will of God is *your generation*. Ecclesiastes 1: 4 says, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." Every man belongs to a generation. This is our own generation. The generation of the Lord Jesus Christ is what we are still fulfilling today. Apostle Paul and others came in their generation. They didn't have to deal with the Computer Age like we have to. They didn't have to deal with some of the challenges on the earth that we have to deal with today. This is our own generation and God has equipped us for our own generation. You're raised up in a generation. Acts 13: 36 says, "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers." He fulfilled the purpose of God in his generation. You can't manifest in another person's generation. You have to do that which God raised you up for in your own generation.

YOUR MEASURE

The last thing you must know about the will of

God for you is *your measure*. In 2 Corinthians 10: 12-16, Paul said, "God has given us a measure to reach even unto you." Every man has his measure. Don't overstep your boundary. You know there are people today who were never called by God to start a ministry, but they went ahead because they are interested in being 'founder and president.' Don't exceed your measure with God, but you should also not be less than the measure of God for your life. God has a measure for everybody. Don't belittle your measure and don't let pride push you to overstep the limit of the measure of God for you.

CHAPTER 6

WHAT THE DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE WILL DO FOR YOU

As we continue in our study of understanding and walking in the power of divine purpose, let us focus on the subject of Divine Purpose—*What the discovery of Divine Purpose will do to a man.*

> He has made (that's God has made) everything beautiful in his time: he has also planted eternity in men's heart, and minds; [a divinely implanted sense of a purpose, working through the ages, which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy], yet so that men cannot find out what the Lord has done from the beginning to the end. (Eccles. 3: 11 amp)

When we're talking of purpose, what do we mean? Purpose is that divinely implanted sense of a reason for existence inside every man who is trying to find expression in life that nothing else can satisfy but God alone. That's why, after people have made money, they want their lives to count. Everybody

wants to live a meaningful life. That's why many people think of doing philanthropic acts after they have made a lot of money. And people give them a good name after they are gone; people remember them as 'Oh, that man was a nice man', 'that man was a wonderful man', 'he was kind, generous' and so on. But it's this sense of divine purpose that God implants in every man to seek Him for fulfilment. But many people seek so many things to fulfil this longing of purpose in their hearts. Some people go into pleasure, others into drinking, and still others go into all kinds of careers to fulfil this divine sense of purpose. But, alas, nothing except God can fulfil it.

Purpose is talking about that which the world cannot offer, that which only God can show a man. When Joseph became the Prime Minister, he suddenly discovered that the position of Prime Minister didn't satisfy that cry of his heart, that there was a reason for his becoming a Prime Minister. And when he began to walk in that reason, to save the nation of Israel, he became fulfilled. Esther became queen, but she discovered that being a queen did not give her fulfilment. There's a cry in every man that

the reason for which you're created alone can satisfy. And until a man discovers it, he'll keep searching and looking. There are many people on the road of life today who are still searching for the meaning to life. Some people go into occultism and strange religion, and all kinds of things to fulfil this cry.

> Ecclesiastes 3: 11 says,
>
> a divinely implanted sense of a purpose, walking through the ages in a man's heart which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy.

Nothing else can satisfy that thing. Only God can satisfy it and He does it by showing you what to do, by what He created you for and by establishing a relationship with Jesus—that's the beginning of satisfaction of that divinely implanted sense of purpose. The absence of this is why some very successful people commit suicide. The reason is because they have tried everything to satisfy this sense of Purpose in them and they could not satisfy it. Therefore, they feel they are failures. Everybody thinks they are successful but a truly successful man

is a man who has discovered God's purpose for his life and is walking in that purpose, even if he's a gardener.

John the Baptist was living in the jungle, but he said, 'This is the reason why I came, to show the Messiah to the world.' And once he did that, he fulfilled his purpose. In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking of John the Baptist, said, "of all that are born of women, there's none greater than him." Yet he dressed in camel's hair, eating wild honey and locust; by the standards of the world, you wouldn't call such a man successful. Just as you wouldn't describe the people in Hebrews 11 as successful but God rates them successful. God rated them as successful because *He* measures success by how a man walks in the purpose of God for his life.

> And others had trial of cruel mocking and scourging, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment
>
> They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins,

being destitute, afflicted, tormented

(of whom the world was worthy) (Heb. 11: 36-38)

'Of whom the world was not worthy' that is, these people were too good for this world, because they were walking in the purpose of God for their lives.

They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise. (Heb. 11: 38-39)

They obtained their good report from God; men may look at them as failures but God says they are wise. The men described in Hebrews 11 are like the man in the parable of the merchant searching for a pearl; he saw a pearl of great value and sold all that he had to buy that pearl. These men saw that the purpose of God for their lives was the pearl of great value they were seeking. All of us are pictured like that merchant in the parable of the Lord Jesus Christ; we're all searching for something, a pearl of great value—something we can really spend our lives on;

something that we can really give all to. You find that many people spend their lives on causes that take nobody to heaven—wonderful causes that bless mankind but incapable of giving anybody a good eternity, not able to save anybody from hell, cannot heal anybody, and cannot destroy the power of devil in the life of anybody. And yet you find people spend their lives on such things.

We are all like the merchant searching for a pearl of great value. When people meet the purpose of God, some turn away from it and others who are wise sell all they have in order to buy that pearl of great value. That pearl of great value is what God offers you when somebody says 'accept Jesus as your Lord and saviour.' That's the entrance into the door that will show you your purpose for living. Until a man becomes born-again, he cannot discover and walk in the fullness of his purpose for living. What happens to many people is that they carry great destinies and great callings upon their lives, but because they never get born-again, the devil perverts their calling. You find such in many funny churches today. No doubt they have a calling to be prophets

but since they never got born-again, the devil perverted that calling.

The calling of a man is like a lamp in the spirit world and the devil sees it when a child is coming into the world. The Bible says, “This is the light that lighteneth everybody that cometh into the world.” The devil sees that light, and the higher the calling, the brighter the light. He sees that light and becomes afraid that this destiny will threaten him and destroy his work. Therefore, he begins to pump problems into their lives in order to pervert it. Many people carrying great callings upon their lives today have gone into error, done all kind of things because they never got born-again. The entrance into purpose of God for a man is to be saved, to be born-again, and if you’re not yet born-again, I challenge you to think of your purpose because becoming born-again is the redemption of man back to the condition in which he can fulfil his original purpose for coming to the world.

The men in Hebrew 11 were “too good for this world.” That means that purpose is that thing which

a man wants to spend his life for. And there are wise men today who are meeting Jesus and they say, "Lord I will go with you, you have what I'm looking for." When Jesus met Apostle Peter for the first time in John 1, he said in verse 42, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona, but you shall become Cephas." He showed him a vision of his tomorrow; he showed him a vision of his purpose—you shall become Cephas. Thou art Simon; this is all that life has made of you and all that you have become by your effort. But there is something higher than that, there is something beyond what you have made of yourself; it is what God alone has designed you to be, and unless a man discovers that, he will live a frustrated life.' You see it is possible to have money and be frustrated. There are a lot of rich people who are really poor because they are not walking in the purpose of God for their lives. It is that man who is walking in the purpose of God for his life that is truly powerful, truly successful, and truly wealthy.

That's God's challenge to you today. Have you discovered God's purpose for your life? There's a purpose for everything; there's a purpose for beauty,

there's a purpose for what you have, there's a purpose for your life and so on. It could be a purpose of God for you as a person; it could be a purpose of God for what you have. For example, look at Mary in Mark 14; that woman had an alabaster box of precious ointment, worth more than a year's wages. She brought it to Christ on the day she discovered the purpose for it; she broke it and poured it on the head of Jesus. Some people said, 'Why is this waste made of this thing?'

But He said, "No, leave her alone. She has done a good work on me. She has come to prepare my body for burial." That woman discovered that the purpose for the perfume was to prepare the body of Jesus for the burial. There's a purpose for what you have, a purpose for your position, and a purpose for your ability. Joseph of Arimathea was a silent disciple of Jesus but he discovered the purpose for his position. He had a relationship with Pilate and he could go in, collect the body of Jesus, and give it a decent burial, in his own tomb. He discovered his purpose for that position and the purpose for his tomb and that brought his name into the book of eternity. There's a divine purpose for a city, a family, a church, you name it and it is when we discover the

divine purpose and walk in it that we can enjoy the benefits and the fulfilment that those things can give to us. This is the way to be a great blessing to the people in your life.

A Divinely Implanted Sense of Purpose

The Amplified Bible according to Ecclesiastes 3: 11 defines purpose as a divinely implanted sense of purpose, walking through the ages, which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy. Nothing else in life can satisfy that feeling that is inside every man to do something of worth within their lives; only God can bring fulfilment to that cry. There's something that you are to do that you are created for. Until you discover it, there is that sense of something missing inside every man, and the discovery of that will do many things for a man.

Now we have seen that purpose can apply to a thing or possession or an ability that a man has. In the life of Mary, the sister of Martha in Mark 14, we saw her break an alabaster box of ointment upon Jesus' head and pour the perfume on him. And some

people said, ‘Why this waste?’ Some people who didn’t understand purpose called it a waste because that perfume cost almost one year’s salary. But that woman discovered that the purpose for the perfume was not her body but to prepare the body of Jesus for burial. And Jesus commended her and said, “‘Wherever this gospel is preached, what she has done shall be spoken of in memorial of her.” That’s part of what walking in alignment with divine purpose will do for you: it makes your name forever remembered on earth and in eternity. That woman discovered the purpose for something she had. You must know the purpose for what you have, whether it is your money or your possessions.

Joseph of Arimathea also discovered the purpose of God for the tomb he had and the position that he occupied. He had a position of honour in the land; he could walk to the governor, Pilate and receive the body of Jesus. No disciple of Jesus could do that; they were already in hiding. But God had a man who was a silent disciple. There are many silent disciples of Jesus today that are not yet fulfilling their purpose, and you may be reading yet you don’t know

the reason why God brought you to a position of great power and great prestige in your country and in different places. What you have in your hand is for the purpose of fulfilling the divine programme of advancing the course of the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the earth. Don't let the fear of men stop you from walking in the power and purpose of your position for God. Joseph of Arimathea approached Pilate and collected the body of Jesus and gave him a decent burial. Today, we remember him for that. Don't be like Jonah who discovered that God's purpose for him was to go and preach to the city of Assyrians, Nineveh but he ran away because the Assyrians were the enemies of Israel at that time and he didn't want to lose his reputation. He didn't want anybody to say he was preaching to the enemy of the Jews, but God wanted him to do that. And he took flight and ran away from the purpose of God. Some people carried Jonah in their boat and their boat began to experience storms because they were carrying a man who was running away from divine purpose.

Purpose can also refer to a city because a city can have purpose in the programme of God.

Jerusalem was such a city. Many nations of the earth today have divine purpose purposed upon them, and it is the responsibility of Christians in those nations to intercede for their city and their country to fulfil their divinely ordained purpose for those cities and those nations. It is when nations begin to fulfil the purpose of God for them that they rise to greatness and great heights. Divine purpose can also refer to a man. God has a purpose for each of us and before God there's a purpose that we represent. When Rebecca, the wife of Isaac the heir of the promise, was pregnant, she had two children struggling in her womb. She went to God and God didn't say that two boys were in her womb. God said two nations were in her womb because as far as God was concerned, it was not just two boys but two nations. Remember, God said to Abraham, 'Nations and kings shall come out of your loins.' What you represent before heaven is more powerful than what men may think of you. Discovering your purpose will allow you to attach value, seriousness, and soberness to living your life and walking in the principles of the Word of God, so that your life will not be wasted and the devil will not pervert what your destiny represents.

A family can also have the divine purpose of God hanging upon their lives. Lastly, churches also have a divine purpose. God doesn't just start church in order to give the preacher a place to preach. God gathers His people together to discover their destiny. The place to discover purpose and walk in the power and purpose of God for a man's life is in the church of God. That's why God set up church so as to find a place that the Word you are hearing and the training you are receiving will prepare your spirit to hear God, and hearing God will help you to discover God's purpose for your life and also help you live a powerful and fulfilling life.

The first thing the discovery of purpose will do for you is that it will transform you forever. Esther was transformed forever from a timid orphan girl to being the most powerful queen of her day.

> Esther 4: 13-14 says,
>
> Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews
>
> For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this

time…

Now, that was an alternative she had, she could hold her peace. She was not suffering any danger like the children of Israel were suffering at that time from Haman. Haman planned to destroy the children of Israel, but yet a Jew had found herself as a queen of the land and she was keeping quiet. Mordecai who was concerned and burdened for the programme of God for the Jewish nation, cried out and sent a message to this woman and said, 'Do something.'

She replied, 'Well, the king has not sent for me.' But you can take advantage of your position and walk in the purpose of that position to fulfil God's programme.

So this man said, "Well, don't think you will escape in that place…"

> For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time; then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place;

What the Bible is teaching us here is that if a

man fails to fulfil his purpose, God has an replacement for him. It's my prayer that God will not find a replacement for you in the programme of God for your life; make up your mind to live your life with such determination and seriousness that God will always seek you and you'll make yourself indispensable, and God will always find you qualified for the assignment that He chose you for. Saul failed in the programme of God for his life, and God said, 'I have set you aside. I will pick a neighbour of yours who is better than you.' The truth is that no man can hold God to ransom. If God says you should do something with what you have, maybe with your position, and you fail to do it, then God will replace you. After all, before Esther became queen, there was another whom God replaced and He did it for a purpose. Today, we are living in a time of displacement and replacement when God is replacing men who are not fulfilling His purpose all over the world, and putting men and women who will fulfil His purpose there. Let us, therefore, understand that and use the placement that God is giving us to fulfil the purpose for which we are brought there.

The time is short and God is not going to tolerate people using positions for various things that God didn't plan that they use it for anymore. Now look at what the Bible says here; it says: *deliverance will arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed.* That is the ultimate end of a man who refuses to walk in purpose or perverts the divine purpose for his life and his positions, it says in verse 14-16,

> And who knoweth whether thou art come into the kingdom for such a time as this?
>
> Then Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer
>
> Go, gather together all the Jew that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat or drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in to the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. (Esther 4: 14-16)

In the verses given above, Esther was transformed forever from a timid, self-conscious woman to a powerful heroine of God and a powerful battleaxe in the hand of God. That's what the

discovery of purpose will do for you. The first thing it will do for you is that your personality will change forever.

1. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE TRANSFORMS YOU

In Matthew 16, we see two sides of the coin of discovery of purpose. The first side is that *the discovery of your purpose transforms you*. When you discover your own purpose, it will transform you. When you discover the purpose of a person you are living with, it will transform your relationship with that person. There are many wives who should come into a discovery of the purpose of God for their husbands; it will change the way they look at their man. There are many husbands who must discover the purpose of God for their wives. Fathers who discover the purpose of God for their children will most definitely change the way they relate with those children. Many pastors need to set apart time to discover the purpose of God for their church and that of the members of that church; it will change the way they relate with that church. Discover the

purpose of God for your pastor and you'll change the way you participate in and contribute to the vision of that man. When we discover the purpose of God for our nation, it will change the way we build this nation. Nigeria has great purpose in the programme of the world, for the human race.

Now look at what Jesus said in Matthew 16: 13-18:

> When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, who do men says that I the son of man am?
>
> And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets
>
> He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am?

Jesus was not satisfied with what the people were saying. He needed to know their own revelation of him. What is your revelation of Jesus?

> And Simon peter answered and said, thou art

> Christ, the son of the living God.
>
> And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to unto thee, but my father which is in heaven
>
> And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter. (Matt. 16: 16-18)

Peter's revelation of Jesus transformed him from Simon to Cephas. In John 1: 42, Jesus told him what he was going to become but it was when Peter caught a revelation of the divine purpose of Jesus Christ that his transformation happened. Jesus said, "*Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (rock of revelation) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* The rock there is not *about* Peter; rather, the rock that is talked about is the *confession* of Peter.

The understanding of divine purpose brought transformation into the life of Peter; it also brought

blessings and the power of God into his life. Discovery of purpose will transform you forever. When you discover your own purpose, you suddenly discover that you're not a biological mistake, you are not an accident of history, you're not an addendum on the human race, and you are not just a number on the census list. You are a person created deliberately by divine design. God knew you before you were created. He told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb, I ordained you a prophet unto the nations" and it did something to Jeremiah. He said, 'Don't say you're a child anymore.' Until a man discovers purpose, he'll call himself by various names, and the devil desires to change your name; but I bring you good news that there's a name you bear in purpose and that's the name that you should walk in and bear in the world. This is when your life becomes powerful and fulfilling, and you can also rejoice at living!

How to Discover Your Divine Purpose

Another critical understanding embedded in the story of Esther (Esther 4: 14-16) is the role that

Mordecai played in Esther's discovery of divine purpose. *You can discover the purpose of God for your life through your individual prayer or through the ministry gift that God places in your life.* In that story, Mordecai represents a prophetic pastor, a pastor who has the understanding of the purpose of God; and it is my prayer that God will bless the church with pastors who carry a revelation of the purpose of God for their people, and men who will sensitise and stir up men and women to walk in the purpose of God for their lives.

Mordecai was not particularly interested in the benefits that accrued to Esther as the new queen because if he wanted comfort for his life, Esther could have chosen to take care of him for the rest of his life. Esther could just settle him somewhere and he'll end up a fat man just enjoying himself and unconcerned about the condition of the children of Israel. But Mordecai was carrying a vision of the purpose of God in his heart, and he couldn't sit filled with the finer things of life while the people of God and the programme of God were going to be wiped out. Remember that the Messiah would come

through the nation of Israel and all the attacks of the devil against the nation of Israel in the Old Testament was designed at stopping the arrival of the Messiah and every man that God raised up; He raised them up to preserve His people and His programme on the earth. The same thing for me and you today—what you do with your life will affect the programme of God positively or negatively. That's why we have to understand this and live such powerful, holy, faithful, and positive lives that will preserve the programme of God for our lives and for other people coming after us.

We need such men and women whom God can hold accountable and who can hold themselves accountable to God to sensitise us to discovering the purpose of God for our lives, men who will not be interested in just the benefits of their position and blessings. Mordecai was not interested in all that; he was more interested in Esther fulfilling the high calling of God for her life and not just celebrating the blessing that Esther had now entered into. You know, if it were today, many people would just start celebrating, saying, 'Thank God for the promotion,

thank God for this,' and giving testimony about that alone. But this man was saying, 'Look beyond this position. There's a purpose for this position. You alone can do something about the condition of Israel now.' That's what discovery of purpose can do for a man.

In the case of Nehemiah, he was the king's cup-bearer, the most trusted position in the land because if you want to poison the king of Babylon, all you needed to do was bribe Nehemiah. One day, by meditating and asking questions about the condition of Jerusalem, Nehemiah discovered that he was the only Jew who could do something about the condition of Jerusalem. So he rose up to do something significant for God and for his nation. Today, there are many people in different positions who could do something wonderful about the programme of God for our nation, their church, and for generation, but they are still hesitating. The truth is that God wants you to do what you can do. He said in Mark 14, concerning the woman with the alabaster box, that she had done what she could do. You should also do what you can do, not just what

you want to do or what the devil allows you to do, but go the length and do what you can do in the programme of God.

Look at the story of Paul the Apostle in Philippians 3—how the discovery of purpose transformed this man's life. He says the following in verses 4-12:

> Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more
>
> Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee
>
> Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is the law, blameless
>
> But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ
>
> Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

> And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of God by faith
>
> That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;
>
> If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead
>
> Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

If you want to talk of position in the flesh, Paul had more, but he was possessed by the sense of destiny and that is what produces great Christianity. The difference between great Christianity and good Christianity is the discovery of divine purpose. Men who discover divine purpose become great Christians, and being a great Christian is not talking of greatness or popularity. It's about walking in the accuracy of divine purpose and programme for your life. A good Christian can be celebrating the blessings of God in his life and showing that alone, but a great Christian is the one who is going beyond the blessing, beyond the prosperity into walking in the power of the purpose of God and living a life that is full of

purpose. A great Christian would be willing to sacrifice anything for the purpose of God and do anything to walk in the purpose of God. This is what Paul was saying in Philippians 3, 'I'm following after, if I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ.' He discovered that Christ saved him a reason.

Before we all became born-again, sin made us unqualified to walk in the programme of God for our lives; it made us unfit and disallowed us from walking in the purpose of God for our lives and the salvation of our souls. But being born-again, the redemption of our lives, made us fit again to walk fully in the purpose of God for our lives. When a man becomes born-again, he now needs to discover the purpose of God for his life, and so begins to walk in that purpose with strength and power. This is what the Bible is referring to when Paul discovered the purpose of God for his life. It transformed him forever. It transformed him from a murderer of Christians to becoming an apostle of the church; it transformed him from being a persecutor and blasphemer to becoming a foremost preacher of the

Gospel. When you discover the purpose of God for your life, it transforms you and brings new power, new ability, and new grace into your life and changes you forever; you'll never remain the same from the point that you discover the purpose of God for your life. That's the first thing that discovery of purpose will do for a man. It did it for David, it did it for all the soldiers who followed David, and the Bible calls them giant-killers because they killed all the other giants who were the relatives and the seed of Goliath.

It was the discovery of divine purpose that transformed David into a giant-killer even though he was not a soldier. When he came and heard what Goliath was saying in 1 Samuel 17, he asked, "What shall be done for the man who kills this uncircumcised Philistine? Why should he defy the army of the living God?"

His senior brother said, 'You have come to look at the battle. You have just come for sight seeing.'

David replied, "No, is there not a cause?" Every champion of God had a cause driving the purpose of God for their lives. Beloved, if people look into your

life—your friends, your relatives, your associates, or even your enemies—and cannot see a cause or a driving purpose in your life, then your life is not yet powerful, because it is not yet as full a life as God wants it to be. Men must look into our lives and see the purpose of God for our lives driving us, that our decisions are informed by the purpose of God that we have discovered and are living for.

2. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE PRESERVES YOU

The second thing that discovery of purpose will do for you is that it will preserve you from sin. It will affect your choices and decisions in life. To know how discovery of divine purpose will preserve you from sin, you need to look at the life of Joseph; that young man discovered the purpose of God at an early age of seventeen and he told his brothers about it and they sold him into slavery. Even though he entered the land of Egypt as a twice-sold slave, the God of the purpose that he was carrying in his belly knew his location at every point in time. You may think nobody knows where you are but God knows

exactly where you are and He has a plan for you that is strong enough to overrule your mistakes and the wickedness of the devil, and bring itself to pass if you would only cooperate with God.

Joseph found himself in the house of Potiphar whose wife tried to lure Joseph to sin. And Joseph refused that evil because all he was seeing, in the light of his understanding of divine purpose, was a woman who was trying to collect the throne from his hand. He said, “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” He didn’t even talk of sinning against Potiphar. No Jew was there to see what Joseph did, but Joseph kept himself pure, and today he is the standard for every single young man to beat today. Don’t say that sin has now become the order of the day in the world and you can’t help yourself because Joseph is there among the cloud of witness and saying, “You can help yourself. I had no support, I didn’t have a church support, I didn’t have a family support, and I didn’t have friendship support.” He was alone, yet he kept himself pure. Today, we have church support, family support, and we have friends who are born-again. Therefore, you

don’t have an excuse to fall for this kind of sin; the discovery of purpose will also keep you from sin.

This wasn’t the case with Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, who, because of a lack of understanding of the purpose of being the firstborn, lost it all in instability and immorality. His father cursed him and said, ‘Reuben, you’re supposed to be my firstborn, the excellency of strength, and the beginning of my might but you are unstable as water. You shall not excel because you went to my couch and defiled it.’ Instability and immorality took Reuben’s purpose and destiny from him, and if you would only look down the generations in the tribe of Reuben, no judge, no king, no priest, and nothing tangible came out of that tribe; even numerically they were not the best because this man did not understand purpose and he chose sin instead of choosing the glory of God.

Samson was another example of a man who did not walk in the power of purpose and he chose the fleeting pleasure of sin thereby missing divine purpose. Esau also did not allow the power of purpose to preserve him from sin. However, if you

discover purpose, it will preserve you from sin because you will know that sin will destroy your purpose and pervert you from fulfilling your purpose. Joseph understood divine purpose and it guided his decisions and choices in life. Make sure you press into a solid future with a clear understanding of the divine purpose of your life.

3. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE WILL AFFECT YOUR CHOICES

The third thing that the discovery and pursuit of divine purpose will do is to affect your choices and decisions in life. Remember that your choice and decisions in life will determine what you'll become or what you don't become, eventually. Before you make a choice, you are the master of whatever you want to choose, but as soon as you make the choice, your choice will become your master and control you. Therefore, you need to be careful as you make your choices in life.

The life of Lot shows us that people could still understand divine purpose and make wrong choices regardless of purpose. But you should be like Abraham who made the right choices in the light of divine purpose.

> And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.
>
> And Abram was vet rich in cattle, in silver and in gold.
>
> And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai
>
> Unto the place of the altar, which he had make there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.
>
> And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. (Gen. 13: 1-5)

One of the things you find in the life of Abraham and a man pursuing the purpose of God is that he has altars in his life. He builds altars in his life which speaks of his relationship with God. He's not just walking in the blessing alone; he's walking in

relationship with God.

An all-important phrase is in verse 5 where the Bible says, “and Lot also, which went with Abraham.” Lot was in association with a man pursing the programme of God, and God blessed him, but he himself did not hear anything from God; he did not copy Abraham to build altars in his life. We never saw anywhere that the Bible says Lot had an altar where he was talking to God. But Abraham had altars where he met God and God met him, and that kept Abraham safe and focused.

> And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together
>
> And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.
>
> And Abram said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.
>
> Is not the whole land before thee? Separate

> thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. (Gen. 13: 6-9)

Abraham and Lot typify two types of Christians —Lot following provisions, Abraham following vision. What are you following? Provision does not care about tomorrow; he's just concerned about today and what he can get from it now. But a man following vision knows that what tomorrow holds in store will be greater than that. Abraham encouraged Lot to choose first, and he did.

> And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar
>
> Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.
>
> Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent towards Sodom. (Gen. 13: 10-12)

If you consider verse 12 which says, “Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain”, it looks like Lot was successful and was ahead of Abraham, but it was not so. If you’ll only look closely again, you’ll see verse 13 which says,

> But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

Lot didn’t see that major difference in the place where he chose to dwell in as compared to where Abraham chose. A man who is not pursuing the programme of God makes choices based on today. Years ago, the Lord said to me, ‘THE FUTURE DOES NOT BELONG TO THE MAN WHO IS DOING IT QUICK. THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE MAN WHO IS DOING IT RIGHT.’ God is more interested in how right you’re doing it, not how quick you’re doing it. It’s not important to God how fast you’re moving but that you get to where you want to get to. God is not so interested in what we are now as much as He’s interested in what we are becoming. He wants us to become and not just labour to have. The Bible says here, “Then Lot chose

him all the plain ". . ."—that's a man who didn't have a purpose driving him. He just went to his uncle and saw an opportunity to be rich through his uncle. Instead of separating from his uncle, he could have served Abraham; he could then have had a future in Abraham just like Isaac had a future in the programme of God for Abraham.

The other side of the coin is that Abraham should not have carried along a man God didn't tell him to. If you are pursuing the vision of God, you must separate from many the Lots in your life. Lot is always a compromise in the life of a man who is pursing destiny, an area of emotional compromise. Lot was the son of his brother, and he felt an emotional attachment to take him along, a man who didn't respect the programme of God and vision of God. And he brought strife into his life, and strife will bring demons. Abraham eventually had to do what he ought to have done before—he separated from Lot. Genesis 13: 14-15 says,

> And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him…

It is my prayer for you that every Lot in your life will be separated from you, whether the Lot is a relationship or anything that God didn't ask you get involved with.

> Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward and westward
>
> for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.

The land God was promising Abraham included the plains where Lot had chosen. And eventually, when judgement came upon Sodom and Gomorrah, it was Abraham—a man pursuing divine purpose—that God spoke to, and he went on to plead for Lot, rescued him, and brought him back from captivity. Catching a vision of divine purpose and pursuing it will make you a blessing. Lot lost all the possessions he took to Sodom and Gomorrah; he lost his wife as she became a pillar of salt, and his daughters perverted. But Abraham had everything by pursuing the programme of God.

Jacob and Esau

And Jacob sold the pottage: Esau came from the field and he was faint:

And Esau said to Jacob, feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name and called Edom

And Jacob said sell me this day thy birthright and Esau said, behold, I am at the point of death: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? (Gen. 25: 29-30)

That birthright represented the future and purpose of God for Esau but he didn't know what it meant; he didn't have a revelation of it. He wasn't pursuing anything like that. A man who cannot discipline himself in the light of an immediate need in order to gain a future blessing is an endangered species, and that's what happened to Esau here: he sacrificed his purpose to satisfy his appetite. Don't sacrifice your purpose to satisfy any form of appetite, whether appetite for food, sex, fame and so on.

And Jacob said, swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob

Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink and rose up, and went his way; thus Esau despised his birthright.

(Gen. 13: 33-34)

Eventually, when Esau was looking for his birthright, he couldn't get it back even though he sought it with many tears. Jacob represented a man who understood divine purpose because he most likely must have been lamenting 'If only I was the firstborn, I know what I will do with the birthright.' But Esau had the opportunity by birth and he wasted it, but Jacob seized the only opportunity he had to get the birthright. There are men today who make wrong choices because they don't have an understanding of divine purpose for their lives and they err by not pursuing divine purpose.

4. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE LEADS TO THE SALVATION OF MULTITUDES

The discovery and pursuit of divine purpose will bring about the salvation of a multitude of people. Esther, Joseph, Nehemiah, and the Lord Jesus Christ are examples of men and women who recognised and pursued their purpose on the earth; they were instrumental to the salvation of multitudes in their

family, nation, and generation. The Lord Jesus Christ is still saving souls today because that was the purpose for which He came. When you discover your purpose and pursue it, multitudes will be positively affected. When you're walking in your purpose, you'll discover that you cannot live for yourself alone anymore; families, cities, a nation, and generations will call you blessed because you walked in your purpose.

5. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE IDENTIFIES YOU TO YOUR GENERATION

Discovery and pursuit of purpose will identify you to your generation. God wants us to be known by His purpose in our generation, not by our jobs or our career, not even by our qualifications but by His purpose for our lives. Today, when you think of Joseph, you immediately think of that young man who saved a multitude of people. When you think of Moses, you immediately think of the man who led the children of Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea and into the Promised Land. You don't think of

Moses as a warrior even though he was a warrior; you don't think of him as a man who was mighty in deeds and in words (Acts 7: 22), though he was all that, but your thought of Moses focuses on his purpose.

When you think of Lord Jesus Christ, you immediately think of the saviour of the world. You don't even remember that He was a carpenter, though He was. When you think of Esther, you think of that woman who risked her life to save her people. You don't think of a beautiful queen anymore. Every other attribute you might have or qualification or ability will not make a lasting impact on your world as much as what your purpose will do. God wants you to be identified to your generation by His purpose for your life. Men may know you to be many things, but until they know you in your purpose, they have not discovered who you truly are. Many people are running helter-skelter trying to discover who they are, but the only place you can find out who you are is in Jesus Christ. Come back to your Source, come back to the One that made you, come to your Creator and let Him tell you who you truly are.

The Lord Jesus Christ said concerning John the Baptist, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."

There are three identities you can have. First, what your friends, family, and people who know you and like you call you; second, what the devil wants you to be known by. Third, what God actually designed you to be, which is your correct identity. Regardless of what people call you, if you succeed and be all that God wants you to be, what you call yourself must tally with what God calls you.

> And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, what went ye out into the

> wilderness for to be see? A reed shaken with the wind?
>
> But what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.
>
> But what went ye out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet
>
> This is he, whom it is written, behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall a prepare thy way before thee
>
> for I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. (Luke 7: 24-28)

'Prophet', as far as John the Baptist was concerned, was a calling, but his purpose was to be the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ. You need to understand that the high call of God for your life is your divine purpose. John understood his purpose; he said, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' He didn't compete with Jesus. He didn't compare himself with him. He understood that he was to prepare the way before the Lord and he did that. People have controversy about why John the Baptist

had to die, but the important thing is that John the Baptist had fulfilled his purpose. As far as heaven was concerned, John was successful. That's why Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." John the Baptist had this commendation from the Lord even though he didn't do any miracle because in the purpose of God for him, he was not supposed to do miracles. His purpose was to introduce Jesus, and he did it faithfully; thus, he was successful. You will gain freedom from competition when you understand that in your purpose, *success is not relative; success is personalised.* If you compare your success with anything, let it be relative to God's purpose for you and not compared with another person. When people compare themselves with another person, they're actually walking in confusion and not walking in success. When you measure your success and source your motivation in prayer through someone else, you show that you don't understand God's purpose for your life. When you understand your purpose in God, you understand that God deals with you in an individualistic way concerning your success in life. In the final analysis, John the Baptist

is not just a man wearing camel's hair, eating locust and wild honey, but he was the forerunner of the Son of God in his ministry.

6. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE ATTRACTS THE HELP OF GOD

The discovery and pursuit of divine purpose will attract the help of God into your life. It will cause beyond-man events to take the place for you. In the story of Esther (Esther 4: 14-16), we read that Esther broke the law of the land, but God overruled the consequences because Esther was walking in the purpose of God for her life. She didn't deliberately break the law as a criminal but because the law had been used against the people of God by a crooked Haman. God then used that woman entering the purpose of God to overrule that. That law was not supposed to be changed except for God's favour that came into the equation; God introduced the favour of God, and the king waved the demand of the law for Esther, and she fulfilled her purpose. When you start walking in the purpose of God for your life, you

begin to enter into realms of special, unusual favour and superlative favour in which beyond-man events start happening for you.

7. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE PUTS YOUR FATE IN THE HANDS OF THE ALMIGHTY

The discovery and pursuit of divine purpose will put your fate in the hands of the Almighty God who designed your purpose. This means that your fate will not be in the hands of men or the devil. Instead, God uses the wickedness of people and attacks of the devil to work the original counsel of His will to accomplish His purpose for your life.

> When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;
>
> And went again into the judgement hall and saith unto Jesus, whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer
>
> Then saith Pilate unto him, speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release

> thee?
>
> Jesus answered, thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin
>
> And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, if thou let this man go thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. (John 19: 8-12)

Pilate thought he had power over Jesus, but the Lord Jesus Christ said, "No. You have no power over me. My life is in the hand of God." When you start walking in the purpose of God for your life, your fate and whatever happens to you or can happen to you is now determined by God and no more by the enemy, nor by men, nor by circumstances, and not by your own mistakes. It is determined by the almighty power of the Almighty God. That's a tremendous thought for you to think about.

Moses, Underneath are the Everlasting Arms

Remember, the third thing that discovery of

purpose will do for you is that it will affect your choices in life. In Hebrews 11: 23, we see Moses in his own choices.

> By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child, and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

The king commanded the murder of all Jewish male newborn babies because the divine purpose of a man will always threaten the devil and he seeks to destroy any threatening purpose. The same thing happened at the time of Jesus' birth.

> By faith Moses, when he was come to years refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; (Heb. 11: 24)

'When he was come to years' means 'when he became mature'; 'Refused'—the refusal that Moses did here was indeed a choice of faith because faith is not only about getting things; faith is also about making choices. By refusing to be called the son of pharaoh's daughter, Moses refused the opportunity to become the next pharaoh and the prospect of being

called a god in Egypt. Had he chosen to be called the son of pharaoh's daughter, the greatest nation on earth at the time would have been at his feet but he refused it because he discovered that the divine purpose he was carrying was superior to the throne of Egypt.

> Choosing (that's making choices) rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming (he was still doing all that by faith) the reproach of Christ (the reproach of destiny; the reproach of pursuing a divine programme) greater riches than the treasures in Egypt… (Heb. 11: 25)

The pleasures of sin will only be for a season, and when that season is over, the pressures and problems of sin will begin. Discovery and pursuit of purpose will affect your sense of value in life and you'll have the right values in life.

> For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.
>
> By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him

who is invisible. (Heb. 11: 26-27)

Discovery of divine purpose affected the choices of Moses positively but not so with Lot and Esau. Today, we don't remember the name of that pharaoh, but the name of Moses is never forgotten in the programme of God because he made the right choice based on the discovery of the purpose of God for his life rather than the stay on the throne of Egypt. It is my prayer that you will start making choices in line with, and in furtherance of, divine purpose.

Lots of people live below-average lives simply because they have not discovered God's purpose for them. The Bible reveals God as a God of deliberate purpose. He does not do things just because He feels like. He's the Creator but He doesn't create to remind Himself that He is still the Creator. No. The Bible reveals Him as the God who creates things—human beings and everything with a deliberate purpose and goal in mind. He's looking for something from everything that He has created and He built a desire to live a purposeful life inside each human being.

> HE (God) hath made everything beautiful in his time; He also has planted eternity in men's hearts and minds. (Eccles. 3: 11)

The Amplified Bible says, "a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages, which nothing under the sun but God alone can satisfy." God doesn't want you to make decisions or relate with life's situations without thinking of the eternity that is in your heart. He wants you to make decisions today with eternity in view. Don't lose touch of the eternity in your heart. That eternity is described as *a sense of purpose*. Everybody wants their lives to count, yet God has so structured it that it is in the discovery and pursuit of divine purpose that a man's life becomes meaningful.

It is very important that we understand that God works all things together for the good of them that love Him, who are the called according to His good purpose. A good example of this kind of thing is the little baby Moses at the age of three months, when he was put in a basket and placed in River Nile because of the decree of pharaoh to kill all the Jewish male children. They were not placing Moses in an

uncertain river, but rather in the hand of the Almighty God. They were too sure that this baby was a proper child. He had a purpose designed by the God of heaven. They knew Moses was here to fulfil something definite and something special, and they trusted in the Almighty God who designed Moses' purpose. With this critical understanding, placing baby Moses in such a river was an act of faith in God, and God honoured it. Miriam said, 'I will wait to see what will happen to him,' and God did not disappoint them because when you discover your purpose and you begin to walk in it, your life becomes wrapped in the power of the Almighty God. No negative force can overturn your life; I want you to believe that with your heart.

When Moses was three months old, he was placed in River Nile not as an act of desperation but as an act of faith in the living God. In Hebrews 11: 23, the Bible tells us concerning Moses,

> By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid

of the king's commandment.

The term referred to in the scripture above is saying 'this child has a destiny', 'this child has a purpose behind his life', and 'he has a destiny to fulfil'. They were going to take a risk at this point in the history of Israel in the land of Egypt. The pharaoh on the throne at that time had given a decree that every male child should be killed at birth, but the parents of Moses understood purpose; they had faith in the living God. Even though they were slaves, they had the Most High God on their side. They did not lose touch with their heritage. They knew they belonged to God.

If you're born-again, you belong to the Most High God—the God who rules in the affairs of men, the God who controls history, the God who determines the future, the God of Joseph, the God of Daniel, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the God who can take mistakes of men plus the wickedness of the devil and all the circumstances around and still work it together to accomplish His original purpose for your life. That's the God who is *your God* if you're born-again. Moses' parents knew

this and they didn't kill him but decided to keep him for three months; and when they couldn't keep him any further, they decided to do something, something that buttresses the truth that when you walk in your divine purpose, you come to a place that what happens to you is no more determined by circumstances or the devil but by the goodness and benevolence of God. Everything that men do to you thenceforth begins to work together for the good of your divine purpose. Let us look at Moses in Exodus 2: 3-4:

> And when she could no longer hide him, (that's after three months now) she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink
>
> And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

As they were placing the three-month-old Moses in the River Nile, anybody looking from the outside, ignorant of the thoughts going on in the minds of his mother and sister, would think they were taking a risk, but the revelation underlying their action was individualistic and personal. You cannot live your life

on the basis of the revelation of another person. The parents of Moses and his sister were acting based on the revelation of the purpose of God for Moses. They knew he was a proper child and that they shouldn't kill him like every other child was being killed. Many Jewish mothers had killed their own children because they didn't understand that every child who comes to the world has a purpose behind their lives; they could have trusted the God who designed the life and purpose of that child but they chose to succumb to the king's evil edict.

Moses' parents knew enough not to kill their child, but there are many people today who take foolish decisions because they don't understand the purpose behind their lives or behind the lives of their children. Moses' parents portrayed for us what kingdom parents should be; parents who pray and find out the purpose of God for their children fulfil that purpose. They placed Moses in the riverbank physically but based on their revelation of divine purpose and faith in God, they were placing baby Moses in the unfailing hands of the living God. When you enter into the purpose of God for your life, you

are placing your life in the Almighty Hands of the Almighty God.

The Bible says in Deuteronomy 33: 27, “Underneath you are the everlasting arms.” You can’t fall totally to the ground when you’re walking in the purpose of God. The devil may push you, but you can’t fall to the ground. You will always be falling into the hands of God and He will take you up again. This is what the Bible speaks of in Micah 7: 8, “‘Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise.” In essence, he was saying that anybody walking in divine purpose can say, “Oh my enemy, don’t rejoice over me. If I fall down seven times, I’m still going to get up, and am still going to beat you, I am still going to win!” At that point, your faith is determined and controlled by the Almighty God. The outcome of your life is always going to be good because the Bible says in Romans 8: 28, ‘And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.’

> good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose
>
> for whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (Rom. 8: 28-29)

The greatest thing that can happen to you as a human being is to discover the reason why God created you and to commit your life, your resources, and your abilities to the pursuit and fulfilment of the reason why you have been put on the earth. Remember that sin made every human being unfit to fulfil the purpose of God for their lives, but salvation through the blood of Jesus is God's plan to redeem us from an unfit condition and restore us to a condition where we are fit to fully fulfil the purpose why He created us. Therefore, until a man becomes born-again, he is not in a condition to fully fulfil his purpose on the face of the earth. Let us note that you must not only be born-again, because many people are born again today but have not discovered their purpose. A lot of born-again Christians don't even bother about their purpose, and the devil enjoys this ignorance due to neglect because a life is wasted if it is not lived in the purpose of God, no matter how

celebrated it is.

Joseph in the Light of Divine Purpose

Look at the story of Joseph, that young man in Egypt. The first thing that his brothers did for him as an act of jealousy and bitterness was to sell him into slavery but they did not know that it was the first step towards the fulfilment of the dream they were fighting against. When you are walking in the purpose of God, everything and everyone that fights against your purpose actually begins to fulfil that divine purpose. See it like this: *when you are walking in divine purpose, everyone and everything is employed.* When you begin to walk in the purpose of God for your life, you will see life with an entirely different eyesight. Medicine and ophthalmology tell us that the best eyesight is 20/20 vision but the Bible tells us in Genesis 50: 20 that it is 50/20 vision. With the 50/20 vision in Genesis 50: 20, Joseph said to his brothers—

> But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it

is day, to save much people alive.

50/20 vision means whatever evil people mean against you, God will turn it to good for you. With this understanding, you can leave your life in the hands of God and keep walking in obedience to God and see God fight your battles for you and turn things for good for you.

If it presently looks as if the cards of life are stacked against you and the circumstances are against you or the enemy has focused on you alone, I encourage you to rejoice because it means that your purpose and destiny is threatening the devil and the God of your purpose is watching to accomplish His purpose for your life. The Bible says in Romans 8: 31, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” A particular version of the Bible renders that verse of scripture as “if God be for us, does it make a difference who can be against us?” Praise God! It doesn’t make a difference. Let us flip that scripture and think on it: if God is against a man, does it make a difference who is for him? The One on your side is more and He will turn everything together for good; you need to start rejoicing in that understanding.

When the Lord Jesus Christ stood before Pilate in John 19: 9-12, Pilate assumed in his carnal mind and said, 'Don't you know I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?'

But Jesus said in essence, 'No, you don't have power against me. God is the one who brought me here, and I'm here to fulfil a purpose. The Person who handed me over to you is a greater King.' That is the kind of mentality you see in a person who understands the power of walking in divine purpose. He knows that his life's outcome is neither determined by men, nor by external things nor by the wickedness of the devil, but in reality, it is determined by the goodness of the God who designed the purpose Himself. Praise God!

Moses' God caused the daughter of pharaoh to come to bathe at the river.

> And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid

to fetch it.

And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.

Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.

And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water. (Exod. 2: 5-10)

We need to understand that it was God who made pharaoh's daughter to see Moses. Now this daughter of pharaoh knew that her father had given a decree that they should kill the Jewish children, and she knew this was one of the Jewish children, but the Bible says in Exodus 2: 6-10, especially verse 6—

> And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.
>
> Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?
>
> And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.
>
> And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give [thee] thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it.
>
> And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

The daughter of pharaoh was paying the mother of Moses to take care of Moses against the decree of her father, because of the purpose of God. When you're walking with God, you're not taking a risk. The person who believes in God is not taking a risk. The almighty hand of God, the shaping hand of God can erase all the negative things about you and rewrite the story of your life. It is that hand of God that fulfils the purpose of God for our lives and can

cancel our plan and superimpose the plan of God on it. The same Moses who was going to deliver the children of Israel out of the brutish rule of the Egyptians was raised in the very house of pharaoh himself. That should show you how powerful our God is; the man who was going to free the slaves was being raised in the house of pharaoh, but pharaoh didn't know it. That's how powerful God's purpose can make your life. The purpose of God for your life just makes your life indestructible and undefeatable because it will prevail over every plan of man and over every act of wickedness of the devil. When you step into the purpose of God for your life, your fate is never again in the hands of men or circumstances or the devil. It is forever in the hands of the Almighty God because He worketh all things together for the good of His purpose in your life. Moses fulfilled his divine purpose, and it is my prayer that you will fulfil yours as well in the name of Jesus.

CHAPTER 7

THE PURPOSE OF GOD IS SUPERIOR TO OUR PRAYERS

> Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered.
>
> And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth, what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.
>
> And we know that all things worketh together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8: 26-28)

Many times, Christians want verse 28 to just happen in isolation, but we need to remember that verse 28 is a direct result of verse 26. All things working together for good to a person who is called by God happens because that person is *walking in the purpose of God for his life* because verse 28 says, 'And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God.' This means that not

everybody qualifies but only those who love God and those who are the called according to His purpose. Two fundamental truths proceed from this verse of scripture, namely:

1. God's purpose is superior to our prayers, and our prayers will only be powerful to the measure that they are in line with the purpose of God for our lives.

2. God's purpose is superior to our plans.

As human beings, even as saints of God, many times we pray a lot and we do a lot of planning—engaging our emotions and opinions as we go along but the Bible says that the purpose of God is superior to our plans.

To understand the truth that 'the purpose of God is superior to our prayers and that our prayers are only powerful in the measure that they are in line with the purpose of God for our lives', take the prayer of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1 as a case study: This

woman prayed for many years looking for a child; she asked God for a child but she seemingly didn't get a child until one particular year when she made a vow and God 'eventually' answered her prayer. If you were looking on the surface, you'll think it was the vow that actually caused God to answer her prayer and then you can build a doctrine or a theology around vows. However, when you look closely and in depth, you'll see that Hannah discovered God's purpose as she made the vow.

At that time, God was moving the children of Israel from the patriarchy and the judges to the monarchy. He was instituting a new thing for the nation of Israel in the land and He needed a prophet whose spirit was pure and unstained with the pollution and the corruption that was already taking place in the life of Eli; God needed somebody that He Himself would disciple and He found this woman—Hannah—qualified to produce that child just like God found Mary qualified to bring the Messiah to the world. This woman had a rival at home in the person of Peninah the other wife to her husband; there was unfavourable circumstance, she had a problem in her

body but there was a purpose of God that she was already chosen for. Note that for all those years she was asking for a child for the wrong reasons and not in line with the purpose for which God wanted to give her a child at that time.

Many times we pray prayers that conflict with the purpose of God for our lives, and if God should answer the prayers that many of his people pray, some of us will be in trouble today. Thank God that He doesn't answer all our prayers because some of the prayers will simply take many people out of the plan and purpose of God for their lives and put them where the devil can attack them. But thanks be to God that his shaping hands can overrule our desires, cancel our plans, and ensure His purpose comes to pass.

God had to work on the prayers and petition Hannah until it was in agreement with God's purpose. In a particular year, laden with frustration and desperation, Hannah made a vow: 'God, if you give me a son, I will give him back to You' and God said 'Yes! I got my prophet, now you can have your

children.' The Bible revealed that after Samuel was born, she had five other children in place of Samuel. But now God had a prophet whom He could Himself teach and disciple, who would speak an authentic word and introduce Israel to the next phase of God's programme. There you see how prayer can be overruled by the purpose of God and how many people can get into problem when they pray prayers that are against the purpose of God for their lives.

The battle of Gethsemane (Mark 14: 32-36) is another example that reinforces the truth that *the purpose of God is superior to our prayers*. Jesus said, "Shall I ask that this cup pass me by?" He said, "Father, all things are possible with you." That's faith! All things are possible with you. He says, "*but not as I will but thy will be done."* So you see the master submitting His personal preferences to the will and purpose of God for His life to go to the cross. When He did that, the devil was defeated forever over the human race. And lo, this is still *the greatest secret of winning the greatest battles in life: surrendering and submitting to the will of God*. The Bible says in Genesis 6: 3, "My Spirit shall not always

strive with a man," and this tells us two things:

1. The Spirit of God will strive with a man

2. The Spirit of God will not always strive with a man

There comes a time in the lives of some people when the Holy Ghost leaves them alone, but it is my prayer for you that the Holy Spirit will never leave you alone to have your way. If you win over the Holy Spirit in your closet, you will lose to the devil outside. This is the underlying truth in one of the books that the Lord gave me a revelation to write titled *Lose to Win or Win to Lose—the Choice is Yours.* If you win over the Holy Spirit, you will ultimately lose. That is where the understanding of purpose comes in to make our prayer very powerful and very effective. We enter into a partnership and cooperation with the Almighty God when we pray in line with, and walk in His purpose for our lives. We see the Lord Jesus Christ submitted to the will of God, saying, 'Not as I will but as You will, let Your will be done.' It was at that point that the battle for the redemption of

mankind was won; Jesus' going to the cross was just a formality after that. The real battle, as far as Jesus was concerned, took place in the garden of Gethsemane and the devil still stages this battle in the life of Christians: the battle to let your will prevail over the will of God and let your plan prevail over the purpose of God. Will you allow your plans to prevail over the purpose of God? Or will you allow the purpose of God to prevail over your plans?

What if you've made up your mind to travel, and the Lord speaks in your heart, "Don't make the trip," or you want to do something and the Lord says, "Don't do it this time, this is what I want you to do now." Every time we move out of the will of God, we move to a zone where the devil can defeat us. *The greatest protection you will enjoy is not by the great armies of this world, but by the purpose of God.* God assumes responsibility for your protection, defence, and provision when you're walking in the purpose of God. When a man steps outside of the purpose of God, he is on his own, he is left to his own will, he is left to his intelligence, he is left to his abilities and that's very little when it comes to

defending himself against the devil who is opposing him. But thank God, when you're in the centre of God's will, God assumes the responsibility to protect you.

In 2 Kings 6, Elisha was in the centre of God's will for his life when somebody sent an army to surround them. The servant woke up in the morning and began to pray. 'Alas! Master, what shall we do?' Many people pray in panic. When you're walking in the purpose of God, you don't pray in panic anymore. You know that God Almighty is in charge of your affairs and He is responsible for taking charge. Elisha said to that young man, "They that are with us are more than they that are with them." The battle is not between us and them. The battle is between those who are with us and those who are with them. And when you are walking in the purpose of God, I want you to remember that He who is on your side is far greater than any who can be against you. It doesn't matter how powerful they may be. If you are walking in the purpose of God, the God of heaven is on your side, and He is far superior to anything that can stand against you. That's the

greatest comfort that you can have in walking in the purpose of God.

Hezekiah—the Consequences of Praying Against the Purpose of God

Another example of a man who prayed against the purpose of God is found in Isaiah 38, the story of Hezekiah. This man, at the age of thirty-nine, fell sick, and Isaiah told him to prepare, for his death was imminent. On the surface, you'll see that the man turned his face to the wall and prayed, and it looked like God changed His mind, it looked like Hezekiah got his way and got a miracle; but a closer look shows us that he did not have SONS at that time of his life, he had daughters only. Also, at age of thirty-nine he didn't want to die without leaving a son on the throne. And this is one of the problems that people have promoting the sex of a child above the other. Some people feel that a male child is superior to a female child but that is not true, it is the purpose of God that determines what children will be. This man prayed against the purpose of God and he was

given fifteen years extra. Three years after that prophecy and after that encounter with Isaiah, he got a son called Manasseh. When that man died, Manasseh became the next king and reigned for fifty-five years during which he undid everything that his father had done. Hezekiah was one of the most powerful and beloved kings of Israel but his son, Manasseh, came after him and wiped out everything he did. If only Hezekiah looked farther at what that son would become, he would not have prayed that prayer.

When we understand the purpose of God, we will change some of our prayers and pray correctly; we will pray prayers that are more dangerous to the devil's interest than any other thing. The devil prefers Christians who are not walking in the purpose of God in their prayers because they pray things for themselves instead of praying for the things that will affect the programme of God and consequently affect eternity. That's what the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3: 11 that "God has set eternity in our hearts" so that our actions, our activities, our planning, our prayers, and everything that we're

doing on the earth will be informed by the recognition of that eternity. That eternity is described in the Amplified Bible as "a sense of divine purpose inside everyone." When you walk with that consciousness, your prayers will change and your life will carry great value before heaven. A man who is walking in the purpose of heaven for his life is a great treasure to heaven. God cannot permit anything to happen to that person anyhow. That's what I believe God wants you to come into, to bring your life to that place of security and power and it shall be so in the name of Jesus.

The Bible tells us something about the purpose of God superior to our plans:

> Many plans are in the heart of a man but it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand. (Prov. 19: 21, Amplified Bible)

That simply means that the purpose of God is superior to our plans. Romans 8: 26-28 tells us that the purpose of God is superior to our prayers. That when we make plans and pray in the light of divine purpose we become powerful, we become more

effective and heaven attaches greater value to our lives. Yet a lot of people pray against the purpose of God or they are not willing to pay the price to seek the face of God to find out His purpose for their lives. When you pay the price to seek the face of God and find out His purpose for your life, the price is worth all the blessings that the purpose will bring to your life. Nothing can compare with walking in the purpose of God for your life; that is where your greatest protection in this world of evil and iniquity lies; that is where you experience the greatest manifestation of the power of God.

Solomon—Praying in Cooperation with Divine Purpose

In 1 Kings 3, we see King Solomon who prayed a prayer that God himself was happy with. The single reason why God was happy with that prayer was because the prayer was prayed in the light of divine purpose. Let's look at what God said to him.

> In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night. And God said, Ask what I shall

give you!

> And Solomon said, You have shown to Your servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before You in truth and in righteousness and in uprightness of heart with You. And You have kept this great kindness for him, that You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* today. (1 Kings 3: 5-6)

Notice how Solomon was not celebrating the fact that he defeated his other brothers to win the throne. He was concerned with the purpose of becoming a king. Remember, we saw earlier that *the high calling of God for our lives is to walk in the purpose of the blessing, the position, and the placement that He offers us.* All that you can become and will become in this world is first and foremost a platform to fulfil divine purpose or else you have not succeeded. I pray for you that you will find God's purpose for putting you in that position and blessing you with that ability and the purpose of having that resource in your hand.

We looked at people who discovered the purpose of their positions, for their persons, for what they possess and all kinds of things and they used it

for that and their names are written for eternity for us to learn from their lives. Now look at this man's prayer in verse 7-10:

> And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.
>
> And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.
>
> Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?
>
> And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. (1 Kings 3: 7-10)

I pray that your prayers will please the Lord. This prayer pleased God simply because Solomon was not praying that God should give him the neck of his enemies; he wasn't just doing thanksgiving for becoming king without knowing the purpose of his kingship. He was praying the prayer that would help him fulfil his purpose as the king of Israel and it pleased the Lord. REMEMBER: God's purpose is

superior to our prayers. Lots of people spend time praying but it's not how much time you spend fasting and praying as much as how strongly you are walking in the purpose of God; that is what brings the power of God into your life. Many people are looking for methods to succeed in life but God is a God of principles. Methods change, but principles remain constant. God wants you to discover His purpose for your life and walk in it.

Look at what God said to this man in verse 11-13:

> And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;
>
> Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.
>
> And I have also given thee that which thou

> hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

Notice that when Solomon chose to pray the purpose of God and walk in it, God gave him things that other people were pursuing. That's what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6: 33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Real poverty is when you have prosperity without the understanding of purpose. There will come a time in the life of every human being that no matter what a man becomes, no matter what he attains in life, no matter what he possesses; those things will not give him fulfilment. He will be searching for fulfilment in the purpose of God. And until a man becomes born-again and seeks the face of God, he won't know that. That's why some people commit suicide after rising to great heights and people wonder why. Some people have money and live aimless lives; you find some people who are 'highly placed' die of funny deaths; an heir to great wealth becomes a drug addict and you wonder what is he looking for. This is because there's a sense of divine purpose in every human being and it's trying to

express itself, and that's what really gives meaning to life. After a man becomes all he can become, yet if he's not walking in purpose, life becomes meaningless; everybody is searching for that. Only in Jesus can we discover purpose.

When Solomon discovered the purpose behind his kingship and prayed in the light of purpose, God began to add things that he didn't ask for. You can then see how wrong it is to seek the additions at the expense of divine purpose. Moses left the throne of Egypt to pursue the purpose of God for his life and he got more than the throne of Egypt. In John 6: 15, the Jews wanted to make Jesus king by force but Jesus went up to a mountain. *God always has something for you that is higher than what the world has for you.* Whatever height you attain in life, maybe you become a king or a president or whatever place of glory and honour you find yourself, there's a higher divine purpose for that office. When you rise up to the higher purpose of God for that office, you start walking in the high calling of God for your life. I pray that you'll start walking in the power of divine purpose because that's where the greatest of

blessings comes. As a reminder, discovery and pursuit of purpose will make your prayer and planning very powerful; it makes God your partner.

CHAPTER 8

WHAT THE DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE WILL DO FOR YOU (2)

Let us continue with our list of the things that the discovery of divine purpose will do for you:

8. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE PUTS YOUR NAME ON THE LIST OF ETERNITY

Another thing that the discovery and pursuit of purpose does for you is that it puts your name on the list of eternity. You can never be forgotten when you discover your purpose!

> And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

> And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?
>
> For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.
>
> And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.
>
> For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.
>
> She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.
>
> Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. (Mark 14: 3-9)

It was immediately after this account that Judas betrayed Jesus Christ because he was a thief and was more interested in what he could get out of the money. The perfume she lavished on the head of Jesus was equal to a year's salary for a Jewish labourer. She discovered the purpose of God, for that perfume in her possession was not to spray it on her body but to prepare the body of the Lord Jesus Christ for burial. She acted in line with divine

purpose and thus put her name in the list of eternity forever. Jesus said, “Wherever this gospel is preached, what she has done shall be spoken for a memorial for her.” It is the same way when you do anything in agreement with destiny and in the purpose of God for you—it causes your name to be put on the list of eternity; you are never forgotten. Nothing that a man does in the purpose of God is forgotten because you’re doing it in time. Very soon, the sands of time will give way to the granites of eternity.

The rivers of time will soon run into the oceans of eternity, and it’s only what men have done with eternity in view that will last. The time will come when all that you and I will have to our lives and to our names is what we have done in the kingdom of God. The Bible says in 1 John 2: 17, “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” The purpose of God qualifies you to abide forever. The Bible says we should labour not for meats that perish but we should labour to become. A man is becoming something by what he’s doing daily. God is more interested in what

you are becoming and not just what you have. Don't just labour to have things, labour to become, because when time is no more, what people have will no more be a factor; rather it would be what people have become that would make a difference. Have you become what God sent you to be? Have you fulfilled your purpose? That's what will make the difference on the day of reckoning.

God is more interested in what you are becoming than what you have. It's just like this question: do you have fish or are you becoming a fisherman? In the long run, the person who becomes a fisherman will have more than the person who is just satisfied with having fish today; so don't join the multitudes of people who are living their lives to get fish, instead of becoming fishermen. In the purpose of God, God makes you to become something. Jesus told the people, "Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He's not just interested in giving us things, but he wants us to be made into someone who will last through submission and embracing of His purpose for our lives. In God's priority for our lives, becoming is more important to God than

having.

9. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE HELPS YOU OVERCOME FRUSTRATION AND DISCOURAGEMENT

The discovery and pursuit of divine purpose will help you to overcome all frustrations, insults, injuries, and every attempt of the devil to discourage you. The understanding and pursuit of purpose will cause you to overcome and rise through every onslaught of the devil. Joseph was a true example of how the discovery and pursuit of divine purpose helps you overcome the fiery darts of the enemy:

> Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall. (Gen. 49: 22)

If you stop reading at that place, you will think *Oh! Joseph had it rosy and smooth all through,* but that is far from the truth. Rather, it was the understanding of purpose that caused him to go

through the rough patches of life gracefully. Many times, when we are pursuing the programme of God for our lives, we need to realise that the road of destiny is not always tarred. Some portions of the road are full of bumps and we need to walk in the power of the joy of God to cushion the effects of those bumps. Many times, people give up and don't get to their goal in life, or don't get to where God planned for them simply because they don't have a personal understanding that divine purpose assures you of a positive destination. No matter how dark it looks, you have a positive destination; you can look in the mirror, square your shoulders, and tell yourself "IT WILL NOT END LIKE THIS!" If it didn't end for Hannah in barrenness or for Abraham in childlessness or for Joseph to rot in the Egyptian prisons, then your case too will not end until it reaches the positive ending.

Many times, when you are running in the race of life, sometimes you run in the dark and people are looking at you wondering whether you know where you are going, but the revelation that you are running and pursuing the purpose of God will light a fire in

your heart that you are pursuing a goal determined by God which has eternity attached to it. That light within you is what keeps you going even though people may not understand; they may even pity you but you know that ultimately the purpose of God will place you in the placement of God for your life.

> Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a wall; whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and hated him. (Gen. 49: 22)

We see two enemies which confront people in life: walls of containment by the devil and the archers of life. There are archers of life who fire all kinds of arrows at people who are running the race of life—arrows of discouragement, arrows of gossip, arrows of scandal, arrows of all kinds of things. If you've ever visited a football stadium to watch a live match, you'll discover that the spectators in the stand always seem to know how to play better than the professionals on the pitch. They criticise and do all kinds of things, but if those won't play their game, they won't have a job to do. In the same vein, when you discover the purpose of God and you are pursuing your divine destiny, you are in the open field

of life's game and many people will be looking at you; your life becomes like an open book that people are looking at. Sometimes, some people mock you, some malign you, others say all kinds of things against you; the wickedness of the devil, the jealousy of men, and all kinds of things come against a man who is pursuing divine purpose. That's what the Bible said here concerning Joseph—"The archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him."

> But his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel). (Gen. 49: 24)

When you read Genesis 50: 20, you will see what gave Joseph the strength to go through. In the house of Potiphar he was wrongly accused; he served that man with all his heart, and the wife tried to lure him into sexual immorality, but he refused, standing for righteousness. That woman lied against him, and the husband didn't give him the benefit of the doubt, he just sentenced him to the prison. That's enough reason to be bitter. His brothers were envious of him, right from the start hated him, and they sold

him as a slave. He could have carried hurts and offences in his heart but he didn't. The truth is if you carry offences in your heart, you allow the archers of life to shoot arrows at you and the arrows to remain in you. Never let the poisoned arrows of the devil enter your heart; they'll keep you from fulfilling your destiny. Get rid of those arrows. Men will always be men; men will always disappoint you. Just keep focus of your destiny and keep pursuing it. Look at what Joseph said to his brothers:

> But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass as it is this day to save much people alive. (Gen. 50: 20)

Four Questions to Unravel the Unexpected

When something unexpected happens to you, as they will necessarily happen many times as we progress on the road of destiny, it may not be solely through your mistakes but through the wickedness of people or through the wickedness of the devil. When these unexpected things happen, four questions

should engage your mind:

1. What happened?
2. How did it happen?
3. Why did it happen?
4. What next?

Many people can answer "what happened?" For Joseph, it was "Oh! My brothers have sold me into slavery." The second question is "how did it happen?" They sold him and the other people sold him again. He found himself as a houseboy. But question three is the most important of all: "why did it happen?" Unless you can answer why it happened, you will not be able to go into "what next?" That's why many people have made a monument out of a problem that happened to them. Many people have stopped moving forward primarily because they did not understand the *'why'* of what happened in the light of divine purpose. The victors of the Bible saw the hand of God where nobody saw the hand of God

and they used what would have been an obstacle as a stepping stone to greater heights in God. *The bumps that you meet on the road of life are actually the steps for you to climb the staircase of destiny.* Don't see it as a bump to hit your foot against, see it as something to step upon. It's the man who has his eyes opened in destiny that can see them as stepping stones.

In Genesis 50: 20, Joseph said, "You meant evil against me (that's what you wanted to do) but God meant it unto good." Now that young man saw God in those things, therefore he never took any offence at them or keep any bitterness in his heart. They did all kinds of terrible things against him. Apostle Paul also met all kinds of horrible people but he still fulfilled his destiny. You will also fulfil your own in Jesus' name. Amen.

You'll meet people who dislike you—some people who will lie against you and some people who will say all kinds of things against you—because the devil hates you pursuing divine purpose and the programme of God. Don't respond to these

distractions, just keep moving on; don't react to those things, just keep listening to God and keep pursuing your destiny and keep walking in love. Forgiveness is a power that you will need to cultivate as you walk on the road of destiny because the devil brings offences to cause you to be stripped off anointing on the road of destiny. Look at what Joseph went through—he knew what happened and he understood *why,* therefore he was able to move unto what next. He went to the prison from the house of Potiphar when that woman lied against him. He went to the prison with a clear heart, still loving his father and developing his gifts in the prison; he kept interpreting the dreams of other people. As he was helping people fulfil their dreams, his own dreams were fulfilled. Don't be selfish; don't go through life laden with ill-feeling as a result of negative things other people have done to you. It makes you focus on evils that people have done to you and it eventually makes you just to focus on yourself. Look around for what you can do to be of benefit to other people; look around for how you can advance the purpose of God and you'll discover that as you begin to do that, making the dreams of others to come to pass, God makes your own dreams to come to pass also.

That's what happened to Joseph, but it took an understanding of purpose and the pursuit of purpose to cause him to come through all those things victoriously. Many people have negative things happening to them in life and they allow themselves to be stopped there. Do you know, one of the greatest songs that we sing in Christendom is "*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine / Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine* ". . ." but in reality the story of the woman Frances (Fanny) J. Crosby who wrote the song is not palatable. At a young age, she had an eye infection and so went to an ophthalmologist to give her a prescription; but they gave her the wrong prescription and she became blind. She did not sit down there and say, "Well, this is what has happened to me ". . ." and become bitter at life. No! She decided to pursue God's programme. So she began to write such beautiful songs. Today, wherever this song is sung, people are so blessed, but they don't know the story of the woman who wrote the song. That song fires up encouragement in us.

Sometimes you discover the deepest depth of

serious faith in God when the worst that could happen has happened. It takes an understanding of the fact that you are not a biological accident but a creature of purpose to discover such depth of faith in the living God in such moments of crises. People will look at you and ask, "Where did you get that strength from?" Beloved, there is strength in God that you have not yet plugged into. It takes an understanding of purpose to discover and lay hold on such strength to pull through all kinds of situation that people thought would have drowned you, but you will never be drowned in Jesus' name, amen. Negative things will soon pass away. One of the scriptures you see in the Bible is "and it came to pass." Negative things will come and pass away, but your destiny will keep staring you in the face, and you need to keep moving towards it. You won't fail God and you won't fail your destiny in Jesus' name. Discover and pursue your divine purpose because it will cause you to overcome all frustrations and negatives on the road of destiny.

10. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE HELPS YOU TO

UNLEASH YOUR HIDDEN GRACE

Another thing that discovery of purpose will do for you is that it will call forth all the hidden grace in you to fulfil itself. The discovery and pursuit of your divine purpose will cause you to give your best to whatever you are doing now and what you are called to do, regardless of the obstacles. When you look at many people, the reason why they are not giving their best is simply because they are not sure that God wants them to be here. Many people want to change jobs. Many Christians today have not answered this question: "Is this the will of God for me?" At times, it is better to find the will of God before you begin to do anything. When you are sure that God wants you to be in a particular place, you will stay there even if it is not looking successful in the initial stages. The Bible says, "God is not ashamed to be called their God." If you'll also pursue the purpose of God for your life, God will not be ashamed to be called your God.

11. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE

PURPOSE MAKES YOUR LIFE A TEXTBOOK FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW

> Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. (Heb. 12: 1)

The discovery and pursuit of divine purpose will make your life a textbook of destiny for others following to learn from. The story of your life will become a history of challenge to encourage generations to come to pursue God and live for divine purpose like you did.

In Hebrews 12, the Bible says, *"Wherefore seeing we also "*. . .*"*; this means that we that are presently running our race on this terrestrial ball are compassed about by such a great cloud of witnesses, those who have concluded their own race. Hebrews 11 has an account of various men who pursued the divine programme for their lives, who saw alternatives in the world offered them by the devil,

but refused it and chose the purpose of God. The power and majesty of their lives are set forth before us today as a cloud of witnesses to show us that we can do it, and they are encouraging us today. Therefore, when you also discover and pursue the purpose of God for your life and run that race well, *your life will become a textbook for people to learn from that it pays to follow divine programme.* Every young man on earth today can learn from the life of Joseph that it pays to stay away from the sin of adultery and fornication, it pays to live a life free of bitterness and unforgiveness, it pays to pursue the programme of God, and it pays to help other people see their dreams come to pass. All these lessons we can learn from the life of Joseph.

We can learn from the life of Abraham that it pays to pursue vision and not provision. When you look at the life journey of Abraham and Lot, you will find that Lot was pursuing provision, and when provision led him into Sodom and Gomorrah, vision kept Abraham out there where God could still communicate with him; and it was Abraham who came to deliver Lot in his time of distress. Lot lost all

the provision he chased, later, because *a man who is carrying the vision of God in his belly is superior to a man that has materials in his hands because materials can be stolen or lost, but the vision of God well pursued will give you a glorious tomorrow.*

The Bible says in Jeremiah 29: 11, "For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Only the purpose of God offers us tomorrow. When God shows you His purpose and calling for your life, He practically gives you your future today and says, "Do what you like with it"; you can't blame anybody for what happens to it. Whatever future a man will have will be determined by what he's doing today concerning the purpose of God for his life. Are you sowing on a daily basis to the programme of God for your life, or into something else because that is what is really affecting your future positively or negatively?

Your life will either become a story of challenge or warning. Today, nobody wants to name their child Judas even though Judas is a fine name. But the

simple reason why nobody wants to name their first son Judas is simply because that Judas Iscariot messed up. His story today is a history of warning: don't betray a man pursuing a destiny. Judas, today, is remembered as the man who betrayed Jesus, it was because he didn't take his life serious that he didn't recognise the plan of God for his life. He valued thirty pieces of silver more than the purpose of God for his life. He could have gone down in history today as one of the apostles. Imagine how many people will want to name their children 'Judas' today! Peter and Judas were contemporaries in the ministry of Jesus. They followed Jesus at the same time, but today we remember Peter, we read the epistle of Peter, but there's nothing concerning Judas. He died frustrated; he died a failure but he got money.

As a reminder: "labour to become, don't just labour to have things." A man who only has things is less than a man becoming. Ultimately, it may take a longer time to become but God is committed to what you are becoming and He's more interested in what you are becoming than what you have today. Judas' story is a history of warning, whereas Peter's story

is a history of challenge that a fisherman can become such a wonderful person. You know how many people have become doctors of theology because of reading the book of Peter? But he was just a fisherman. You know how many professors today, how many highly placed people all over the world today are reading and being blessed by the writings of a fisherman? That's what purpose can do for a man; it can transform a fisherman to become a person who will affect generations to come. The Bible says in Isaiah 60: 15, "I will make you an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." That's what the pursuit of purpose will do for you—it makes you an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. You are never forgotten, and people keep thanking God because of your life, and they keep remembering you for good. People will not forget a man who lived for the purpose of God. But how many people want to name their daughters Jezebel? I doubt if any. Not only did they not pursue purpose, they lived for wrong purposes. Nobody wants to name his son Pharaoh, but people want to name their children Moses because he pursued the programme of God.

Hebrews 12: 1 says, “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with great a cloud of witnesses “. . .”—the word “also” here means the people that you read about in the story in Hebrews 11; d uring their own time, they also had examples to look at; they had people who challenged them. In the same way, after our own generation, some other people will have their own examples to look at what discovery and pursuit of divine programme can do for a man.

12. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE HELPS BUILD ENTHUSIASM AND ENERGY INTO YOUR LIFE

Another thing that the discovery and pursuit of divine programme can do for a man is to build enthusiasm and generate energy in your life. The Bible says, “Where there’s no vision, the people perish.” This refers to a revelation of the purpose of God for your life. When you discover that, when you have a vision of God’s purpose for your life, then it concentrates on energy and builds enthusiasm into

you. You never wake up thinking of suicide; no, you just wake up in the morning knowing that today God has something better for you than he did yesterday.

13. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE HELPS YOU CONCENTRATE AND REDUCE FRUSTRATION

Another thing that discovery of purpose will do for you is that it will reduce frustration in your life. It will define what you do and what you don't do. Many times people think that God calls us to be jack of all trades and master of none. No! God has something specific for you to do, and you find out *this is what I'm raised to do.* The discovery and pursuit of divine purpose will also help you to concentrate and bring focus into your life. You don't scatter your energy here and there.

14. DISCOVERY OF DIVINE PURPOSE HELPS YOU

EVALUATE YOUR LIFE EFFECTIVELY

The discovery and pursuit of divine purpose will help you evaluate your life, not by comparison with other people but by asking yourself this question: "Am I doing what God has intended for me to do, and how well am I doing it?" Many people today compare themselves with other people; when you compare yourself with another person, it shows that you are running the race of that other person. There's a race set before you. That's what Hebrews 12: 1-2 says to us:

> Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Notice, the Bible did not say '*a* race,' rather it says "*the* race." There's a race that you and I are listed for and we cannot run it comparing ourselves with other persons. You have your race, I have my race. The only way we are going to run effectively is to look away from every other thing and look unto

Jesus. Don't stop your journey because of the failure of anybody; if a man of God fails, you don't have to fail because Jesus never fails; He is to be our ultimate objective and example.

> Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12: 2)

You and I can effectively evaluate our lives by asking "How well am I doing?" and "Where am I in the race for my life?" Some years ago, a man of God had a vision of heaven, and he was told that beings in heaven are not so much interested in what clothes we are wearing on earth or what kind of houses we are living in, or what kind of cars we are riding, but that they are interested in how we are running our race. That statement touched my heart. You may be sharing testimonies of great blessings physically, but heaven is not interested in that. Heaven is interested in the purpose of God for our lives. The question that is in the mid of the cloud of witnesses concerning you and I is How well are you running your race? Do you know where you are in the race of God for your

life?

Can you relate what is happening presently in your life to the programme of God for you? Are you making evaluations in life's situations based on the race of God that you are running? Can you imagine if Joseph was on the earth today, if he had a misunderstanding of the purpose of God, he would think that being a houseboy is wrong? He had a vision to be a leader, but he also knew that the time was not ripe and the place was not in Potiphar's house. When he was lied against for standing for righteousness, he went to prison. Someone who doesn't understand purpose will think that Joseph was demoted, but Joseph saw going to prison as a promotion. That was the next place before the palace. Joseph was thrown into the *pit*; that was the first P. The second P was in Potiphar's house, the third P was in the *prison,* and the fourth P was the *palace*.

Out of the four 'Ps' in the life of Joseph on the road of destiny, three of them were not good. But if he had been delivered from any of the three Ps that

were not good, he would have also been delivered from the palace which was the ultimate place he was going. We need to understand that it's our understanding and pursuit of purpose that helps us to make proper evaluations of our lives; not based on what people say but based on what God is saying and based on where you are in the programme of God. It's my prayer for you that you will understand your purpose, make a commitment to it, and run a good race. One day you will see the master and He will say to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord". You will not miss your reward in Jesus' name. You will receive a full reward at the end of this race in Jesus' name.

CHAPTER 9

The Sovereignty of God and Human Efforts

A lot of times people relate with God from a position of lack of understanding, and many times there are suppositions that people make concerning God that are not Bible-based. One of it is that 'nobody can understand God.'

Look at Romans 1: 18-20:

> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
>
> Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.
>
> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

The scripture above tells you that there are things about God that you can understand that God Himself deliberately created the world with enough codes, hidden codes as it were, in many things in the world to show and reveal truths about Himself and His dealings with human beings and their affairs. God is saying nobody can be excused on the basis of saying, "It's just because I can't understand God, God's ways are past finding out, and nobody can understand it." No! God has given us the Bible—His Words—to show us Himself and what can be known of God. We can know it; therefore, we have no excuse to say, 'Well, I can't know it.' It's our responsibility to search out from the Word of God, from the situations of life as to what God has built into life, to know God, and understand God. Nobody can say God is not real. For example, the Holy Trinity —the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; there are so many examples in life to show that God is trinity —man is a spirit, he has a soul, and he lives in a body. Water exists in solid, gaseous, and liquid state; eggs have a shell, the white, and the yolk. Therefore, the truth of the Holy Trinity should not be hard to understand.

There is a Purpose Behind Everything

> For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;
>
> It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.
>
> As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.
>
> What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.
>
> For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.
>
> So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.
>
> For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (Rom. 9: 11-17)

From the above verses, you notice that God is the Maker of all things with a specific purpose attached to everything. Animals and plants have their purpose, and it is the responsibility of man to find out

the purpose of those things. The Bible says in Proverbs 25: 2, *"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter."* You will enter into a kingship's status in God's presence when you begin to discover the purpose that God has hidden behind things, the purpose of God for creating various things. God never gets involved in anything without purpose. When God was going to bring a wife for Adam, He said, "I am going to make a helpmate for him." He had a reason for making that woman; the woman was not an afterthought, she was not a mistake, nor was she a conflict in creation. Man is not a conflict in creation; man is not a mistake, nor an afterthought. There is nothing that is a mistake or an afterthought in the creation of God. Everything is created to fit into a whole divine master plan. All that God made fits into the whole and everything works together in a concert. Only God knows the concert. That's why it is wrong for anyone to say man evolved from apes; it doesn't tally with what is observable in the Word. God is the maker of all things and everything has a purpose behind them. That's the first point I want you to understand in this subject of the sovereignty of God and the efforts of man.

God Works After the Counsel of His Will

The next point you need to understand is that "God worketh all things in this world after the counsel of His own purpose."

> *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. (Eph. 1: 11)*

The caution here is that when you are doing anything against the will of God, you'll find yourself directly working against God and you can be sure that what you are doing will not work. That's why many people's lives are frustrated today because they are doing things against the will of God and it's like you're carrying a load uphill, kicking against the bricks; it's not going to be easy. But when you discover the will of God and begin to walk in it, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 10: 31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Find the will of God and pursue

it; don't waste your time. When you find the will of God and walk in it, you will find that the working of God, the power, and the energy of God is carrying you along with what God is working because He worketh all things in this world according to the counsel of His will!

> Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
>
> And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 5: 17-18)

God gave us the Holy Spirit so that we can understand the will of God. The way to walk in the will of God is to allow the Holy Spirit to control us and guide us into the will of God. He leads us into the will of God. We don't know the will of God by the exercise of our brain, but the Holy Spirit leads us into it. It's not an accident; it's the guidance and the direction of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Bible says, "Don't walk as unwise, but understanding what the will of Lord is"; this is because God worketh all things after the counsel of His will. If you want to have the power of God working in you, find the will of God and get involved in it and you'll see that the

power of God will start working in you. Many people find themselves working against the power of God because they have not discovered that principle.

God Calls, Elects, and Places Us According to His Purpose

> And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Rom. 8: 28)

Being *called according to His purpose* is not about saying 'I just found myself doing this.' No! There is a divine purpose behind things. Discover the purpose behind the calling and you will walk in the high calling of God upon your life.

> For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. (Rom. 9: 11)

All of us are called, elected, and placed according to the purpose of God. Opportunity comes our way according to the purpose of God. We only

need to understand and cooperate with that purpose, and it will cause us to utilise whatever calling, election, placement, and opportunity that comes our way effectively in the light of what God had in mind from the foundation of the world.

We are Saved According to His Purpose

We are not just saved because God fancies saving us. No, He saved us according to His purpose!

> Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;
>
> Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. (2 Tim. 1: 8-9)

Our salvation and our calling go together. The minute you are saved, you have a calling in God, you have a destiny in God, and it is according to His

purpose, not according to our works. That's why you cannot say because a man is a secondary school teacher he should come and teach in the body of Christ. A successful administrator may not be a successful pastor because we are not called according to our works but according to His purpose so that we will always depend on His gifting and His equipping. We are saved according to His purpose, and after you're born-again, the next thing God desires for you is to find out the reason and purpose for which He saved you. Discover that purpose and start walking in it, and you will be walking in the high calling of God for your life.

Gifted and Talented for His Purpose

Romans 12: 5-6 tells us that we have different talents and different gifts, not determined by us but by God Himself, not for our purposes but for His purposes.

> So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.
>
> Having then gifts differing according to the

> grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;
>
> Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching.

We have gifts differing according to the grace given to us not according to our choice or preferences. We are also responsible to discover and live after the purpose of God for our lives.

> Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. (Acts: 11: 23)

Paul discovered his purpose and walked in that purpose. It is your responsibility to discover your purpose because God has appointed every one of us to a high destiny, and we are accountable for that destiny; we are responsible to discover it and run in that purpose and fulfil it.

PART II

TIMING

CHAPTER 10

USING TIME IN THE LIGHT OF ETERNITY

Part II is dedicated to the second component of the will of God and that is TIME. Time is the portion of the overall purpose and programme of God that deals with human affairs. It is a portion of eternity, a continuation of eternity; and whatever we do in time must be related to eternity, if it will attract eternal relevance and glorify God. Invariably, I am saying that everything we do with time must be measured by ETERNITY. In a simple form, you may say TIME is the 'WHEN' of God's divine purpose for our lives.

> To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. (Eccles. 3: 1)

The scripture above reveals that time is attached to purpose. This is to say that if you discover purpose, you must discover the time for it. Time is where you are on God's schedule for your stay on the earth.

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?

I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.

He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. (Eccles. 3: 2-11)

Let us take a look at the tenth verse: “I have

seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it." The travail has to do with finding the time that God has set concerning every purpose. It is not you and I that set time for the purpose of God for our lives, God does. Therefore, the onus lies on us to find out the TIME.

Our main text says, "He has made everything beautiful in *His* time." The word there is not in '*its*' time. It is not to say *in the time of that thing*; it means *in God's time for that thing*. There is a time for everything, and that's what we want to be looking at concerning the subject of our purpose under God.

> I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for *there is* a time there for every purpose and for every work. (Eccles. 3: 17)
>
> Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment.
>
> Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man *[is]* great upon him. (Eccles. 8: 5-6)

For every activity of man, God has a set time for us to do them. We cannot do everything we desire; our bid should be to discover God's timing for us. This is very important. There is a decision to make at the right time so as to move ahead and fulfil the purpose of God. What this passage is telling us is that WISDOM is equal to accuracy of timing and accuracy of the right decision of step to take. I believe that the equation of wisdom is actually 80 per cent time and 20 per cent decision. A wise man doing the wrong thing at the right time is foolish. We see a good example of this in the life of David in 2 Samuel 11: 1. Let us quickly look at that place and see what wrong timing can do for a person.

> And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

Clearly, David was meant to be at the battlefront, but instead, he stayed back at home. This was a mistake of timing on his part. And look at what happened in the next verse:

> And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon.

God occupies us and employs us in divine timing. When you are out of divine timing, you are out of divine employment. And, of course, when you are out of divine employment, you can be sure the devil will gladly employ you. The devil finds work for someone that is not in the timing of God. This is exactly the case with David as we see in this scripture. Here, David was not in the timing of God. He was still in the place of God as the king of Israel, but he was not in the timing of God; he was out of the will of God at this time.

Had David been at the battlefield that day, even if that woman was bathing herself beside the battlefield, she would not have been a temptation to David because he would have been engaged with the right activity at that time. What should not be a temptation to us becomes a temptation when we miss the timing of God. Keeping pace with divine timing makes it

difficult for temptation to catch up with us.

At this time, David was alone while the Holy Spirit was on the battlefield. The Holy Spirit, the power of God, the provision of God, and so on, move in the programme, the timing, and the purpose of God. They work together. When you step out of the timing of God, you also step out of the provision and protection of God. And that's why it's important that we understand and study the subject of divine timing.

Every one of us has a time attached to everything we are doing or are meant to do. There is a time for you to be where you are supposed to be in the programme of God. This one mistake of David which gave birth to other sins as you can see in the latter part of 2 Samuel 11. I, therefore, want to encourage you not to do anything in the moment or in a moment of time of pleasure that will have a bearing on the overall purpose of God for your life, which, in turn, may make it impossible to fulfil the purpose of God for your life.

The Relationship Between Wisdom and Time

Don't forget I mentioned to you that WISDOM is 80 per cent TIMING accuracy and 20 per cent DECISION accuracy. Look at the following scripture:

> Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing: and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. (Eccles. 8: 5)

The Bible says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." So God does not just want us to take steps anyhow, He plans to give us the steps. But in the overall plan of God and the Word of God concerning wisdom, wisdom is equivalent to 80 per cent accuracy in timing and 20 per cent accuracy in steps. We will be looking at such subjects, but let's first deal with the subject of wisdom and timing.

> And of the children of Issachar, men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, the heads of them were two

hundred. (1 Chron. 12: 32)

When David was to become king, people began to come from different tribes to make him king. But the Bible described a particular tribe with a clear understanding—the children of Issachar. One distinguishing quality they possessed was that they had understanding of TIME. From this scripture, we could infer that they were not doing things just because everybody was doing it. Rather, they were doing it because they sensed it was time for it; you know, this is one of the secrets of living ahead in life —doing the right thing at the right time and being in the right place at the right time.

Their understanding of times caused them to know what Israel OUGHT to do, not what Israel WANTED OR DESIRED to do. Sometimes, what will make us fulfil the purpose of God may not be the things that we like to do at that time.

Understand the Time You're Living In

So the Bible says the children of Issachar had

the understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do, and they did it. Like that, God wants us to understand the times we are living in: to know what the church ought to do, what a child of God ought to do and so on. You should understand the times of God in your world, the times we are in the country, and the time you are in the programme of God for you. Also, you should know what you ought to do as against what the majority are doing. God doesn't bless what is popular; He blesses what is right. God doesn't commit to what is popular; He commits to what is right.

In view of this, what are you supposed to be doing now in the programme of God for your life? In the programme of God for you, are you supposed to be married by now? What business are you supposed to be doing? Where are you supposed to be living? What seed are you supposed to be sowing? Let us be sure and not assume.

Let me reiterate that this chapter is addressing TIME as a component of the will of God. It is not enough to know the purpose of God for your lives;

you must know His times for your life as well. So let us continue with our study on wisdom and timing as we look at the following scripture:

> Then the king said to the wise men, who knew the times, (for so was the king's manner towards all that knew law and judgment. (Esther 1: 13)

From this scripture, you would see clearly that there is a tie between wisdom and timing. We can therefore deduce that it is wisdom to know the TIMES. So wise men must be people who know the times. With that said, let us look at Psalm 31: 15—

> My times are in thy hand: Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

David said to the Lord, "My times are in your hands." Is your time key in the hand of God, or do you just choose what you want to do anyhow? Do you just run your life the way you like? We must not allow ourselves to be ruled by our feelings or tend to the ways of the multitude. We must follow the leading of the Spirit of God, which is always in

accuracy with the timing of God for us.

> And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. (Acts 17: 26)

God never planned that man would succeed apart from seeking Him. There are many things that God has built into creation and life. Unless you seek Him, you would not be able to understand them or decipher them.

There are certain things that prayers cannot change; prayers can affect the promises of God, but they cannot change the prophecy of God. And what our prayers can do for us is to birth accuracy in our lives to work in the prophecy of God. We can claim promises to come to pass, but we can't claim prophecies to come to pass.

Don't Step Out of God's Set Time

God has set our times. The Bible says, “To every purpose there is a time, and there is a set time for things to happen.” Most of the problems we have as people of God come from the fact that we move out of the timing of God by allowing ourselves to come under satanic pressure as well as circumstantial pressure. For example, orange has its season of harvest; no amount of prayer will bring it out before its time. God has set nine months for a woman to carry her pregnancy. If your wife gets pregnant today and delivers in two weeks’ time, that will be an abortion.

Beloved, there are things the Lord has set for us; they are time bound, but what the devil does is to make us go ahead of God. He inflicts us with pressures so much that we step out ahead of God. Even though God has set to offer us certain things, we must be conscious of the time He has designed to offer them to us. If we are impatient and strive to get those things, they are going to be a snare to us despite the fact that it is in the will of God for us to have them. A good example is the birth of Ishmael.

After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?

And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. (Gen. 15: 1-4)

Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. (Gen. 16: 1-2)

And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.

Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?

Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh. (Gen. 17: 15-19)

And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.

And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.

> Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.
>
> Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?
>
> And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?
>
> Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.
>
> Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh. (Gen. 18: 9-15)

It was in God's plan for Abraham and Sarah to have a child, and the child was to come at the time set by God. God had said in Genesis 15 that Abraham was going to have a child, but Sarah pushed Abraham into marrying her maiden and the product of that was Ishmael. The question I want to ask you, my beloved, is that Didn't Sarah give birth to a child as promised by God? Of course she did but with a hurt beside it, because she pushed her husband outside of the timing of God.

She did with a hurt as the following scripture shows us:

> For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.
>
> But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.
>
> Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.
>
> For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.
>
> But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
>
> For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.
>
> Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.
>
> But as then he that was born after the flesh

> persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.
>
> Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. (Gal. 4: 22-30)

The contention between Christians and Muslims today is a product of Sarah's haste against divine timing. It is to our benefit when we wait for God's time. Things are made beautiful in God's time and this we must earnestly find out. God wants us to walk in the accuracy of time. Don't just find out God's purpose for your life, find out your times. Your time may be different from your friend's, so you don't have to envy him or emulate him. Just wait and keep being faithful where you are; keep doing what you are supposed to be doing, and you'll get to where God wants you to get to. The Bible says, "A fool's eye is at the end of the world." He never faces the 'present tense' realities of his life. He always looks ahead of the end of the world. And God doesn't want us to be fools; He wants us to be wise. A wise man walks with the future in view. He doesn't make decisions that will negate or mortgage the future ahead of him.

CHAPTER 11

HOW GOD SETS TIME AND HOW WE CAN DISCOVER IT

According to the Bible, there are two major ways by which God sets time: naturally and divinely.

> And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. (Gen. 1: 14)

That is the natural time. It can be discovered by wristwatch, by the sun, by week, by seasons and so on. Various societies, depending on their level of civilisation, have various means of gauging the time and calculating the age of people. The calendar can as well be used to measure time. But it is not the same as DIVINE TIME. The natural time is set to help man discern and determine times, seasons, days, months, and years. God sets divine time by His choice. He marks out portions of time and periods of time, and there is nothing you and I can do about

that.

God Sets Divine Time by Prophetic Utterance

God uses prophecy to set divine timing. He has fixed some things into life, and there is nothing you can do to change them. There are even certain natural things that the Lord has set their time by Himself; He didn't seek our opinions before He set them—for instance, the number of months an animal or a human being will carry a pregnancy.

In Jeremiah 29: 10, we will see how God, by prophetic utterances, set time;

> For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

That prophetic utterance set the period of seventy years for the children of Israel to be in Babylonian captivity. It had to be seventy years, and

there was nothing they could do to cut it short. All they could do was to find out what God wanted them to do during the time they were in Babylon. You can't change divine timing; you can only discover it. Align yourself with it and cooperate with it.

Prophecy is history before it happens. It is history in advance. For example, history says that Nigeria got her independence on 1 October 1960. None of us can change that; it has happened already. You can't rewrite actors of history. None of us can change the date we were born. You can try, but eventually the truth will be discovered. Nobody can rewrite history. In the same way, nobody can rewrite prophecy. The only difference between history and prophecy is that we've already known people who took part in history, but we don't know the people who are going to take part in the prophecy. And that's why it's very important for us to find out what steps to take so as to run and fulfil our own divine purpose in the prophecies that God has given to us.

God works within His own time frame. He only needs us to pray in order to do what He has planned

to do in that time frame, that is, He needs us to cooperate with Him like Daniel did by praying to God after he discovered that the children of Israel were to spend seventy years in Babylon. God has set the time and He's looking for somebody to know the time and remind Him. If you will study the scriptures, there are many things God has promised to happen in our days, and we can begin to pray according to that. If it's time for rain, let us ask Him for rain. There's a time to live by the Word of God, and live normally.

If you look at John 7, Jesus said something there concerning this subject of divine timing and natural timing. Let's start reading from verse 3-6:

> His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.
>
> For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.
>
> For neither did his brethren believe in him.
>
> Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet

> come: but your time is always ready. (John 7: 3-6)

He says "My time." What is He talking about there? He is talking about the time that God has set for Him to show forth Himself and His works to the general public. Look also at what David said in Psalm 3: 15:

> My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

Yes, we have one lifetime to live and fulfil all that God has for us, but different time frames that God Himself has chosen for us to be sensitive to, to discover, and to keep, otherwise we'd lag behind in His schedule for us.

Prophetic Words Delivered by Angels

> *And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.*
>
> *And the angel answering said unto him, I am*

> *Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings.*
>
> *And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season (emphasis mine). (Luke 1: 18-20)*

From the scripture above, God was showing us divine time through angelic means, but all is under the Spirit of prophecy. The angel was telling him that the message he brought was already determined by God, and the phrase I want you to note is this " . . . *because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season*". This tells us that prophetic words have their season of fulfilment.

When a man misses his divine timing, the attention of heaven is removed from his life and God may have to focus on another person as a result. May God never remove His attention from your life in Jesus' name, Amen. There's a time that God puts you in a position to do something that only you can do for His programme on the earth; but if you get carried away and fail to do it, God will have to look

for somebody else to work with. Look at the story of Esther in the book of Esther, Chapter 4:

> And who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a *time* as this? (Esther 4: 14)

That was Mordecai addressing Esther here. She didn't get to that position for fashion parade or for popularity; God put her there to affect His programme in preserving the children of Israel so that the messiah could still come. Thank God she had an uncle to remind her, or she could have missed divine timing.

Phrases of Time: His Time, My Time, and Your Time

There are three phrases of time that we should look into, namely, His time, my time, and your time.

His time

This is God's time, fixed sovereignly for man to

discover. We cannot alter this time at all. That is why the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3: 11, "HE hath made everything beautiful in His time." God works within His own time frame, not ours. We don't set time for God. No man has the right to give time to God; God is the One who gives time to us.

My time

> John 7: 6 says, *"Jesus therefore saith unto them, My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready."*
>
> John 2: 4 says, "*And Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."*
>
> Psalm 31: 15, *"My times are in thy hand: Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me."*

"My times" is the language of a man who is walking in the understanding of divine programme, who synchronises his activities with the timing of heaven, on God's own timetable. He does not do things because they are popular. His activities are not informed by earthly physical condition or circumstances that may look right. He knows his

seasons and waits for them.

My time is the awareness to a man who is connected to divine purpose, who knows that his time according to the programme of God is superior to his time by his wristwatch. That was what David and Jesus were talking about there. *My time is where I am in God's programme for NOW.*

Your time

In John 7: 6, Jesus was speaking to His brothers, saying, "Your time is always ready."

'Your time' is bound by nature. It is the time you are personally disposed to do what your flesh desires. This is governed by your will. You determine what you do with it. But you need to know that your time may not be God's time for you. He requires that you give it to Him—synchronize it with His time. Don't walk in your time. Walk in God's times. When David said "*My times are in your hands"*, he was referring to God's set time for him.

So we are still talking about God setting His time by prophecy. Prophecy is His plan for you in advance. There are various prophecies at various levels. There's a *prophecy of divine purpose*, which you can't affect; we can only discover it and cooperate with it. Also, there are *prophecies of warning* that prayer can change. Like when Jonah prophesied to Nineveh and their prayer made God change His mind. It was a conditional prophecy. When they repented, God had mercy. Also, there are *prophecies of encouragement*.

The Set Time and the Appointed Time

In this section, we shall be looking at what set time means, how to discover the set time, what we are expected to do before our set time comes, and what God does at the set time. I have a number of examples to drive home each of the points. So let us start with these scriptures:

> And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,
>
> Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least

> in this thy day, the things *[which belong]* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. (Luke 19: 41-42)

What Jesus mentioned as "this day" coincides exactly with the prophecy given in the book of Daniel, Chapter 9:

> Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.
>
> Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.
>
> And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.
>
> And he shall confirm the covenant with many

> for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make [it] desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Dan. 9: 24-27)

Jesus knew that the peace of Jerusalem, the progress of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem fulfilling its appointed time in the programme of God for the human race had come but they missed it. In Luke 19: 43-44, you will see what happens when a man misses his set time.

> For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,
>
> And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

At the set time, God visits, and when God visits, He fulfils promises. That's what Jeremiah said in the scripture below:

> For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place. (Jer. 29: 10)

Set times are special times of God's favour, God's fulfilment of certain promises that have been on. What do we do before our set time comes? We should live normally. There is divine visitation; there is divine involvement. We don't lose divine involvement and participation on an ongoing basis. That's living by faith. Divine visitation is when special anointing gifts and manifestations come. And we receive both too. So we see here that Jesus said the children of Israel missed their time of visitation. You will not miss your time of visitation.

Many people miss their time of visitation and remain in limbo for years because a man must either be in place or in space. God will cause you to always be in place in the name of Jesus. That's God's plan and purpose for us—that we walk in His time. And like I said, set time is God's time; therefore, your time must be set to His time to make it coincide with

His agenda.

CHAPTER 12

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR SET TIME

Naturally, time can be discovered through our wristwatch. However, we can discover divine time through the Holy Spirit, through the scriptures, through anointed men of God, and through our inner man. We are going to consider each of these approaches to the discovery of your set time, first through anointed men of God.

THE MINISTRY OF ANOINTED MEN

> *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers. (Eph. 4: 11)*

These men carry special anointing to help us discover the timing of God for our lives. They are inspired of the Holy Spirit to sensitise God's people to the timing of God, and that's what Paul is doing in the book of Romans below:

> And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (Rom. 13: 11)

Paul is saying here that it was a critical moment in the programme of God for the Gentile world and the human race. He says it is high time they awoke out of sleep and careless activity to purposeful activity that is in line with divine programme for their lives. Now if Paul wrote this chapter, Chapter 13 of the book of Romans, more than two thousands of years ago, how much more is it imperative for us to awake out of sleep? Sleep here is talking of careless, unconcerned activity of coasting along, not bothering to find out God's timing for your life.

> The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. (Rom. 13: 12)

Paul is talking of night here in reference to divine timing: " . . . knowing the time ". . ." so God wants us to know the time, and it is possible to know the time. Paul was warning the Romans that it was high time they came out of careless slumber, out of living an unconcerned life about the coming Jesus,

and embrace the programme of God for their lives.

Look at another statement from that verse: "Now our salvation is nearer than when we believed". Salvation here is not talking of being born-again; it is talking of our deliverance from this world when Jesus shall take us with Him in rapture and our body redeemed from the corruption of the fall of Adam.

The devil likes a man who is not aware of divine timing because he has a way of involving him in so many things that look exciting but are not having any impact on divine programme in his life. So God wants us to be aware of divine timing. There's a time attached to our lives, to do what God sent us to do here, and I pray for you in Jesus' name that you will be baptised with divine sensation and sensitivity to timing and that you'll fulfil divine purpose on the surface of the earth in time.

2. THROUGH OUR RECREATED

HUMAN SPIRIT

Another way by which we discover the timing of God is through the recreated human spirit. Now for a person who is not born-again, this is not going to be possible. It is only the born-again, spirit-washed by the blood of Jesus, recreated, and renewed people who can be ministered to by the Holy Spirit. I want us to see something in Acts, Chapter 7, verses17-23:

> But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,
>
> Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.
>
> The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.
>
> In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:
>
> And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

> And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.
>
> And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

Another way to discover the timing of God is by watching your heart. Your spirit man is your connection to heaven. God deals with our spirit man, not our brain. God deals with our spirit, and then our spirit contacts our understanding, our intellect, our brain, and then our body. And until a man is born-again, he can't come into that. And even when you are born-again, there's a need to walk in accuracy of divine timing. The Bible says, "It came to his heart"; it was God who brought it to his *heart*, not to his *head*.

> Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,
>
> And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

> Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.
>
> And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.
>
> And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.
>
> But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.
>
> And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.
>
> And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat. (Acts 27: 9-16)

Sometimes when the time of God is ripe, His whispers in your spirit man may not look like what is currently happening around you. Everything looked seemingly right when Paul sensed that danger loomed. The present condition didn't give a chance to think that there was an impending danger ahead. That is why you must train yourself to follow your

spirit man. In every situation, always check out what your spirit man is saying. In most cases, what it says may be ways apart from general norms and standards, but trust it.

Divine direction is in the *heart* of a man, not his *head*. We have seen two instances of how God communicates divine timing through a recreated human spirit. In the case of Paul, he *perceived* and in the case of Moses, *it came to his heart*. You need to cultivate the attitude of listening to the voice of the Spirit in your spirit man in every situation, and you will be safe and on time.

3. THE SCRIPTURES

Another way by which we can discover the timing of God is through the scriptures, and our example is Daniel.

> In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

> In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. (Dan. 9: 1-2)

So by studying the scriptures, he discovered that the time the prophet of God set for Israel to be captives in Babylon was seventy years. And then calculating naturally, he discovered that seventy years was almost up and so began to pray. So by studying the scripture, we can locate divine timing. People who don't study the scriptures can never walk in the accuracy of divine timing.

4. BEING FILLED WITH AND CONTROLLED BY THE SPIRIT

Another way by which we can discover time, the timing of God, is found in Ephesians, Chapter 5, verses 15-19:

> See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as

> fools, but as wise,
>
> Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
>
> Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
>
> And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
>
> Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

This means that by being filled with and controlled by the spirit, we bring ourselves into a perpetual place of consciousness and awareness of divine timing. Verse 19 tells us how we can be filled with the Spirit:

> Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

When a person is full of worship and praises to God by fellowshipping with Him in prayer, worship, appreciation, and praying in the spirit, he comes to a place where he's ruled more by his consciousness of divine timing than by his awareness of natural time according to his wristwatch. Remember, that "set

time" is a time that God Himself has sovereignly fixed to do certain things, for example, to visit His people, to perform His promise, for certain events to take place and so on. There's simply nothing we can do about set time.

In Jeremiah 29, He said they would spend seventy years in Babylon as captives, but He also said "after seventy years I will visit you". You should then understand that divine visitation is a result of divine appointment. There can't be a visitation unless there is an appointment. The appointed time is the time that we should be waiting on God to bring to fulfilment to what He has said.

There are many times that God surprises us, thank God for divine surprises. But divine appointment is a matter of obligation to God. It's a matter of justice to God, a matter of His integrity. God will do what He says He will do, whether people believe them or not. If you are in the place of waiting for set time to come, wait patiently, confidently, expectantly, and in faith, knowing that He that set the appointment will visit at the appointed time, and do

what He says He would do. At the set time, things happen. The devil can't stop set times because set time is not dependent on you, it is dependent on God. Our responsibility is to do what we need to do so that God will meet us in the right condition for our set time to come to pass.

Joseph had to wait for the set time. He saw the dream at the age of seventeen but he entered and walked in that dream at the age of thirty. That was thirteen years' interval. But in-between the time he saw the dream and the time he fulfilled it, he faced many temptations—his brothers sold him to a land of slavery, the wife of Potiphar tempted him, and he was jailed unjustly. He could have been bitter, he could have fallen into immorality, still the set time for him would have come, but he may not have been the person who would have fulfilled the appointment at the set time; God might have chosen another to fulfil that destiny. I pray for you that no one will take your place in the programme of God for your life. When Saul, the first king of Israel, failed to fulfil God's programme for his life, God said, "I have found a neighbour of thine who is better than you, who will

replace you." That's the tip-off that nobody is indispensable in the programme of God. The only indispensable person in the programme of God is God Himself. God doesn't change His plan, but He can change the people. That's why each one of us must come into a sensitivity of the seven components of the will of God.

When the set time comes, no devil in hell can stop God's decision. When the set time came for Jesus to come out of the grave, all the soldiers fell dead; they fell down flat as the anointing knocked them down; the stone was rolled away by an angel, and the Lord rose up. Nothing could stop him. When the set time came for Joseph to become the prime minister, they sent for him in the prison. Look at the story in Genesis 41; I want you to see it. He just slept one day as a slave; he woke up one day as a slave and slept that night as a prime minister.

> Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. (Gen. 41: 14)

Now I want you to notice the action of Joseph; he had been working for this for thirteen years. He was a man who was sensitive to divine timing. He was not an ordinary person; he was waiting for an appointment. And when Pharaoh sent for him, he knew it was a call of destiny; he knew his time had come to fulfil his destiny. And what did he do? He shaved himself and changed his raiment. He didn't go to Pharaoh in prisoners' clothes; he went there in normal attire. That he shaved himself meant he was prepared never to go back to the prison. The next thing his fellow prisoners heard about him was that he had become the prime minister.

Look at how David said this story in Psalm 105: 16 concerning Joseph:

> Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: *(that was God)* he brake the whole staff of bread. *(that was in the land of Egypt)*.

God was preparing His programme to come to pass and He was controlling circumstances on the earth. Let us look at verse 17 through verse 22:

> He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant:
>
> Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:
>
> Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.
>
> The king sent and loosed him; *even* the ruler of the people, and let him go free.
>
> He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:
>
> To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

Can you see the statement " . . . until the time that his word came ". . ." Whether you like it or not, your word will come. I pray that you will be the right person for the right position that God has prepared you for. Joseph fulfilled his own programme; the time came, and nothing could stop him from becoming the prime minister because he had fulfilled his own part by staying prepared, and God kept His appointment with him. I pray for you, my dear reader, that God Almighty will help you to live right and do right things that will qualify you for your destiny. Your set time is coming when things will

break loose for you and no devil will be able to stop it in Jesus' name.

CHAPTER 13

OVERCOMING PRESSURES WHILE WAITING FOR DIVINE TIMING

Divine appointment represents the time that God has personally fixed to do certain things in our lives according to His programme for our lives. And many times when we are waiting for the set time or the time appointed when God comes visiting, there are pressures that the devil engineers to move us out of the timing of God; we must not allow ourselves to fall prey to these pressures. This is because when a man is out of divine timing, he's also out of the will of God. When a man is out of divine timing, he misses the provision, the protection, and the promotion of God that he actually is looking for.

These pressures are inevitable in the place of waiting for divine appointment, but you must keep your feet strong. Waiting period is not forever, it will end someday; but how well you wait will determine

your qualification as well as your manifestation. In the place of waiting, the devil tries to bring so much pressure, internal and external, to cause us to miss the timing of God. When a man misses the timing of God, he also misses the event that God has planned for that time. Also, when you miss the timing of God, you miss His blessings and His purpose.

With specific examples, we are going to see instances of pressures we are liable to face in the place of waiting for divine appointment. We shall be considering some people who went through pressures while they were waiting for the time appointed by God for them in destiny, and we shall learn a number of things from the their lives.

1. JOSEPH, THE PRESSURE OF TEMPTATION

> And it came to pass from the time *that* he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had

in the house, and in the field.

And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was *a* goodly *person*, and well favoured.

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. (Gen. 39: 5-7)

Joseph proved that it is very possible as a young man to live without the sin of fornication. He becomes the standard and holds the record that every young man should aspire to pursue and break. So here we see the pressure that came to Joseph, the pressure of sexual sin, and it will come to you too.

8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what *is* with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;

9 *There is* none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou *art* his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to

lie by her, *or* to be with her. ((Gen. 39: 8-10)

What makes it a great temptation is the fact that if Joseph had slept with that woman, she would have made him the acting husband in the house, and Joseph's destiny would have ended in the bedroom of Potiphar. But Joseph knew what he carried and what he was aspiring. He knew the vision of God for his life that it was beyond Potiphar's house and he remained resolute not to sell that glorious destiny for a short-term pleasure.

Don't forget that it was possible to Joseph to sleep with her without anybody knowing about it. And that is what most of the people do. Joseph held dear to his consecration. He would not compromise even if no one was watching. Only God knows how many Christians have denied God and mortgaged their destinies by succumbing to sexual pressure.

Joseph has exemplified to us that even if it would mean that the offer be denied us, we should not bow down to pressures of this kind. Samson bowed for this kind of pressure and lost his own

destiny. Of course, the woman lied against him, and he was sentenced to prison. Sometimes, God allows some test to come our way to qualify us for our next promotion. God knew that the prison was the place that would usher Joseph to his place of destiny. If he enjoyed the pleasure of sleeping with his master's wife, he would have stayed back in his house and would not have had an occasion to be imprisoned. But was that God's destiny for him?

Beloved, pressures are indications that the battle is almost won, that the set time is around the corner. Don't throw in the towel and allow your testimony to be soiled. Joseph was allowed to stay in Potiphar's house for that season in order to learn integrity in handling another man's things. In prison, he cultivated his gift because it is easy to cultivate gift in isolation.

2. ELISHA, THE PRESSURE OF STAYING UNDER AUTHORITY

> So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke

> *of oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.
>
> And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?
>
> And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him. (1 Kings 19: 19-21)

All Elisha was doing was ministering unto Elijah as his houseboy. He was not even a student in the school of prophets. At that time, the school of prophets in Israel had been established. There were students in the school learning ministry. But Elisha was attached to the servant of God, Elijah, as a houseboy, ministering unto him. In fact, he was called as the servant of the man of God by the time his ministry started. Let us see this in the scripture below:

> But Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a

> prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.
>
> And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. (2 Kings 3: 11-12)

What does Jehoshaphat know about pouring water on the hands of Elijah to make him say that the Word of the Lord was with him? He knew that the secret of receiving anointing was service; the secret of entering into a place of destiny is to stay in the place of waiting under tutors and guardians until the appointed time by the father comes, as explained by Paul in Galatians 4: 1. So Jehoshaphat knew that Elisha had paid his dues; he had fulfilled the requirement of service, and so he could safely predict that the Word of the Lord was with him. And you notice that when you see prophets who never stayed under tutors and guardians, they find it easy to lie against the Holy Ghost. One of the things that your stay under authority brings into your life is ACCOUNTABILITY CONSCIOUSNESS. When you see a man who never stayed under authority, he'd

also not be accountable to anybody.

We will see a good example of some of the pressures that he faced in 2 Kings, Chapter 2, verses 3 and 5 as to how the sons of the prophets related with him. Mockery is a pressure that could come to a young man in the place of waiting for set time under tutors and guardian. Let us see that more closely:

> And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know [it]; hold ye your peace.
>
> And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know [it]; hold ye your peace. (2 Kings 2: 3, 5)

So they knew him to be the servant of Elijah; they knew he was loyal to the man of God and so mocked him. So we can safely say that mockery is a pressure that many people face in the place of staying loyal to their God-ordained tutors and guardians.

Many people have allowed such mockery by their contemporaries to push them out of divine timing and divine placement. As far as God is concerned, His purpose for Elisha was to be trained to be a prophet so as to receive double portion of his anointing. If he would be qualified for this, he had to stay under Elijah and learn.

So Elisha faced mockery, and you may be reading this book today and you are in the place of waiting for divine appointment, and mockery comes to your way. People mock at you and call you all kind of names while you are waiting for the promise of God to come, but don't give up; remain faithful and get all that God wants you to get out of that waiting period. It is only a matter of time when they will see your manifestation.

3. MOSES, THE PRESSURE OF HUMAN FRAILTY

Another person that faced pressure while waiting for the appointed time was Moses. The

pressure he faced was that of his temperament. He faced the pressure of his anger, self control. There are certain things in our lives that each one of us must conquer, or else they will conquer us in the place of waiting for the will of God to come to pass. Moses moved before time; he assumed that the children of Israel would accept him as their leader but they didn't because the time of God was not yet right.

> And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.
>
> And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was* no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.
>
> And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?
>
> And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

> Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well. (Exod. 2: 11-15)

Many people work to arrange things for themselves, and when you work to arrange things for yourself, even though you are the man God has chosen, you can muddle up the water of divine programme for you and make it difficult for yourself to fulfil the programme of God for your life. Moses delayed and elongated that programme by another forty years. Who knows whether he was supposed to step into his destiny in another two years if he had not smitten that Egyptian? But by moving before time as a result of zeal and his lack of self control at that time, his journey was elongated. He had to go into the wilderness for forty years extra. Why? Because God had not finished training him. God needed to train him under a man like Jethro—a man who would not respect his status. He needed to be trained as a shepherd to know how to carry the burdens of the people. His training was not complete in the house of pharaoh. And if he had moved with that training of Egypt, he would not have been able to lead the children of Israel into the wilderness and the

Promised Land. But thank God that Moses still fulfilled his purpose because God had mercy on him.

4. ISAAC, OVERCOMING ECONOMIC PRESSURE

> And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.
>
> And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:
>
> Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. (Gen. 26: 1-3)

God appeared unto Isaac and said *'Don't go down to Egypt.'* Why would he want to go to Egypt in the first place? The reason is simple: when there was a famine in the days of Abraham his father, Abraham went down to Egypt. And of course it looked like nothing happened negative, but observed that it was out of Egypt that Abraham brought Hagar,

who, later, became the opportunity of the devil to cause Abraham and Sarah to fall for pressure to get a child outside of the plan and purpose of God for their lives. And the same way, the devil wants to cause you as a child of God, waiting for set time, to move out of the place of waiting and get into human arrangement as opposed to divine arrangement. Human arrangement can look good. Human arrangement can give you something today that God planned that you should have ten years' time, and you look like overnight success but that would mean you are eating your future today. You will not eat your future today in the name of Jesus.

Many people have fallen for that trick of the devil. For example, the devil came to the Lord Jesus and said to Him, "If you bow down to worship me, all this glory of the world I'll give you upfront", whereas that is what Jesus came to collect from his hand, but the way that God planned that He should collect it was by going through the road of the cross. However, the devil said, "You don't need to go through the road of the cross; I will give it to you if you worship me." The devil does this today—he

offers the people of God what God wants them to get later.

In Genesis 26, you will see how the devil wanted to move Isaac out of his place through the pressure of famine. Economic pressure, financial pressure, and social pressure come with famine. Due to famine, he wanted to move to Egypt, to follow the trend and the norm at that time. He wanted to try the method of the world, but God said, "No, don't do that. Stay in this place. This is the land I have chosen for you. It may look like conditions are not fine, but I am here with you. You are okay." It is where God has located you that your allocation will come to you. You cannot be everywhere. God has determined the boundaries of your dwelling. Acts 17: 26 says, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

Isaac hearkened to the Lord, and God blessed him in that land. The Bible tells us in verse 12 that he sowed in that land, and the Lord gave him a

hundredfold, and he began to increase, and in the midst of famine God was blessing him. Of course, you can prosper in famine if you remain where God has placed you. The key factor that caused him to prosper in the midst of famine is that he was in the will of God. Many people are in the famine because they are out of the will of God. A man can go to a land flowing with milk and honey in disobedience and he will be suffering there. And a man can be in the midst of famine, yet enjoy plenty because he's in obedience to God. So you see, economic pressure can come to move us out of the timing of God for our lives; to do things NOW that God eventually will bring LATER.

5. JOB, PRESSURE FROM YOUR SPOUSE

Job's pressure came through his wife. She said, "Curse God and die. Why are you still maintaining your integrity?" Only God knows how many women today have pushed their husbands out of divine timing because of pressure. There are many people today who, by the virtue of divine calling upon their

lives, were called to be associate ministers to some senior ministers of God, and their wives say, "No, you can't just stay like that as an associate. Just move yourself out. You too can start something." Many people have left the timing of God, His placement, and His purpose because of that, and they have moved into irrelevances. You will not move into irrelevances in Jesus' name.

Job's wife almost made him compromise. It would be terrible for you to allow your spouse to push you out of the will of God for your life. Amos 3: 3 says two people cannot work together except they see the same thing and believe the same thing. May you not marry the wrong wife or husband in the name of Jesus. Your spouse should consolidate your bid to fulfil divine mandate and not to lure you away from it. So when this pressure comes from them, hold your ground and do not waver.

Sometimes, when you are waiting for the set time, it looks to others like you're foolish; it looks like you're not smart like other people. But a man who is waiting for God is never a fool. The Bible says, "They that wait upon the Lord shall be exalted

in due season."

6. SAMSON, PRESSURE FROM PERSONAL COMFORT

Samson faced the pressure of his own personal comfort! Though the pressure that Samson faced throughout his life revolved around women, the main issue was his personal comfort. He always promoted his personal comfort above the will of God. In fact, one of the reasons why many people get into financial problems in their lives is because they make the issue of their personal comfort a matter of life and death. They can't suffer now to enjoy later; they just want to have it now. No. If you are in the place of waiting for divine appointment, the devil will try to use your own personal comfort above the will of God. When you promote your personal comfort above the will of God, you fall into many hurtful temptations of the devil.

Champions of God, people who fulfilled great purposes of God, learnt to master their appetites—

sexual appetite and physical appetite.

> Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.
>
> I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. (Phil. 4: 11-12)

Paul said he had to be content in whatever state he was. There is a time to abound and there is a time to abase. If you are in a season of life where you should be abasing, and you are trying to abound, you will eat your future. So you see that Samson fell for the pressure in the place of waiting for divine appointment because he could not forgo his personal comfort and thirst.

7. SAUL, RESISTING THE PRESSURE FROM THE PEOPLE

> And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were

> scattered from him.
>
> And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.
>
> And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.
>
> And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;
>
> Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.
>
> And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. (1 Sam. 13: 8-13)

The desire to be loved and look good in the sight of people was Saul's problem. And what led to that was because Saul had personal insecurity in his life.

Too many people today find themselves in the position of great honour and great power, even in the ministry, with personal insecurity in their lives.

Saul said, "Because I saw the people scattering from me… I forced myself to offer the burnt offering." God does not expect a leader to allow the people to put him under pressure. Saul did not have a personal relationship with God. Throughout his life, he always referred to God as the God of Samuel. He once said to Samuel, "Pray to the Lord thy God for me." The Lord *thy* God! He never said, "The Lord *my* God."

Saul's insecurity came from the fact that he did not have a relationship with God as we have seen above. Your security is not in your position or the feeling of acceptance you enjoy with the people. If you are going to last as a leader, you must make your relationship with God a priority. Leadership is trust. God sets a man to lead his people for him, but such a man must know the God who is sending Him. Your desire must be to please *Him* and not the *people*.

The bedrock of confidence, real strength, and character is the man who has his identity rooted in his relationship with God. Before Jesus started His ministry, He got divine approval: "*thou art my beloved son in whom I'm pleased"*. He had not done any miracle, yet God approved his sonship. And when your confidence is rooted in your sonship and not your performance, you'll be a safe leader.

CHAPTER 14

WHAT TO DO WHILE WAITING FOR GOD'S SET TIME

On several occasions in this book, we have seen that God has set time for certain things to happen, and we have seen that there is nothing we can do to change what God has set; we discover the time and then we cooperate with it. We make ourselves live in such a way that we will be the right person, doing the right thing when our set time comes so as to fulfil the good things in the programme of God for our lives. In view of this, we shall be looking at what is expected of us while we are waiting for God's set time for us in His programme.

1. STAY UNDER TUTORS AND GOVERNORS UNTIL YOUR TIME IS RIPE

> *"Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though*

he be lord of all;

But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." (Gal. 4: 1-2)

The father has a plan for the heir. The heir is the one who he has marked out and chosen to enter into his estate later. But the heir, as long as he is a child, cannot function in the fullness of what the father has marked out for him. So the father puts him under tutors and governors until the *time chosen* (time appointed) by the father. The child is meant to schedule his life according to his father's timetable if he desires to enter into his heritage.

Paul is using this illustration to explain our dealings with God too. Before we can qualify to walk in His purpose for our lives, before our time is ripe, God puts us under tutors and governors. Sometimes the tutors and governors are human beings; sometimes they are systems or situations and circumstances that are designed by God to train us to be vessels of honour in His hand for His purpose at the set time. One of the great tragedies of ministry today in the body of Christ is that there are a lot of people who have entered into ministry without

adequate training. They have great callings and great destinies though, but God wants them to be under tutors and governors but they would not. At their time of manifestation, they mess up and eventually do not fulfil God's purpose the way He ordained them to.

Situations Trained Joseph

Joseph stayed under tutors and governors in his father's house, in Potiphar's house, and in prison. Through circumstances and situations, he was trained and made fit to be the prime minister. He knew that all the roads he walked were instrumental to his position as a prime minister. Little wonder he did not have to get even with his brother for selling him into slavery. He knew he had to be prepared until his appointed time came. He walked in the power of the purpose of God.

I want you to know that your time will surely come. Your time and season will come, but you are responsible to be ready and thoroughly prepared to walk in the fullness of His purpose for your life.

Situations of life may be your own tutor. As a child of God, you must not lose sight of the fact that God's dealings with you are ultimately for your good. Enjoy it and learn all you have to learn.

David Succeeded

David came under tutors and governors and he fulfilled his purpose as the king of Israel. He was abandoned, living like an outcast in his father's house, but overall, he allowed the heart of a shepherd to be formed in him. God had ordained that he was going to be king over his people. If he failed in his training, he would be unfit to be a king. You need to know that God knows the road each of us must walk to arrive at our place in destiny. Mine may be different from yours, so you don't have to emulate or envy me.

Samson Fumbled

Samson is a very good example of a man who failed at his time of manifestation, because he did not stay under tutors. He never stayed under his father to be tutored and governed, and he wanted to fulfil

purpose. Of course, you know what happened to him. His father relayed God's instruction of not marrying strange women so as to preserve his anointing, but he would not listen. Tutors are meant to guide us in the ways we should go so as to qualify for our destiny.

Gehazi Ended Wrongly

Just as Elisha was trained under Elijah, Gehazi was trained under Elisha, but he did not succeed. Sometimes, the substance, the anointing, and virtue we need to function in our destiny are handed to us by our governors and tutors. In the programme of God for him, Gehazi should have walked in the double portion of Elisha's anointing because that was the measure that would sustain the next judge over Israel. However, instead of cultivating the right heart and staying qualified, he had his eyes on another thing and he became a storyteller instead of a prophet. We have another example of those who failed in their waiting period in Judas Iscariot. He was under Jesus' tutelage, but he did not relate with his training well. This makes me know that the condition of your heart is essential when you are in your

waiting period. Whether your situations and circumstances prepare you for your appointed time, or men would have to prepare you for it, the condition of your heart will tell what you will become. *These were men who had clear-cut destinies under God, but they didn't stay under tutors and governors until the time appointed.* There is a time appointed for everyone. Wait until your appointed time comes. Look at what Job says:

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

2. SOW GOOD SEEDS IN YOUR PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

Make the dreams of other people come through. Serve the vision of the city you live in, the family you belong, and your place of work. Bless your employers. Fulfil the dreams of other people.

> And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace

thereof shall ye have peace. (Jer. 29: 7)

Sow good seeds into the lives of others. If you want to be great in life, you must make someone great first of all. As a wife, minister to your husband; help the dreams of your family to come to pass. As a church member, help the dreams of your pastor. Remember this: when a man is working a vision, nobody can use you because the vision will make you. Elisha was not used by Elijah because it was his service unto him that qualified him for the double portion.

3. MAINTAIN A CLEAR EXPECTATION OF YOUR FUTURE

Joseph never lost sight of his dream. He knew that someday it would become a reality, and it did.

> Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

> And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (1 John 3: 2-3)

Draw your hope from the Word of God, not from circumstances. Maintain a very clear expectation. Live with the consciousness of what you are becoming. Time must not just pass away. Keep an inventory of what you are progressing in the light of the purpose of God for your life. Even if the situation is not palatable now, don't lose sight of that tomorrow. Day by day, you would get close to the end of the tunnel where the light would be seen. What God has planned for you is great. Jeremiah 29: 11 says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

4. MAKE YOUR DECISIONS VERY STRONG AND UNSHAKEABLE

Decision is more important and more powerful than desire. Anybody can desire, but for a decided man, life makes way for him. Decide that you would stand your ground until your time comes.

5. RECOGNIZE THE TIMING OF GOD

Your life is broken into seasons; identify your seasons and master your transitions. Don't jump ahead of time. Don't move before divine timing and don't stay behind when God is asking you to move. Fix your gaze on Him. Don't be too slow or too quick for God. Maintain the sensitivity of heart, and it will be well with you.

6. BUILD A FUTURE FROM YOUR PRESENT CONDITION AND POSITION

Lots of time, when people have a picture of a better tomorrow, they enter into idleness and stop doing the things that would contribute to the future ahead of them. The future will not just come out of the blue; how well you handle your TODAY will determine the kind of TOMORROW that you will get.

7. DISCONNECT FROM WRONG PEOPLE AND FALSE EXPECTATIONS

False hopes and false dreams come through false prophecies. When wrong people lead your life, wrong things won't stop happening. We're in a season of intense spiritual activities in the world today, so you must watch your relationships. Don't connect to anybody who builds wrong expectations or wrong hopes in you, or leads you into wrong things. One of the ways the devil uses to break the commitment of people to their destiny is by bringing them into wrong relationships and associations.

> *He that walketh with the wise man shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. (Prov. 13: 20)*

Learn to disconnect from wrong. It is not everybody you know who will be relevant to your purpose in God. The people who are not going to the same destination in life as you're going will take you to a wrong place. For example, when you are in a

motor park, you don't first ask how much the fare is; the first thing you do is to find out if there is a vehicle going to your destination. Why? Because you know where you're going and you want to join a vehicle going there. You must be sure that the person you want to team up with is going where you're going. It's so important. Many people have ended up in wrong places in life because they joined the wrong set of people. You must not make the same mistake in your waiting period.

8. KNOW AND ACCEPT YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES, DON'T ABDICATE THEM

God has appointed every one of us to a glorious destiny, and each of us will be responsible individually before God to fulfil that destiny. No one will answer for you on the day of judgement; you will speak for yourself. The Bible says, "Each one of us will stand before the judgement seat of Christ to give an account." You can transfer your responsibility, but you can never transfer your accountability. For example, if someone is appointed

to sweep the floor in an office, and he asks his best friend to help him with it and his best friend refuses, the leadership of the office won't ask his best friend to give account, because the responsibility was not assigned to him; instead, it would be the man who was appointed for it who will be called to give an account. In the same way, one day, you and I will stand to give an account to God on how well we lived our life in the light of His will for us.

9. *KEEP SEEKING THE FACE OF GOD IN THE PLACE OF PRAYER*

> *In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.*
>
> *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:*
>
> *And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them*

that keep his commandments. (Dan. 9: 2-4)

Prayer is part of the weapons that God uses to fulfil His purpose in our lives. An accurate prayer is the one that is prayed in the light of divine purpose. When you pray in the light of His purpose, He teams up with you. Daniel engaged himself in prayer while he was waiting for the Lord to return them to their land. He did not just fold his arm and sit, expecting God to remember their set time.

CHAPTER 15

WHAT HAPPENS AT YOUR SET TIME?

> *"For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place." (Jer. 29: 10)*

We have seen that the set time is a time that is sovereignly, fixed by God for certain events to take place in our lives. No matter who you are or what you are going through today, no experience is designed by God to be permanent. So at out appointed time, what happens? That is what we shall be considering next.

1. GOD VISITS

You have read in this book that there cannot be a divine visitation unless there has been a divine appointment in the first place. You can't force God to visit outside His schedule. The first thing that happens when a set time comes is *divine visitation*.

Let us look at the scripture below:

> And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.
>
> For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. (Gen. 21: 1-2)

2. GOD COMES TO FULFIL AND PERFORM HIS WORD

Exactly what He had declared to you gets fulfilled at the *appointed time*.

> And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.
>
> For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. (Gen. 21: 1-2)

3. GOD TAKES RESPONSIBILITY

God assumes responsibility for the outcome because it is His set time. He makes sure everything works according to His pattern. Many times you will

see this phrase in the Bible—"And this was done that it might be fulfilled what was said ". . ."

God employs the most suitable method to bring His Word to pass. That is why you must not embrace alternative offers from the devil before your time. Usually, at the set time, what you have become is what is needed. God creates a need that only you can meet. In the case of Joseph, God put a dream in the heart of pharaoh that none of his wise men could decipher but Joseph. That is more of a reason why you must sharpen your gifts in the place of waiting. In the time of David, He raised up Goliath. In the time of Esther, the country was in need of a queen. God takes the responsibility of making things conducive.

When the set time comes, God stirs up the heart of people who matter for your sake. "*The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord like rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wills."*

This saith Cyrus king of Persia, the Lord God

> of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. (Ezra 1: 2)

At the set time, there will be a release of favour, leading to human help and support. Look at what the scriptures say in Ezra 1: 6—

> And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with the vessels of silver, with gold, with goods and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered.

When the set time comes, God opens the tap of favour upon your life, your business, your ministry, your church, and so on, which leads to human help, human support, material gifts and so on. Do you remember that when the children of Israel were leaving Egypt, God blessed them with such favour that the Egyptians began to hand over their properties to them? And the same thing still happens today.

4. RESTORATION

And the LORD turned the captivity of Job,

when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

He had also seven sons and three daughters. (Job 42: 10-13)

At the set time, God restores to you all that the devil had stolen from you. He brings you into a state of completeness. Everything you have lost as a result of your sacrifice, God brings back into your life.

Also, at the set time, God moves men and things into place for His will to come to pass in your life. Things just fall in place for you. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3: 11 that when set time comes,

everything is beautiful. God makes everything work for you. That is what is going to happen for you in Jesus' name. At the set time, God arranges everything to work together for His purpose for your life.

I believe your set time is going to come. Just wait patiently for it and keep doing the right thing that God wants you to do now. At the set time, you will see all these things happen. Don't forget that the devil will hunt you until he makes you jump out of divine timing, but you must hold your ground. As soon as you find out about God's purpose for your life, whether you are a pastor, a husband, or an individual, the next thing to do is to find out God's timing for that purpose. You will not fail God in the name of Jesus. Your time will come, and when it does, may the Lord find you faithful in the name of Jesus.

PART III

KNOWING YOUR PLACE

CHAPTER 16

YOU HAVE YOUR OWN PLACE

Everything that God created has a place; every man has a place. And for every person and every one of us there's a place called 'THERE' and until you get to that place, you are simply in space; you are not in place. Proverbs 27: 8 explains the gravity of being out of place:

> *"As a bird wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place."*

Here, God likens a man that wanders out of his place to a bird that wanders out of her nest. I will be looking at this particular passage as our text on this subject of 'THE PLACE'. Everything that God has for you has a place that is attached to it. Every programme that God has for you has a place attached to it. God placed Abraham in Canaan to fulfil His purpose; He placed Joseph in Egypt to fulfil His own purpose. Daniel's place of purpose was Babylon; God used Moses in the wilderness, leading the children of

Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land; Joshua's place was the Promised Land. For Esther, the place of fulfilling destiny was in the palace of the king of Medes and Persia.

God called Nehemiah from the palace of Babylon back to Jerusalem; God used Peter among the Jews in Jerusalem. And the Lord Jesus Christ Himself knew that when He came in His earthly ministry, He was sent to the Jews and not to the Gentiles. He was so conscious of the geographical dimension of the programme of God for his life that He did not venture outside of the scope of the design of God for Him. You and I must recognise this subject of the place where we are to fulfil our purpose—the destiny that God designed for us. The Bible describes man as a tree in Psalm 1: 1-3—

> Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful
>
> But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night

> And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

That means God describes a man as a tree that is planted. Now do you know something about a tree? A tree does not move around anyhow. And the same way God does not want us to move around at our own will, but at the will of the One who plants us. If there is going to be any shifting, movement, or relocation of any sort, it must be at the instance of God who planted us. For example, God plants a man in the family; God plants a person in a city; God plants a person in a church; God plants you in a place of work; God has a place for you concerning every aspect of your life—in your family, in your father's house, in a husband's house, in a church, in the body of Christ, in your place of work, and in life. There is a place in the calling for a man, there is a place in the anointing, and there is a place with God for a person. Each one of us must know this place very well and stay there to fulfil the plan of God for our lives.

God does not want us to fall for the pressure that causes people to miss the plan and the

programme of God for their lives. When we talk about the subject of placement by God, I will be looking into three different types of people in this chapter:

1. Those who lost their place and were replaced, and who didn't fulfil anything that God planned for them.

2. Those who left their place and so did not fulfil all that God planned for them.

3. Those who kept their place and fulfilled the purpose of God for their lives.

As we consider this subject, my prayer for you is that nobody will take your place in the programme that God has drawn for your life in the name of Jesus. One of the worst things that can happen to a man is for another person to take his place. Nobody will take your place in your father's house, nobody will take your place in your husband's house, or in your place of work, or in life and destiny. You will fulfil the plan and the purpose that God has designed

for you in the name of Jesus.

The world has entered into the era of displacement and replacement as it happened in the days of Esther and Vashti. Vashti was displaced, and replaced by Esther to fulfil God's purpose and programme for Esther's life. Many people are careless with God's programme for their lives. They think their destinies will happen whether they take it seriously or not. But let me tell you this as unequivocally as I can: each one of us must take the issue of God's plan and purpose for our lives very seriously if we do not want to lose our place and have another person replace us. God said to Elijah, "I have seven thousand other people in Israel who have not bowed the knees to Baal." Elijah thought he was the only one serving God, but God said, "I have seven thousand other people." What this means is that God could replace him with any of the seven thousand people. What this means to you and I is that we must hold our place as a position of responsibility with understanding and tenacity. It must be a strong determination of our hearts to ensure that God will have no alternative to you and I in the programme that He has drawn for us. God said to Saul, the first king of Israel, that He has taken the kingdom from

him and given it to a neighbour of his who is better than him. I pray for you as you read this that God will not take your place from you and give to another person that is better than you.

As I noted earlier, the plans and the purposes—the destiny—that God designed for each and every one of us has a place attached to it. In fact, destiny means destination, which entails purposefully going somewhere, not just aimlessly wandering around on the earth. God never planned that anybody should just pass through the earth without a definite purpose. You and I have a destination that God has pre-ordained, and when you get there, you will know you are there. There is a place called THERE!

CHAPTER 17

THOSE WHO LOST THEIR PLACE ALTOGETHER

Let us consider those people who lost their place.

Judas

Judas is our first example of a man who lost his place. He had a place in the anointing; he had a future in the programme of God, but he lost it. Peter summarised this well in Acts 1: 15-17, 20 (NIV)—

> In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)
>
> and said, 'Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus.
>
> He was one of our number and shared in our ministry.'

> ‘For,’ said Peter, ‘it is written in the Book of Psalms: “May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,’ and, “May another take his place of leadership.”‘

He could have been like Paul who wrote a portion of the New Testament. Maybe if Judas kept his place and did not lose it through greed, we could have been talking of an epistle of Judas today, but he lost his place. You will not lose your place in Jesus’ name!

Saul

Another person who lost his place in the Bible is Saul, the first king of Israel in 1 Samuel 15. Indeed, God regretted His decision to have made Saul king. May He not have regrets over your life in Jesus’ name.

> Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,
>
> ‘I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.’ (1 Sam. 15: 10-11)

Not continuing to follow God all through, disobeying Him, and not keeping His commandments can cause a man to lose his place. Verse 28 of that same chapter of Samuel gave Saul the bad news from the Lord:

> And Samuel said unto him, the Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.
>
> And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man that he should repent. (1 Sam. 15: 28-29)

That's another example of a man who lost his place. He didn't keep it. God gave him a place of authority, of royalty that would have extended to his seed, but because he lost it; his family lost that future. How did he lose it? Through disobedience, incomplete obedience, and through a sparing mentality. We are going to look at reasons why people lose their place, in the course of this chapter. I'm just showing you first about people who didn't keep their place. God wants you and I to keep our place. When I talk of a place, we are talking of various things; it could be a place in the anointing, a

place in your family, a place in the calling, a place of faith, or a place where you are resting in the promise of God. You must not lose anything or any place that God gives you.

Eli

Eli was another man who lost his place in God. We see his story in 1 Samuel 2: 27-35—

> Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Did I not clearly reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?
>
> Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire?
>
> Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded *in My* dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?"

> Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: "I said indeed *that* your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever." But now the LORD says: "Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.
>
> Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.
>
> And you will see an enemy *in My* dwelling place, *despite* all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever.
>
> But any of your men *whom* I do not cut off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age.
>
> Now this *shall be* a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them.
>
> Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest *who* shall do according to what *is* in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever."'

This man had a place in the ministry, in the anointing, in the calling, a priestly ministry. He came

from the line of the high priest, Aaron. He had a place that has so much blessing attached to it in the house of God, but he lost it. This man failed as a father and lost his place in the anointing. How you perform your role in the home will affect how you keep your place in the ministry and in the things of God. This man lost his place in the calling because he failed as a father; he honoured his sons above God.

We see in verse 35 above that he was replaced largely because he failed in his fatherly responsibility. He allowed his children to desecrate the things of God, and because of that he lost a great future in God. The children could not proceed in the programme of God for them. May God help you to keep your place! To my mind, that is one of the most important prayers that anybody can pour for himself.

Vashti

Another person who lost her place in the Bible is Vashti, wife of Ahasuerus, King of Medes and Persia in the book of Esther 1. In this book we see the king of Babylon called his wife to come and appear before

him and she didn't come.

> If it pleases the king, let a royal decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will not be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she.
>
> When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will honor their husbands, both great and small.
>
> And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan.
>
> Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should be master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people. (Esther 1: 19-22)

This is another woman who lost her place and was replaced. Esther became the queen and fulfilled her purpose in this place.

John Mark

Another person who lost his place in the Bible was John Mark. In Acts 15, we see this young man following Apostle Paul into ministry, but as the journey continued, the road became rough, and this man did not want to go along any more.

> Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing.'
>
> Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark.
>
> But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.
>
> Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus;
>
> but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (Acts 15: 36-40)

Now, John Mark was a nephew to Barnabas, so Barnabas had an emotional attachment; but Paul was focused on the mission at hand. This man just couldn't take the roughness of the road. You know, sometimes, as you pursue the programme of God, the road could be difficult. Sometimes God gives a man a place as an associate to a man of God or to a senior man of God; it could be to your brother or to your boss at work. He just gives you a place where you are not the overall but an assistant. Along the line the road gets tough and difficult. Sometimes such people change places and relocate, and just get out and say they can't continue suffering. This man did that and lost his place. He was replaced by Timothy.

> Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek.
>
> He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.
>
> Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. (Acts 16: 1-3)

Since Timothy followed Paul, he became an apostle. That was the place that belonged to John Mark, but he failed. Later, in 2 Timothy 4: 11, we see Paul telling Timothy to bring Mark who was now a deacon, when he could have been an apostle all because he allowed the difficulties on the road to cause him to miss his place; he also missed the destiny that God had for him. Timothy replaced him, and became an apostle and a mighty man in the programme of God. We read about Timothy today because he kept his place that John Mark failed to keep.

I pray for you once again that nobody will replace you; nobody will take your place! You will do all that is required to keep your place and fulfil your destiny in Jesus' name!

Everything that God creates has a place. God did not plan for anything to float in space without occupying its place. God created the fish, for instance, to dwell in water; the animals to operate on the land; and the birds in the air. The devils and demons have a place created for them; the angels have their place in the spirit realm. You notice that

everything that God made is designed to find nourishment for thriving and survival in the place where God assigned them. In your place, everything you need not only to survive but to thrive is there.

Sinners who Refuse to Get Born-Again

Now as we continue to consider those who lost their place, I want us to look at sinners, people who are not born-again, as having a place prepared for them by God, but a man will lose that place that is prepared for him if he doesn't get born-again. Everybody who is not born-again today has a place in God's kingdom if only they would come to take it. The parable that Jesus told in Luke 14: 15-24 expresses this well:

> Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, 'Blessed *is* he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!'
>
> Then He said to him, 'A certain man gave a great supper and invited many,
>
> and sent his servant at supper time to say to

those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’

But they all with one *accord* began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’

And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’

Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’

So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the* maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.’

And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’

Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’

This is a picture of the love of God preparing a place at His wedding feast for everyone in the world.

The people who were bidden disqualified themselves because they didn't show up. As you read this, if you are not born-again, I want you to know that God has a place for you in His kingdom. God has a seat for you at His wedding feast. Nobody will take the seat for you; you will have to take your seat yourself. One of the most important prayers for anyone is that nobody will take your place, and I pray it for you again that nobody will take your place. You and I have a place. No matter how your situations and circumstances look today, you have a place, but the devil seeks to take that place from people. He seeks to cause them to leave their place; he seeks to cause them to lose their place.

Once a man loses his place, he loses his destiny; he loses everything that God has designed for him to succeed in life because in the place God has designed for you is everything you need to survive and thrive. The fish that gets out of water will be out of place and vulnerable to all sorts of perils. In the same way, every man has his place; you and I have our place in life and eternity. The passage above from Luke 14 describes the provision of God for everybody who is

not yet born-again. You can come, all things are ready. Everything that makes you a partaker of the kingdom of God has been provided by the death and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and His resurrection on the cross of Calvary. Many people don't take that place. Look at the destiny of the person that dies without accepting the Lord Jesus Christ in Revelation 21: 7:

> He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

That place is not meant for a man, but that is where the devil is taking everybody that dies without accepting Christ to.

> *"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt, 25: 41)*

That's the Lord talking about what will happen

when He returns. You see, that place that we read in Revelations 21: 7 is actually prepared for the devil and his angels, but the devil's trick in the world today is to deceive men to lose the place that God has for them in the kingdom and exchange it for a place in the lake of fire. How do people get a place in the lake of fire and not in the kingdom of God? By rejecting Jesus and refusing to be born again. It is not just enough to go to church; you must be able to prove that you have made a definite commitment of your life to Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, repent from a life of sin, and exercise faith in Jesus as your Saviour.

It is not your works that will save you and give you a place in the kingdom of God. Rejecting this is what gives people a place in the lake of fire. The lake of fire (hell) was not designed for man but for the devil and his angels, but the devil's deception in the world today is to take men to that place. If you are reading this and you are not born-again, I want to invite you to surrender your life to Jesus today. I want to invite you to consider the claims of Jesus. Only Jesus Christ the Son of God qualifies to be the

Saviour of the human race. He only was sinless; He only died for mankind. Only His blood can cleanse you and I from our sins, and accepting Him is the only way to get free from the judgement of God. Making Him your Lord today can simply transfer you from a destiny of destruction to a destiny of glory in the kingdom of God. That's what the Bible says here, that He has a place for you. Every person that dies without accepting Christ will lose the place that God has prepared for them in the kingdom and exchange places with the devil.

The Devil

The devil is another person who lost his place. We see his story in Revelations 12: 7-8—

> And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,
>
> but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

The devil used to be a good angel of God called Lucifer, but now he is an outlaw. He had a place in

heaven, a place of honour, a place of power, a place of authority in heaven before he fell into sin. And when he sinned, he lost that place forever. The devil does not want people to know that he has lost his place in heaven forever and that he has a place now in the lake of fire. He has a place that is a place of judgement for him, and he wants that place to be the place of the human race. That's why the Gospel comes to us; that's why God sent Jesus Christ into the world to deliver us from that place where the devil wants to deceive us to get into. If you are reading this, and you think sin has a reward, I tell you, sin has no reward except punishment. There's no reward for sin except to share in the judgement of the devil which is not supposed to be the portion of any human being. But thank God you are hearing the Gospel that Jesus came into the world to deliver us from sin and to make us fit for the kingdom of God.

Look at what Jesus Himself said in John 14: 1-2

—

> 'Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

> In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so,* I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Let that sink into your heart. If you are not born-again, His is the hope that I invite you to—'I go to prepare a place for you.' Receive it. When you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, you have a place prepared personally by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And if you have been born again, I want you to be encouraged by this word that there is a place specially prepared by the King of kings for you, His own Child. You can imagine how beautiful and wonderful that place is going to be. A place that Jesus Christ has been preparing for almost 2,000 years now, designing it, decorating it, and preparing it to be just fit for us. So there is a place in eternity for you, a place in the kingdom of God for everybody who makes Jesus the Lord of their lives. Verse 3 of the same chapter says,

> 'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.'

That is our hope as believers; that is our hope as children of God. Paul said, "If only in this world we

have hope we have to be of all men most pitied." What does that mean? It means if we believe in Christ only for material things, we are to be pitied. There is a greater thing that God has prepared for us in eternity. I pray for you that nobody will take that place from you. The devil will not succeed in exchanging his own place in hell for your own place in the kingdom in Jesus' name.

One of the things a man must know if he is going to fulfil his destiny on the earth is that he must know his place. When I'm talking of the subject of 'place', it could mean many things. The dictionary meaning of a 'place' is 'location', 'a physical local location that people can identify with a person'. You say that that is so-and-so place, but in the context of the teaching we are dealing with, I'm speaking of a location chosen by God for your purpose to flower and to blossom, a place where God Himself specially designed for you as a person in mind. It could be a place of calling where God has posted you to fulfil a divine calling. It could be a place in heaven like we saw in John 14. It could be a place in faith walking with God, a place of rest in faith. It could be a place

of destiny that you are heading for, something that God sets ahead of you, and it could be a place with God.

In 2 Samuel 7: 10, God, speaking to David, said the following:

> Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as beforetime.

Look at what happens when you get into your own place. The Bible describes this place as a place of one's own. God knew Egypt was not the place for them to flower. He just went to Egypt to nurture them and prepare them, and then brought them out to flower. He just planted them in a particular place. One thing that happens is this: God says, "I will appoint a place for My people." Now, if God appointed a place for Israel, He has appointed a place for you as a person or as an individual. It could be a place of a calling. That verse speaks of a place of a calling appointed of God. You can't change it. These things

we are dealing with concerning the programme of God for a man are not decisions that you and I make; they are discoveries that we make. God has made decisions over them. He said, "I will appoint a place for My people." They are to be guided to that place. Many people became less than what God wanted them to be because they didn't get to the place that God designed for them, or some allowed themselves to leave that place.

There is stability when you get to your place. You become established; you become settled. Nothing is going to move you from the place that God has appointed for you. And He says here that when you are in your own place, the children of wickedness will not afflict you and buffet you here and there. But when you are not in your own place, anything can disturb you. You just smile at opposition, smile at problems, and look at it in the face and say, 'I'm just in the place that God has placed me.' Sometimes, people don't give their best to what they are doing in life because they are not sure God wants them there or what God wants them to be doing. That's why we dealt with the purpose of God before dealing with the

place of God. You must not only know that you are doing what God wants you to do but you must also know that you are doing it where God wants you to be doing it. When you are sure about that in your heart, there's confidence, there's a security, and there is an assurance that is borne in your heart that nothing moves you and nothing disturbs you.

That place that God says He will appoint for you could be a place of calling. Look at Acts 7: 33—

> *"Then said the Lord to him, 'Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground."*

What place is God talking about here? The place of the calling of God. Every man or woman who is standing in a calling in the body of Christ is standing on holy ground, and you must see your calling as holy ground, no matter how small you think it is. God may have called you to pastor three people. If it is God that put you to pastor those three people, treat that place as holy ground. Walk with honour, humility, and a consecration that brings glory to God in that place. God told Moses at the place that He

called him to his assignment that the place where he was standing was holy ground. When you treat your calling as holy ground, you may be an associate pastor that God has posted you to a senior man; see that place of posting as a holy ground. You may be a wife married to a man; see that place of calling as holy ground and treat it so.

> "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Rev. 2: 5)

This is talking of a church that was not fulfilling its purpose in the place that God put it, and God said He was going to remove it. That possibility exists when a man does not hold his place; he can be removed. I pray in Jesus' name that your candlestick will not be removed. There is a place of calling that God has chosen for each and every one of us.

> No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. (Luke 11: 33)

That's talking of the place of a calling. When God has finished preparing you, you are lighted as a candle, and He places you where you can be a blessing. Wherever God has placed you presently is the place where you can be a blessing. No man can be a blessing outside of the place of divine choice for him. If you go to a place that you chose for yourself, you cannot be a blessing to anybody; you will just be a problem to everybody. That is why, sometimes there is confusion amongst God's people. God is working after a master plan. If you receive your place and I receive my place, we will not conflict with each other. If you receive your place and the other person receives his place, we will complement each other. There's no competition in the kingdom of God; only complementation because each of us is in place. God chose the place, and if we are given our places by God and we occupy our places, we will blend and fit into one another.

The place could also be a place with God that God knows is available and He has reserved it for you. Exodus 33: 21 suggests that there is a place in God that is available for everybody who is going to

pay a price to get there:

> *"And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:"*

I love that! There is a place in God where you stand on a rock, where there is no uncertainty; where you know that you know. In this place, there is no cloud or darkness between you and God. You can press into a place of fellowship and relationship with God who keeps nothing from you. It's available!

Romans 9: 16 says,

> "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."

What this verse means is that the maximum a man can become is going to be determined by the mercy of God that is shown him. It also means that what God can do with a man, will be determined by that man's effort. These two statements are two sides of a coin. God draws the sphere, but the man's

effort will determine how far he goes within the sphere. There is a place that God knows is available for all of us in Him and in our walk with Him, but we are to make the effort to get into that place. God has no favourites, but we take advantage of our relationship with Him differently from each other. Thus, even though that special place in God's heart is available to all, only those who do their bit can get there.

It was this place that God showed Moses. He said, "Behold there is a place by Me and thou shall stand upon a rock in the shifting sands of uncertainties in this world." There's hardly anything that is predictable in this world, but there is a place in God where you can know things for certain. You can know that you know! You may not know tomorrow, but you know who holds tomorrow and tomorrow holds no fear for you any more. Exodus 33: 22 says,

> "And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by."

There is a place of protection in the Lord; there's a place of covering in God, where the glory of God is a constant experience of a man who presses into that place. So when God says He has appointed a place for you, it could be a place of a calling; it could be a place with God; or it could be a place of destiny like God chose for the children of Israel, for Abraham, and for all the people who walked with God. He always has a place in mind for us to fulfil our destinies.

God is the one who determined the geographical boundaries of all the countries. God determined the white men to be white in colour and black people for the colour they have because of where He placed them. He didn't mean that one colour will be superior to another. No! He designed us for different purposes.

When you are in place, you are planted; you have roots in your place. As we saw in 2 Samuel 7: 10 earlier, it says,

> *"Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more."*

That's another mark of being in your place. You move no more; you are settled and established. " . . . neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as beforetime"—your protection is guaranteed. In your place you'll grow, and that is a mark of being in place. As you begin to grow, you'll spread.

Look at Hebrews 11: 8:

> "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed."

It was not him who chose the place; it was God who chose the place. This is one mistake that many people make—they choose the place for themselves. That a place of divine posting is not convenient for your flesh or to your understanding or to your comfort does not mean that it is not the place of

God's choice. Don't choose a place for yourself; let God choose for you. The Bible says, "Abraham obeyed and he went out, not knowing whither he went". Just as we read in 2 Samuel 7, it's God who appointed the place. The place could talk of a city or a location; the place could talk of a person to whom God attaches you in destiny. The place could talk of a position in God that He apportions to you and says 'this is your place. Stay there and don't move. The Bible says, Let every man in the calling, let him abide. Don't change calling, don't change place.

In Proverbs 27: 8, the Bible says, "As a bird that wanders from his nest, so is a man that leaves his place and wanders away". Look at that description of a bird that wanders out of its nest; it means that person will become lawless, will be endangered, will be a prey, and have all kinds of problems. You look at displaced citizens and refugees; they are just at the mercy of anybody whom they need to survive and thrive. You find today that many people don't get to their place or some people get to their place or some desire to change my place because they don't like it. They desire another place, to look for something else.

You can’t have anything better than the place that God has given to you.

CHAPTER 18

THOSE WHO LEFT THEIR PLACE AND DID NOT FULFIL GOD'S PLAN

Lot

Let's begin our examination of people who left their place, starting from Lot, the man attached to Abraham in Genesis 13. We've already dealt with those who lost their place. Now we want to look at those who left their place. That's another experience, that is, temporarily they were displaced from their place. They tried to come back, but most of the time such people don't end up fulfilling the totality of God's counsel for them. They partially fulfil what God has for them. There are various reasons why people lose their place or leave their place, but let's first look at those who left their place. In Genesis 12: 1, we saw the call of Abraham:

> "Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred

> and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee."

Abraham didn't know the land that God had in mind—only God knew. Always have that at the back of your mind when you are dealing with the subject of the place that God has chosen for you and into which He is leading you. You can't locate it by your own effort. It is not by geographical permutation that you get to your place. It is by divine leading and by sensitivity of heart; it's by waiting upon the Lord and seeking God. God never designed a programme where we will survive and succeed without Him. In this place, you see that the Bible says "the Lord had said" not that God '*is* saying' to Abraham, but "the Lord *had* said". This is a man that is having postponed obedience. God had spoken to Abraham and now God was waiting on Abraham to obey.

God called him out of a place into another place. In the former place, Abraham had many things going for him. He was called from the known to the unknown. Do you know the greater part of your life lies in the unknown? For example, tomorrow is unknown, yesterday you already know, and today is

unfolding to you. The greater part of your life is unknown. Don't be afraid of the unknown; the unknown is in the hand of the known God. The reason many people are afraid of the unknown is because they don't know the God who holds the unknown in His hands. If you know God who holds the unknown in His hands, you will never be afraid of the unknown; you just trust yourself in the hand of the God you know holds the unknown in His hands.

God called Abraham out of the known into the unknown, and everyone who wants to fulfil his destiny must be able to cross the line between the known to the unknown. He was called out of his country, out of his father's house, out of his kindred into a land that He will show him. It took some time for him to obey just like any normal person. He must have considered so many things that it's going to cost, but eventually he obeyed. We read it in Hebrews 11 that Abraham was called into a land that he would inherit and he obeyed. It takes obedience to do that.

Finally, in Genesis 12: 4-5, Abraham obeyed God:

> So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram *was* seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.
>
> Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.

Abraham took that man along; I believe that God attached that man to Abraham. Lot was blessed because he went with Abraham. He stayed where God attached him; God attached him to a man here. God gave Abraham a vision of a city, but He attached Lot to Abraham. There are people today where their place is with a man. Abraham had a place in view, and because he was a man who was going to a place, everybody whom God attached to him also had a place. Lot didn't know that Abraham was following vision. Lot was following provision, and that's a picture of two kinds of Christians—some are following vision while some are following provisions. A man who is following provision is likely to sacrifice his place in God for the sake of comfort. A man who

is following vision will never sacrifice his place in God for any comfort because a man who has a vision is superior to a man who has materials. Materials can be stolen or can be burnt, but a vision cannot be lost. If you pursue your vision well, it gives you your tomorrow; it gives you your place.

But then, strife arose between the herdsmen of Lot's cattle and those of Abraham's:

> Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents.
>
> Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together.
>
> And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.
>
> So Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we *are* brethren. (Gen. 13: 5-7)

Now, this was the beginning of Lot's problem. Lot separated property between himself and the man God attached him to. This is like a man who has an associate call or a junior role in a business or a partnership, and this is divine. There are some people that the permanent place that God has apportioned them is an associate role. It is not inferior to the headship role; it is only different. If a wife feels that her role is inferior, and wants to become the husband, she will get into trouble. The same way, if God did not design you for headship, don't try to change it. This man allowed strife, but Abraham being a man of peace said, "Don't let us quarrel."

So in verse 9, Abraham offered to have them separated, and Lot accepted what looked like a lucrative offer:

> Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me… if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

This was Lot's problem; he ought not to have

separated himself from Abraham because his place in God was with Abraham. That was the man with whom his sustenance and security lay. Abraham knew that it didn't matter what Lot chose; God would choose his own inheritance for him. When you are pursuing the vision of God, you are never threatened, you are never afraid, and you can afford to be generous. When you see a man who is grasping, fighting, and protecting things for himself, it's most likely that God has not given him his place. When you are in your place, nothing can take what belongs to you. It will get to you one way or another:

> And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go towards Zoar.
>
> Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched *his* tent even as far as Sodom.
>
> But the men of Sodom *were* exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD. (Gen. 13: 10-13)

That was the genesis of Lot's many troubles in life. He separated himself and left his place. At the end of his life, he lost everything; he took to Sodom and Gomorrah, lost his daughters to depravity, and his wife became a pillar of salt. He came out of the place alone; he didn't come out with any property. It was Abraham who came to bail him out later. I want to encourage you, don't leave your place; don't wander out of your place. Remain in the place that God has given to you. Your blessing is there; your greatness and your future will manifest there.

Lot separated himself from Abraham. Lot's place from God was his posting to Abraham. He was attached to Abraham, and in that place as long as he stayed with Abraham, he was protected, he was blessed, he prospered, and he had flocks and herds. He was so blessed that his property became almost as much as Abraham's. There are people today whom God attached to men who are blessed, men who are called. That's their place in God. It doesn't mean that he is inferior. No! He is only different. There is something that we must understand about differences of roles. Different roles do not mean

superiority of personality. The apostle is different from the pastor, but this doesn't mean he is superior or inferior.

Now, Lot, out of greed and unrighteous desires, separated himself from Abraham and began a downward journey. That is what always happens when a man leaves his place; when a man runs away from the posting that God gives him, he begins a downward journey. That was what happened to Jonah when the Lord sent him (Jonah 1) to go to Nineveh to preach to them. The Bible says that Jonah arose and went down to Tarshish. He went down—it is always a downward journey. He found a ship going there and paid the fare. When a man leaves his place, the cost of running his life begins to increase and the quality begins to reduce. But when a man is in his place, he begins to flourish, he begins to expand, and blessings begin to come. Now let's consider the story again in Genesis 12: 12-17—

> Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched *his* tent even as far as Sodom.

> But the men of Sodom *were* exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.
>
> And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: 'Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—northward, southward, eastward, and westward;
>
> for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.
>
> And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered.
>
> Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you.'

On the surface and at the moment in time that the Bible recorded the events above, it looked like Lot got a better deal than Abraham, but that was not so. It is better to stay in the place and the land of promise where God posted you than to dwell in the cities of disobedience. Now, you see every place that Lot chose, God gave it to Abraham because Abraham was keeping his place with God. He was pursuing vision. Like I said, Abraham represents a Christian who is pursuing a vision from God. Lot represents the Christian who is pursuing provision. He doesn't see anything in the spirit. He just sees the blessing,

and all he pursues is the blessing.

Today, there are many people pursuing the blessing of the kingdom, but they are not pursuing the kingdom itself. Today, all they are being offered from the pulpit is “come for the blessing of the kingdom.” There’s something greater than the blessing of the kingdom—it is the kingdom itself. That was what Abraham had. When Abraham was dwelling in the land of Canaan in tents, it looked like Abraham was suffering, but he was not suffering at all; he was actually being prepared for a future of glory, but Lot was dwelling in a city that was close to destruction, where he would eventually lose literally everything in quick succession.

Let’s look at verse 14 and see what happened to Lot after he left Abraham. Remember, as long as he was with Abraham, he was protected; no evil visited him and no problem touched him, but when he left his place, every evil visited him. Remember our text of Proverbs 27: 8,” As a bird that wanders from its nest, so is a man that leaves his place.” He becomes endangered; he becomes a prey; anything could hit

him; he is exposed to cruel weather and many things. The same way, when Lot left his place, he became like a bird that wanders from its nest.

> And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that *is,* Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim
>
> against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five.
>
> Now the Valley of Siddim *was full of* asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; *some* fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains.
>
> Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way.
>
> They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. (Gen. 18: 8-12)

He became captive because he left his place. Abraham was protected on the mountains of destiny, on the mountains of divine programme. In the place of divine destiny he was protected. Now, if you look

at it physically, dwelling in tents in the plain of Canaan looked exposed, but the protection of Abraham was God Almighty because it was God who put him there. Lot dwelling in the cities looked as though he was safe but he was not safe. The Bible says, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." They could build it, but it is vain labour. May you not labour in vain, in Jesus' name. I pray that you will not leave your place. Many people are leaving their place today, and when a man leaves his place, he is leaving protection; he is leaving provisions, leaving blessing, leaving destiny, and leaving his greatness. Look at Lot here now: he became a captive. He was captured and all his goods were lost. He lost everything.

> Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they *were* allies with Abram.
>
> Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained *servants* who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

> He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which *is* north of Damascus.
>
> So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. (Gen. 14: 13-16)

You would have thought that Lot would say no to his uncle, but Lot went back to living in that place. Eventually, he lost everything that God planned for him to have. Lot lost his family, children and so on. In Genesis 18, God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot was there. Het needed the prayer of Abraham again; he could have gone back after that first experience of being a captive. He didn't have any protection. That's one of the markers of a man who is not staying in his place. Lot's place was attached to Abraham. For Abraham, his place was located in the land of Canaan. Once he got there, his protection was secured; for as long as he was where God wanted him to be, he was secured. Lot's place was with Abraham. The place that God gives a man could be a city or it could be a man. God could tell you, "Stay with this man, he is the one I assigned you to. Stay beside him. Don't ever leave him. Be a

blessing to that man and let him be a blessing to you. There your greatness will flourish."

> Then the men rose from there and looked towards Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way.
>
> And the LORD said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing,
>
> since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?
>
> For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.'
>
> And the LORD said, 'Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave,
>
> I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.' (Gen. 18: 16-21)

And, of course, Abraham began to pray and intercede because of his brother who was there, but

his intercession did not succeed because he did not pray fully. In Genesis 19, we saw Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah; he had become part and parcel of that place; a wrong place! He didn't have a focus of worshipping God as he used to have. He was now a brother to the Sodomites and the people who were living in sexual immorality in that place. He was not doing it, but he was seeing it and vexing his soul by what he saw and heard. He was in the wrong place! By the time he got out of that place, he had two daughters who were perverted and he lost his wife.

Let's see what happened in Genesis 19: 23-26—

> And Abraham came near and said, 'Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?
>
> Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare *it* for the fifty righteous that were in it?
>
> Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'

> So the LORD said, ‘If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.’

This man lost his property and his wife. The two daughters whom he brought out of that place were perverted. We see this horrible perversion that they must have learnt in Sodom:

> Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.
>
> Now the firstborn said to the younger, ‘Our father *is* old, and *there is* no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth.
>
> Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father.’
>
> So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.
>
> It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, ‘Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine

> tonight also, and you go in *and* lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father.'
>
> Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.
>
> Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. (Gen. 19: 30)

They were perverted; they committed incest and gave birth to two children who became the Moabites and the Amorites, enemies of the children of Israel. That's the example and testimony of a man who lost his place. His generation partook in the punishment of that mistake. Lot went after provision and lost everything that he saw in that place. He lost his daughters to sin and iniquity, and lost his wife to greed.

I pray for you, beloved, that you will not lose your place! Nobody will take your place! Nobody will replace you in the programme for your life in Jesus' name. God calls you to a place. Everything that God made has a place. God has a place for you, and when you are not in place, nothing else is in place for you. But when you are in place, everything

and everyone is in place for you. A man who is wandering from place to place only changes imaginary trouble for real trouble. Many people put everyone around them into trouble because they are wanderers. There is a place for you where you have a divine nest. The nest speaks of rest, security, shelter, safety, and an atmosphere for growth and development, creativity, and for raising everything that God gives you to raise. It speaks of provision, conquest, achievement, and everything that has to do with your destiny.

There are reasons why people leave their place or lose their place. We will also look at how to keep your place. The subject is crucial to fulfilment of God's programme for your life. Every programme that God has for you has a place attached to it.

Let's go on to look at some other people who left their place.

Dinah

Let's look at the story of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob in Genesis 34. This young, beautiful lady, daughter of a covenant and a child of God, as long as she was in her father's house which was the place God apportioned to her, she was safe.

> Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.
>
> And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. (Gen. 34: 1)

Her problem was curiosity. This is one of the things that lead people out of the place of God for them. She was not being satisfied with the place of God for her; she just was not satisfied with the standards of her father. She went out looking for the daughters of the land. There are many daughters of God today who are going out of the boundary of Zion to look at the daughters of the land, how they behave, how they dress, and so on, and they get into problems.

Where did that man see her? When she went to see the daughters of the land. A son of the land, not a son of God, not a son of Zion, saw her. I want to speak to you daughters of Zion—don't go looking for the daughters of the land. Be satisfied with the friendships in Zion; be satisfied with the relationship in your father's house, and a son of God will see you. This man saw her, took her, raped her and defiled her, and wanted to marry her. And that is all you ever heard of Dinah in the Bible. You never heard of this woman in the Bible again apart from this passage. What a tragedy! The only daughter of Jacob. All the sons of Jacob became great in the programme of God, but this woman ended her story like that. That's how it happens many times to people who leave their place out of unscriptural curiosity.

Elimelech

Elimelech was another person who left his place in the programme of God. In the book of Ruth, Chapter 1, we find the story of Elimelech, the man who abandoned the land of Israel for the land of the Moabites because of economic problems.

> Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.
>
> The name of the man *was* Elimelech, the name of his wife *was* Naomi, and the names of his two sons *were* Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there.
>
> Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons.
>
> Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years.
>
> Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband. (Ruth 1: 1-5)

Look at what happened to this family. The head of the family, Elimelech, left the place of divine programme in the purpose of God and went to a strange land because there was famine in the land. You may not know what serious implications this had

until you look into the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ and see that Ruth, by following them back to their country, entered into destiny and became one of the ancestresses of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not only this, Elimelech actually came from the lineage that Jesus was born from physically and that man's name could have been in the history and genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. He lost it just because he left his place, and another man took his place. No man will take your place in Jesus' name!

Don't allow any situation or circumstance to push you out of your divine posting. He died without any achievement and without going back to his country. His two sons died in a strange land without going back to their own country. Why? Because they left their place of divine posting due to crises and problems. The woman that one of the sons was married to—Ruth—saw what they left. Maybe they talked of their lineage, about Abraham, a righteous line through which the Messiah is going to come (they came from Bethlehem-Judah, the city of David). Ruth became one of the great-grandmothers of David. So that man Elimelech could have been one

of the ancestors of King David. He came from a royal family and he left it, lost it, and another person replaced him in the programme of God for his life. Nobody will replace you in the programme of God for your life in Jesus' name. Nobody will take your place in Jesus' name. That's an example of a man who left his place and another person took it in the programme of God. Hold your place. Stay in your place; don't move out. It could be a place of calling and it could be a place of dwelling.

This man was supposed to dwell in the Promised Land with the rest of God's people, but they left it and died in a strange country. This can apply in the place of the anointing; don't change the anointing. If God has called you to be a pastor, be satisfied with being a pastor; don't try to be an evangelist or a teacher. If God has called you to be an evangelist, don't try to be a pastor. Stay in your place of calling. It brings leprosy when people criss-cross in the calling. Stay in your place, and your greatness will show forth there. There is a place attached to the programme of God for every man. It could be a place of dwelling, it could be a place with a man, or it

could be a place in the anointing or in the calling.

The Prodigal Son

Let's look at another person who left his place—the prodigal son, in Luke 15. This man left his place and came back.

> Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons.
>
> And the younger of them said to *his* father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me*." So he divided to them *his* livelihood.
>
> And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.
>
> But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.
>
> Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.
>
> And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

> ‘But when he came to himself, he said, “How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
>
> I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,
>
> and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’” (Luke 15: 11-19)

When a man dwells in the land that God has not apportioned to him, what he meets there is famine. But when you dwell in the land that God apportions to you, you meet milk and honey. The land that God sends you to, it is milk and honey that is waiting for you there. It is the land that God has not sent a man to that giants meet him. It is a place that God has not sent him that problems will meet him. God did not send this man anywhere. It was his father’s house that God placed him to be trained, groomed, and developed for destiny. He told his father to give him the portion of goods that fell to him.

You see the suffering he subjected himself to when he left his place of covering in his father’s house, a place of provision and protection. See this

young man's progression: first he said *give me*; later he said, *I will go back to my father and say* make me *as one of thy hired servants.* The programme of God is to make you first before giving you. As far as God is concerned, it is "make me" that comes before "give me", but many people put it the other way round—"give me first and try to make me later". It doesn't work like that. God wants to make you a husband first before He gives you a wife; God wants to make you a wife first before He gives you a husband; God wants to make you a mother first before He gives you children to take care of; God wants to make you a pastor before he gives you sheep to pastor. God will make you so you can manage and maximise what He decides to give you. Too many people today have rushed off on the "give me" part and missed it because they were never made. It is a man who is made that can fulfil destiny.

I pray that you will allow God to make you. He is the potter of heaven; He will make you what He wants you to be, and give you all He has for you. When He makes you, you will be all that He wants you to be, and you can get all that He has for you.

CHAPTER 19

ENEMIES OF DIVINE PLACEMENT

As we consider the topic of divine placement, it is necessary to look at the enemies of divine placement. What are some of the enemies or forces that move people out of the place of divine posting? When we know these enemies, we can then resist them in our lives and refuse to allow them to move us from our place. God does not want us to be movable. He wants us to be rock-solid in the place that He has planted us. That does not mean that God cannot change our location. Like we said in the early part of this teaching, we need a lot of sensitivity to the Holy Spirit to know when a particular place is no more the place of God for you and move on to another phase and another place. But there are times in our lives where the person is in a permanent place of divine posting and God wants him to be there. Even if it is a temporary place of divine posting or a permanent place, these enemies are the same, and we would consider them shortly.

1. ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY

Number one enemy that we want to consider is the enemy of economic and financial difficulty. A good example we will consider is in Genesis 26, the story of Isaac, the pattern son who wanted to leave the land of promise for the land of Egypt.

> There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar.
>
> Then the LORD appeared to him and said: 'Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.
>
> Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. (Gen. 26: 1-3)

Look at what this man has done. There was financial difficulty. Famine in the Bible tells of economic and financial crises and sudden change in the physical environment of a person. When the

famine came, Isaac did what he saw Abraham do. This is one of the problems you have sometimes when you observe somebody do something before, and it looked like God did not hold the person responsible. Abraham could get away within what he did in his own time because Abraham was like a pioneer. He had no example to look up to and God allowed him to go up to Egypt and come out of Egypt, but when he was coming out of Egypt, he came with Hagar who later became a problem to him and Sarah. In this case, Isaac was going to go down to Egypt, but God said to him, "Go not down to Egypt. Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of, sojourn in this land, I will be with thee and bless thee ". . ." It is the presence of God and blessings of God that determines what you get in the land. If you are where God posted you, two things will be there with you: the presence of God will be there and the blessings of God will be upon you. It doesn't matter who else is not getting blessed in that place of posting. When a man is not in the place where God posted him, no matter how good that land is, two things will be missing in his life: the presence of God and the blessings of God.

There are people who believe that unless they change their location, they can't get blessed. No! It is the presence of God with you that makes the difference. Joseph was a slave in Egypt, yet the Bible describes him as a prosperous man:

> Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.
>
> 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 in his hand. (Gen. 39: 1-3)

You see those two forces working with him. Here, Isaac was going down to Egypt, and God said that that was not His place for him. On the other hand, Joseph was brought to Egypt which was God's place for him, and God's presence was with him. In the case of Isaac, he was in a land where there was famine, a physical condition that was not favourable; yet God's presence and God's blessing made a difference.

Look at the power of divine blessing in Genesis 26: 12—

> "And Isaac sowed in that land ". . ." [*Which land? The land that the Lord placed him though there was physical famine; yet he sowed in that land.*] " . . . and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great. For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him."

You see what happens when a man is in his place. The blessing of God will be there. Isaac grew and became very great. This is the problem of many people. They think it's the location that determines what they have or what they can become. No! It is the person who is with you. You don't choose location; it is God who chooses location, and when God chooses a location, He commits to staying with you and blessing you there, and that makes all the difference.

This same enemy—financial and economic difficulty—was the one that moved Elimelech and his family into the land of the Moabites in the book of Ruth, Chapter 1.

2. DECEPTIVE OPPORTUNITIES AND FALSE OPEN DOORS

The second enemy that moves people out of the place of divine posting is what I call "Deceptive Opportunities" or "False Open Doors". This second enemy almost always looks attractive to somebody facing the first enemy of economic and financial crises or physical surroundings that is not conducive. One good enemy that the enemy seemingly is using now is the Green Card lottery—the American Green Card lottery. There is nothing wrong with it if God says you should take it. But do you know how many of God's people today have been taken out of this country to another country when God doesn't plan that they should go? There are people today whom God has posted as pastors, people who are called into full-time ministry even in the village, who accept it, but then suddenly come up with an idea and say,

‘This place is not conducive. If I can just win the green card lottery, I’ll just travel out’.

There are people whom God used the green card lottery to move them out to the US because that is His place for them. There are, however, many people that it is not God’s plan for them to relocate but the devil uses a false open door to take them out of the programme of God and locate them where God didn’t plan them to be. You find people in America or in the United Kingdom today who do not have the presence of God with them. No matter how good any place on the earth is, it is not paradise. It is where God puts you that milk and honey will flow for you. It is where God placed you that His presence and blessings will make a difference in your life.

In 2 Timothy 4, we see the story of Demas, who was one of the followers of Apostle Paul; he lost to this kind of deception.

“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved

> this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." (2 Tim. 4: 10)

This man left Paul; he left God and the place of divine posting. God attached him to Paul the Apostle. So Paul determined divine placement as far as Demas was concerned, but along the line the road got difficult and things got tight. He didn't see the presence of God with them. No matter how tough it is, the presence and blessings of God will always make the difference. This man left Paul, having loved this present world. He loved what the world had to offer, and he departed from Paul; he departed from the place of God's posting, and lost all that he saw in his life. You won't see his name mentioned again in the programme of God; you won't see his name mentioned again in the book of heaven. I pray that you will receive strength and grace to maintain your stand in the place of divine posting. That is where the presence of God and the blessing of God will be with you.

Whatever you do in the place of divine posting will prosper. When God told Isaac to stay where He

posted him, Isaac sowed in that land in the midst of famine and received a hundredfold, and God blessed him. Hundredfold is not hundred percent, it is hundred times. He waxed great and increased until he became very great and moved forward in the midst of famine. Why? Because God's presence will be with you where He posted you.

Everybody may be experiencing something negative, but He will cause you to experience something positive if He posted you there: whether you are posted to a man, city, or nation. You may be in the missionary work in a jungle, and it looks like you are far from the city, from what you are used to, if God sent you there, Hispresence makes all the difference. It's the blessing of God that makes one rich without adding sorrow to it. Some people can be in the place of their own choice and have blessing, but they'll sorrow with it. God doesn't want you to have sorrow with your blessing. The blessing that God brings in the place of His posting for you will have no sorrow with it.

Anything that is out of place will be a problem

and hindrance to other things in your life. God wants us to find our place, operate in that place, and be everything that God wants us to be.

3. GREED

The third enemy that causes people to lose their place is the greed. In Genesis 13, we find the man Lot who allowed greed to move him out of his divine placement.

> Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents.
>
> Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together.
>
> And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.
>
> So Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we *are* brethren.

> *Is* not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If *you take* the left, then I will go to the right; or, if *you go* to the right, then I will go to the left.'
>
> And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go towards Zoar.
>
> Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. (Gen. 13: 5-11)

You saw that greed of Lot; when he lifted up his eyes, he chose what his eyes saw; he didn't choose what God gave him. God had posted him to Abraham; and if he had stayed with Abraham, he would have kept his place, his position, his property, and his family. But he left Abraham, the man whom God placed him with, and he lost it all. That was his greed, and you still find that happening today. The same thing repeated itself in the life of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha. He went after the money of Naaman in 2 Kings 5: 20; let's see how he received leprosy by leaving his place:

> But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, 'Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but *as* the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him.'

Of course, he followed him; consequently, not only did he take the money, but he also took the leprosy of Naaman. God does not want you to take leprosy through greed. Greed always causes a child of God to think that something is better outside of where God placed him. It is the devil's deception to the greedy to make him think that life can be better or rosier outside where God has placed him. Look at the housewife whom the devil deceives by telling her that life can be easier outside of her husband's home. Your husband may not have as much as somebody else, but that does not mean life cannot be rosier for you there. There are many people today whom God posted and attached to a pastor, maybe as an associate or a junior officer to a senior officer in a place work, and the devil tells them that life can be rosier outside, maybe they don't appreciate you here and so on. The guy, out of greed, moves out of the place of divine posting and pursues that which is not certain; he pursues that which is not permanent. You

saw Lot as to how he saw that place but didn't know it was close to a place that was due for judgement. In the end, he lost his family, his property, and everything.

4. PREMATURE EXPOSURE AND PREMATURE SUCCESS

Another enemy that moves people out of divine posting is what I call premature exposure or premature success. In Matthew 14, we see the story of Peter who asked the Lord for a supernatural encounter, when his faith had not been developed for it. Not only does God want us to know the place, He wants us to have a clear understanding of His purpose for our lives. He also wants us to be prepared and equipped for that purpose before we launch out into it. Many people fail in great destinies, not because they don't have great destinies but because they are not properly equipped and trained for that great destiny. Peter, in Matthew 14, asked Jesus Christ to tell him to come to Him walking on the water.

> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.'
>
> And Peter answered Him and said, 'Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.'
>
> So He said, 'Come.' And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.
>
> But when he saw that the wind *was* boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!'
>
> And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?' (Matt. 14: 27-31)

It was the same water that Jesus was standing upon; why? The faith of Jesus was developed to handle it, but the faith of Peter at that time could not handle it. Sometimes some people see others doing certain things (projects etc.) that their own faith and divine training in their lives could not handle; they jump and fall flat on their faces. Our own walk or our relationship in the kingdom of God is not determined by our age, by our qualification, or any outward whatever; it is determined by our inner strength with God. And different people are at

different levels of our faith and different inner strength with God. That you and somebody went to school together does not mean you got born-again at the same time, and it does not mean you have been exposed to the same encounters and dealings with God.

Somebody could have been having secret training and then his colleagues at work or school thinks if my classmate can do that for God, I can do it also. It doesn't work like that; The kingdom of God doesn't operate like that. So don't let premature exposure move you out of the place of God and do things which God may want you to do later but the time for it is not yet. When you miss the time, you also miss the place. There are people today who jumped out like Peter jumped out. He was supposed to stay in the boat. Learn from what Jesus was doing there. Maybe they questioned him. They could have asked, "Master, how did you do that?" and He would have told them, but they were not ready for that leap yet. There are people today who have taken leaps in ministry, in careers, and in life that they are not ready for yet. Can you imagine a sixteen-year-old girl

getting pregnant? She could get pregnant physically, but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually she doesn't have the capacity to be a mother yet. She has moved out of her place before time. He wants to prepare us for our places in life, and our current estate in life is part of that preparation. God is using the present place that He put you now to prepare you for the next place in His programme for your life. When you acquire all the training in this particular place, you will be ready and fit for the next place that God is taking you.

5. PROBLEMS, DIFFICULTIES, AND WARFARE IN THE PLACE OF DIVINE POSTING

Number five enemy that we are dealing with are problems, difficulties, and warfare in the place of divine posting. Sometimes the enemy just brings warfare, problems, and all kinds of difficulties to move us. We must not respond to problems; we must respond to God. We must obey the voice of God more than the voice of men. In the book of John 11, we see Jesus Christ demonstrated this for us.

> Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.
>
> It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.
>
> Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, 'Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.'4 When Jesus heard *that,* He said, 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.'5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.
>
> So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.
>
> Then after this He said to *the* disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' (John 11: 1-7)

What was Jesus doing here? By the time Jesus decided to go to Lazarus's house, he had already been dead for four days. The lesson that we can learn from there is that Jesus responded more to the voice of God than to the problems. Many times problems are lies. When the circumstances change, it wants to affect our perspective, and as God's people, we must let the voice of God, the counsel of God,

the presence of God, and the leading of God to determine our perspective and not our circumstance. God planned that we should be people of joy, not necessarily people of happiness. Happiness is a product of happenings around you, whether good or bad, but joy is a product of what you know inside you. Jesus was described as a man of sorrow but also as a man full of joy. Our circumstances may not be exciting; we may not be happy, but we can know that God put us there. God is working something in our lives, so we should stay there and receive all that God has for us. Don't allow problems to move you prematurely out of a place of advantages to make us what God wants us to be. I pray that God will strengthen you to stay in the place of divine posting until your breakthrough and until God shows up.

6. FEAR

In 1 Kings 19, we saw how Elijah the man of God left the place of the presence of God, and how and why spiritual fellowship is important for us to maintain an atmosphere of faith and an attitude of faith. The church of Jesus Christ is the only

institution that remains committed to maintain faith in the heart of people. We live in a world where faith is not respected. God did not plan that man should live without faith in Him. Removing faith from our hearts in a God who is good and intervenes in our case and life becomes hopeless. Doubt and fear makes things dark, ugly, and horrible. In fact, fear connects you to the realm of the destructive and the impossible while faith connects you to the realm of the possible and the realm of the divine.

We need to watch our fellowship. In 1 Kings 19: 9, we saw that Elijah allowed fear to push him from what Jezebel said to him, and he ran for his life and came to a cave where God said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” I want to ask you what you are doing where you are. Have you allowed fear, have you allowed the devil to use the spirit of fear to drive you out of the place of divine assignment to a place that you shouldn’t be, out of the place that God located you to another place? There are people today who are in the wrong place because of fear. God wants you to return back. God did not say Elijah should stay there; He strengthened him and sent him

back to his place, because it's in your place that you are going to be a blessing. It's in your place that you are going to fulfil destiny; it's in your place that you'll be effective and dangerous to the devil. When you are out of place, the devil can deal with you. If you want to deal with fish, then no matter how big the fish is, if you remove it out of the water, it's only a matter of time before it dies.

Anybody can deal with fish outside water; but inside water, no matter how good you are as a swimmer, you may not be able to catch fish with your hands. God designed everything to have its place—even animals; He designed their bodies and their nature to blend with their environment for protection, for safety, and for blessing. Their food, and everything they need to thrive, is located where God placed them. It is the same thing for mankind and for a child of God. There is a place where everything you need to be protected, everything you need to survive, to thrive, to triumph, and to fulfil destiny is located. It could be with a person or it could be a city, and you must know it. In the place of the anointing that God has given, that's where your

destiny will flower. Don't change anointing; don't change places. Those are things we've been dealing with.

Let's read what God told Elijah in 1 Kings 19: 10

—

> So he said, 'I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.'

He was not the only one left. One of the tricks of the devil is to make us feel we are alone. God didn't plan that anyone should survive alone. One of the greatest fears that anybody has is the fear of being alone. God Himself said it's not good for man to be alone, and therefore He gave Him a helpmeet. We all need to know they that are with us. There are people or beings who are with us, men are with us and you must know the right kind of men to have with you in any situation of life to survive and succeed and fulfil your destiny.

In verse 11, look at what God said:

> And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

What is God telling us here? That when you are down, don't look for God in the big things; look for the still small voice inside you. There are things that God has planted around you to tell you that God is still with you. Many times, the devil wants you to feel that God has left you, but that is not true—God has not left you. God is not your problem. God says He will never leave you nor forsake you. He says "I will never forsake you" over and over in the scriptures. He says "Fear not for I am with you". It may not feel He is with you, but He is always there. God never breaks His covenant. Men may abandon you but God will never abandon you. Elijah's perspective was distorted because he was tired, overworked, and he

allowed fear to move him. He felt he was all alone, but God said, “You are not all alone”. God told him there were 7,000 people left who had not bowed their knees to Baal. He asked him to go back to his place of anointing and assignment, and fulfil destiny. Many times we leave the place that God wants for us because of fear. There are people who have gone out of the country because of fear. It is not physical surroundings that determine your potential to succeed; it is what you have in you and where God has placed you. If you got to a place, city, or country where God has not sent you, things will be difficult and everything will be an obstacle to you. But if you are where God placed and posted you, everything will work for you.

Let’s look at another person whom fear pushed out of the place that God had for him—David the man of God. David had been anointed as the king of Israel; he knew he was the next king, yet there was Saul on the throne messing up. And Saul was chasing David, and David had been kept and protected by God till this time.

> And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul… (1 Sam. 27: 1)

That was not correct. This onslaught of fear is very terrible and we must protect ourselves against it. The only way to do this is to open ourselves against it. The only way to do this is to open ourselves to faith. The Bible tells us in Romans 10 as to how faith comes—"faith comes by hearing, and hearing the Word of God." We must closet ourselves with the Word of God. We must not joke with the hearing of the Word of God preached in the simplicity of it in power of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The truth of the Word of God is not preached in fear but in truth, for the Bible says, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free". David was running away here, so he didn't have time for fellowship; he didn't have time to hear the Word of God like he used to. Now look at what he said: "I shall now perish at the hand of Saul". That was not correct; it was a distortion of his perspective. He wouldn't have perished by the hand of Saul; God would not have allowed him to die until he fulfilled his destiny.

God remains committed to protect you to do your purpose on the earth. If you are walking in the purpose of God, nothing can defeat you. The purpose of God for your life will prevail over the plans of the devil; it will prevail over your own plan, it will prevail over the mistakes of men, and it will prevail over the wickedness of men and cause you to triumph. God's purpose for your life is stronger than any wickedness of the devil or any plan of the enemy against your life. Look at what David said here: "There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines, and Saul shall despair of me to seek me any more in any coast of Israel, so I shall escape out of his hand". Now he had to go to the land of the enemy because of fear and he went out of the borders of Israel. Physically speaking, Saul left him alone, but God also did not communicate with him while he was in the land of the Philistines. That's how terrible it is when you leave the place of divine posting; it looks like the voice of the Lord is not clear as before. It is in the place of divine posting that the voice of God is clear to you. We must not allow ourselves to allow fear to push us there. Fear is a spirit, and we can resist it with the Word of God and the name of Jesus.

Nehemiah also faced this kind of attack but he didn't bow to it. Look at his case in Nehemiah 6; we see how the spirit of fear came upon Nehemiah:

> Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and *that* there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates),
>
> that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, 'Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono.' But they thought to do me harm.
>
> So I sent messengers to them, saying, 'I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?'
>
> But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.
>
> Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand.
>
> In it *was* written:
>
> It is reported among the nations, and Geshem

> says, *that* you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king.
>
> And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, '*There is* a king in Judah!' Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.
>
> Then I sent to him, saying, 'No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart.'
>
> For they all *were trying to* make us afraid, saying, 'Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done.'
>
> Now therefore, *O God,* strengthen my hands. (Neh. 6: 1-9)

This man was progressing in his assignment despite enemies around. In spite of all the wickedness and all the enemies around you, you will progress in the call and assignment of God for your life, in Jesus' name.

The enemy is now using blackmail to cause him to leave that work. The enemy's focus is your assignment. He wants to stop the purpose of God for

your life. He wants to stop you and stop the work. Don't let him stop you, no matter how he comes. Don't leave the work while you come down and talk with the enemy. I pray that the wisdom of God and discernment from the Spirit of God will be your portion to discern the enemy when he is coming.

I pray that God will strengthen your hands in Jesus' name. Part of the attack of the enemy is to weaken our hands. He brought lies, scandal, and blackmail to weaken the hands of Nehemiah. His goal was to stop that work. They stopped that work in the days of Ezra, but Nehemiah came determined of God to fulfil this work, and he did it. You will do your work. Just as Nehemiah finished building the wall in fifty-two days, you will also finish your assignment on the earth in Jesus' name.

People Who Kept Their Place

Let's look at five people who kept their place. I want to show you positive attitudes that all of them maintained in their place that enabled them to resist all the enemies that the devil brings and that he can

bring. They survived those enemies, overcame them, kept their place, and fulfilled their destinies. We'll look at David, Joseph, Mary, Abraham, and Jesus, the Lord Himself. Look at Philippians, Chapter 2. We picked these attitudes from the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. All these five attitudes we will be looking at are present in all of them, and we can imbibe them into our lives and it will help us.

> *Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.
>
> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.
>
> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,
>
> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,
>
> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.
>
> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.
>
> Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and

given Him the name which is above every name,

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2: 3-11)

CHAPTER 20

ATTITUDES IN PEOPLE WHO KEPT THEIR PLACE

Now what are these attitudes that we are dealing with in the lives of these people? Jesus manifested the perfected example of the five of them. Other people manifested them in various degrees. We also manifest them in various degrees as we mature and get better and better in the Lord.

1. CLEAR UNDERSTANDING AND REVELATION OF THE PURPOSE OF GOD

The first attitude I see them manifest is the fact that each person who kept his or her place had a clear understanding and revelation of the purpose of God for their lives, and they built their identity in life on their purpose and not on their environment. Jesus went around telling people who He was. He knew who He was and did not allow circumstances to

change who He was.

In John 5: 31-37, He said,

> If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.
>
> There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.
>
> You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.
>
> Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.
>
> He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.
>
> But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.
>
> And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

Also, in John 8, He spoke of Himself to this people, and they wondered at the audacity with

which He spoke:

> Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'
>
> The Pharisees therefore said to Him, 'You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.'
>
> Jesus answered and said to them, 'Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. (John 8: 12-14)

This is why His witness is true. He knows where He came from and where He is going. Every man who is going to stay in his place, who is going to fulfil the purpose of God for his life, must know where he is coming from and where he is headed for. We must have a clear understanding of our heritage and we must have a clear picture of the destiny ahead of us so that we don't lose our heritage and destiny to forces of the environment. You see three forces competing—our heritage, our destiny, and our environment. Many people build their identity on their environment. But no! You must build your identity on a clear understanding of your heritage as a child of

God. You are born by God, you are called of God, you are sent by God, and you are going back to God. Your destiny must be the foundation of your identity. Don't let your identity be built around what you have and what you don't have. Joseph was a slave in Egypt, yet he carried himself as a prince. He carried himself as a messenger of God. Daniel was a captive in Babylon, yet he did not compromise his ideals, because he had an understanding of purpose.

In Daniel 1: 8, the Bible says,

> But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat…

That's the *first attitude* I see in all these people —Jesus maintained it, Paul had it, and all the people who kept their place and fulfilled their destiny had first and foremost in their lives a clear identity rooted in their purpose, not in their environment. Our environment changes, and we must not change our identity based on our environment; we must let it be rooted in our purpose. God called you, God assigned you, and you have a purpose in life.

2. A CLEAR FOCUS

The second attitude is that they had a clear focus. They do not allow themselves to be distracted. When a man does not have a purpose in life, distractions will be a major enemy that will defeat him. We see here in Philippians 2: 3 where it says, "Let nothing be done through strife and vain glory" . . ." Strife comes when a man is competing with another person. You are no more running your race; you are running the other person's race. Vainglory comes when a man has pride and ego in himself. There is no reason for either of the two. The Bible says, "Let nothing, absolutely nothing, be done through strife and vainglory". Why? Because they lead to distraction. A man who is walking in strife or in competition, or a man walking in vainglory, will have the distraction of the devil lure him away from the placement of God. The Lord Jesus Christ refused to be distracted.

In John 4, He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work". His focus

was to finish the work. In Nehemiah, Chapter 6, we saw that when they called him, he said, “Am doing a great work, I cannot come down and come and talk with you”. He considered the work God gave him as great work that nothing will stop him to get into funny discussions. Maintain focus; have a strong focus on your destiny, on your assignment, and on your present work. Whatever present thing God has given to you, focus on it and do it; don’t bother about what has come. The Bible says the fool’s eye is at the end of the world but a man who is going to fulfil destiny takes advantage of where he is at present to prepare for where he is going to go tomorrow.

3. HUMILITY

The third attitude that these people had is the attitude of humility that gives birth to patience that will wait for God; the type that is not going to manipulate God, that is not going to take shortcuts or the easy road but is going to do it right. God blesses what is right and not what is popular. It may be popular but it may not be right. A man who is going

to keep his place will have the humility that gives birth to divine patience. A person who is not humble cannot be patient for God. The Bible says Christ humbled Himself unto the death of the cross. He had a spirit of humility that we must also imbibe if we are going to fulfil our destiny.

4. *CAREFUL CHOICE OF RELATIONSHIPS*

The fourth attitude that all these people had is that they chose their relationship very carefully. They walked in the power of right associations. It is impossible for a man to fulfil his purpose on the earth in the wrong company. Everybody will be accountable for the company that he keeps. The Bible is clear on this. You are not responsible for the family you are born to but you are responsible for who you associate with on the earth. Associations play a great role in our destinies. God always seeks to bring people into relationships. He seeks to bring people into powerful relationships. You need somebody that is not in your state in life, who can help you, who can be an answer to your prayer. You need a

confidant, somebody you can open up your heart to without fear of exposure or fear of embarrassment.

You also need a fellow traveller, somebody who is going the same road you are going—somebody who is involved in the same business or the same career you are involved in to challenge and to encourage each other. You also need somebody who can be an answer to your prayer. A man who is not sowing to other people's lives will never reap a harvest from other people's lives. A man who is selfish will remain small.

Philippians 2: 4 says,

> Look not every man on his own things but every man in the things of others.

God wants us to walk in the power of right associations. In Acts 4, when they threatened Peter and John, the Bible says they went to their own company. You must have your own company. In the book of Daniel, when the king commanded that all the wise men of Babylon should be killed when they

couldn't interpret his dream, Daniel asked the king to give him some time and he went to his friends (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego); they prayed together, and God gave them the answer in the night. So you need a powerful company—people with whom you can pray together, people who believe what you believe, people who understand the way you understand, and people who share your tears and pain with you.

5. KNOWLEDGE OF HOW TO DEAL WITH ADVERSITY

The fifth attitude you see in these people is that they learnt how to take advantage of adversity. Paul said, "Though our outward man perishes yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

In 2 Corinthians 4: 16-18, the Bible says,

> Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.

> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,
>
> while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

That is the attitude of a man who is going to keep his place and fulfil his destiny. He has a positive attitude towards adversity. Joseph had the same attitude in Genesis 50: 20, where he said, "You meant it for evil but God meant it for good to save much people as it is today". Beloved, you must not allow adversity to change your perspective. Adversity actually is meant to be a means of rising up. Nobody becomes a champion without going through challenges. Nobody becomes a winner without fighting some battles. Great faith comes out of great tests. Great victories come out of great battles. That's one of the mentalities you see in the life of all the people who kept their place and fulfilled destiny. They learnt how to take advantage of adversity; they didn't let adversity defeat them; they took advantage of it and rose to great heights. You too will rise to great heights by learning to take advantage of adversity in the name of Jesus. It shall be well with

you. You will keep your place, and nobody will take your place. You will fulfil your destiny in Jesus' name. Amen.

PART IV

DIVINE STRATEGY

CHAPTER 21

UNDERSTANDING AND WALKING IN THE POWER OF GOD'S PROGRAMME

We know the seven components of the will of God are Purpose, Timings, Place, Strategy, People, Measure, and Generations. The last three parts of this book dealt with Purpose, Timings, and Place. Part IV will take us into the fourth component which is the Divine Strategy. I believe that it is equally important that you know about Divine Strategy just as you know about Divine Purpose. Every man must be accurate in all the seven components at the same time. If a plan is God's plan, in order for it to succeed, it must be executed using God's strategy. You cannot use human ideas to carry out divine programme. That's why many people get into trouble; they find out the purpose of God, but use human ideas and human methods to execute it. We get better in walking with God during the strategy stages; even though it may look foolish, it is still the best.

"The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity." (Prov. 10: 29)

"The way of the Lord" as rendered here is talking about "the style of the Lord"; "the method of the Lord" is the strength to the upright, that is, the method of the Lord will bring strength to the upright. It's the upright who can use the method of the Lord; it brings strength. It doesn't bring defeat. Another scripture that will help us as we deal with this subject is in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 2, verse 1:

> And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

'Wisdom' above is talking of the strategy and the wisdom of the world.

> For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
>
> And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.
>
> And my speech and my preaching was not with

> enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:
>
> That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.
>
> Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:
>
> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. (1 Cor. 2: 2-7)

Those verses tell us of four levels of wisdom:

1. Man's wisdom
2. Wisdom of this world
3. Wisdom of the princes of this world
4. Wisdom of God

Man's wisdom includes cultural wisdom, proverbs, and wise sayings. The wisdom of this world includes science and the smartness, and

sharpness of the people that are worldly wise. Then the wisdom of the princes of this world talks of occultism and satanic wisdom. The wisdom of God is found in verse 7:

> "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:"

You must understand from this verse of scripture that the wisdom of God is the means to bring the child of God into the beauty and glory of God; yes, to the level of glorification. If a child is not operating in divine wisdom, he will be ashamed in the world, he will suffer, and be defeated in the world; but when we apply the wisdom of God which is described in the Word of God, we will rise to the heights of glory that is in-built into the new birth. But it is hidden to those who are not born-again.

> Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

The Bible is telling us here that the wisdom of God for destroying the devil was not to fight the devil

physically, but it was for Jesus to die. The wisdom of God was that in dying—*Jesus destroyed the one that had the power of death, and he freed every one of us who through the fear of death have all in lifetime been subject to bondage.* The devil didn't bargain for that kind of wisdom. He didn't know that Jesus was going to die. It was after he died that Satan knew he was in trouble. He had taken somebody who didn't commit sin to hell and Jesus rose from the dead, took the keys of death and hell from the devil, and from then onwards the keys of hell and death were in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ.

> But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.
>
> But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.
>
> For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. (1 Cor. 2: 9-12)

These things are not costly; they are freely given but it comes through the Spirit, so the key to getting access to the wisdom of God is to develop your spirit man.

> Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man… [*that is the man who is not born again*] . . . receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God… [*why?*] . . . for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Cor 9:13-14)

The man who is not born-again will see the wisdom of God like foolishness, but the scripture says the foolishness of God is wiser than man.

> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Cor. 1: 25)

That does not mean God is foolish; instead it means that what God uses that looks foolish to man is actually wiser than the highest wisdom of men. An example of that is the laying on of hands, the system of God of transmitting power to His people. Preaching the Gospel is the way to change sinners to saints. When a man who is not born-again looks at the way God operates, it looks foolish to him until he gets born-again. Of course, before we got born-again, the ways of God looked foolish to us. You know Nicodemus who came to Jesus and asked, "How can a man be born again when he is old? Shall he enter his mother's womb again the second time?" That's a man of the world trying to understand the wisdom of God with his human brain. It takes the spirit of man to know it, and as God gives the plan, He also gives the strategy to use.

We are not supposed to apply our minds to say, "Well, does this strategy look logical?" It may not look logical, but it's going to work; it's going to produce great results! When Moses stood before the Red Sea, Pharaoh was coming behind, with the wall of mountains on one side, desert on the other side,

and the Red Sea in front of them. Now if you talk to men in the world who have high Intellectual Quotient (IQ), who are not walking in the wisdom of the Lord, they may ask how long it will take to construct a bridge over the Red Sea. And by the time they gather together to meet and raise money, the enemy would have cut them off. God asked Moses to lift his rod and divide the sea. Now, lifting your rod looks foolish, but that's how God was going to do it. Many times, when people apply human mind to divine wisdom, they miss it.

In the days of Elisha, Elisha said by the Word of the Lord, "Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, Tomorrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." It looks and sounds ridiculous. Then one man—the Bible describes him as the man on whose hand the king leaned, a very high counsellor of the king—asked whether it will be possible even if the Lord would open the windows of heaven. Then the man of God replied, "You will see it but you will not eat of it." And the next day, according to the

prophecy, God brought the translation from famine to abundance by using four leprous men when He magnified their footsteps such that the enemies heard a noise of chariots and so ran away. Overnight, the famine was turned to abundance according to the Word of the Lord. That's how God works His own things, and if we are going to succeed in the plan and purpose of God, we must seek the mind of God concerning the strategy that He wants us to use in our particular situations. I pray that the Holy Spirit will open your mind to the strategy you are supposed to use to fulfil the directions and the plans you have receive for your life, your business, your marriage, your career, and your ministry in the name of Jesus.

> And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.
>
> Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;
>
> Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was

> Thaddaeus;
>
> Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.
>
> These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. (Matt. 10: 1-5)

Now, look at that; He is giving more than instructions.

> But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
>
> And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.
>
> Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.
>
> Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses. (Matt. 10: 6-9)

How are they going to eat?

> Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. (Matt. 10: 10)

Yes, but how? He gives us the strategy in verse 11-13:

> And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.
>
> And when ye come into an house, salute it.
>
> And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. (Matt. 10: 11-13)

In verse 13, Jesus was giving them the strategy on how they are going to have their needs met. They are going to preach, yes, but he told them how to go about their feeding. The same God that gives a plan and gives a commission also gives the strategy to execute His plan and His commission. God goes to this extent because He is the doer. The Bible says in Psalm 127: 1, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

Hebrews 11: 10 describes God as the Architect who designed the building, and He is equally the Builder who sees to it that the building follows His design. God does not give the contract or the job of building His kingdom to anybody, and we must be careful not take that job out of His hands.

We are co-labourers together with Him. We are working together *with* Him, not working *for* Him. So He is not asking you to use your initiative; no! He says, "Get the instructions from Me, and go and carry it out". He told Moses, "See that you build according to the pattern shown you on the mountain"; it's important we stay with the strategy that God gives us. Many people have failed, not because they didn't get the plan of God but because they didn't use God's strategy. I pray that God's strategy will come clear to you. No matter what God has told you and no matter what the great vision that you have seen for your life, there is always the divine strategy to use. Before Joseph became prime minister, he had to go through the road that God marked out for him. There's a way to do the work of God. There's God's way for God's will, and I pray

that God's will be revealed to you in Jesus' name.

CHAPTER 22

DAVID, SUCCEEDING WITH DIVINE STRATEGY

We have established that if the plan you are following is God's plan, then the strategy must be God's strategy. We cannot walk in God's plan using man's strategy or the world's strategy. People who do this usually fail or don't become all that God wants them to be because they keep using human ideas to work out divine instructions. There is a vast difference between God's ideas and good ideas. God has not called us to operate in good ideas; He called us to operate in God's ideas, and if you've got an idea from God, you must labour to wait in the presence of God to receive the strategy He desires to use in working out that idea.

You cannot fulfil the plan of God by using Egyptian tactics, Satan's strategy, worldly methods, or the devil's wisdom. You just must have the strategy of God. God has a strategy for every

instruction He gives you. No matter how illogical it looks, follow the strategy of God. We must learn to submit our intelligence to the revelation of God. *When divine revelation is talking, human experience must sit down. It is a foolish person who promotes human experience above divine revelation.* That is why a lot of people get into the trap of the devil. Many people have died because of this approach to life. Human experience must take the back seat when divine revelation is talking. That's why somebody says, "I'm older than you. I know the world more than you ". . ." That does not mean God cannot speak to a younger person. The God who speaks by divine revelation is the Ancient of days; He is older than the oldest. You must learn to submit human experience to divine revelation, and when we do so, we walk in the power of God.

David, the servant of God, in walking in the plan of God, knew that he could not fight the battle of the Lord using human strategy. We saw the battle with Goliath, where he could not wear the armour of Saul; he needed to wear what he was used to, and that was divine strategy. Many times, the world wants us to

wear Saul's armour and still carry the spirit of David. It won't work.

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

Saul was promoting human experience above divine revelation. Human experience has to do with age and interaction with the things of this world; and most of the experience you get from this world is Satan-dominated and Satan-influenced, but David was coming from the presence of God, in a pure spirit, having a pure revelation from God. He's been taught in the bush by the same God who killed the lion and the bear for him. So he was going to face Goliath.

> And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

> And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.
>
> Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.
>
> David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.
>
> And Saul armed David with his armour…

David came to battle by divine revelation. He had said, "Is there not a cause?" God sent him out to redeem His honour. And Saul was offering David his armour. Saul was saying in essence "use my strategy, use my idea". You cannot fight the Lord's battle using human ideas. Once you are using human strategy, you are no more fighting the Lord's battle; you are alone. God fights with His strategy. He needs that strategy to get involved with you, and that's why so many people lack divine involvement in their lives because they are using human ideas, even though they got the revelation from God they are yet to get

the strategy from Him.

> . . . and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.
>
> And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.
>
> And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine. (1 Sam. 17: 34-40)

David was used already used to a spiritual relationship. The staff in his hand represents his calling, the five smooth stones that he picked from the brook speak of the revelation. The flowing brook represents the move of the Holy Spirit, the operations of the Holy Ghost in David's life. The stones speak of the instructions that God had given him. He put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, and even a scrip and the sling was in his hand. The sling represents David's spiritual life. The strategy of your

spiritual life will determine the accuracy of your receiving from God and walking with God.

David depended on his relationship with God, and that's what the spirit is saying. He depended on divine strategy. Saul's armour stands for human strategy or worldly wisdom to carry out the battle of the Lord. David rejected it, knowing that he could not win a battle using human wisdom. It was God who commanded the battle; therefore, you must get divine strategy. The same way Moses told the children of Israel, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord"—they didn't construct a bridge over the Red Sea; he pointed his rod and they crossed over.

Another example from the life of David the servant of God on how David fought and won battles:

> But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.

> The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.
>
> And David enquired of the Lord…

Now, David could fight, but he did not first depend on his energy or expertise; he first inquired of the Lord.

> . . . saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? (2 Sam. 5: 17-19)

David knew that it was the Lord who fights his own battles; and if you're a child of God, you are not to fight your own battles.

Different Strategies, Same Enemy

> *" . . . And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.*
>
> *And David came to Baalperazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim.*

And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

And when David enquired of the LORD ". . ."(2 Sam 5:19-23)

David could have acted in presumption and said, "We beat them last time and we are going to beat them again. We will go out against them." No! But David inquired again the second time, and God said:

. . . Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.

And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer. (2 Sam. 5: 23-25)

Here you'll notice different strategies for the same enemy on the same battlefield. When they came

the second time, David did not say "We beat them last time. I don't need to pray this time around". *Overconfidence is a manifestation of pride,* and overconfidence comes through pride of achievement. When you feel you've come to a place that you know God now, and that you don't need to pray as much as you used to do, you are getting overconfident. Very soon you'll begin to use human strategy, and the devil will trap you because *God doesn't want us to be self-confident, He wants us to be God-confident.* He wants us to be rooted in Him so that our confidence is only from God. David depended on God. He knew that his victories were not the product of his brain. He knew that his victories were a result of the partnership of God with him. He knew that God was the senior partner and he depended on God.

Take Heed to the Technical Details of Divine Strategy

David walked in the power of divine strategy, but as much as he understood this truth, there was a time in his life that he didn't seek counsel from the mouth of the Lord and he carried the ark of the Lord

using human ideas.

> And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader.
>
> And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God,

He didn't say if it seems good unto the Lord; he's just waiting that God will sanction it. This is being democratic. God's kingdom is founded on theocracy not democracy.

> . . . let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us:
>
> And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul. (1 Chron. 13: 1-3)

This is a commendable act. They wanted the presence of God back in Israel. For forty years during the reign of Saul, they despised it and didn't build it. Saul built on his human brain because he was

taller than everybody from his shoulders up. But then David came, a man who depended on God; he wanted to bring back the ark of God, but they didn't inquire how (the divine strategy and method) to bring it:

> And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.
>
> So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriathjearim.
>
> And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kiriathjearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it.
>
> And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart.
>
> And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. (1 Chron. 13: 4-8)

In any mighty move of God, one of the things that you must take heed to is the technical details. There are moves of the Holy Spirit going on today and in the euphoria of God doing mighty things in our midst; we must not overlook technical details. At this time, had they consulted God, they would have seen the frown on His face; they would have seen the smiles slipping from His face and they would have cautioned themselves, saying, "What are we doing wrong?" We must always come back to God and find out "Am I still doing it right? Am I still doing it the way you want it done?", no matter the success we are seeing. This was great success for David; the whole country was behind him, and they were bringing back the ark of the Lord. They were dancing and rejoicing, but they were putting the ark on a new cart. The ark was never supposed to be carried on a new cart.

According to the instructions of God to Moses, the ark must be carried on the shoulders of men, not just any men but the sons of Levi; but now they made a new cart for it. It looked modern and improved but it wasn't in line with Divine Strategy.

That is one of the things we, as Christians, must not fall for. We must not lose the power of our heritage to the force of our environment. Some people carry great callings from God and the calling is functioning in their lives; but today, success has brought new company into their midst who you will require God's strategy to walk with. Let us have a look at the life of Moses:

> In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:
>
> And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.
>
> And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.
>
> And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. (Acts 7: 20-23)

Best of Human Ability Cannot Compare with Divine Strategy

Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the

Egyptians but he was not yet learned in the ways of God even though he was mighty in words and in deeds. He could not fulfil God's commission to lead Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land, using Egyptian wisdom and carnal words and deeds.

> And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

That's mighty indeed that he could fight. He was learned in all fighting tactics of Egypt and he killed that Egyptian because he was a mighty man physically. But God could not use this. That's not God's strategy.

> For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.
>
> And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove… (Acts 7: 24-26)

Moses showed himself unto them; let me advise you: *Don't show yourself to people. God is not interested in a man showing himself to people.* When the time of manifestation comes, the Bible says that

God showed John to Israel and He also showed Jesus to Israel—they didn't show themselves. A lot of people show themselves before God's time, and it is very wrong. This was not God's time for Moses. He was not yet trained to use God's method and God's strategy. He was only learned in the ways of Egypt. There are many people who have great destinies hanging upon their lives, great callings, and powerful visions brewing in their hearts but the thing delaying their programme is that they are still learned in all the wisdom of this world and they still want to pursue the call of God in the way of the world.

Today, in the body of Christ, some people are importing worldly methods into the church and it is producing a weakness for the church in the spirit realm. To the world outside, it looks like great blessings, but there is a spiritual weakening that is taking place because we are importing the world's methods to do divine things, just like putting the ark of covenant on a cart instead of carrying it on the shoulders of the sons of Levi. God called us sheep because sheep follow a leader. He didn't call us goats because goats are smart; they can find their way. If

you want to catch four sheep, all you need to do is tether the leader and the rest will follow you; but if you want to catch four goats, you will need four ropes and four men who will run after the four goats; and that's the way many people are operating.

> He showed himself to them as they strove and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? (Acts 7: 26)

Moses was speaking to these men because the Bible says he was mighty in words. You saw that he was mighty in deed as he killed an Egyptian the previous day. Now, because he was mighty in words, he started speaking to them.

> But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?
>
> Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?
>
> Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Median, where he begat two sons.

> And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. (Acts 7: 27-30)

Moses had to go for forty years of training in the school of the Holy Ghost. God could not use anything he had learnt in the school of men. God cannot use man's wisdom for His programme. It is divine wisdom that God will use to execute His programme on the earth. It may look foolish or sound illogical, but if it's God's strategy, it will produce the God-kind of results. If you use human strategy, you will get human results. Church leaders and workers at different levels in the kingdom must understand that God's strategy applied to the work of God will produce a people who are holy, who resemble God, and are strong and powerful in the spirit realm just as God is, because that is where it matters.

> When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the LORD came unto him,
>
> Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of

> Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.
>
> Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.
>
> I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. (Acts 7: 31-34)

In Exodus, Chapter 3, God asked him, saying, "What is in your hand?" And he replied, "It's a rod."

Then God said, "Throw it on the ground." The rod became a snake, and He said, "Pick it up." And Moses picked it up, it became his rod again. God gave Moses a rod to defeat Egypt, and in the strength of that strategy, Moses brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, brought Egypt to its knees, and parted the Red Sea. Moses did all the miracles he needed to do with that rod, and not with his brain power. He was learned in the wisdom of Egypt, but God knew that the divine strategy will be His power working through that rod.

Labour to Get Your Own Divine Strategy

When Joshua took over leadership from Moses, he did not inherit the rod of Moses. *Copying ministry leads to error. Each man must get his strategy from God.* Moses used the rod but Joshua didn't use the rod. He didn't inherit the rod of Moses; he got his strategy from God. For every battle Joshua got divine strategy. There is a divine strategy for every assignment that God has, and we must labour to get the divine strategies particular to our assignment in order to fulfil God's purpose. Moses could have become the next pharaoh; he may have thought that as pharaoh, he will issue a decree to release the children of Israel and they will be free but he would not go with them. He wanted to go with them, enter the Promised Land, and also lead them out; and he had to wait for the strategy of God, but it took forty years to learn that.

Sometimes we don't need to spend forty years to learn how to walk in the way of God. We can just learn it immediately; not through the hard way, we

can learn it easily. Just say prayerfully now "I'm a sheep, Father, I want you to teach me your ways" and He will teach you His ways. Moses needed the strategy of God to fulfil the purpose of God. When Joshua became the leader, Joshua also needed the strategy of God. He didn't inherit the rod of Moses but He inherited the God of Moses. There's a great difference between the rod of Moses and the God of Moses. There is nothing wrong in following men, but we must receive their relationship with God, not their methods. When David was about to leave the scene, he told Solomon his son, saying "Solomon, know thou the God of thy father". That's the greatest thing we can leave for our children, our relationship with God so that they will know our God. One of the mistakes of Saul, the first king of Israel, was that he never related with God as "the Lord my God"; he always related with God as "the Lord thy God" and "the God of Samuel". He didn't build a personal relationship with God; and as long as Samuel was around, Saul was satisfied because Samuel could always hear from God. When Samuel died and God was not speaking to Saul, Saul went to the witch of Endor; that's the result of people who don't have a personal relationship with God or a personal

knowledge of God themselves. *God wants us to know Him before knowing people, otherwise people will not let you know God.* God told Joshua "Moses my servant is dead" but the God of the servant of God is not dead and God established a relationship with Joshua; God was practically saying to Joshua, "It was Moses' relationship with me that made him who he was. If you are going to fulfil this assignment, then you must know me. I'm the One who holds the plan and the strategy. What Moses did was follow My instruction; and if you are going to succeed, you too must follow My instruction and not copy the methods of Moses. Joshua learnt that lesson well, and one day, he had to fight against Jericho.

> And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?
>
> And he said, nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, what saith my Lord unto his servant?
>
> And the captain of the LORD's host said unto

> Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so. (Josh. 5: 13-15)

This was the empirical manifestation of Jesus Christ appearing to Joshua and saying "I've come to take over the battle". He is the One who supplies the strategy. Joshua didn't know how to penetrate Jericho. He could think of so many military strategies but none of them would have succeeded because only divine strategy will work. In Joshua, Chapter 6, we see the strategy that God gave Joshua.

> Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.
>
> And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.
>
> And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.
>
> And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

> And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. (Josh. 6: 1-5)

Why did they have to do that? You don't know, I don't know. But the God who had the plan is the one who had the strategy and that's what He was going to work with. If you are using another strategy, God will not work with you; but when you use God's strategy in God's plan, God will work with you and you will get supernatural results. It's God who does the work, not us. In Matthew 16: 20, the Bible says, "They went everywhere preaching the gospel, the Lord was working with them, confirming the word with signs and wonders." It wasn't the disciples confirming the Word; it was *the Lord confirming the Word.*

It is the Lord who works with us that makes the difference and He will only work His strategies, not with our own ideas. The strategy He gave Joshua against Jericho was foreign to basic military

intelligence. No military man will ask his men to walk round the wall seven times for seven days, exposing themselves, keeping silent and so on; but the glory of the divine strategy was such that at the end of the seven days, the wall of Jericho sank. Joshua and his team went in, possessed the city, and defeated them. Joshua ensured that he received divine strategy and instructions for each of the battles he fought. You need divine strategy to walk in the plan of God, and it shall be well with you in Jesus' name.

CHAPTER 23

GOD IS A GOD OF STRATEGY

In this chapter, we'll see that God is a God of strategy and a God who has a plan. He also has the strategy to work it out. He lured the devil into the Garden of Eden to utterly destroy him. The wisdom of God will destroy and defeat anything the devil can manufacture. That is why it is important that you and I learn to understand and walk in the power of the wisdom of God.

The Bible describes Jesus Christ as the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. Even before the devil was created, God had known that the devil was going to rebel and man was going to sin, and Jesus would be slain for man's redemption. Jesus came walking in the plan of the Father using the strategy of God, he died at the time he should die and rose from the dead to destroy the devil's work.

When God took the children of Israel out of Egypt, God lured Pharaoh to the sea to gain honour over him. The enemy always stumbles at the strategy of God. That is why, when you walk in the strategy of God, you become invincible and the enemy is defeated. It is when we borrow ideas from the world and borrow ideas from the enemy that the enemy defeats us. When it looks as if God has led you into a tight corner, look out! The sea is about to open up and swallow up the enemy, but you cannot be swallowed up when you are following divine programme and instruction. When Jesus came on the earth, He followed the strategy of God in ministering healing. The Bible described two instances in which Jesus prayed for the people who were blind—the same disease but different strategies; in one case, He simply touched the man's eye, but in another case, He spat on mud and mixed it and touched the eyes of the man.

A Divine Strategy Shouldn't Become a Permanent Instruction

A key understanding and caution concerning

strategy is—Don't turn any method that God gives you into a permanent instruction. There are many methods that God uses but they are not supposed to be permanent methods. When you turn a method into a permanent instruction, you fall into idolatry. God can ask you to pray over handkerchief, or to do one thing or the other. Don't turn any specific method that God gives you to do something into a permanent method. God must hold the place to give instructions. God does not want us to turn a method into a permanent instruction so that we'll be dependent on Him and keep seeking His face because He planned a programme that He will always have a portion and a place in it. In fact, it is only Christianity that cannot function effectively without a living relationship with the living Christ, others can exist based on a set of creeds.

Another reason why you shouldn't take a method that God gave you as a permanent instruction is so that you don't fall into the trap of the devil. David fought the Philistines twice and God gave him different instructions on different occasions. When Joshua became the leader and he wanted to cross the

River Jordan, he didn't stretch a rod like Moses, he got his own method from God. What is important is the God who gives the strategy, not just the strategy itself. You must not copy the strategy of another person. Get your relationship with God right and then use the strategy that God gives to you, and it shall be well with you in Jesus' name.

Divine Strategy in the Work of the Ministry

Apostle Paul was a man who understood the place and purpose of divine strategy in fulfilling divine programme. Let's see:

> Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.
>
> And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.
>
> But if any man love God, the same is known of him.
>
> As concerning therefore the eating of those

> things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.
>
> For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)
>
> But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.
>
> Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.
>
> But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.
>
> But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak. 1 (Cor. 8: 1-9)

The above scripture records Paul teaching how he applied divine wisdom in running his life and ministry. Some things may be permitted to somebody more matured, but somebody who is younger can think it wrong, thus for the sake of that person walk

in love and maturity, and don't do that thingt. We see another example in 1 Corinthians 9: 17-23—

> For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.
>
> What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.
>
> For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.
>
> And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;
>
> To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.
>
> To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.
>
> And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

Apostle Paul has exposited here as to how he applied divine strategy in his ministry. He didn't just cook it up in his head. Paul, in his heart and zeal, wanted to reach the Jews, but God didn't send him to the Jews; and every time Paul had problems in ministry, it had to do with his desire to reach the Jews which was overstepping his mandate. Until he agreed with God that God didn't call him to reach the Jews. The work that Paul did in the Gentile world is still evident all over the world today. Whereas the work he did in Jerusalem is today entwined with Judaism. There is not as much Christian influence in physical Israel today as it is in the Gentile world. That will show you that when you use the Master's strategy, your work will last. When you use human wisdom, it may look good for sometime, but it won't last.

There is a divine strategy that God wants you to follow. God must be the architect of the plan that you are following whether in marriage, business, career, calling, ministry, and so on, and that strategy is guaranteed to be the winning strategy. Whatever God is the architect, He is also the builder, the foreman,

and the contractor, and we are helpers. The Bible calls us helpers together with him, and we must not take the job over from him.

Let's see how God built in divine strategy into the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

> And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
>
> He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.
>
> And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
>
> They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.
>
> So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.
>
> And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen. (Mark 16: 15-20)

The word must go forth first and then signs follow. If you are a minister of God, don't go around working signs and wonders. Just go on giving the Word of God out, and God will take care of the signs. Our job is to give out the Word, and God's job is to do the signs; you go on giving out the Word of God with all your heart and the signs will follow. Many ministers have been pushed into a place where they work signs by themselves. When you work signs, you are open to familiar spirits and demons. If God is not bringing signs and wonders, don't bring one. It is God who does the signs. No man can perform signs by himself. No man can do a miracle by himself. *It is God who does miracles, and He does it to confirm His Word, NOT TO CONFIRM YOU.*

If you desire signs to follow your ministry, do a good job in preaching the undiluted Word of God and He will confirm the Word. Anybody who is not satisfied with God confirming the Word with signs, but puts pressure on you for manifestations of the Spirit, wants to lure you into error. Ministers of God are not to follow signs, just to allow God to do signs in confirmation of the Word. That is God's strategy

built into the preaching of the Word. He didn't send us into the world to work signs; thank God for signs and wonders, but they are the prerogative of God. God is the one who chooses when and who He does signs and wonders through—not us, even though we may want to do it. Though we may want to heal, we should not force it if God doesn't do it at that time as a confirmation of His Word.

In John 11, people came to call Jesus because of Lazarus who he loved with all his heart, but Jesus didn't move until Lazarus died. Two days later, he said "let's go" and by that time Lazarus had been buried for four days. Why would Jesus be as slow as this, perhaps maybe Lazarus shouldn't have died? But *Jesus moved at the time he moved because he was more committed to the voice of God than to the noise of men around.* People wanted him to come, emotions wanted him to come but God had not said "go there". God's plan and strategy in that place was not to heal Lazarus but to raise him from the dead, because raising Lazarus from the dead will bring greater glory to God.

You may find yourself in some situations that God's plan is "Let it die, I will raise it up", but you want it to be healed and you are struggling fruitlessly to protect what God says "let it die". Cooperate with the divine strategy; let it die and God will raise it up for you in a better way. We must know those salient differences, that is, walking in divine strategy. God didn't want to heal Lazarus because God wanted to show every generation of mankind that He can raise up the dead and restore hopeless situations. The Bible says "*by this time he stinketh!"* But Jesus was sensitive to God's strategy for that hour that it was not a time for the healing ministry; the divine strategy for Lazarus was a resurrection strategy. As a result of that episode, we know beyond the shadow of doubt today that God can and does raise the dead! We also can raise the dead and we can believe for it and expect it. Praise God!

In the same way, we must know that God has a strategy for each situation we find ourselves in. No matter what the situation you find yourself in, find out from God 'What is the next thing to do?', 'What is the divine strategy?', and 'What is the next step to

take?' The Bible says, *the steps of a good man are ordered by God and that speaks of strategy.* It is one thing to know where you want to go but it is another thing to know the steps to take in order to get there. I pray that God will show you steps to take to get to where you are going in life, in Jesus' name. You will not miss it nor will you be lacking in the steps to take to get to your expected end to what you want to do in life in Jesus' name. Amen.

PART V

THE PEOPLE OF VISION

CHAPTER 24

UNDERSTANDING GOD-GIVEN VISIONS

Another component of the will of God is THE PEOPLE. There are people that the Lord has sent us to and our duty is find them and carry out our ministry to them. God gives us the training and a heart that is commensurate to the people HE is sending us, and we shall find out in this chapter why it is necessary to take our training seriously and to stay where God has put us. I am going to share a few things on THE VISION (as you cannot separate it from THE PEOPLE). You will also see how different people responded to the people the Lord sent them to as well as how people too should respond to the man sent to them.

A Vision and the People

There is a close tie between vision and people. Every vision has its people. What I am saying in essence is that the vision of God for your life is to affect a group of people. There is a category of

people to whom a man has been sent into the world to minister to and to reach. Let us look at the following scriptures;

> Where there is no vision, the people perish but he that keepeth the law, happy is he. (Prov. 29: 18)
>
> I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.
>
> And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make *it* plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.
>
> For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. (Hab. 2: 1-3)

When you combine these two passages of the scripture, you will see that God has a plan for a person and that plan also involves a people. When God wants to reach out and save a people, He raises a person for them.

The purpose of God for a man, which is the first component of the programme of God for anybody, is communicated to a human being through the process that can variously be described as a vision. Divine vision is not necessarily something you caught while sleeping at night but a revelation of God's purpose for your life—your definite assignment here on the earth. So let us take a look again at Proverbs 29: 18—

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

What this simply tells us is that, without the vision being given, the people cannot be saved, and without the people coming into place to run with the vision, the vision itself will suffer. So we can infer that there are two segments to the programme of God for a man: *the vision and the people*. You are not just raised up for yourself. God does not give any assignment or divine purpose to a man without a focus in view. The focus will have a people as the objective.

It is important that each person understand the people that they are raised for. The vision will attract its own people, and the people, when they come, will make the vision, that is, the vision will fashion the people from a crowd.

The Origin of Vision

The vision is the communication of the purpose —God's purpose, not the one fabricated by yourself. If a man claims that his vision is from God, then it will always have a people it serves. If it does not raise its own people with their peculiarities, it is not from God, of course. It may be a great idea, but it is not necessarily a vision from God.

There is a difference between a great idea and a vision from God. A vision from God is not the same as an idea coined by people in the business world, which centres on finding out a need and meeting it. Ministering in the purpose of God and the programme of God is about calling and divine instructions. It is not about human ideas or intuition. Maturity can make a man see needs, but it is calling

that gives you a ministry to a people.

For example, you may want to open a branch of your church in a university campus so as to avail students the opportunity of having a place of worship. While this sounds good, you need to be sure that God actually wants you to do that. Do you have a ministry and a message to the youth there? You cannot start a church in a location simply because you figured that there is no church there, particularly when you have not been instructed by God to start one. That is why we must be careful not to liken vision to an idea.

Some Characteristics of a God-Given Vision

1. IT AFFECTS THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL LIVES OF THE PEOPLE

Every human being is composed of two sides—the physical and the spiritual side—and your ministry to them will no doubt touch these two sides. The

physical side of the people has to do with the questions in their minds, their needs, the problems they are facing, the fears that are assaulting them, their desires, among other needs. However, the spiritual side of a people has to do with the sin that is holding them bound to the devil, the destiny that each one represents and so on. The physical side of a person is not all there is to him—he represents a destiny, a purpose, and a calling. The church is the place where these can be fine-tuned, but sadly, most people are inaccurate in their choice of church.

2. YOU ARE EQUIPPED FOR THE VISION

I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter that God leaves out time between the time a man is called and the time a man is sent. All of us have been called before the foundation of the world INTO something and TO DO something.

> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:
>
> According as HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD *(emphasis mine),* that we should be

> holy and without blame before him in love. (Eph. 1: 3-4)
>
> Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. (Jer. 1: 5)
>
> And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,
>
> The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,
>
> To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4: 17-19)

There is a call (better said, a vision) upon each of us, and it is our responsibility to come into a place of alignment with the Lord to be able to discover it. That is why a man who is not born-again is disadvantaged. I want you to pause here because I am about to do a necessary digression, but don't lose sight of the point I am making.

If you are not born-again, and you are running with a vision, I want you to know that you are an anti-Christ. Any vision that is not orchestrated by God is a distortion of His agenda on earth. The devil had been in charge for so long, which is why God is calling many sons and daughters, equipping them, and working through them in order to restore His original plan and purpose and to undo the works of the devil.

You remember I mentioned earlier that a vision has to be God-given. Don't just run with a vision because of a passion. Your passion may be a pointer to what God has called you to do, but the best way to be sure is to get born-again and settle in a God-given church for you so as to be trained.

The Role of the Church in Vision Discovery and Vision Training

The church is God's workshop on the earth. It is the centre of His attraction on the earth. So if you must walk in the fullness of God's vision for your

life, you must be accurate in your choice of church. God still leads people to church. You need to know that it is not every church that God has prepared to train you for your destiny because each church is characterised by its assignment.

> And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
>
> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
>
> Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:
>
> That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
>
> But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:
>
> From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual

> working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Eph. 4: 11-16)

From the above scripture, I am sure you can see clearly the role of the church in maturing the saints. Maturing cannot take place anywhere outside of the church because the church is God's workshop. Though the church has been equipped by God to mature the saints, it is not every church that is equipped to supply our specific training.

Let me add another scripture to drive home this crucial point:

> And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,
>
> Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. (Eph. 1: 22-23)

The church is likened to the body of Christ and you are aware that a body is composed of several parts. The location of your body part is proportional to its function. Can you imagine what you would look like if your head was situated where your

stomach is and your feet being where your nose is? That will be funny, isn't it? So each church is created by God to fulfil a definite task. Do you remember I said that a vision will fashion out of its own people? Your training for the vision of God for your life is in a church, and you must pray to God to lead you to that church.

Sadly, most of the people are in the wrong church for various reasons ranging from proximity, fashion and style and so on. Can you imagine someone that chose to attend a church because he loves the way the pastor of that church dresses? I make bold to tell you that your choice of church is immensely a matter to God. He does not want you to be in a wrong place.

For instance, a carpentry apprentice will not go to learn carpentry at a mechanic workshop because it is situated beside his house or because he likes the owner of the workshop. Instead, he will go to a carpentry workshop, even if he has to travel several miles to get there. The mechanic workshop is not suited for his training—you can call it a wrong

environment. Likewise, you don't go to a church just because it is close to your house or because you like their style. Your choice of church to attend should be informed by whether it is equipped to nurture your calling and groom you for your destiny, and if you pray to God, He will lead you aright.

3. THE VISION WILL MEET THE PEOPLE'S PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS

If a man is truly sent to a people, he is first equipped by God to handle both the spiritual and physical issues of their lives. Their physical and spiritual needs will be met by that person, not just one side met and the other side not met. But the ultimate intention of God is for the man who is sent to a people to move them into the spiritual programme of God for their lives because that is the most important aspect of God's purpose for a person's life.

The vision that God gives to a man of God or to a church will reach the people and solve the questions in their lives—physical questions and

spiritual questions alike. But if it's only solving the physical questions, it is not complete. The ultimate of solving physical questions of needs, problems, fears, desires, and so on, is to bring a person into the spiritual programme of God for his life which includes destiny, purpose, calling and so on. That is, if God is going to bless somebody physically, for example, it is with the ultimate goal that the person is going to walk in the purpose of God for his life. That is part of the spiritual questions in the life of the person. If God is going to heal somebody's sickness, it is with the purpose of walking in the destiny of God for his life and not just for him.

Daniel was an administrator (and you may call him a politician) in Babylon, but as far as God was concerned, he was a prophet. We must therefore be careful not to put our career before our destiny. If you are not called into the full-time ministry as an apostle, prophet, pastor, teacher, or an evangelist, your career (if it is God-inspired) is your platform for your ministry.

Let us look at Joseph:

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*:

Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. (Gen. 41: 39-44)

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest.

> And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. (Gen. 45: 5-7)

Joseph knew the assignment side of his position. He knew that the reason God allowed him to become the prime minster in Egypt was primarily to preserve the people of Israel. He met their physical need (provision of food) as well as their spiritual need as we see in verse 7. So this is a call unto us to understand the assignment side of our career.

I have taken time to point to you the importance of allowing God to nurture you for your destiny. Once the vision is caught, be patient; don't rush into it. Allow God to do His thorough work on you. Don't forget I mentioned that it is important for you to be in the right church in order to get the right training for that vision.

The People of the Vision

I have mentioned that when God calls a man, He has a people in mind. It is therefore necessary for us to know the people to whom we have been sent if we

are going to enjoy God's involvement in our lives and calling. I am going to explain why it is important that you know and accept your people—those you are sent to minister to by God. Let us start with the following scripture:

> But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person) for they who seemed *to be somewhat* in conference added nothing to me:
>
> But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision *was* unto Peter;
>
> (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles) (Gal. 2: 6-8)

God is going to participate with you only when you get into accuracy concerning the people you are to reach. Many times, certain things pull us out of the programme of God in this area—what I call side issues. Here, Apostle Paul clearly defined the people he was sent to. The nationalistic zeal in Paul caused

him many times to want to minster to the Jews, but God did not send him to the Jews. When God wants to save a people, a baby is born. We can find this example in Moses and Samson.

Moses

God was preparing to save the children of Israel out of 430 years of bondage in Egypt. God's purpose had been clear. Before Moses was born, God's purpose to deliver the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt had been established, and for that purpose was Moses born. Little wonder he turned down the offer to become Pharaoh.

> By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.
>
> By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;
>
> Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

> Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.
>
> By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. (Heb. 11: 23-27)

He could have become the Pharaoh of Egypt, but he chose not to. He left riches for suffering. He knew he was born to take them out of Egypt. He could have said, "Let me become Pharaoh and then I will give a decree to let them go free", but that could not work because he was not raised to remain in Egypt, he was raised to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Samson

Another example of a baby born for a purpose is Samson. In the book of judges, the children of Israel had become captives of the Philistines, and in order for them to be delivered out of their hand, God sent Samson. An angel came to reveal the purpose of his birth to his parent. Unfortunately, Samson did not fulfil that purpose. Rather than delivering the children of Israel by defeating the Philistines for them and

judging them well, he was interested in marrying strange women from the land of the Philistines. He didn't understand the purpose of God for his life. He didn't understand why God brought him in contact with the Philistines in the first place. He didn't understand what he was raised up for, the people he was supposed to preserve. How did he end his life? He died with the Philistines, yet the children of Israel remained captives of the Philistines. Samson is an example of someone who was inaccurate in the programme of God concerning the people.

Esther

Esther was born to prevent annihilation of the people of God in the land of captivity. She was an orphan girl who was trained by her uncle Mordecai. It is the responsibility of a parent to know the purpose of their children and then train them along that purpose. But, of course, if the parent is going to fulfil that responsibility, the parent must be:

- born-again,

- committed to God, and
- able to know the Word of God enough to be able to raise their children up in the line of the purpose of God for their lives.

However, this is one of the great tragedies of the human race. Most parents are not equipped to prepare another generation to walk in the programme of God. And I believe that God does not want our generation to fail Him. If somebody's parents are not born-again, they may not have been able to do what they are supposed to do in him, in the light of preparing him for the spiritual purpose of God for his life. But when that person gets born-again, he should not fail his own children. It is my prayer that you will not fail your children in the name of Jesus. You will not fail God. You will be able to raise a generation that will walk in the programme of God for their lives. The Lord Jesus Christ was born specifically to save the world. In fact, the Bible says, "His name shall be called Jesus because it's He that will save *His people* from their sins". And of course, by the age of 12, He knew He was here for a purpose. He knew He must be about His Father's business. God could trust

Him to a mother who kept herself and who would raise Him properly. And I pray that God will be able to trust you with great destinies of children in the name of Jesus.

So we see that no matter what your gift or calling is, you are raised for a people. They will wait for you, and nobody will replace you in Jesus' name. Some of the people that you are raised for may not be able to pay you for what you are doing for them. Not everybody is going to respond to you or to your gift. But whatever your gift or calling in life is, you are raised up for a people. Paul was raised to reach the Gentiles while Peter was raised as an apostle to the Jews, and both of them succeeded.

> For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles. (Gal. 2: 8)

Apostle Paul had a zeal for the nation of Israel—natural zeal—which is normal, but he was not sent to them. Each time he attempted to reach the Jews, he encountered opposition because they were not the people that he was sent to.

> Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.
>
> For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.
>
> For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (Rom. 10: 1-3)
>
> I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,
>
> That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.
>
> For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:
>
> Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises. (Rom. 9: 1-4)

He had a deep affection for his people, the Jews, but he was constantly unaccepted by them. Everybody wants to be accepted by his own people. Even the Lord Jesus Christ wanted that, but He said, "A prophet is not without honour but among his

people". Sometimes that can happen. Paul had a mindset that he could reach the Jews whereas Peter had a mindset that it will hinder him from reaching the Gentiles. Paul wished he could be separated from Christ if only it would help him to reach the Jews. Paul wanted to reach them but that was not in the purpose of God for him. You must not allow emotion or zeal to take you out of the plan of God for you. It is my prayer that the spirit of wisdom will come upon you, to recognise the people that you are sent to so that sentiments that are carnal and earthly will not move you out of accuracy in the programme of God in Jesus' name.

CHAPTER 25

BE WILLING TO REACH THE PEOPLE OF YOUR VISION

Sometimes, people miss the programme of God because they are unwilling to go to the people that they are sent to, or stay with the people they are not sent to. People can be classified by different things: it could be age, sex, education, wealth and so on. It doesn't make a difference. A single soul is equal in the sight of God to another soul, no matter the earthly yardstick of measurement. So if God sends you to a people, accept the call, settle there, fulfil your purpose, and fulfil your role.

Paul

Paul represents a man who was willing to reach out to a people he was not sent to. He had a good desire to reach his people, the Jews. He was concerned for them, but he was not sent to them. Paul's pursuance of this desire exposed him to

assaults of the devil. That is one way somebody can get out of the programme of God—when you go to a people you are not sent to.

> And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. (Acts 21: 4)
>
> And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.
>
> And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.
>
> And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.
>
> Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.
>
> And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. (Acts 21: 10-14)

And, of course, Paul went to Jerusalem. And look at what happened when he got to Jerusalem:

> And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. (Acts 21: 15)

I want us to jump to verses 26-31:

> Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.
>
> And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,
>
> Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.
>
> (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

> And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.
>
> And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

He didn't need to bring this kind of uproar on himself, the mighty Apostle Paul. But this is the fault of his 'over-concern' for his own people. His zeal made him refuse the prophetic warning. What if he had been killed? His destiny would have been aborted at that time. Many people had gotten themselves out of the programme of God and had their destinies and assignment aborted because any inaccuracy in any of these seven components of the will of God can expose a man to satanic assaults that can lead to the abortion of the programme of God for his life. Many people don't end up fulfilling all that God planned for them, or remain small in that because they are inaccurate concerning any of these areas.

Jonah's Example

Jonah is an example of a man who did not

accept the people to whom he was sent.

> Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,
>
> Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.
>
> But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.
>
> But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. (Jonah 1: 1-4)

It does not matter who you are; if you step outside the will of God for you, you will become God's enemy and you may find God working against you. Jonah did not want to go to the people of Nineveh because of their sins. A lesson is that *you* don't choose the people, *God* does.

> But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was

very angry.

And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, *was* not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for *it is* better for me to die than to live. (Jonah 4: 1-3)

Jonah was displeased that the people of Nineveh were saved. Why should this be a problem to him? An evangelist would pray to have a city saved through them, but here we see a man who was displeased because a whole country got saved having listened to his message. This is funny, isn't it? Even Jesus was not received by His own people. So the lesson I am bringing out is that you must accept the people to whom the Lord has sent you. Do not discriminate. Just accept them and do your ministry in their lives.

Peter

Just like Jonah, Peter was unwilling to go to the Gentiles because he considered them aliens to the promise. Average Jews don't like the Gentiles. Ethnic considerations on the positive and on the negative side must be put aside if we are going to be accurate concerning the programme of God for our lives. Whether it is marriage, ministry, business, settlement, location and so on as children of God, we must submit and surrender our choices and desires to the will of God and the purpose of God, not to our traditions or whatever.

> On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:
>
> And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,
>
> And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:
>
> Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

> And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.
>
> But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.
>
> And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.
>
> This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. (Acts 10: 9-16)

Peter didn't know what it meant. He began to think, and suddenly some people came from Cornelius, a Gentile whom God had appeared to and sent to Peter to lead him to Christ. And look at what happened in verses 17-21:

> Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,
>
> And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.
>
> While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.
>
> Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with

> them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.
>
> Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come?

Peter turned down God's offer on three occasions. He did not want to go. Verses 25-28 says:

> And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.
>
> But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.
>
> And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.
>
> And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

Why was the Holy Spirit speaking to him like this ? Because of his ethnic mentality. He needed to hear a strong word from God to be sure that God was sending him to reach the Gentiles at that time. Many times, ethnic, tribal, and racial issues have moved many people out of the programme of God (v.

20). You can be wrong on racial issues on the positive side or on the negative side. Paul was wrong on the positive side. He had a concern for his people. Peter was wrong on the negative side. He didn't just want to go to another set of people (v. 28).

Christianity removes all barriers among men of all races. Only in Christ can there be peace between tribal and ethnic issues. The Bible says, "Christ is our peace who has broken down the middle wall of perdition and has united one". You can never find unity between two races except in Christ Jesus because He alone shed the blood to remove that enmity. And here you find Peter allowing ethnic consideration to affect his judgement (v. 28). Paul had a more cosmopolitan mentality. He didn't have that kind of inhibition. So God prepared and raised up Paul for the Gentiles. Peter was actually the first person to do this job but he didn't because of that mentality.

Look at what happened in Acts 15 when Peter came back. They asked him and He said something to them.

> And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.
>
> And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. (Acts 15: 6-7)

But Peter did not continue with this assignment because of ethnic considerations. It is very possible to miss the programme of God on the basis of allowing racial sentiments, tribal sentiments, colour and so on. In Christ, there is no colour sentiment. God is 'as it were' colour blind. God only knows three nations: the Jewish nation, the Gentile nation, and the church. If you are born-again, you are part of the church, a holy nation. If you are a Jew, a natural descendant of Abraham, then you are part of Israel. If you are not born-again, you are part of the Gentiles. And Jesus loves everybody. He died for everybody. He shed His blood for everybody and He wants everybody to be saved. He apportions who He sends us to. We must put the will of God above all discriminations.

The People Must also Accept Their Minister

We have established the fact that God has a plan for people and God raises men for them. Whatever purpose God has for your life, there is a people attached to the purpose. It is important for you to know your own people and accept them for who they are. I pray that God will connect you to the people of your vision, in the name of Jesus.

Remember that we have looked at Apostle Paul and Apostle Peter who, though they were apostles, were sent to different people. And we saw reasons why some people missed the programme of God concerning the people to whom they were sent, based on ethnic, tribal, or racial considerations.

We shall look at a scenario where people can also miss their blessings in not accepting the person whom God sends to them, particularly when such a person comes from another tribe or another race. All over the world today, you will find all kinds of racial tensions here and there, tribal sentiments, and so on,

which are designed by the devil to keep people from the blessing of God for their lives. God can send black men to white people and vice versa, and each person must be able to respond well to them. Races are different from each other, and not superior. Callings are different, not superior.

God gives different roles—not better or superior roles. The husband is *different* from the wife, not *superior* to her. The pastor is different from the apostle, not superior. The teacher is different from the evangelist, not superior. It's important we understand that. When you bring the issue of superiority into anything, it leads to competition and various kinds of reactions. However, when you bring the issue of differences into matters, it leads to complementation. God is involved in *complementing* one another, and not *competing* with one another. Complementing comes with understanding each other.

The people must learn to receive the person whom God sends to them without any barrier of age, sex, colour and so forth. In Christ and in the things

of the anointing, there is no colour, education, or sex barrier. We must not feel superior to another person or better than another person based on those earthly considerations. Remember that Jesus was a bachelor, and there is no record that He went to school; yet He fulfilled His destiny. Why? God wants us to know those things that don't matter to the fulfilment of a destiny. The fact that you are not educated, married, or poor is no indication that you can't make it. Those are not factors that God considers before giving them assignment. God loves everybody—wealthy or poor —equally.

The person who He sends to us may not be from our race or tribe or even culture, but we must give them an allowance to do what the Lord has sent them to do in our lives. When Jesus got to Nazareth, they discriminated against Him based on His age, and the fact that He was a 'son of the soil' as it were. When He got to Nazareth, some of the Pharisees said, "You are not yet fifty years and you are saying that you have seen it all". He was called the son of the carpenter. Consequently, they missed the visitation of their Messiah.

Different callings and different anointing attract different crowds. A teacher's anointing will definitely attract a different crowd from an evangelist's anointing. For example, the evangelist's anointing most of the time will attract people looking for a miracle—those in a crisis, not necessarily people who are looking for deep teachings. The teacher's anointing is likely to attract people who want a deeper relationship with God—these are people who want the Word of God and who want to have a deeper relationship with God; these are likely to be attracted by the teacher's anointing. And you know, we need all these anointing—the teacher's anointing, the preacher's anointing, the prophet's anointing, the apostle's anointing, and the pastor's anointing. Praise God! And the issue with God, don't forget, is difference, not superiority. Different roles, not superior roles. When you bring superiority into any thinking process, you create a reaction that leads to competitiveness and it destroys the unity of the body of Christ.

God is about uniting the body, and unity is not

based on conformity; it is based on understanding of different roles. It is based on interdependence, that is, "I can't do without you" or "You can't do without me". The only way we are going to come to that is to understand our different roles, not seeking to replace ourselves. The law of difference says, "I need you just as much as you need me." The unity that God is talking about that makes the church of Jesus Christ different and unique is the unity that is based on understanding the diversity of the calling, and the roles that God has given to each other, and accepting it like that, not trying to replace it.

There are two areas in a man's life where he can get out of the will of God:

a. **When he is in a problem and he has not broken through:** when he is still struggling and paying prices. This is the period he has not broken through 'as it were' to the place that his vision is speaking. In this state, it is easy to abandon one's God-given vision and chase after another vision that is not God-given, or look for another people.

B. WHEN THE MAN HAS REALLY SUCCEEDED: when the man has resources to do anything and succeed.

At this point, he has to be very careful and more sensitive so as not to get out of the will of God. You may have resources to do everything, but you are not sent to do everything. We must always separate between what we know to do, what we know, and what we are anointed to do. We must separate ourselves between what resources we have in order to do and what we are actually ordained and sent by God to do.

You know it is possible for a successful evangelist to want to start a Bible school. Of course, doing this will automatically take him out of the will of God for him. He will now have to camp around a different people other than the ones that God sent him to. Also, a teacher who is sent to start a Bible school may want to emulate his friend who is an evangelist. No! We can't replace each other; we must stay with the people that God sends us to minister to. Let us be satisfied with what we are anointed for.

Moses was specially prepared for brutalised people who were coming out of 430 years of slavery and maltreatment in the hand of Pharaoh. Though he was a prophet, he had a shepherd's heart. God had to take him out of Egypt for forty years to the deserts of Arabia to prepare him and give him the heart of a shepherd. God needed a prophet who would direct the people to the Promised Land, while the shepherd's heart is there to carry and bear them, and bear with their feelings on the way. That's the combination of ministries in the life of Moses; but he was not a prophet like Elijah.

Look at a prophet like Elijah, who was raised up at a time when the people of God were backsliding, and there was oppression in the land under Jezebel—a queen operating witchcraft in the land. So she needed a fiery prophet like Elijah who would call down fire from heaven. But that is different from the crowd that Moses was raised up for. Just imagine Elijah being the one to lead the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt: it will not be out of place to think that only half of them would get to the Red Sea

while the other half would have been consumed with fire. That is not the kind of man they needed. God had prepared a man like Moses with a heart of a shepherd, who would intercede for them and bear with them. In fact, when God said He was going to wipe them out, Moses said, "Look, God, wipe *me* out. I'm ready to sacrifice myself for them." He pleaded and interceded for them. Why? Because God took time to prepare him. The same way God prepares each and every one of us for the people to whom He is sending us. He gives you answers to the questions that the people to whom He is sending you will have.

The experience that a man is going through is actually preparing him for a ministry in the purpose of God for his life. So don't look at another person's experience and say 'Why is God not treating me like that person?' Sometimes, when God takes you through a crisis, it is because He is preparing you for an assignment in future, and you should learn what you should learn from that crisis so that when the time comes, you would know that you had been prepared for it.

So my beloved in the Lord, walk the road with the Lord, and know the people you are sent to and enjoy them. Also, let us learn to accept the people God has sent to us without discriminating on the basis of age, race, or culture. May we not miss our saviours in the name of Jesus, Amen.

PART VI

YOUR MEASURE

CHAPTER 26

IT IS GOD WHO GIVES YOU YOUR MEASURE

The sixth component of the will of God is the measure, and we'll be considering the different perspectives of the measures that God gives us.

> That it shall come to pass in these days that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulders and his yoke from off thy neck and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing. (Isa. 10: 27)

> He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.
>
> For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him. (John 3: 33-34)

Now the scripture above tells us that the Spirit of God and the anointing of God for ministry are given in measures; now it is talking concerning the

Lord Jesus Christ that He did not receive the anointing in measure. It simply means that Jesus received a measureless anointing. And he is the only person who could contain that anointing without measure in his own physical body. All of us ministers of the Gospel, today, receive anointing in measures though the whole body of Christ receive the same anointing that the Head has, because we are the body and He is the Head.

What is on the head automatically will be on the body, but not one of us can carry the anointing without measure. All of us receive the anointing in measure. So when we are talking of the measure, the man must be accurate in a bid to fulfil the purpose of God (remember, we said that all these constitute the seven components of the programme of God for a man).

Now when we talk about the measure, what do we mean? We are talking of that supernatural position of the Holy Ghost power granted to a man to function in the assignment that God has given to him. Everything that God asked us to do whether spiritual or physical requires an anointing. The Bible says that

much in Zechariah 4: 6—

Not by might, nor by power but by my spirit saith the Lord of hosts.

If God has called you to serve Him as a pastor, He will anoint you and will put a measure of it upon you. That measure is that which God gives you, and what defines your limit of reality and authenticity in your sphere of calling and assignment and the programme of God that is assigned to you.

To operate above your measure is to become unreal and fake and to lose authenticity. All of us have a measure of divine grace, no matter who we are, what is given us, to be and to do all that God assigns to us in His programme. The Bible speaks about a measure of faith in Romans 12: 3—

> For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly according as God hath dealt

to every man the measure of faith.

Now, Paul is not talking of himself in the flesh as a lawyer but he is talking through grace. That is a supernatural portion. He's talking as an apostle, as a prophet and a teacher here. So God does not want us to operate above that measure of faith. People get into problem when they try to operate above the measure of their faith, that is, our faith is also in measures. Many things of God in our lives operate in measures. We grow, we increase, we expand, our spirit increases, our faith increases, our love grows, our understanding increases, wisdom grows in our lives and so on.

In Matthew 14, Jesus said, "Let's go to the other side" and then the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water. And Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, tell me to come" and the Lord said, "Come!" And, of course, the Lord will not stop anybody venturing into faith. But Peter's measure of faith was not the same level as that of the Lord Jesus Christ. He couldn't handle the circumstances, and as he was walking, the Bible tells us there that he began to sink. Why? He

saw the wind boisterous and the storm moving. Jesus was not moved or bothered by the same thing because His own measure could handle it. So we find out that faith also is in measures.

Faithfulness and Measures

Measures can be increased or reduced depending on our faithfulness or unfaithfulness. The Bible has so much to say about this subject of measures, and I believe that among these things that we have been dealing with, this is one of the most important. All of them are important but this one is most crucial because it defines the limit of reality in your life and to the people you are sent to. It also defines your limit of authenticity before God. People try to operate beyond their measure and they get into 'unrealness' and synthetic operations, and it becomes easy for the devil to deceive somebody who loses out of his sphere of grace.

Concerning Moses, let's consider Numbers 11: 16-17—

> And the LORD said to Moses, Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them to the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.
>
> And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which *is* upon thee, and will put *it* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou mayest not bear it thyself alone.

Now you see, out of what was upon Moses, God took and gave to seventy people, and Moses still continued in his ministry. Before God took of the measure upon Moses, of the spirit upon Moses, and gave to the seventy, all of it was upon Moses. You can now understand why such superlative, powerful manifestations took place in the life of Moses. And God took seventy portions out of what was on Moses and gave to seventy people. They too began to operate in the supernatural and so forth.

The same thing happened in the book of 2 Kings, concerning Elijah and Elisha. In verse 9, Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's Spirit:

> And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. (2 Kings 2: 9)

Elijah noted that Elijah asked a hard thing. Why did he say that he had asked a hard thing? Simply this: a man can't give what he doesn't have. This man was asking for double portion of what Elijah had. He replied, "You have asked a hard thing, but only God can do that. But if you see me, it would be yours."

So you see a double portion here. Elijah had a portion of a prophetic spirit upon him; Elisha asked for a double portion. God showed us through the life of Elisha that he did twice as much miracles that Elijah did because he carried double portion of what was upon him.

The measures that we carry determine the limit of our reality and authenticity in the programme of God.

Different Measures to Different Members of the Body

> From whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (Eph. 4: 16)

Now, the above verse tells us that every member of the body of Christ should be a functional member. When the Bible talks of membership in the body of Christ, it's talking of functional membership. You see, the Bible uses the physical picture of a human body to typify the body of Christ.

You notice that every part of your body is functional. There is nothing in your body that does not have a function. Maybe the only thing that did not discover its function may be the appendix. most of the time it's cut away when it becomes a problem. Now, every member of the body of Christ is there with a function assigned to it. It is when the measure of every part is brought together that the whole measure of the body of Christ is visible and manifest in the local assembly.

Every person whom God adds to that local assembly has a function and a measure of grace upon him or her to function in a particular level that will bring great increase to the whole local assembly and fulfil the vision of that local assembly. The singer in a church is not inferior to the pastor there. Each of them has a different measure to function, and adds to the work of that local assembly, thereby fulfilling the vision of that house. The usher has a measure upon him; the evangelism team member has a measure upon him; the prayer warrior has a measure upon him; and the pastor who is preaching and caring for the flock has a measure upon him.

When every part functions effectively in their measure, the entire local assembly functions in its whole measure; when the entire local assembly that makes up the whole body of Christ functions effectively in their measure, the whole body functions effectively on the earth. Can you see that? So what the devil does is to cause the body of Christ to be populated by non-functional members who only come to church and attend service on Sunday alone.

As you read this, I want to encourage you not to be a non-functional member of the body of Christ. There is a provision for every part of the body of Christ to function with the measure given to them. You have a measure if you are born-again; you have a measure of grace upon you; you have a measure of divine impartation upon you to function. Ephesians 4: 16 says, It is as you function effectively in your measure that will cause the increase of the body of Christ to grow.

That is what you do as an individual member of a local assembly: you affect the overall programme of God on the earth. Don't let that surprise you, especially if you consider yourself as small. The truth is that there is nothing like small you. Look at your little finger and the little nail on your smallest finger: if it pulled off, you know how the whole body would feel the pain. The same way, there are things that the little finger can do: it can clean your eye which the tongue cannot do. That's part of the measure of that finger. Every part of the body has something to do, and as each part functions effectively, the whole

body begins to grow. Can you imagine if your hand refuses to work one day and there is no way food is going to enter your mouth? The whole body will begin to grow weak. If your eye refuses to see, you know! The body wouldn't be able to move well; if your leg refuses to walk, you can only imagine the chaos this will cause in the body.

Now that's the problem because each part of our body is designed differently by God and given different assignments—the assignment determines their shape! It is the same thing in the body of Christ: we don't have the same function and we don't have the same assignment. So there are different measures upon us; the issue is difference of roles, not the superiority of people. It is the ego of man that produces the unregenerate carnal nature of man which turns things into superiority and things like that! It is just like the husband who is different from the wife, but not superior to her; the husband is given the role of headship and the wife is given the role of support, and when the two function together, the atmosphere in the home is conducive for the children to become champions for God.

Now, look at Ephesians 4: 13, which continues with the subjects of measure:

> Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

It means that there is a measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ that every one of us is assigned to fill. Now let me give an example of that: look at your body now—your finger is the same age as your thigh, you will agree with me; your hair is the same age as your nose; they came into the earth the same day. The finger is not inferior to the thigh; no! But they are different. What it means is that your measure does not mean you are superior; it means that you are different. The carnal or unregenerated flesh of man thinks "I'm a head of this person. I'm superior". But the regenerated spirit of man, the born-again spirit of the children of God talks of complimenting one another.

Now, if the finger begins to measure itself by the thigh, it is wrong. Why? If it grows to be the

thigh, to be the size of the thigh, it can only be a disease. Now if the thigh begins to compare itself with the finger, then that is also wrong. If the thigh reduces to the size of the finger, it is a disease called paralysis. So you found that some part of our body has a measure to be big because of the assignment and the role that they are given, while some have a measure that determine their small size because of their roles; they are not a replacement of each other. The same way, in the body of Christ—either as an individual Christian or as a local assembly or ministers—we have different assignment and different roles, and that determines the measure that we are given.

There are some people who are multi-gifted. Jesus gave the example of some men travelling away and whose master gave them different talents—to some three talents; some two talents; and some one talent according to their abilities. What they got was not by their own effort; it was chosen by the person who gave them, what you and I have by way of grace. It is not by writing application to heaven, but it is rather by the sovereign will and the creation and

design of God. And God has never created anybody to be better than another person; he created us to function complimenting each other, just like you need your smallest finger and your thigh, without either of which you can't do. The same way every part of the body of Christ is needed.

Even you, the reader, are needed in the body of Christ. You may feel nobody knows you or that nobody thinks of what you are doing in the church, but you are nonetheless needed. Sometimes people think that in a local church, for example, maybe there are some visible ministry like the preacher or the choir; somebody who is in the prayer band or the ushering team or the children church may think nobody sees them, but what you are doing is so crucial to the overall vision of the church that God is going to give us an equal reward. He will say, "Well done, thou faithful and good servant." Amen! So you see, this is so important that God wants us to understand. You try to think of your finger as inferior to your thigh because of the size and see how foolish it is; then we should not apply that unto the body of Christ or to family members. You know, there are

fathers who think a son is better than a daughter and things like that. No! A male child is not better than a female child; they are only different from each other. Praise God!

Understanding Differences in Measure

The measure of the husband is different from the wife's measure; it is not superior. The measure of different family members is different because of function, not because of superiority. This should encourage you to take your place and function in your own place in God. You see, my finger has reached the fullness of the stature of my person.

My thigh has reached his own fullness of the stature of my person. So the Bible says in Ephesians 4: 13, "That we all grow unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of his fullness of Christ ". . ." The measure of the stature of the fullness of me that my finger has reached is what it is; the measure of the stature of the fullness of me and also the thigh at its size. The same way, in the body of Christ, we must grow to fill our measure and be satisfied with them and glorify God there. And that's

what will be a blessing and help us fulfil our purpose in God.

Your measure determines what you can genuinely accomplish with God. A man can be less than what the measure of God upon him determines. But a man cannot genuinely accomplish more than the measure upon him allows. Now let's look at 1 Corinthians 15: 10 to support that statement:

> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace towards me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.

When you look at Apostle Paul, he wrote two-thirds of the New Testament. He planted so many churches; he did so much to advance the kingdom of God. In fact, he said he laboured more than all the apostles put together. Now, what that tells us is this: you cannot be bigger than what God makes you, but you can be less due to your own unfaithfulness. That is the grace of God that will make it possible for you to be all that God wants you to be. But you will have to add human labour to the grace of God to be all that

God wants you to be. Now if a man tries to be bigger than what God makes him, it is a product of his own ambition and ego, and that will expose him to the attack of the devil; it will even be his downfall. Many times, you see human ambition and ego cause us to push ourselves beyond the limit that God has set for us.

And then a man can be less than what God makes him, through laziness and complacency; that also will expose him to danger. You see, God's plans for Abraham was for Isaac, not for Lot; it wasn't for Ishmael and the others. And you see that they all became a problem for Isaac. What you add to the programme of God will become an enemy and a source of friction and opposition to the programme of God in your life. And that's why it is important for us to become accurate in the programme of God for our lives.

In Ephesians 4, the Bible says concerning the subject of measure again, as it relates to you as a member of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4: 16 says "from whom" that is, Jesus Christ the head.

> From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Please note the words “whole” and “part”. For every “whole”, there are “parts”. None of us can make up the whole, no matter our size, calling, or gift. We are all parts of the whole, and we need to complement one another. No single minister can make up the whole body of Christ. Indeed, the Lord Jesus alone does not make up the whole body of Christ. He is the head and we are the body, and joined together we make up the whole body. No single church can make up the whole body of Christ, no matter how big or powerful it is; no single person can make up the whole body, no matter how great or anointed he or she may be. Everybody is part of a whole, and that is why we need one another, and we need to integrate. Now take note of this statement: everything that is healthy integrates with something that is bigger than itself and everything that is healthy

grows in consonance with what it is integrated. As a Christian, if you don't integrate with the larger body of Christ, you are not healthy, and if you are not growing in consonance with the rest of the body, you are not healthy.

It means you can't be a child of God and say, "Well, I don't have a local body that I belong to". Every member of the body of Christ is a member of the body of Christ through a local church. There must be a local body that you are a part of; every one of us is part of a whole. You can't say, "Well, I don't believe in local churches". Now the local church is part of the overall church of Jesus Christ. It is a subset of the body of Christ, just like a person is a member of a family. You can't be a legitimate human being if you don't come through your family. The same way, you can't be a member of the body of Christ, if you don't have a local body that you are a part of. God's plan and purpose is for the church, the local body of believers. Praise God!

Now the reason for many unhealthy Christians and unhealthy activities in the body of Christ is

because there is no proper contact with the head. Colossians 2: 19 tells us that one of the ways to maintain our health is to maintain contact with the head of the body of Christ. When a person loses contact, then he becomes sick. Now if you are healthy, you cannot be swallowed up under legitimate part of the body. If you are healthy, you will be in unity of diversity based on understanding and not union of conformity! There is a difference between unity and union.

God calls the body of Christ into unity. He says in the book of Ephesians that we should endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the body of peace; how are we going to do that? It will come as we come into our understanding that all of us are part of a "whole". I need you; you need me. There is a measure that God has given to me that He hasn't given to you. So we come together in an understanding of our different roles and work together for the glory of God.

One of the things that we are going to deal with in this chapter on measure is leadership, superiority, and competition.

A child belongs to a family, a society is part of a nation, a believer is part of a local body, and the local church is part of the bigger body of Christ. When you talk of family, in the body of Christ, there are three families: the nuclear family (a man's family: his wife, children), then a church with the pastor as the head, and then the Father's family, that is, the overall body of Christ. The same spirit flow, the same vision, the same thing that you see in church should be in your family at home; the same thing that you see in church should be in your life as a Christian. The Bible says we are joined together, fitted like furniture that is a unity of diversity, different shapes coming together to function in a powerful unity that only God can bring about. That's what Ephesians 4 is telling us.

Nobody can say he doesn't need another part of the body of Christ. We all need one another because that is how God designed that we should operate. So when you look at this subject of measure, it goes a long way to determine how real and how healthy a Christian should be. The Bible says in Ephesians 4

that “the whole body is growing according to the different working in measure of every part”. Your own measure is so important to the overall growth of the body of Christ. Every single soul that you, as a single Christian, win to Christ increases the overall body of Christ. Sometimes, what we have in the body of Christ is not the growth of the body; we just transfer growth. Somebody takes the member of another church and another person takes members from another church; so the growth is just movement within the body and not real organic growth. But God wants the body to grow from outside. We should go to the kingdom of darkness and win people from there and bring them into the church, so the overall body of Christ grows.

That is how God wants the effectual working of each member of the body of Christ, as a single Christian; every church is a member of the body of Christ and each one has measures; individual Christians have measures, individual churches have their measures, and as we function effectively in our measure, the whole body of Christ begins to increase.

As I hinted earlier, in a local assembly, the pastor holds the perpetual leadership by calling; in a family, the husband holds perpetual leadership by divine calling and assignment; and in the body of Christ, it is the Lord Jesus who holds the perpetual leadership as the head of the body. When you relate the husband in the family to the body, you relate him to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the head of the church. All the fivefold ministry offices operate in the affairs of leadership anointing based on their assignments and their roles: the apostle carries a unique anointing different from that of a pastor, different from that of a prophet, different from that of an evangelist, and different from that of a teacher.

We are in the days of apostolic revivals; so pastors and ministers must understand the accuracy of measures and divine roles, not moving to the area that God did not assign to people; for example, the apostle is divinely equipped to find, plant, and provide leadership for multiple churches. There are various levels of apostles, which we are going to look at, who are sent to do something at a particular place,

sent to a particular person, sent with a particular message, or to introduce a particular truth in the body of Christ; they carry a strong measure to do that assignment.

The pastor is equipped of God to provide leadership for a local church; now there are pastors who are doing fine in the local church, and he says "well! I want to go into opening branches like somebody carrying a measure of an apostle is doing ; you may lose your anointing and lose your ministry because of that, because you compare yourself. We should be satisfied with the measure that God has given us. It is not because of our application; we should never rate anybody or relate with anybody based on what is not due to their effort. It is due to the assignment of God; the Bible asks, "What do you have that you have not received? Why do you act as if you don't receive it?" That is to say, you don't relate with somebody as being superior because of what God gave him, or with another as inferior because of what God gave him. If that were true, it would mean that God is promoting superiority and inferiority, which He doesn't do.

Diversities of Operations, Same God

God wants us to come into an understanding, appreciation for different roles and different gifting and different equipment in the body of Christ so that we can function in his strength of unity that is built on understanding, not a union that is built on conformity. It is so important that we understand that one of the areas I believe that God is dealing with his people in these last days is to bring understanding for an apostle to understand the role of a pastor, the pastor should understand the role of an apostle, the prophet should understand the role of a teacher and things like that so that we can come together in an understanding that brings strength to the body of Christ. Many people have moved into the area that God did not assign them and have got out of their measure into areas where they cook up things and open themselves to familiar spirits. Why? Often because of comparison and competition which is of the devil, and not of God. God is into leadership and complementation based on understanding. So we see this in the programme of God.

Don’t let anybody relate with you based on what you have or what you don’t have. If that person does that, it means that person is using you. If a woman allows men to relate with her based on her beauty alone or on her figure, what they are saying to you is that you are only a sex object, not a fellow human being. That’s reducing your human nature. If a man allows women to relate with him based on his money or possession, what they are saying is that you are just a means to satisfy their needs and not a human being. Insist on people relating with you as a human being with understanding.

Leaders need to allow people to take leadership based on their functioning. If a lawyer goes to a hospital, he allows the doctor to lead him in what to do, even though he is older and richer than the doctor because the hospital is the area of the doctor’s expertise. So the lawyer gives him leadership in that area. If the doctor goes to the court, however, he needs the lawyer; that does not mean superiority—it’s just allowing each person function in his or her own area. So let’s look at 2 Corinthians 10: 12, still looking at the subject of measure:

> For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

Now, that passage is telling us that comparing and measuring one another with each other is a mark of foolishness; your thigh does not compare itself with the finger and say 'I'm better than you because I'm bigger than you'. No! The thigh has to be that size because of its assignment to carry the body. The finger has to be that size because of some other jobs that the thigh can't do.

Your measure here is telling us in this passage that wisdom comes with accepting what God has designed you to be, and being satisfied and fulfilled there building your integrity on your creation in God, not just in circumstances.

Verse 13-14 says:

> But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the role which God hath distributed to us a measure to reach even unto you.
>
> For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure.

Your measure determines your riches in ministry or riches in focus and your riches in destiny; it doesn't mean that somebody else who has bigger riches is superior to you, or you can't work with the person; No! God just designs us differently and gives us measures differently. You know the story of the man who gave talents to his servants, that one who had five talents went and traded with it and got two other talents. But the man who had one talent didn't go to trade with it; instead, he buried it because of jealousy and competitive spirit; he felt inferior, and accused the master, and he was the one who spoke the longest. Of course, he was giving excuses to cover up his failure. Don't ever be an excuse-giver, because excuse is always a cover-up for a failure that could have succeeded.

Verse 14 above says, "For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure". We must not do

that. Every time we go beyond our measure, we also go beyond our grace and find ourselves stretching, not at rest, and everybody associated with us is also not at rest. They come under a spirit of tension and pressure just because you go beyond your measure and do things that you are not equipped to do. Now look at what he says, “For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reacted not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the Gospel of Christ”.

Now when a person is going beyond his measure, whether there is visible success or not, that person is not at rest in his heart; there is too much stress in the system in his body, in his home, in his church, and in his ministry. Why? He is going beyond his measure; when you find yourself going beyond your measure, you are not at rest in your heart—you come under a spirit of being driven, and you are not working in a sense of peace. Stop! If you don’t, it will lead to danger later, and God doesn’t want us to overstress ourselves; it can endanger your health and even your marriage. You know there are marriages that have broken up because the stress was too

much; there are churches that have broken up because the stress was too much; ministries that got folded up because the stress was too much.

You have probably heard of men of God who just collapsed even under the calling because the stress was too much. That portion of scripture warns us not to compare ourselves with people. One of the pressures that working with bigger people brings is stress that comes from trying to meet up with their level of accomplishment. It brings pressure on your finances and things like that, all because of lack of understanding in comparing yourself with them. There is nothing wrong in you having a friend or somebody who is richer than you or somebody who has other things than you, but if you compare yourself and feel inferior because of what that person has, you are just putting unnecessary stress on yourself. If you have a friend who has three houses, while you are still a tenant, and you feel inferior because you don't have your won house yet, especially since you were classmates in school, you put a stress on your finances and on your family.

All kinds of things can put people under stress and cause people to make avoidable mistakes; God doesn't want us to do what you can transfer into ministry. People who get into things that God did not call them to but do it only because somebody else is doing, put themselves under undue pressure.

In the days of healing revivals in America, there were people who did things because they saw Oral Roberts doing it; so they said 'I can do it too'. The question for them, of course, is, Has God equipped you to do it?, Has God assigned you to do it? Let's stay in the area that God has assigned us to and serve God faithfully there. You may be assigned as a singer —don't say 'because that other person both sings and preaches, I will preach also'. God may have given that person two measures, but if God gave you one measure, accept what God has given you and be faithful there. If God sees it, he can add to it and increase it; now that you are functioning in your measure, you are a blessing to people—there is peace; there is rest. He says, "He leads me beside the still water." He doesn't lead us beside stormy waters. Praise God!

Jesus prayed for unity in the body of Christ; the apostles prayed for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is sent to work unity in the body of Christ. And it is unity that is based on understanding of different roles. The issue in the kingdom of God is different roles, not replacement of roles. Nobody is created to be a replacement of another person; each person is created and designed by God uniquely, given a unique assignment, and given a measure to function and fulfil an assignment, but that assignment complements other assignments that are given by God to other people.

Just like a husband and wife: the two of them find a home; the children come in and everybody understands their roles; flowing together, they will bring a picture of a place that God's power can move into the world. There is something in the church where the pastor and his members understand differences of roles and function together in unity; they will affect their city, the something in the society. In the Godhead, there is leadership, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. You know, Jesus

said, “My father is greater than me” and in another place He said, “I and My father are one”. The Father said in Genesis 1, “Let us make man in our image and our likeness”; the Godhead is co-equal, co-eternal, co-omega, co-omniscient, and co-omnipresent, yet there is leadership among the Godhead.

And if there is leadership among the Godhead, and no superiority or competition, why should there be competition among the children of God? The reason is when we open up to Satan. The devil was the first person to compete with God for leadership in heaven.

The devil thought of his position as being inferior; he did not see it as his design and what God designed him to be and accept that. He was not satisfied with what God created him to be; he was in conflict. For example, if a man is not satisfied in being a man and tries to be a woman, he becomes a conflict in the sight of God. If a woman is not satisfied with what God created her to be and tries to be a man, she becomes a conflict, and that is a problem.

When people are not satisfied with what God created them to be, it becomes a problem. And then something happened to the devil; he was not satisfied. There should never be competition in life if we were truly born of God and controlled by the Spirit of God. Every such competition and superiority feeling is a product of Satan's spirit. Now, in the body of Christ, there is leadership in the fivefold ministry gift, not superiority. The Bible talks of that in Ephesians, Chapter 4; it says that the apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, and pastor are ministry offices in the body and that there is no superiority.

Leadership is not Superiority

In the local church, there is leadership between the pastor and the flocks, not superiority; the pastor is not superior to the flocks, they are just different. It is a different anointing that is upon him, a unique anointing as a shepherd. There is an anointing upon the member of the church to function as members of the body of Christ; at home there is leadership between the husband and the wife and children, not superiority. Leadership exists in the society between

the government and governed, not superiority. There is never superiority between the same class of beings, only leadership. Of course, there is superiority and inferiority between different classes of beings such as human beings and animals. It is correct to say that man is superior to animals or plants. God created both plants and animals for man. Indeed, man is superior to angels, animals, and plants. Man is inferior only to the Godhead as man was made in the class of God.

It is important to stress that one man is not superior to another man. Never! Not on the basis of colour, gender, age, education, possession, and opposition. That is so important: the white man is not superior to the black man; male is not superior to female; the aged is not superior to the younger; the strong is not superior to the weak; the rich is not superior to the poor. This is so important; the issue is leadership based on the factor of function and not creation, based on factors or expertise and not birth.

Regarding an engineering problem, the engineer will take leadership over the doctor or lawyer and

that does not mean the engineer is superior to the doctor or lawyer; but when it's a medical case, the doctor will take leadership. When it's a legal case, the lawyer will take leadership. If a doctor has a case in court, he can't argue his case, he will get a lawyer; that does not mean the lawyer is superior to him, but he gives leadership to the lawyer because of training and expertise. In the issue of home administration, the man is the leader over the woman; the woman takes the lead in the issue of getting pregnant and producing children—a man can't get pregnant.

The same way, when you are dealing with the body of Christ, the apostle operates in leadership in the fivefold offices. In the local church, pastors operate in the leadership just like the husband operates in leadership in the home. For example, if an apostle attends a local church for Sunday services, he has to submit to the leadership of the pastor out of understanding, because the pastor is the head of the local church. God has equipped the pastor to help the local church; God has equipped the apostle to provide leadership in the body of Christ. If I'm a pastor and visit the home of a church member, I will submit to

his leadership at the dining table and allow him to pray because he is the head of his home. There is such a thing as spiritual jurisdictions; problems come when people cross their jurisdiction and try to do what God has not sent them to do. There are people who want to assume the role of the head of the body of Christ. It is only Jesus who can say the whole Christian in a town should fast for three days; nobody else can do that. For example, it is the head that can say "I want Christians in Nigeria to fast".

But nobody can say, 'I'm calling Christians to come and fast'; no government can decree that. You can't control my finger to move because you are not the head of my body; also, I can't do the same thing to your leg. If my church member now allows me to pray, of course I will pray; but if his wife is sick, the pastor comes to pray only if the man of the house allows the pastor to pray. When we understand different roles, we know that we need each other in an understanding of unity that the devil can't break.

Now, if there is a sick person in the church, and there is a brother in that church who carries an

anointing of healing, then he takes the lead in the issue of praying for the sick. But if his pastor does not have the anointing of healing, then the pastor will submit or give leadership to that brother to pray with the anointing of healing on that single occasion. That single occasion does not make that brother a leader over the pastor. The pastor's authority is an ongoing one. It is only in the area of his anointing that the brother can have occasional leadership, but the pastor has the perpetual leadership in the church because of his calling. When people understand this, we will be willing to yield to leadership without losing the integrity of our passion or without feeling inferior. Following leadership is not the same thing as feeling inferior. Following leadership is something that comes with understanding, knowledge, and maturity. So in the local church, you see the pastor holding perpetual leadership by calling; but the brother with the anointing of healing operates occasional leadership by gifting, by appointment, or by expertise, and that is when the sick is present.

Similarly, in the home, the husband holds perpetual leadership by creation and assignment by

God, but the wife operates occasional leadership by expertise and by assignment given by the husband. In the body of Christ, two offices that must understand their roles are the apostle and the pastor. Sometimes, the apostolic office that wants to take over a local church is not biblical. The pastor is equipped to help the church and the apostle operates in the general body of Christ. We need to understand the difference of function and allow each other to express our gifts from God within hindrance or complexes—inferiority or superiority.

Earlier we reviewed 1 Corinthians 15: 10; we would return to it:

> But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all yet not I but the grace of God which was with me.

Measures on the Calling and Assignment

Now, the scripture above tells us that there is

grace put upon, and we are looking at different areas of measure of people who can function. The first area is measures on calling and assignment; those who are called in assignment to minister to the physical needs of mankind, and those who are called in assignment to minister to the spiritual needs of mankind. What it means is that there are two kinds of platforms, and the platform is to enable us to fulfil our ministry and to accomplish our destinies and our purpose on the earth. If you cannot relate your platform to your purpose, then all you have is a title.

Let me give you an example: somebody can stand on a secular platform of a doctor. Now what exactly does God want you to be and do for Him as a medical doctor? He has put a measure upon you there to function and do something for Him. If you can't relate that platform to divine purpose, all you have is just a title. Now another person can have a spiritual platform as a pastor; he must also be able to articulate what God has called him to do with or for Him. What has He called you to help Him to accomplish in His programme on the earth? If He can't relate that platform to a purpose in that

pasturing, it is just ordinary titles—there is no power in it.

Everyone has a measure of God and His grace upon their lives to fulfil an assignment for which they are called to on the earth. We see David in the scriptures who was not only anointed to be king, but also to be a warrior to fight Israel's battles. He had some warriors with him, and together they fought supernatural battles. There are people who are anointed to be administrators, statesmen and so forth like Daniel; God anoints people for politics as well. Sometimes, people just go into things because they feel like it; but I'm addressing this to you as a child of God: whatever God has called you to do, whether on the secular scene or in spiritual scene, He put a measure upon you. Stay within your measure and be satisfied with it and be a blessing to mankind and to the Kingdom of God.

Measures Within the Calling

The second area of measure is measure within the calling and anointing within the same calling. For

example, the prophetic calling of Elijah had a measure. Elisha asked for a double portion of that same prophetic calling, and running through the scripture, you'll see that the last miracle of Elijah was the first miracle of Elisha and Elisha did twice as many miracles as Elijah did in his ministry. So here you see the same prophetic anointing but different measures.

Moses had enough measure upon him to pass to seventy other people, and all of them prophesied just like Moses the prophet. In the Old Testament, you see the priests had a measure; the high priests had a measure and the Levites had their own measure. It is the same priestly anointing on the generations of Aaron but different measures. That of the high priest is different from that of the priest; that of the priest is different from that of the Levite.

In the setting of a pastor, for example, someone can function as a general overseer, another as a senior pastor, another as a pastor, and yet another as a youth pastor. It is the same anointing of the pastor, but different measures. In the teaching anointing,

someone can function as a Sunday school teacher; someone else can function as a teaching pastor (2 Tim. 2: 24 says “A pastor should be apt to teach”); and someone else can function as a teacher in the body of Christ; all these are different measures of a teaching anointing.

In the apostolic as well, there are various measures. There are foundational apostles who establish doctrine for the body of Christ. Nobody can stand in the measure of a foundational apostle today or a foundational prophet, but then, there are other categories of apostles and prophets: apostles who are sent to a city to break the ground and open a highway for divine operations to begin. People may not know them there, but they carry a measure from God to fulfil their assignment. In certain tribes in the backsides of nowhere, there are people, who many of us don’t even know about, who are functioning in the measure of the apostolic anointing—messengers, sent ones.

There are apostles who carry a special message. These are people to whom God gave an apostolic

anointing to introduce a truth to the body of Christ. And He gives them such a strong measure that while they are operating in their anointing, it looks like it is the only thing that is important at the time. This is because God is introducing something new—again, we find various measures within the same calling and anointing.

The same thing applies to the evangelistic anointing. Some people carry an evangelistic anointing to reach a village; for some others, it's a city; and yet some have an international evangelistic anointing. I said in an earlier portion of this book that God deals with leadership and complementation, not superiority and inferiority. There is nothing like inferiority in the things of God. We recognise each person for his measure from God, we respond to it, and it blesses everybody because everybody needs everybody and we can't do without one another. That is the second level of the measure, within the same calling and the anointing.

Measures Within Different Callings

The third area of measure is: measure within different callings. That is, the measure of an evangelist is different from that of a teacher or a prophet or a pastor; and it is so important that we understand that. That the measure on the evangelist attracts a larger crowd than the teacher's measure doesn't make the teacher's measure inferior, it only makes it different. The measure of the pastor's anointing is different from each other, that is, measures within different callings and different anointings. The singing anointing is different from that of the pulpit ministry. Those who function in the helps ministry in the church—ushers, counsellors, people who keep things going in the church—carry a measure that is different from that of the pastor who is preaching the Word.

In Acts 6, when they needed to distribute bread to the people, the apostle said, "It is not reason for us to leave the word of God and serve tables. Look out for people among you who we can appoint this business but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the word of God". And as they laid hands on them, they transferred the measure of serving the

tables to administer the church to those seven people so that they could be free to face the ministry of the Word. Those deacons carried an anointing to distribute bread. The deacon's anointing in the church is a unique anointing; it is a definite anointing. Don't let anybody throw you off balance and say that some people are just carrying titles and things like that. Where it is done correctly, there is anointing upon the office of serving tables. The usher who is ushering in the church carries an anointing; the singers who are singing carry an anointing; the person who is doing door-to-door evangelism carries an anointing, if that is the anointing that God has placed upon him in that part of evangelistic anointing.

Somebody who is involved in village evangelism is part of the evangelistic anointing, and it is different from that of the pastor; none is superior to another. But one is different from one another, we need it. Can you imagine a pastor who does not have an usher in the church and says "I can do without an usher?" Superiority complex says "I can do without you" but leadership says "I need you. I can't do without you; within different callings, we need one

another. Within the same anointing we need one another.

As you read this, I hope that it encourages you to function in your own place. Don't be a non-functional member of the body of Christ; don't be an onlooker or spectator in the body of Christ. Church is participation; it is functional membership, not just occasional membership. You must have a function in the body of Christ.

There are people to whom God gives a measure to reach and solve physical problems for mankind; there are people who are to minister to the spiritual needs of mankind. You remember when we dealt with 'people' as a component of the will of God, that when you talk of people, there is a physical side to life and a spiritual side. The ultimate of meeting the physical needs is to move them to the spiritual programme of God for our lives. When you study the scriptures and history, you'll discover that there are men that it looks as though the assignment that God sent them to fulfil centred on meeting physical needs. All that we call development today, civilisation, has

been provoked by certain men through their discoveries. They opened the human race to new levels of life, and living an example of such people was Michael Faraday. The people who discovered them may not be born-again—that means they may not make heaven as it were, that God sent them into the world to fulfil a purpose which cannot be removed from their lives. It is the grace of God that functioned in their lives and mixed with their brain and their researches that caused them to discover those things that brought advances to the human race on the physical side of the earth.

These kinds of discoveries we are seeing today in the media, the arts, the sciences, mathematics, and engineering have their roots in God. Look at our present generation: computer literacy is such a powerful thing; what computers have brought to the world is enormous, and it was somebody who did the pioneering study that opened the world to these kinds of things. That man functioned in a measure of divine grace to open that knowledge to him. Proverbs 25: 2 says, “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honour of kings to search out a matter”.

When God put man on earth, He said, “Subdue the earth”. What that means is that we should discover the riches in it and use it to advance ourselves. You notice that God did not put man in a finished world. God just put him here and gave him equipment inside himself that he will take hold on what is in him, mix it with the grace that God has hidden in the world, and thereby advance.

You know, none of the things that are a blessing to us in the physical realm came from heaven. It was manufactured here! Praise God! And that is part of the grace of God that is upon mankind. There are various men in the world. Look at Joseph in Egypt for example: Joseph functioned as a Prime Minister with amazing ability and wisdom in him to solve economic problems and administer the economy of Egypt in the midst of the worst kind of famine that the nation went through, and he successfully took them through seven years of famine. As I have been stressing, the measure of grace on a man to function in the physical assignment will not be purposeful if the man does not discover his higher calling by simply asking “Why has God given me this grace?”

Joseph understood that God's purpose was to keep the nation of Israel alive through the famine.

You may find out as you read this that perhaps you're one of the people upon whom God has given a measure to be a blessing to mankind on the physical side, maybe by discovering the next great invention, and you may not even be born-again. But that will not mean that God will withdraw His calling. The Bible says the gifts and the callings of God are without repentance. But you see the danger of not being born-again, and carrying a measure on your head for a destiny assignment is that the devil can see that calling in the spirit and can damage that person. Some of the people, whom God has used to bring great advances to the human race, may have a horrible physical and social life. This doesn't mean that their calling is not genuine, but what is the purpose of God for a man gaining the whole world and losing his own soul in hell?

You may be finding out for the first time today as you read this that God has that kind of a hope for you. You need to be born-again to complete the

picture so that you will not only be a blessing here, but you also have an eternity waiting for you. If somebody is called to be an apostle and he doesn't know it and so doesn't get born-again, the devil sees that calling and he can pervert it. When you see false churches, false ministries, and false manifestation, they don't deliver people from sin; they don't preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ; you can see the traces of a genuine call that is perverted because the person is not born-again, and if he is not born-again, then demons can talk to him. When a person is called and he doesn't get born-again, he is not in the right condition of spirit and soul to activate that calling.

So that's one area of measure where a man, to whom God gives grace to discover truth and be a blessing through inventions, will move the human race forward. You can imagine that the world is indebted to such a person. There are men who still exist today, who carry such a measure from God. The world may not know them but what they have discovered will move the world forward, and I pray that God will give us more and more of such men. The kind of environment such people find themselves

in, affect what they can bring forth and what they can do; so that is the first area of measure, those who carry the measure to meet the physical needs of men.

The second part relates to those who carry a measure to meet the spiritual needs, the area where we have been dealing with a lot of ministry gifts. It is not only the fivefold ministry offices—apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and pastors—that God anoints. It is not only pastors who carry an anointing; there are also teachers in Sunday schools who carry an anointing; there are messengers in the office who carry an anointing; there are mechanics who carry a measure to do that job, and that's important; there are people who carry a measure in an educational field. It is just like an anointing upon them. Sometimes, some people try to be pastors and do some other thing. We should just be what God wants us to be! Interestingly, whether a man is born-again or not, it does not neglect the calling in his life. When we stand before the judgement seat of Christ, we will give account according to our calling, not according to our lives. You imagine somebody who is

called to be an evangelist, who did not even get born-again, standing before the judgement seat, and Jesus asking him, "How many souls did you win?" If somebody who is called to the world to come and discover the next great solution for diseases dies as a sinner, without fulfilling his calling, he's going to give account for that. I pray that this teaching will help you to give a better account when you stand before the master on that day in Jesus' name.

> From whom the whole body, being fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto edifying of itself in love. (Eph. 4: 16)

CHAPTER 27

CLARIFICATIONS FOR ACCURACY IN YOUR MEASURE

There are a few words that bring confusion if they are not properly classified, and these words, when people don't place them in proper perspective, move into inaccuracy concerning measure:

1. Gift
2. Vision
3. Knowledge
4. Maturity

Maturity will cause you to see needs, but that does not mean God has called you to meet that need. Knowledge can give you fact; you can know so many things, but that does not mean you have a ministry in that area; you can't have a gift of healing

without having a healing ministry. God can call you and give you an assignment; your vision is a revelation of God's purpose for life and it's so important. Somebody can have a calling as an apostle or as a pastor but cannot have a vision of how to work about the functioning in that office.

Understanding these words and relating them to our life constantly will help us to work in accuracy, and I believe that God will give you greater understanding in Jesus' name! Let's look at the area of measure, that is, the believer's measure, the deacon's measure, and the ministry measure. In Mark 16, we see the measure that is upon a believer, that is, just being a believer in Christ, the Lord said these signs will follow us; they don't just follow us because we want them. There is a measure upon us that makes the signs to follow us:

> And he said to them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
>
> He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

> And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak in new languages;
>
> They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (Mark 16: 15-18)

Now these are believers' portion; every believer can have a part in the healing ministry of Jesus on this platform of healing, but that does not mean that every believer has a gift of healing in his life; that does not mean that every believer has the anointing of healing in his life. We can participate in the healing ministry of Jesus either as a believer or as the anointing of healing like Peter manifested in Acts 5. All these are part of the healing ministry of Jesus Christ—how to stand on the Word of God for ourselves. I'm talking of ministering healing to people, not just taking it for yourself; so that's the believer's measure. Matthew 28 says that going out to preach will make people to see signs and wonders; people will see great miracles happen by functioning in a believer's anointing.

Every believer should be able to cast out devils;

every believer should be able to lay hands on the sick and see them recover. There is also deacon's measure which we see as a manifestation in Acts 6. When God assigns you a role in a local setting (now this is not within the body of Christ), this is service within the local body. A local church, for example, on ministry setting.

> And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.
>
> Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.
>
> Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.
>
> But we will give ourselves continually to prayer,

and to the ministry of the word.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

(Acts 6: 1-7)

What happened by the laying on of hands on them was that they released an anointing upon them to function in that assignment that God has assigned them within the local setting, and we later find out that two of them saw the grace of ministry manifest in them. Stephen and Philip manifested a high

dimension of grace that pointed to ministry. In the latter part, we saw Philip become an evangelist, but who started as a disciple and served as a deacon. In that service, anointing was imparted upon him so there is a measure to serve in a local assembly. Everybody in a church is a member of the body of Christ if you're born-again. Every born-again person is a member in the body of Christ, but in that they are stewards. There are people who have gone ahead, not just ordinary stewards but partners with the Holy Spirit, getting the vision of that church fulfilled. There is a measure upon them to work in that place to fulfil the vision of that assembly, not create the vision but to function in that assembly perfectly.

The third area under this fifth dimension is the ministry measure; that is what we found in Ephesians 4: 11—apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and pastors—that's another dimension of measure. A person who is functioning in the believer's anointing should not assume that he is also going to function in the ministry anointing just because he functions in the believer's anointing. If God has not given you ministry measure, don't assume it. If God has not

given you ministry measure, and you're functioning under the measure of a deacon, then stay there and be a blessing.

The sixth area of measure is those with multiple callings and anointing. There are people who have multiple callings and anointing upon them. At the head of the list is Jesus the Lord, who stood in the five offices: apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, and pastor. The Bible called him as the apostle of our confession; the Bible called him prophet. He said the prophet is not without honour; He was an evangelist who came to preach the good news; He was a teacher; most of the time He went around teaching. He was a pastor; He is the Good Shepherd as told in John 10: 11. So He stood in all the five offices, but all of us stand in various callings and measures; some stand in one, some in two, or some in three, but I don't think anybody can stand in the five because our physical bodies can't sustain it.

It is important that you don't intrude into areas of calling that God has not assigned to you; it can endanger you and lead to problems. In the Old

Testament, there was a measure on the king, a measure on the prophet, and a measure on the priest; and God separated those roles. Sometimes, people like David operated as a king, prophet, and priest, but not all the people. There were times when people did the job of another and that resulted in leprosy. Just like there was physical leprosy then, there can be spiritual leprosy today. If God called you to be a pastor, don't covet the work of an evangelist. Thank God for it, appreciate it, bring evangelists to bless your church members, and thank God for your own measure.

You know, one thing about the unregenerated human spirit is the tendency to always think that the grass is greener on the other side. And that's too bad because no other person's measure is better than your own; yours is unique, and the other person's is unique. The issue is difference, and God wants us to be satisfied so we can cooperate with the Holy Spirit, so we can get the work of God done in the last days.

In 2 Chronicles 26, there was a king who crossed into another person's measure, and God dealt

with him; that's King Uzziah—

but when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

> And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him eighty priests of the LORD, *that were* valiant men:
>
> And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said to him, *It appertaineth* not to thee, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither *will it be* for thy honor from the LORD God.
>
> Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.
>
> And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests looked upon him, and behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out,

> because the LORD had smitten him.
>
> And Uzziah the king was a leper to the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, *being* a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land. (2 Chron. 26: 16-21)

Now, a king was not supposed to do what he did. That is the assignment of a priest. Why did he become a leper? Because he operated in another person's ministry and calling. In these last days, God wants us to be accurate in our measure. God has not called everybody to be jack of all trades. God has anointed each person for something specific. Only Jesus carried anointing without measure, and carried a measure in all the offices: apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, and pastor. No other person stands in the fivefold offices, though people can stand in multiple anointing, of which I'll talk about very shortly. But stay within the sphere of your measure; don't get into another person's measure.

When we're talking of measure within different callings, we must recognise and accept the one God has given you. There are people whom God has

greatly anointed in the body of Christ for a particular office, but they coveted another person's anointing. What a tragedy! Imagine someone whom God gives a measure of a prophet, and he says, "I just want to be a teacher" and he starts teaching. There are people whom God called to be pastors, but they said, "I just want to be an evangelist. I love the miracle in that man's ministry. I don't want to just stay with these people, take their burdens and things like that!" And they moved to a field where God had not called them. And you know what? The devil cuts the destiny of such people short. I pray for you that God will not allow the devil to cut your destiny short in Jesus' name!

I pray that these teachings will help you hold your places, stay within your measure, and fulfil the purpose of God for your life. Operating beyond your measure or in another person's measure exposes you to danger.

The first area of measure is the measure upon the gift and the callings. The Bible says in Romans 11: 29:

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance!

Now, what does this tell us? If all that a man has is a gift, he should not move into the area of calling. There're people who don't have a calling; they have a gift.

Some people can have a gift of prophecy like 1 Corinthians 14: 3 says:

> But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

That's a simple gift of prophecy; it's is a measure of grace upon that, that brings blessing and comfort when somebody just prophesies under the gift of prophecy. But then, there are people who have a calling of a prophet. If someone who has a gift of prophecy sees a man who has a calling of a prophet, and says that if that person can do it then he can do it too since he prophesies, and having said so moves into the prophet's office, then he moves outside of his measure into error and becomes a prey to familiar spirits.

There are people who have the gift of healing, while some have a healing ministry; it is a different measure. If you look at Acts 5: 12-16, for example, the Bible says that Paul, Peter and the rest of the apostles had a measure:

> And by the hand of the apostle were many signs and wonders done among the people; (and they were all with the one accord in Solomon's porch).
>
> And of the rest dared no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.
>
> And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both man and woman)
>
> So that they brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on the bed and pallets, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow them.
>
> There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem bringing sick folks, and those who were afflicted with unclean spirits and they were healed everyone.

We see that paralysis and lameness were healed; but in Peter's ministry, all kinds of healings took

place—that's a measure. So the fourth area of measure is the one that is upon the simple gift; everything of God carries a measure of grace and the one that's upon a calling, the one that's upon special anointing, and we must recognise that. Let's be honest with God; you see, when a man pretends to be what he is not, God will not work with that person. But when a man is sincere with God, God can promote him.

I must make it clear that God can add to our measure. If you're faithful and sincere, He can add to your measure if He deems it appropriate. Then if He says, "That's all I'm going to give you", then rejoice. We should be happy that God is using us to be a blessing to mankind. Praise God! So that's the fourth area of measure—the one upon the gift.

Acts 10: 38 speaks about Jesus anointed with the Holy Spirit and the power to heal the sick, which is a special anointing. That is another measure. Two people can be in a pastor's calling; one anointed with a gift of calling, while another anointed with a healing ministry. There can be another person who can stand

in the pastor's calling, yet won't have either the gift of anointing or the anointing of healing, but he can still be a pastor—different measures. We must recognise them and enjoy all that God has provided and be a blessing; take hold of what God has provided for you as a Christian and as a minister; functioning in the areas of measure that God has given unto you and be a blessing.

PART VII

YOUR GENERATION

CHAPTER 28

WHICH GENERATION DO YOU BELONG?

The Bible makes it clear that every man belongs to a generation. Men are chosen and prepared by God for peculiar generations. When the Bible uses the word 'generation', it refers to two things specifically:

(i) birth and family history

(ii) revolution of time, or an age

It means that generation as used in the Bible could refer to a lineage of a man, different people coming one after another, succession of family members in different space of time: father, son, grandson, great grandson and so on. Then it can also talk of a specific period of human existence in an age, a revolution of time that has its flavour, spirit, and fashion and everything about it. For example, when we were just at the tail end of the twentieth century, looking forward to enter into the twenty-

first century, the world was dealing with the twenty-first century that was just upon it. Almost everyone used to talk of millennial things: people talked of millennial fashion, millennial cars, millennial homes, and millennial things. You can look at this peculiar wonderful period that we are living in that there are just about five sets of other human beings in the history of mankind on the earth, who have had this kind of privilege we are having that has witnessed the end of a century of a millennium and the beginning of one.

It is a tremendous period, a tremendous time that God has just privileged us to join five other sets of human beings. If you look at the twenty-first century, there are people who are part of the twentieth century. If you look back at the educational standards in the twentieth century, there was a time when the standard qualification educational to participate in life affairs and be employed for gain and so forth (at least in Nigeria) was standard six education; then it moved up in another generation within the twentieth century to teacher training college, then in the next generation to West African

School Certificate, and at the tail end of the twentieth century it was university education.

Now that we are in the twenty-first century, the standard qualification is not just university education, but in addition to that basic requirement, you need to have information technology literacy as well. If somebody is not computer literate, or at least has working knowledge of computers, he may not be able to participate actively. You can see these shifts in development and in activities within the same century but different generations. There are some people who, when they were growing up, the only radio set they knew was what you call *'Rediffusion'* in those days, that is the box you hanged on the wall in the room; some people have so grown up today that they don't even know what rediffusion is.

Every facet of human endeavour has been moving progressively from what people used to know to new things. Cars are going through various changes, new types of airplanes are being developed, the internet truly makes the world a global village and so on. Change seems to be the most constant factor

in human existence. It is because of how God designed every generation to operate.

This subject of generation with the forces that rule in a particular generation is extremely important for each one of us to know the generation we have been placed, and not to wish for another generation but to face the challenges of our generation and provide answers for them.

God did not plan that Apostle Paul should come in our generation. In Apostle Paul's days, the Roman Empire controlled majority of the world. The communication system at that time was the best they could have. The road networks were prepared by the Roman Empire. There was what they called Roman Peace, all over the world at that time. It made it conducive for the Gospel to be preached, transported to every part by those apostles. They were up to the challenge and the opportunities of their days, and they utilised them. All the technological advancements we now have are in place so that the Gospel can be preached with greater intensity and power than even in the days of Apostle Paul.

God did not plan that Apostle Paul should come in our day. It is you and I that God raised for such a time as this. Remember what Mordecai told Esther? "Maybe you have come into the kingdom for such a time as this." God has been preparing you and me for this generation. God prepared you for this generation and placed you in it. The truth is that this generation offers us a unique opportunity than any other before it to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world. There is no other generation that had the kind of advancement that our generation has at our disposal to preach the Gospel to all the world. Satellite technology makes it possible to reach the world at the same time in seconds. I believe it is in place so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ can advance to hasten His second coming. Praise God!

We will examine this subject closely in this chapter and I pray that God will show you your own opportunity in this generation because it is what each and every one of us does with his opportunity that determines our future. Many people will blame someone else for their failure, but the truth is that everyone will have opportunities, and what you and I

do with our opportunities will determine what we get and what becomes of our future. Ecclesiastes 1: 4 says, “One generation passeth away and another generation cometh but the earth abideth forever.” This portion of the scripture is simply telling us that the history of mankind in the earth is a succession of generations; one generation passes away and another follows after—whether in a family setting or in an age.

God wants you to understand the generation you are living in, that you have been placed in, that you have been designed for and rise above the problems of the generation, supply solutions to that generation from God’s Word and from God’s Spirit, and face the challenges of that generation and overcome and glorify God. That is what God has placed us in each generation for. Isaiah 41: 1 says, “Who has wrought and done it, calling the generation from beginning? I the Lord, the first and the last; I am He.” That is to tell us that God placed a holy calling upon each generation. The devil fights against each generation of human beings on the earth: their collective destiny and their collective assignment. He prowls against it

and wants to destroy it and affect it and waste it.

God's purposes for each generation will not pass away; it is God who is behind the advances and the opportunities, the positive development, and the great discoveries of each generation. His purpose is that it will benefit mankind in that generation and cooperate and contribute to the advancement of God's dream, God's plan, and God's programme for that generation, not that the devil should pervert it. It is not an automatic thing if human beings who are living within each generation will account for the opportunity that God gives them in their generation and for the resources that God places at their disposal in their generation.

Christians living within each generation will give an account for what we do with the advantages, the technology, and the blessings that God placed at our disposal in our generation. I believe that of all generations of human beings, of Christians that lived on the earth, ours is the most privileged, the most blessed, and the best generation to bring back Jesus. What other generations have not been able to do, I believe our generation will do, and I also believe that

you and I will cooperate with the Holy Spirit to achieve this. We will not fail or delay God's programme for this generation in the name of Jesus! In your life, you will not fail or delay His programme.

When God places a man in a certain generation, He expects him to rise up and glorify God in that generation. Lots of time we wish we belonged to a different generation that God didn't place us in. But David was a good example for us in the Bible, according to Acts 13: 36.

For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

That verse, at a minimum, established that David had belonged to a generation. What he did in that generation was serve the will of God. He didn't give an excuse that he couldn't serve the will of God in his generation on the excuse that it was too horrible or wicked and so forth. Rather, in spite of the challenges, he served the will of God in his

generation.

The Bible describes many generations in the Bible with different characteristics, but that does not mean that the will of God cannot be served in any generation. God will not allow any excuse because God equips each generation of His people for the particular task He has appointed them. In God's eternal plan, He allocated different things to different generations; we must do our part to find out what the will of God is in our generation and fulfil it. In both the Old and the New Testaments, everyone who had a sense of an imperative for their destiny kept themselves pure. In any generation, if you look at all those who lived for God in every generation, they will have the same consistent testimony of fulfilling God's purpose in their generation if they live righteous and holy. The Bible said in the days of Noah that it was such a horrible generation that demons were even coming down to the earth to have sexual affairs with women; yet Noah found favour with God in that same generation. In the days of Moses, the Bible described the generation with so many negative adjectives (stubborn, stiff-necked

etc.), yet Moses pleased God and fulfilled the will of God in his generation. In the days of David, there were all kinds of backsliding in Israel. It was at that time that Saul had turned the people away from God for forty years; yet David came there and served the will of God in that generation. In the generation of the apostles, Apostle Peter described David's generation as an "untoward generation", yet David served the will of God.

CHAPTER 29

SERVE THE WILL OF GOD IN YOUR GENERATION

Whatever purpose, whatever anointing, whatever measure is upon you, whatever in all that we have been dealing with in the components of the will of God, God will demand that you serve His will in your own generation. God will not accept excuses. Joseph found himself in a terrible generation in Egypt, yet he served the will of God. David served the will of God in his own generation; he didn't merely wish to do so, he actually did!

You sometimes hear some people express the position that it was easier to live for God and serve His will in the days of the Apostle Peter, especially in the initial period when Jesus was around. Others say, "Well, it must have been easier in the days of Moses" as they could see the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud. The truth of the matter is that it was not any easier that time than it is today. It's the same devil

that is manufacturing different spirits and different atrocities in each generation to sidetrack men of that generation from the purpose of God for their lives and from the will of God for their lives; but God is also working within each generation and behind the scenes in each generation to prepare men to live gloriously to fulfil His purpose and counsel in their generation.

Let's look at some of the descriptions of generation of Moses in the Bible. I want to show you there will not be any excuse for not living for the will of God in our generation. Our generation is not necessarily worse than what Moses faced. The Bible described the generation of Moses variously in Deuteronomy:

> Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I serve to gave unto your fathers. (Deut. 1: 35)

Now that's the description of the men of the generation of Moses. The Bible described them as an evil generation. Look at another description of that generation (of Moses). It doesn't matter the

description of our generation, we must have the same testimony.

> They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children they are a perverse and crooked generation. (Deut. 32: 5)

That's the generation of Moses, yet the Bible described him that there was no man like Moses—a man that God spoke to mouth-to-mouth like a man speaks to his friend. In that same generation, Joshua rose up to a great leadership of spiritual depth and power, and fulfilled God's purpose. In that same generation of unbelief, you find a man like Caleb who believed God in spite of the giants. It doesn't matter the forces of our generation; you and I can still rise to the level God wants us be. Indeed, God wants to use us to show to our generation that He will have a faithful witness in every generation.

Remember this: it doesn't matter what the generation does, or what spirit rules in that generation; God will always have witnesses to show that this is what He wants for that generation. I pray that you will be one of such witnesses in this

generation that Christianity can be of the same old-time power, and vitality, and the same old-time holiness and righteousness and integrity and truth and honour and walking in the power of God as men of old did it in this generation.

Now look at another description of Moses' generation in Deuteronomy 32: 20—

> And he said, I will hide my face from them I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.

Those are people of Moses' generation, yet where did Moses get his own faith from? Where did Moses get his own seriousness from? It says it's a froward generation, an unserious generation, a fickle generation that didn't trust God. That was Moses' generation, yet Moses trusted God. It doesn't matter what description or adjective qualifies your own generation. We also can trust God. You know Moses didn't have as much as we have. Moses was not baptised in the Holy Ghost; he only had the Holy Ghost upon him in the calling, but you and I have the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The blood of Jesus has

been shed for us. Moses didn't have the blood of Jesus shed for him. Noah didn't have the blood of Jesus shed for him. David didn't have the blood of Jesus shed for him. They were not baptised in the Holy Ghost, but we have the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We have the blood of Jesus. The complete scripture has been written for us today, so we are without excuse. We must outshine all the other generations put together.

The amazing number of men and women of God in our days today preaching the Gospel of God, the number of churches all around walking in the power of God, the books that have been written, and all kinds of Christian programmes on radio and TV everywhere all over the world means that our generation cannot have an excuse before God for not living right, for not surpassing the records and testimonies of people like Moses, Joshua, Elisha, Noah, and David.

God placed us in this generation and paved so much resources to our hand. Praise God! Whereas in the days of Moses, they didn't have access to

listening to radio like you and me have access to listening to radio in the morning. If they wanted to hear the Word of the Lord, they had to travel to the temple wherever the temple was located. They had to travel long distances to get the Word of God. Now the Word is coming to you in your bedroom, your office, and where you are through the radio. The Word comes to you on TV through the satellite, so we have no excuse not to be better than them. Yet you see it looks like our generation lacks consecration to God. It looks like our generation is weak in consecration and dedication to God. Those old-time generations that didn't have as much seem to be more consecrated. But God is bringing consecration back to church. God is having witnesses who are consecrated and who are walking in power, purity, prosperity, faith, and in everything plus consecration of old and showing the world that the children of God are still on the earth.

You know the Bible described them in Philippians that we should show the world that we are children of God by holding fast the Word of life.

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the

> sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world
>
> Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. (Phil. 2: 15)

That means if you have every other component of the purpose of God in place, and we don't use them to shine as light in our generation to live as the children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, we would have failed in the purpose of God for us. With all the anointing and grace of God in everything, God wants us to leave a witness to this generation that God is still God. His standard has not changed. His mind has not changed about sin, or about righteousness. Heaven is still real and hell is still real. You can live a holy life and you can be all that the Bible says you can be for God. That's the purpose of God for giving us as all these advantages. That's why this teaching on generations is so crucial that God has placed us in this generation as his witnesses.

Matthew 24: 14 says, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a

witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." The end will not come until a witness has been given to the world that God remains God, that God's power is still the same, and that the devil remains defeated. Praise God!

Psalm 18: 8 describes Moses' generation as a stubborn generation. A generation that just refused to obey God and refused to walk in the ways of God—always going in and out of idolatry, yet Moses remained with God. In the midst of that generation, you will find Joshua rise up and get trained for leadership. You see the Bible described this generation as a crooked and perverse generation. We can be a holy nation in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. That's the church of God. I believe you and I will do that. Our families will be holy families in the midst of corruption around us. Our churches will be a holy nation in the midst of perverseness around us in Jesus' name.

No matter what the description of your generation is, the central issue between you and God is serving the will of God in that generation. Many

people use the excuse that “God, in this generation I live in the midst of an unclean and an ungodly people. This system is so corrupt and hopeless. You cannot be righteous in this system”. No! Listen to men who have lived in worse situations; they served the will of God in that generation. Each generation has its own flavour, spirit, and fashion and their own sinful characteristics.

CHAPTER 30

BECOMING GOD'S STANDARD IN YOUR GENERATION

The Bible describes various generations. You and I will not be allowed any excuse because our generation has more than other generations in terms of the blessings and the resources of God. It looks like all the negative descriptions of the previous generation can describe our generation, but all the strength, glory, power, and the resources of God from the day that man was first put on the earth are available for our own generation to triumph over the evils of our generation too. We must focus on the positive side of our generation, and use it to live for God and serve the will of God in our generation. Look at Noah's generation in Genesis 6: 1-4—

> And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,
>
> That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives

> of all whom they chose.
>
> And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also
>
> There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them: the same *became* mighty men, who *were* of old, men of renown.

This was a corruption of the highest order where fallen beings (demon beings) were having cohabitation with women and producing children, and God had to cut short that generation. God had to deal with these beings to remove them and put them in chains. Jude 6 tells us that these beings are in chains now, reserved unto darkness forever so that these kinds of things will not happen again but that was the kind of generation in which Noah found himself. I mean, today, you can't say you have human beings who are living on the earth who are a product of a demon and a human being cohabiting together. We don't have any excuse not to live for God in this generation. Let's consider Genesis 6: 5-8 further:

> And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was*

> great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.
>
> And the LORD repented that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.
>
> And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping animal, and the fowls of the air; for I repent that I have made them.
>
> But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

I like verse 8—*But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord*. In the midst of the corruption that everybody else was involved in, Noah remained true to God. You know one of the slogans of our generation is 'If you can't beat them, join them'. No, God says you can beat them with His Word.

You can beat them with His Spirit, so you don't have to join them. You don't have to join the evil or corruption of your day, in your generation. You can be a witness for God. God has not called the church to be a diplomatic agency on the earth. God has called the church and Christians to be instructors on the earth. That is to say, God is aware that every generation of man has been perverse since Adam had

transferred authority over the earth to the devil, but God always raises men in that generation to show that generation the standards, the will, and the qualities of God.

The Bible says when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord will lift a standard and put him to flight. What does God do when the enemy is coming in any generation with floods of ungodliness and floods of iniquity and perversion and saying, “Well, it’s not possible to live for God” What the spirit of God does is lift the standard by raising men and women who are living by the standards of God. He raises churches that are still operating by the standards of God and makes a statement through them that this is how it is supposed to be done. In any battle, the standard bearer is an object of attack because as long as the flag of the army is up, they are not yet vanquished. God is looking for Christians that He can raise as standards in this generation and say, ‘This is where I am still standing’. If you are looking for God, look at these people. This is how to do it. God has not changed.

Noah found grace. Noah became a standard for his generation just like Joseph became a standard for his generation. David became a standard for his generation. Moses became a standard for his generation You too, I pray, will become a standard in this generation like Philippians 2: 15 says that we should be sons of God in the midst of this crooked and perverse nation, holding forth the Word of God shinning as lights in this generation. Praise God!

> These are the generations of Noah; Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation and Noah walked with God. (Gen. 6: 9)

In the midst of demonism of the highest order, the Bible says that Noah walked with God, and it doesn't matter what is happening around you or in your place of work in this generation. It doesn't matter what fashion is coming upon this generation; from anywhere, as a child of God, you must maintain your identity and be a witness for God. You cannot give an excuse that it's not possible to live for God in your generation. Christianity is not to be tailored to accommodate the spirit of our generation. Christianity is to face the spirit of the generation that

is contrary to God's Spirit in the power of the Spirit of God. "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world" (1 John 4: 4). Greater is the Spirit of God in the church than the spirit of evil that is in the generation where God places the church at every period of time. And the church is designed to overcome.

Jesus said, "Upon this rock I would build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail." Listen to me; even if the church of the Lord Jesus Christ fails Him on the earth, the devil still cannot overcome Jesus because Jesus remains the Head of the church. The devil will still have to deal with the head. If a generation fails God, what happens? God will wait for the children of that generation for another generation. I pray that our generation will not fail God. The children of Israel that God brought out of Egypt were not the same set that He brought into the Promised Land. They failed, so God raised up their children. In the midst of their own failure, God was raising up their children. Look at the day of Eli: in the midst of the failure of Eli, God was raising up a Samuel who would usher the people of God into the

next phase of God's programme. If a father's generation is failing, God raises up the generation of their sons to replace them, and He waits for them to grow up and move into His programme.

What their fathers fail to do, He will get it done. I believe that one of the greatest assignments upon our generation is to usher the Lord Jesus Christ back in the rapture and we will not fail in Jesus' name. I pray for you and for myself that we will not fail in Jesus' name. The Bible says David served the will of God in his own generation. Many generations are described in the Bible in different ways. In Proverbs 30, we find descriptions of various generations. Let's quickly run through some of them.

> There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. (Prov. 30: 11)

That's one generation. Another one, in 12 says

> There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

That is a hypocritical generation—a generation that does not respect what the elders have done. Yet every new generation needs the wisdom of the previous generation that is righteous and holy; not to follow the *sin* of the previous generation but the *wisdom* of the previous generation. God is a God of continuity.

> There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids lifted up.

That's a proud generation. Next, verse 14 says,

> There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

It looks like all the description of these four generations describes this present generation, but in the midst of that, God wants us to be examples. God wants you and I to be a standard; God wants the church to be the standard for the generations that existed in the Old Testament. God has chosen the church of Jesus Christ, born-again people to be His standard bearers for this generation.

If they are talking about how to live in the family, they should look to the church; if they are talking of how students should behave on campus, they should look to the born-again people; if they are talking of how people should operate in government (in positions of authority), they should look to the born-again people; if they are talking of dressing, they should look to the born-again person; if they are talking of health, they should look to the born-again person; if they are talking of excellence, they should look to the born-again person; if they are asking what is holiness, they should look to the born-again person; if the topic is investigating the truth, they need to look no further than the born-again person; if they are talking about compassion and mercy, they should look to the born-again person. God raised us to be the standard for the world. A generation that doesn't have a standard is a damned generation. The standard is to be found in the church. When the church doesn't raise the standard, there is trouble for that generation, and God doesn't want us to fail our generation.

Let's look at the generation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our goal is to establish the fact that there is no excuse allowed in heaven for any child of God to fail to be a standard for God in His generation. Everything that God placed upon you—the calling, the grace, and every resource is designed to be used by God to show your generation that God is still God and that Bible is still the truth. You know, when we fail God, we suggest to our generation that the standards of God are unattainable, but God will always have His witness; and I pray that you will be one of such witnesses. Look at Isaiah 53: 8; it is concerning the Lord Jesus: "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation?" So let's look at the description of the generation of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, the people that He lived among, whether He failed God. No, He didn't fail God. He said, "I have finished the work that you gave me." He asked the men of His generation, saying, "Which one of you convicts me of sin?" He became a standard to His generation. In Matthew 3: 7, John the Baptist was describing the generation He lived in:

> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and

> Sadducees come to his baptism, he said to them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
>
> Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance (Matt. 3: 7-8)

So you see the description of men of Jesus' generation. He described them as vipers, all right. Now you look at Matthew 11: 16-19—

> But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like to children sitting in the markets, and calling to their fellows,
>
> And saying, We have piped to you, and ye have not danced; We have mourned to you, and ye have not lamented.
>
> For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon.
>
> The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified by her children.

The Bible says that wisdom is going to be the key in handling any generation, knowing the generation, understanding the generation you are living in, and knowing how to handle the problems of

that generation with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and succeed and fulfil your assignment. Jesus said, "Wisdom is justified of her children." The generation that Jesus lived in was a generation that didn't make a stand for God. When John came, they accused him of having a demon. When Jesus came doing what they said John didn't do, they accused Him of something else. You see, it looks like it's a description of men around today. Praise God. So you see, Jesus in the midst of that generation did not give up His calling; He didn't give up His assignment; He didn't lose His identity; He still fulfilled the purpose of God. He finished the work that God raised Him to fulfil. Look at Matthew, Chapter 12. The Bible describing the generation of Jesus says,

> O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.
>
> A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.
>
> Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign

> from thee.
>
> But he answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh for a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah.
>
> For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.
>
> The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah *is* here. (Matt. 12: 34-35, 38-41)

You see this? It says it is a sign of evil and spiritual adultery to be looking after a sign because the Word of God has been given; the sign has been given. Jesus is the sign now. But in this generation, we, the believers, are the signs to our generation, and what we do will either be a good sign or a negative sign. God wants us to be a true sign that God is still God and that God remains God and He's still here today. May we not fail Him in Jesus' name. Amen.

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The Seven Components of the Will of God
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