David O. Oyedepo

Exploits In Ministry

Exploits In Ministry

DAVID O. OYEDEPO

Copyright © 2006 by:

ISBN: 978-2905-40-2

2nd Print: August 2007

Published in Nigeria by:

DOMINION PUBLISHING HOUSE

All rights reserved.

No portion of this book may be used
without the written permission of the
publisher, with the exception of brief
excerpts in magazines, articles, reviews, etc.
For further information or permission, contact:

DOMINION PUBLISHING HOUSE
Faith Tabernacle, Km 10, Idiroko Road,
Canaan Land, Ota.

Tel: 234-1-7747546, 7747547, 7747548.
Website: www.davidoyedepoministries.org

All Scriptures are from the King James Version of the Bible,
except otherwise stated.

Exploits In Ministry

David O. Oyedepo

Introduction

A successful life style is not measured by the quantity of accumulated possession, neither is it measured by popularity. Rather, it consists of the attainment of God's goals and purposes for one's life. Everyone who is born of God has a divine plan for his life. 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.

The Living Bible renders it in this wonderful way:

For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

God has plans for you. They have been there before you were born again, waiting for you to step into the kingdom and step into them. It is your duty to discover these plans and step into your divine assignment. Discover your God-given assignment, pursue it and you will have a ministry.

Ministry is neither a dream nor a trance. It is not a church title or leadership position held in a local church. It is not an organization or an association. It is a divine assignment handed down to a person by God.

Everyone God called, He gave a task to perform. In fact, the entire Bible is full of called people, who carried out one special assignment or the other. For instance, He called Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt. Joshua was called to lead the people to Canaan. Gideon He called, to deliver His people from the Midianites. He called David to be king and Isaiah to be prophet, etc.

Ministry is stewardship — serving as a messenger, to carry out the orders of your superior. Ministry is not an idea, a feeling or a burden. It is carrying out a given task. Also, it is harnessing divine resources to carry out divine assignments committed into a man's hand.

It is not limited to the pulpit or to preaching, as it were. Rather, it covers every area of human need— social, moral, spiritual, physical, mental, etc. Thus, wherever divine intervention is needed for the gospel of the kingdom to be enhanced, God always dispatches human agents to stand in for Him and act on His behalf.

True, there are ministry gifts — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, but their principal function is to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;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:For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Ephesians 4:11-12

Do not get trapped in the folly of comparing yourself with others. Rather, discover your individuality and accept your responsibility. Every member of the body of a lion is part of the lion and carries the aroma of royalty around it. No wonder Paul talks of our calling as ***"a high calling of God in Christ Jesus."***

All callings are equally high, each person determining the height he attains. This is the purpose of this book — to help you discover the step up the ladder, ***"for the prize of the high calling"*** of God upon your life. We cannot all be in one office. If we are all preachers, who will be the congregation? If we are all selling, who will do the buying? Set yourself to discover your assignment, and be yourself in the pursuit of excellence.

However, for the purpose of clarity, in this book, our major emphasis will be on the pulpit ministry. I believe God that as you read, your eyes will be opened to see how best to handle your own ministry, wherein you have been called to serve in the kingdom.

PART 1

The Minister And His Call

CHAPTER ONE

You are Special!

A thought of mediocrity makes mediocres, while a thought of greatness makes great men. The Word of God says:

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

Proverbs 23:7

You are the way you see yourself. This is why the first step up the ladder of excellence is for you to think excellence. As you think in your heart, so are you. What you think in your heart is what you will voice out.

...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Matthew 12:34

The good news is that everyone born again is special to God and must see himself as such.

It is time you begin to see the honour and dignity attached to the new man. You are not a biological accident. You are a creature of destiny, a creature of great value. The outstanding thing about treasures is the value attached to them. This is what makes them special. God rates you as a special treasure to Him.

...Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people...

Exodus 19:5

You are a peculiar specimen of God's glory, a unique specie! You carry the kingdom of God inside you. Luke 17:21 tells us that the kingdom of God is within us. Your kind has never been before. You are not ordinary. You are peculiar. You have access to the divine nature of God here on earth; the abilities of God are available to you.

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2 Peter 1:3-4

Also, the Lord told Moses:

...I have made thee a god to Pharaoh...

Exodus 7:1

If God has made you a god to Pharaoh, then you are a god to the whole world. Remember, Moses had told them:

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Acts 3:22

The “prophet” Moses was talking about in this Scripture is Jesus. Jesus came and it was said of Him, “What manner of man is this?” He said:

...As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

John 20:21

You are in the class of Jesus. He has sent you. The world should say of you, *"What manner of man is this?"*

You are special! Everyone called by God is sent to the world. He is made a god to the world and the world is expected to listen to him and obey him. You are a god! This is the position of anyone who receives the Word of God. Those unto whom the Word of God comes, He calls gods (Jn. 10:35).

Remember, it was said of Paul and Barnabas, *"the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men"* (Acts 14:11). God says all His children are gods (Ps. 82:6). You are made to be distinguished; you too belong to the upper class, you are not just different.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

1 Peter 2:9

You have unusual grace and impeccable abilities. You are a priest and a king, and your priesthood and kingly dominion is to be manifested on earth. You are special!

In the Creator's eye, the entire world is not worth an exchange for your soul. You are of much value in the sight of God; you are a pearl of great price. You are so valuable, that it cost God the blood of His only begotten Son, to redeem your soul from perdition. You mean so much to God, you matter a great deal to His eternal purpose. So, stop despising yourself. The Bible says:

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 6:20

To further establish your great value, God declares: *"He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye "* (Zec. 2:8). You are the apple of God's eyes. You are His beloved. Therefore, discover yourself and recover your birthright; because you are peculiar and have a peculiar mission here on earth.

...Every man hath his proper gift of God...

1 Corinthians 7:7

There is a "proper" placement for you on earth, made possible by the "proper gift" that is in you. You have a special mission on earth. You are sent on a mission by Jesus Christ, even as the Father sent Him while He was on earth. Jesus Himself declared:

...The works that I do shall he (you) do also; and greater works than these shall he (you) do...

John 14:12

Jesus Christ has tasks for you to carry out. He is the head and you are the body. There is no useless member in the body; no member of our physical body is without a function. If all your teeth are removed, your entire body will not only be unable to feed comfortably, but your facial appearance is also likely to change, particularly when you smile! Every one member of the body of Christ has a function or ministry. You are peculiar with a peculiar function.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Romans 12:4-5

God has an office for you to occupy and has endowed you with the gift you need for excellence in that office.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

You have all it takes. You are destined to be glorified in your calling. Locate it and stay in it. Every calling of God is a high calling. Every placement is a high placement, with the ultimate purpose of glorifying the called.

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.

Romans 8:28-30

Do not despise yourself. Do not despise your calling. Do not cross to someone else's lane. Having located your calling, stay put there, till you become a star. Locating your calling and pursuing it is the beginning of a great future. Abiding in that calling leads to stardom. You are destined to be a star!

Chapter TWO

The Power of Vision

God has a grand plan for His church; but much more interesting is the fact that He has a plan for each member of His body. In Jeremiah 29:11(AMP Bible), He says:

For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome.

You are not created to roam about in life purposelessly. You are designed for a specific placement. Before you were born, He knew you and separated you for a specific goal and assignment. But your placement in the grand master plan of God is located by vision.

Vision is the path finding tool in the hand of the believer. In Joel 2:28, we are told that vision is for young men *"...Your young men shall see visions."* Abraham had a vision at the age of 75. So, in the sight of God, you are still a young man even at 75! Do not allow your age to intimidate you. Samuel heard God at a very tender age; God gave him an assignment. Reach out for a vision and lay hold on direction.

Where there is no vision, the people perish...

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no direction, there cannot be progress. You need to locate direction for your life by vision.

Vision is the unfolding of a divine plan as it relates to an individual. It is having a supernatural insight into one's placement in life. It provides access into a divine programme for an individual. It therefore takes vision to find one's correct placement in God's master plan.

Vision is not an invention, but a discovery of a set plan. Many things have been mistaken for vision. I want to draw a sharp line of demarcation between vision and these other elements:

Ambition

This is one's expectation or what one looks forward to achieving. Thus, it is a self-made plan. Nothing is practically wrong with being ambitious. But, *"without vision the people perish."* Ambition is liable to failure and can even destroy the ambitious one. Only ambition that falls in line with God's drawn-out plan becomes fruitful. Absalom was ambitious and his ambition killed him!

Ambition says, "I want it by all means", but vision says, "I have it because God says it, and I am in His plan." Ambition is a brother of anxiety, whereas vision is a relative of peace.

I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints...

Psalm 85:8

Impression

This is being carried away in one's thoughts about what one likes in others, for example, their vocation, business or ministry. These thoughts, when compounded, pose as a signal for direction; but they are what can be called an impression.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Many have mistaken impression today for vision and have been chasing after the wind.

Imagination

The word imagination is derived from the word image, which also means shadow. Imagination is the act of image formation. It is very powerful, but destructive when not properly handled. It is true that what one doesn't see, one doesn't possess; but the snag in imagination is that outside the Word of God, it can be misguiding. It can intoxicate until it destroys.

Thus, imagination is not vision. Though it is powerful, but is not a tangible substance as a vision. It is a dream; it is like a floating idea. It can falter and fail. Indeed, imagination that is not in line with the Word of God can only end up frustrating the dreamer; but when in line with God's Word, it is absolutely powerful. A positive imagination can cause the dreamer to attain the ultimate in his visionary pursuits.

Situation

This is direction arrived at as a result of what one is going through at a particular time. It sounds like direction, but it can be grossly misleading. For instance, someone is not doing well in his business and suddenly, “he perceives” it is because God is calling him to preach! That is not vision; it is situation. Again, someone else has been looking for a job for a long time and has found none, so he believes God is asking him out of the country for one thing or the other.

Many people today love explaining the situation, instead of pursuing a vision. The preaching ministry, in particular, has been the biggest victim of these explorers! Many in the church think misfortune is a stepping-stone into ministry:

I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran...

Jeremiah 23:21

Do not allow your life to be directed by situations and circumstances, because it will lead you nowhere. It is when God is your shepherd that you attain, not when you are led by situations and circumstances. It is time to move by vision and not as situations demand.

Reaction

Many have found themselves in what they are doing today by reason of things they detested in some people, places or systems. This is the origin of the breakaway syndrome in the Church today. “I don't like that man”, “I hate that constitution”, “I will not take that new policy”, “I am bigger than the kind of

discipline being meted out to me. Therefore I will begin my own church; I will start off my own ministry. As a matter of fact, I can do it better than that man or woman."

Reaction is, in most cases, an act of insubordination and an overestimation of oneself. Moses, in Egypt, is a very good example of reaction. Through reaction, he killed the Egyptian who had manhandled an Israelite, and had to dwell in the wilderness for 40 years. I believe he finally located himself through meekness (the Bible refers to him as the meekest man on the surface of the earth). God eventually gave him a vision in the place of a reaction, but it cost him a lot!

Reaction, if not dealt with, can slow down one's pace in life, and may even destroy one's destiny altogether! So watch out, or you may add 40 years of wilderness wandering to your journey in life.

Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?

Ecclesiastes 7:17

Confirmation

This is seeking the affirmation of others in deciding what steps to take in life. God is never moved by multitudes or by popular opinion. If all the prophets in the world prophesy you into a preaching ministry and God has not called you, He has not called you! Even if all the members of the local church you belong to see you as a worldwide evangelist but God does not see you as one, then you are not.

Stop being led by men; rather, be led by God. If you let God lead you, then you shall not want! No amount of confirmation by people can put words into His mouth. What He has not said, He has not said; what He has not written, He has not written. Locate His writing about you, not the writings of men. Human confirmation is, more often than not, confusion in disguise.

Association

Many have also thought that association is equal to commission, but this is not true. For instance, Saul was said to be among the prophets and he actually did prophesy, and a parable came out of it:

...Is Saul also among the prophets?

1 Samuel 10:11

Mockery! This is what is called environmental anointing. That is, getting things done by virtue of what goes on in the environment to which one belongs. Saul prophesied, but he was not a prophet. I perceive that he misunderstood that experience, because when he ought to have waited for Samuel, the priest, he went ahead to offer the sacrifice, thereby losing his throne.

Association has a way of influencing one in any area of ministry. Jesus had twelve people in His company. They went out in His name and even devils were subject to them. Then Peter thought he had it all. He argued blindly with the Master on his ability to stand by Him; but after the master was taken, he could not even stand before a little maid! He was swearing profusely, as he vehemently denied his beloved Master! Until finally, on the day of Pentecost he was commissioned to stand.

Therefore, people who think they can get things done because others are doing them should watch properly before they step out. Association can inspire and motivate for action, but has no power to commission.

Natural Instinct/ Inspiration

Some people have mistaken talent for vision. What one has a flair for is not necessarily an indication of a call. Often, God delights in placing men into areas where they have the least natural abilities to perform. Think of His commissioning an exiled Moses to deliver His people from bondage, when there were numerous more qualified citizens that stood better chances. As if that was not enough, although a stammerer, he became an orator.

What about God calling the little man, Gideon, a nonentity and weakling by all natural indications, to deliver His people from the Midianites. Also, Nehemiah was a slave boy, yet he was commissioned to rebuild the broken wall of Jerusalem.

When Samuel went to anoint a king for Israel in Jesse's house, he was captivated by the beautiful countenance of Eliab, until the Lord brought him back to reality by refusing him. Thus, all the five sons filed past and all he could hear from God was “NO!” Who then? An insignificant youth attending to sheep in the field David! God's response to the look of shocked disappointment on Samuel's face at His rejection of Eliab and his brothers will help to humble anyone who prides himself/herself on natural talent.

Have you ever considered the rationale behind God's choice of ignorant and unlearned disciples to spearhead the cause of the gospel, men who have now become the canons of Scriptures? This is because talent is not vision. God said to Samuel:

Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7

A vision is deeper than what people deem it to mean. While natural instinct and inspiration may enhance it, they must never be mistaken for one in isolation.

Locating Yourself

God is a God of ways. He has heaven for you on earth and wants to show you how to get there. He has created you for a purpose and wants to show you how to attain it. He shows His ways to His men. Acts are for the children, while ways are for His men.

He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

Psalm 103:7

Locating the plan of God for your life, that is, where you are destined for, is vision. Vision is a vital link to success. It is power. Everyone has a duty to locate what he or she is created for. Discovering your kingdom placement is by vision:

Where there is no vision, the people perish...

Proverbs 29:18

Vision is therefore a tool for finding direction. When you cannot tell where you are heading for, you cannot get there. Vision is a direct discovery of God's plan for you (Jer. 29:11).

You never become a star in the kingdom until you have become a visionary. The future of every believer depends on the discovery of his placement in the body of Christ. You make it seemingly effortlessly in your calling, because God enables you to perform in the area He has assigned you. True vision comes from God and is characterized by peace. When a vision is from God, it will speak peace, not war, divisions or tension.

A Strong Desire

“Now, how do I locate the plan of God for my life?” You may ask. Or, “How do I get a vision from God?” The answer is found in Habakkuk 2:1:

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me...

You cannot receive your plan from God without having a strong desire for it. Your strong desire makes you to set your will towards achieving it.

Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.

Proverbs 18:1

Desire sets your will towards your goal. “To set me...” means to embark on a discovery. When your will is set on achieving a mission, you have to take necessary steps for it to materialize.

Ask Of God

The Word of God says:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:5

One other necessary step is asking. As you ask, be watchful in your spirit-man. Maintain quietness on your inside. Clear your spirit, get rid of all preconceived notions and let your spirit be empty, to ease reception of signals from the throne of grace. Often, visions are received in moments of quietness. God is always ready to show you the right path; all you have to do is to get to the point where He can reach you.

The Holy Spirit releases the plans of God for you through your spirit, so programme yourself to hear His voice. His voice should not be strange to you because you are born of Him. No child goes to school to learn his mother tongue. Jesus said:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

John 10:27

You can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, so set your spirit at the right channel and receive instructions.

Every Christian, by right, should be able to receive vision from God. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Meekness

God will only release vision to the category of believers who are clothed inside and outside with godly qualities. That is why another major requirement is that same quality that was found in Moses after his humbling experience of self-exile meekness.

A Christian who wants to know the way of the Lord has to be humble and also have the spirit of the fear of the Lord. Moses, whom God says was the meekest of all men upon the earth, spoke face- to-face with God, and as such, he had first hand knowledge of the ways of the Lord.

Sustaining Vision

It is one thing to get a vision from God, it is yet another to be able to maintain it. Take heed to yourself, attend to the following points and your vision will not only be maintained, it will be kept.

Contentment

Do not despise your calling when God reveals it to you. Do not be a follower of what others are doing; be a follower of God. Your calling might not be popular now, but stick to it. God does not just call you and leave you to fend for yourself. He would have deposited in you the inherent abilities that will enable you to stand and triumph.

Every calling glorifies God and also lifts the person called. You are destined to be a star in your area of calling; so don't despise it. Know your rank and maintain it. Do not place yourself beyond where God has placed you. Know those ahead of you and accord them the honour due to them.

Consistency

Be consistent in your calling. There is a path for each person, walk in yours. The army of God is an army of specialists who have received visions with precision. Do not cross to someone else's lane. Having located where you belong, stick to it till you become a star. You are a part of excellence, because you are a part of the body of Christ. Abide where you have been placed. Consistency is a divine attribute. Every calling culminates in glory, but there is a demand to press towards it. In Philippians 3:14, apostle Paul says:

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

There is a pressing required for every prize. No press, no prize! Paul pressed, ran and fought, so he was confident that a prize awaited him. The prophet Habakkuk said, *"...That he may run that readeth it"* (Hab. 2:2).

No vision gets fulfilled automatically, so run; do not go about minding other people's ministries. Even when they go wrong, leave them to God who has called them. Be least concerned about how others are running. Referees don't win any prizes, so don't be one. This is a race that calls for physical, mental and spiritual exercises. It might not be comfortable, but press on and you will see God in action. Endure all things; press on till you receive your prize.

Location

You need to receive adequate information about your calling before you step out. Stay with God to receive the details of your calling. Are you called to preach? Ask, "What do I preach?" The Bible says in Isaiah 40:6, *"The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?..."*

Every messenger must have a message. A messenger without a message is a dangerous man. You must know what you are sent to deliver. In addition, you have to know where to preach the message you have been given. Jonah was going to Tarshish to preach, instead of Nineveh, and he ended up in the belly of a fish for three days and three nights. Until you go to where God sends you, you remain a struggler. When you are where God has sent you, there is supernatural provision.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psalm 23:1

Know Your Timing

In Ecclesiastes 3, we are told that there is a time for everything. You have to ask for God's "when" for your assignment. God who sent you knows the perfect time for you to set out. Moses struck 40 years earlier than God's time. This sent him on a personal exile; he was downgraded. Jesus, the Son of God, was the natural son of Joseph for 30 years, until He came into the fullness of time.

There is what is called “the fullness of time.” It is the right time to step out into your God-given assignment. You need to be sensitive to the right time, in order to make healthy progress.

Know The Method

After knowing what to do, where to do it and what time to set out, you also need to find out how you are to go about it. Don't just go about it your own way or the way of others. Ask God for His way and He will show you how to perform the divine task.

Knowing where you are heading for is the first step towards attainment. You can be very diligent and faithful, but if you are not on the right path, you will keep struggling all your life. Get on the right path God has purposed for you in His infinite variety, and you will see your light break out of the gloom darkness like the bright morning star.

The Place Of Grace

Ministry is by election of grace. Placement has nothing to do with abilities or inabilities; it is purely an act of divine election.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

That no flesh should glory in his presence.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Our callings and elections in the faith have nothing to do with our background cultural, educational, social and what have you. God is the sole authority behind every calling and He gives it severally as He wills.

The Scriptures show that the “have-nots” and “be nots” secure higher placements than the “exposed” and “gifted” candidates. The reason for this is clear *“That no flesh should glory in His presence”* (I Cor. 1:29). He wants all the glory! Yes, for He has said:

...My glory will I not give to another...

Isaiah 42:8

This is why the seemingly unqualified and incompetent often wear the ministry crowns more than the “have it all” and the “know it all.”

(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 showeth mercy.

Romans 9:11-16

Here is the good news: every born again believer has been accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:6). Therefore, we can boldly say with the Psalmist:

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

Psalm 16:6

We belong to the favourable order in the covenant. We are His beloved, like Jacob was, not of works, but of election.

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 Timothy 1:9

Our calling was sealed before the world began! It is amazing that God has set His people apart unto glory. Much more amazing is the fact that your salvation confirms your inclusion in that company of people.

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.

Romans 8:29

You are called to be justified, and you are justified to be glorified. That is what, I believe, apostle Paul was referring to when he spoke about ***"the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14).*** It's a high calling indeed! It's a call to glory, royalty and dignity!

When a man steps into his divinely appointed place in life, things happen; wonders take place and stardom takes off!

As a little boy in school, I was a victim of speech impediment. Even though I was not stammering, I was conspicuously slow-tongued, for which my mates gave me a nickname. This was very demoralizing. But surprisingly today, people complain that I am too fast for them in my ministrations!

At that same period in my life, I was "crowd-shy". I could not lift up my eyes while passing through a group of 40 people, but all that is no more now! Why did God pick on a crowd-shy person for a crowd-demanding task? **"That no flesh might glory in His presence!"** (I Cor.1:29). Why did God select a slow-tongued individual for such an assignment that requires the fast-tongued? "That the excellency of glory might be of God and not of us" (2 Cor. 4:7).

It is worth everything to locate oneself in the master plan of God and stay with it. When God elects one for a task, He releases His grace at the same time unto the individual, to enable him perform. When God called Gideon, among other things, He said:

...Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

Judges 6:14

When God commissions; He accompanies the commissioned with supernatural facilities that make for excellence in the task. What He has not appointed a man to do He will not give the ability to perform.

This is why the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 7:20:

Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

The reason is that the prophetic army spoken about in Joel 2:7 has this major characteristic:

They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:

No wonder it emerges as a formidable and invincible army: it has the backing of the forces of heaven.

Chapter THREE

The Place of Direction

Having a vision is one thing; knowing the way to attain it is something else. Direction is a major prerequisite for success in life and ministry. You might have a vision, but if you are ignorant of the necessary steps for achieving it, you will end up in a ditch. Yes, for every vision there are inbuilt steps towards its achievement. God has given you a task and will also reveal to you the way you are to go about it.

Direction is knowing the right way to attain a vision. It is knowing the steps to take. Coming out of the land of slavery and bondage, the Israelites only knew where they were heading. They had been told it was a land flowing with milk and honey. Its name was Canaan. So they set out. They knew their destination, but none knew the way to get there, not even their leaders, Moses and Aaron. Then God sorted out the situation. He led them. He told them which way to take. He led them into the land flowing with milk and honey.

For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.

He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.

He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock;

Deuteronomy 32:9-13

The Lord alone led Israel into Canaan. They had the pillar of cloud in the day, and the pillar of fire at night. With these, they knew when to move and when to remain in camp. The ability to successfully move from the beginning to the end of your vision is dependent on how much you rely on God's direction. Your mission on earth is from God; therefore, the direction you need to attain it must also be from Him.

The Old Testament saints were led in diverse ways. Some spoke face to face with God, some others received the Word as the Spirit of the Lord came upon them. Others received direction through visions and dreams. Angels even brought messages to quite a number of them. The prophets and seers of the Old Testament occupied the singular position of telling the people what to do.

The core of those that will matter this end-time are those that will be led by God. When you know the way to go, you will not fall into any ditch. Knowing the way is the only means of getting to your destination.

Whoever will not follow God's direction will not arrive at his destination. The world is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God; these are those led by God. You are a son of God. This is why God gave you a vision in the first place. You only retain your sonship when you allow yourself to be led by God. You need direction for each step you take in ministry. It is dangerous to step out at any time without having received adequate direction from God. He is willing to lead you. The Word says:

...I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

Isaiah 48:17

God gave the vision. He knows the way and is willing to lead you into your Canaan. If He led the Israelites from Egypt into Canaan, then He will lead you to fulfil your vision. He does not want you going about like a mule without direction. That is why He categorically stated:

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding...

Psalm 32:8-9

You are a son of God, not a stupid ass. Your Father is willing and eagerly waiting to lead you in the right path. Hook on to Him and receive instructions for wise steps in the pursuit of your vision.

I have not had a sleepless night over the ministry since its inception. I work hard and when I get into my bed, sweet sleep welcomes me. You only stumble when you are not linked up with God for direction. You only fail when you don't receive instructions from His mouth. Sleepless nights come from not knowing what to do. Before stepping out on any project, I make sure I have received instructions from God. This is the only way to sweat-less triumph.

There is no mountain, no matter how high, that can stand on your path when you are acting on direction from above. King Jehoshaphat was a man who always acted on God's directions. He went out to battle with singers against a mighty host and had an overwhelming victory (2 Chron. 20). Jehoshaphat could have said, “The only way to win a battle is to fight”, and would have carried bows and arrows to fight against his enemies. It would have been catastrophic.

King David was a master inquirer. He never attacked or made a move without first asking God for direction. Even after the death of Saul, when the coast was clear for him to become king, he still asked God for what to do. He went to Hebron first, where he was made king of Judah. It took him another seven years to be made king over the whole of Israel.

Following God's directions always leads to sweatless triumph. It also leads to prosperity in life and ministry.

How To Receive Direction

How do you receive direction? Know that there is nothing you can receive without asking. Receiving is a privilege reserved for those who ask. No asking, no receiving! When you are confronted with situations or decisions, and you don't know which way to go, ask God and He will tell you what to do.

The Word

One of the major ways by which God directs is through His Word. His Word is the truth; it cannot fail. It has been tried in fire seven times. There is a solution in the Word to every problem you might encounter in life. The Word of God is loaded with solutions. A discovery of your way out of that ugly situation depends on you; you have to do the searching to locate the way. Embark on a discovery of the ways of God in His Word, make them your way and success will surely be yours.

The Holy Spirit

Apart from the Word of God, the Holy Spirit is there to guide you also. At new birth, you receive an ability to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Activate this by asking the Holy Spirit for instructions. Remember, the Bible defines sons as those led by the Spirit of God. If you are born again, but not led by the Spirit of God, you are still a baby. Being led by the Spirit is the seal of your sonship, it is a mark of spiritual maturity in the faith. When you become a son, you begin to manifest.

The world is waiting for you to manifest the glory of your Father on the earth. This manifestation belongs to sons, so get in tune with the Holy Spirit for direction and be on the path to fulfillment.

Take a look at Jesus, He never did anything on His own. He said: *"I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him"* (Jn. 8:26). Also, in verse 28, He said:

...I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

Jesus was totally dependent on God for direction. He always listened for what steps to take before stepping out. When he was told that Lazarus had died, He didn't go rushing off to his tomb. He listened for God's instruction first and when He carried them out, the glory of God was revealed.

The Holy Spirit in you is there to lead you. He will tell you what to do and what not to do. He will tell you the right steps to take. Without Him, there is no technique with which you can accurately discern the will of God. Even when you are seeking direction from the Word of God, the Holy Spirit is the One that leads you to the right Word and quickens your spirit to it.

A lot of people seek direction through the advice of men. This is not wrong in itself. But the Word of God should prove every advice received. The Word puts the final seal on any advice you may receive. If what you have is not in accordance with the Word of God, drop it fast.

Circumstances are also not reliable means of guidance. In everything, God's Word has the final say. God's ways are ways of peace. When He is the One directing, it will be accompanied by peace. The Word says:

...He will speak peace unto his people...

Psalm 85:8

A leader always takes the lead. When God is the One leading you, don't rush up front with your suggestions. Wait for Him to lead you. His ways are ways of peace and pleasantness. He knows where the green pastures are. He will lead you there. He knows where the pitfalls are, He will make sure you avoid

them. Be sensitive to Him. Open your spirit to Him and receive instructions from His mouth. Your ideas may seem right, but they lead to destruction.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Proverbs 14:12

Make His ways your way, and your success is sure. The short way is not always the best. Short cuts always end in defeat. The short cut may end up cutting your destiny into shreds, even though it may seem shorter. God did not lead the Israelites through the way of the Philistines. It was a way out of God's plan; otherwise, they would never have made it to Canaan.

Walking in the path of God generates confidence. Even when faced with obstacles, you are confident because you know you will overcome them. You see obstacles as stepping-stones to victory, so you move on with confidence. God goes before you in the path He has chosen for you and gives you victory. The Bible says:

I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

Isaiah 45:2

There is no short cut to making it in ministry. The ways to success are with God. Get them from Him.

Chapter 4

The Phases Of Ministry

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven (Eccl. 3:1). Ministry is in phases and every phase has its time. An understanding of God's time schedule for every phase puts you in the centre of God's programme. Ministry is dynamic, not static. Your ability to discern the right timing in the pursuit of your calling is a great asset for speedy accomplishment.

When God calls, He shows the final destination, not the phases you must go through to get there. When He called Moses, He only told him to lead the people out of bondage, into a land flowing with milk and honey. Moses was neither told how he would go about this assignment phase by phase nor the timing involved. It was his responsibility to ask find and work this out himself, with the vision still in view.

Every calling of God has an appointed take-off time. It also has different phases of operation, with every phase having its own take-off time. The subject of the appointed time is of utmost importance in the fruitful pursuit of a vision. Many have an insight into God's plan for them, but are completely in the dark about the appointed time for take-off.

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.

Habakkuk 2:3

The vision is for an appointed time. Your calling has a divinely appointed time to take-off. It is your responsibility to find out from God the time He has appointed for it.

We all know what happens to a sprinter that beats the gun. Even if he is allowed to run, he stands disqualified at the tape, the sweat involved in the race notwithstanding. The timing for the take-off of any ministry is determined by God. “Why not any other way?” you may ask. If He gave you the ministry, He should also give you the take-off time. The vision is for an appointed time; this is talking about the time of God.

There is provision and safety in God's time. In God's appointed time, the miraculous is ever present. Why? He goes before you to prepare the way. In His own time, He makes every crooked place straight before you arrive there.

Missing God's timing may jeopardize your life. Moses, while he was a “prince” in Pharaoh's palace, had knowledge of his deliverance ministry, but was ignorant about the timing. He acted according to his own timing and this cost him forty years of suffering and wandering about in the wilderness. John the baptist knew of his mission on earth. His parents were aware of it. He, however, did not step out rashly. He waited for God's appointed time. He was in the desert till the time of his showing forth.

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

Luke 1:80

Jesus waited for thirty years before stepping out. For thirty years, He lived in the Carpenter's shed as if He were to be a carpenter all His life. But when His time came, He stepped out and could not be stopped.

After He was informed that Lazarus was dead, He was said to have remained there for two more days, at the end of which He told His disciples, *"Now let us go and wake up our friend Lazarus, for he sleepeth"* (Josh. 11:11). We heard Him say, *"I do nothing on my own, as I hear, so I speak"* (Jh. 8:28). He was in perfect consonance with the Father. No wonder He enjoyed such a supernaturally and exemplary ministry.

When the Lord called me into the ministry in May 1981, I was in touch with Him in sweet communion in order to lay hold on details of the vision, including His time chart. At the point when I began to sense that the stage was set, I set myself apart to secure His marching order. While I was in prayer asking, "Is it time Lord?" I heard very clearly a heavenly host singing: "Be in time, the harvest is ripe." I was immediately engulfed in tears. I knew the stage was set for the worldwide ministry, which God had spoken to me about. That was it. *"For the vision is for an appointed time"* (Hab. 2:3).

Chapter 5

The Purpose Of The Anointing

The anointing is not a feeling; it is a force. Nothing gets done without it. The anointing makes things work. The work of the ministry is not possible without it. There is nothing God has called you to do that is possible without it; it provides solutions to every human problem, no matter its intensity or long history.

Ministry is a divine assignment; therefore, it requires a divine enabling for performance - The anointing . No king ascended the throne without the anointing in Israel, so it is today also. No one can occupy his position in ministry without the anointing.

The Apostles could not occupy their places of calling until they were endued with power from above. They were all in hiding. Peter even thought it was better to go fishing! The power to stand in their office (calling) was not there. The anointing is the fuel you require to take off.

The Lord spoke to Zerubbabel to build the temple, and He said in Zechariah 4:6-7:

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

There is no mountain that can stand the Spirit of the Lord inside a man. Obstacles are turned to miracles and barriers to breakthroughs for a man filled with the anointing.

Ministry is not by the strength of man. It is by the Spirit of God that anoints. The anointing is a fundamental requirement for the take off and eventual execution of any commission. You can sweat greatly, but great sweat does not equal great impact; you can have great zeal, but it still does not bring accomplishment.

Jesus had been going to the synagogue before *"as his custom was"* (Lk. 4:16). He had the zeal. Perhaps He must have been preaching also, but His preaching had nothing to show for it, it made no impact. With the anointing, however, the Bible tells us that as He read: ***"The eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him" (Lk. 4:20).*** Verse 22 says they "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

The anointing brought accomplishment. His words became gracious and He caught all their attention. The anointing removed all barriers and the words He spoke penetrated deep into their hearts.

The anointing transforms, it turns one into another man Jesus became another man. He was transformed and the people wondered:

...Is not this Joseph's son?

Luke 4:22

The same thing was said of Saul, the son of Kish, Israel's first king. He became another man after the anointing came upon him and he prophesied. Samuel said to him:

And the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

1 Samuel 10:6

Verse 9 affirms this: *"And it was so..."* The people of Israel also wondered and said, ***"What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"*** What came upon Saul was the anointing.

Let us take a closer look at Jesus. At His birth, the angel announced:

...The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:35

Jesus came to this world born of the Holy Ghost. He lived quietly for 30 years in the Carpenter's shed. No one knew Him by anything other than *"the Carpenter's son."* At 20, he was there. At 25, He was still there. He lived as if He were to be a carpenter for life. But suddenly, at age 30, something happened that gave Him a beginning. He shot up from a nonentity to the most talked about person in Israel. He shot up from the realm of the ordinary to the extraordinary. He went from the natural to the supernatural.

But what actually took place? He went for John's baptism with a difference. But as He came forth from the water after being baptized, the heavens opened and the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove and the voice of God came forth saying:

...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 3:17

The Holy Ghost came upon Jesus and led Him into the wilderness, and the Scripture says:

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Luke 4:14

Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Ghost; and the Bible says, ***"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Lk. 4:1).***

He had the Holy Spirit, but the anointing to operate was not yet there. It was not until he had waited on the Lord for forty days and forty nights that the power came. The anointing, the force that makes things happen, came upon him. He had gone into the wilderness full of the Spirit and returned in the "power of the Spirit." This is the power of God, the very force of God. He went into the synagogue ***"as his custom was"* (Lk. 4:16).** This means that Jesus had always been going to the synagogue, but made little or no impression on the people. But on this day, however, He opened the book of Isaiah and read:

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.

...This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Luke 4:18-21

"This day" was His beginning. *"This day"* was the day of the anointing. Jesus never had a beginning until the anointing came. Son of God though He was, sinless from all records; yet He had no beginning until the anointing came.

It is THE GIFT!

The anointing is not just a gift. It is the gift promised by the Father. In Acts 2:38, Peter says, *"Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* God is the source of ability. He is the One who anoints. He delights in anointing His vessels for greater accomplishment. This gift is different from the other gifts of the Spirit. It is THE GIFT. The Bible says:

A man's gift maketh room for him...

Proverbs 18:16

The anointing is a gift from God, and as such can neither be merited nor purchased. It is not a doctrine. It is neither a principle nor a statement of faith of an organization. It is the gift for exploits and excellence. The gift of a man opens doors for him and takes him to extraordinary heights. The apostles rose from the level of illiterate fishermen to occupy a position of honour and dignity after the anointing came upon them. People began to ask them, *"What shall we do?"*

The anointing surrounds you with an aroma of honour, dignity and excellence.

It Gives You Knowledge

The ministry of the anointing is that of teaching you all truth:

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth...

1 John 2:27

The anointing of the Holy Spirit guides you into what steps to take from time to time. It prevents you from perishing, because it gives you knowledge. The Bible says:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...

Hosea 4:6

The anointing tells you which direction to take and makes you supersensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the most effectual teacher of the truth, so when the anointing comes upon you, it unveils your understanding, it makes reading and studying fruitful. It gives you entrance into the heavenly realm, so you can understand the truth of God. Many are stranded in life today because they lack the unction that teaches all things. You cannot be stranded when you have that unction. It will teach you the way out of every situation.

This Anointing Is Strange!

The anointing God intends for His vessels this end-time, is a strange one. It is such as has never been witnessed before.

Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.

Joel 2:23

Everything that happened in the time of the apostles is moderate, compared to what God is going to reveal this end-time. There is going to be an outpouring of the autumn rain and the spring rain upon the people at the same time. This will cause God's anointed ones to be so saturated with the revelation of God and His Word that the glory of the Church will be made manifest. The anointing will lead to restoration and great abundance, causing quality praise to spring forth from the people of God. It will roll away reproach, causing the power and the glory of God upon the Church to be revealed.

It Will Protect

The anointing will protect the anointed one, because God has clearly commanded: *"Touch not mine anointed."* The anointing of God upon one makes him sacred. Anyone who dares to use either hands or tongue against him has signed his own death warrant. God owes the anointed an unequalled protection, because He is the One who has anointed him. Touching an anointed therefore means touching the anointing of God upon him.

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses for something, which was obviously wrong. Moses had married an Ethiopian woman, a stranger. Though the Lord had given express orders that forbade the Israelites from marrying strangers and Moses was walking in disobedience by doing that, yet God did not let Miriam and Aaron go unpunished for condemning him. What did God do? He struck Miriam with leprosy (Num. 12).

You must not slander any anointed servant of God, whether he is aware of it or not is irrelevant. There is One before whom all things lay bare God. The God who has anointed him, who hears everything you say, will definitely reward you accordingly. God fights for His anointed.

Levels Of The Spirit

Let me quickly draw a line of demarcation here between the three levels of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost is one, but He operates at different levels in a believer. The Scriptures likens the Holy Ghost to water:

...Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
(But this spake he of the Spirit...)

John 7:38-39

The Holy Ghost is involved at every stage of Christian experience. At new birth, He convicts of sin and enables the individual to confess Jesus as Lord. God's Word says when He, the Holy Ghost, is come; He will convict the world of sin. Also, it is written, *"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost"* (1 Cor. 12:3).

The Spirit of God is there at work in a believer at new birth; but at what level of water? Jesus, in His discussion with the Samaritan woman, said:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

John 4:14

At salvation, a believer has the spirit, but it is at the well level. You know that the water level of a well is largely determined by the prevailing climatic conditions. During the rainy season when the conditions are favourable, the water level is high; but in the dry season, most wells dry up completely.

This is why a man who is newly born again is largely controlled by the circumstances of life. Peter was born again, he was a disciple of Jesus; but his having accepted to follow Jesus could not help him at the arrest of his Master. When confronted by the little maid, he could not stand. His saviour and hope had been arrested, and he thought that was the end of the world. The spirit level in him was at its lowest. The water was completely dry. Christians, therefore, should press forward for a higher experience of the Spirit.

The baptism in the Holy Ghost is another level. What happens at baptism? The water level rises. Jesus said:

He that believeth on me...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given...

John 7:38-39

The Holy Ghost is neither for the world nor unbelievers. It is for those who already believe in Jesus, it is for those who already have the Spirit in them at the *"well of water"* level. At baptism, you are immersed in the Spirit. This immersion causes the water level to rise. The spirit in you now operates at the *"river"* level.

It therefore means that a man, who has received the baptism in the Holy Ghost, has a stronger resistance against harsh conditions than one who is only saved. A well of water might dry up in the dry season, but it will take harsher conditions like severe famine and drought, to dry up a river. Even when the conditions are favourable, there is a limit to which a well of water can be put to use compared to a river.

How much irrigation can one accomplish in a well of water? Can one go boating and fishing in a well? Can hydroelectric power be generated from a well? No. All these are not possible with a well of water. They can only be done in a river. Thus, a man who is baptized in the Holy Ghost exercises greater spiritual power than one who is only saved.

There is yet another spiritual experience higher than the first two. This is the anointing, the anointing with power. This is the *"rain"* level. This is the WATER-INFILLER level. Without rain, a well dries up. A river looks pitiable in the dry season. Never mistake your baptism with the evidence of tongues for the end of the journey. This is just an introduction to the workings of the Spirit. The life of both the well and the river is determined by the rain. It is the only way a river can be filled. The more the volume of water in a river, the greater the use to which it can be put and the greater the power it can generate. The rain is the anointing.

Jesus went through these three phases. He was born of the Holy Ghost (new birth). At baptism, the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove (baptism in the Holy Ghost). He then went to the wilderness and secured power for His ministry, and returned in the power of the Spirit (the anointing). He had the rain.

The anointing is the downpour of rain from heaven. Rain is the infilling instrument for every water level. During the rainy season, all the wells are full and the vegetation blossoms. The rivers are also full to overflowing.

The anointing is the force of the power of God operating in an individual. It is the power of the Spirit, the enabler. It is the power that makes the Word come alive. The Word is empty without the anointing. Every principle becomes burdensome when there is no force to make it work.

Let us consider the analogy of a milling machine. The main equipment, where the grain is put and milled, is connected to the engine, which is in turn connected to a switch. You may know all it takes to make the machine work and your grain milled, but without turning on the switch (the power source), power will not be released for the machine to work.

Similarly, you may have all the faith in the world and really believe that if you put grain into the machine, it will be milled; but if you don't turn on the power switch, nothing will happen. So is the Word. So is your commission to ministry. Faith in the Word and knowledge of the Word are not enough. They require power to produce, and the anointing is the power that makes faith and knowledge fruitful. All knowledge and all faith are fake and futile without the anointing. The anointing is the power behind every knowledge and faith we exercise.

The anointing is a penetrative force on the pulpit. It is what gives a breakthrough in ministry. For instance, when Peter preached after the anointing came, the Bible says, they were *"pricked in their hearts."* Peter was not given the opportunity to even make an altar call. The people made it themselves and three thousand souls were saved in one day! This was the same Peter whose weakness was brought to light by a little girl. He now preached the gospel with power and could look a lame man in the eyes in public and command him to walk, in the name of Jesus!

If you want to see results in your ministry, humble yourself, bow down and let the oil of heaven spark off a new beginning for you. You must get hold of the anointing for an unparalleled speed in the pursuit of your vision.

Avenues For Receiving The Rain

By Asking:

Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.

Zechariah 10:1

This appears simple, but let me believe God to help you see what this asking entails. Asking for anything, without a strong desire, makes prayer a mere religious exercise. No one has ever reached out for this spectacular rain without a heart-burning desire. Challenge yourself with this truth that where you are now is not the best place for you to be. Create a thirst, which you then communicate to God in prayer. Ask Him from your heart: "Pour on me the oil needed for a breakthrough in ministry."

It is in asking that you receive. But you have to desire and thirst for it with all your heart before you ask. What you do not desire, do not bother asking for it.

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

To see thy power and thy glory...

Psalm 63:1-2

To see His power, you have to thirst and long for it. Mere asking will not do. It has to be backed up with a burning desire; and when it comes, there is no mistaking it. There is no argument about it, because the anointing is a force. It gets the impossible done and opens your eyes to mysteries.

The anointing of God on an individual can lose its functionality. A lot of believers today have lost the functionality of the first oil they received and have gone back to their old ways. They fake the anointing and produce no results. If the oil has stopped or is stale and lost its freshness, it needs a complete overhaul, for a new beginning. You have to ask to be re-anointed with fresh oil.

The anointing of God is not for personal consumption. God doesn't anoint you for your own private use. The anointing is not a private treasure. It is to carry out specific assignments. In Acts 10:38, we are told of "*How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil...*" Jesus was anointed and He went about *"doing good."*

The anointing forbids idleness; being at work on the job you have been assigned only activates it. When Jesus said the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, He said, *"He has anointed Me to..."* (Lk. 4:18). He went on to list specific assignments. If you have no assignment, you need no anointing.

The anointing is relevant to every kind of placement in the kingdom. When Christian businessmen begin to operate their businesses under the anointing, there is always a difference, a shooting forth. It is what makes your goals cheaply accomplishable. I heard of a very successful American businessman who arrived home from one of his trips and the Lord spoke to him to buy up a desert strip. There was no argument, because he knew it was God. He bought the wide expanse of barren land and a few months later, large deposits of oil was discovered there. So it doesn't matter where your placement is, the anointing makes the difference!

By Contact

The anointing can be imparted. Impartation means transfer. When the anointing is imparted, it is transferred from one anointed vessel to some other person. Just as water cannot flow uphill, so also anointing cannot be transferred from a lower vessel to a higher one. It is always from a higher vessel to a lower one.

And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

Hebrews 7:7

If you consider a man of God your equal, you can never receive anything from him. The anointing is never transferred from colleague to colleague, but from a superior to a subordinate. However, some conditions still need to be fulfilled, for a transference.

Desire

The lesser vessel must have a burning desire, a thirst, a craving for the anointing upon the servant of God, before he can receive it. The desire must be intense and he must go about it with singleness of mind and purpose. Elisha desired a double portion of Elijah's anointing and he refused to be distracted. Nothing could make him shift his focus from his goal, not even the orders from his master or the discouragements from the other sons of the prophets. He refused to settle for anything less and got his heart's desire.

Believe

You must believe in the prophet whose anointing you desire.

...Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

2 Chronicles 20:20

You must have total and unconditional faith in the prophet whose mantle you desire. If you don't believe in him, his ministry will not prosper you. You must neither criticize nor curse him. Do not even think it. Elisha pressed on after Elijah even though Elijah's life style and character, according to Bible history, was enough to drive anyone away from him.

There are different ways of imparting anointing. It can be transferred through encounters with the anointed. Do not make any encounter you have with anointed servants of God casual. Some years ago, I met a young man who was not even a believer while I was on a trip. I sighted his car from afar and waved him to a stop. We both came down from our vehicles and I embraced him. Do you know what he told me the next time we met?

He said for about two weeks after that encounter, he still felt the warmth of my embrace. A kind of burning sensation was all over him and that since then, he experienced supernatural favours in his career. Today, he is a bonafide believer, on fire for the Lord!

Encounters with anointed servants of God are a very effectual way of transferring the anointing. This can be through prayer cloths, the media television, radio, audio/visual tapes, and printed materials.

By Laying On Of Hands

The anointing can also be imparted by the laying on of hands.

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him...

Deuteronomy 34:9

Also, in Numbers 11:16-17, the spirit in Moses was transferred into seventy elders of Israel. This enabled them to operate in the offices they were called to occupy.

Some years back, I accompanied a great man of God to a crusade. On one of the days, I visited his hotel suite, and just as I was about to go to my own room for a shower, he insisted that I had it in his bathroom. As I came out of the bathroom, he asked me to kneel down and I promptly obeyed. He then laid his hands on my head and declared, “I impart to you the gift of on time; before a need arises, supplies will be waiting.” That day marked a new beginning of supernatural supplies in my life and ministry. I have never had a reason to beg or borrow. Truly, the anointing works!

By Anointing with Oil

In Israel, no king reigned without being anointed with oil, neither does any priest stand in the priestly office without being anointed either. God Himself specifically told Moses what ingredients to use to prepare the oil. It was, and is still special today.

The anointing oil is not a symbol. It is a medium through which the Holy Spirit operates in the beneficiary. It is a divine enabling, empowering the beneficiary to stand in a particular office. Thus, the oil serves as a seal of authority upon the beneficiary, enabling him to go forth and function.

Prophecy

The anointing can also be received through prophecy, as we see in the case of Timothy.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy...

1 Timothy 4:14

These are the days of the latter rain, when every blade of grass in the field, which desires and asks will be soaked with the anointing of the Lord. If you desire the anointing upon anyone, I challenge you, to go ahead and prepare.

Part 2:

The Fundamentals Of Ministry

Chapter SIX

The Force of Faith

The Christian walk is a faith walk, for we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). This is why a Christian is said to be in the faith. Faith is to a Christian what oxygen is to living. Faith is the life force behind a Christian. The most dire need of a Christian is to please God and the Bible says, *"Without faith it is impossible to please him"* (Heb. 11:6). If you cannot please God, then the essence of your Christianity is defeated. What a tragedy then it is, to be faithless in the faith. You can't afford to be a faithless Christian. The Word of God declares:

...Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Romans 14:23

To be faithless means to be sinful, and you know that the wages of sin is death. What does it mean? It simply means that faithlessness leads to death. This explains why the subject of faith is very important.

One often hears people say, "This faith message is too much. Let these preachers talk about something else." But the message of faith can never be too much. It can't be over-preached! Faith is what makes for genuine Christian living. So, the more it is preached, the more it is imparted into lives.

I was called by God to liberate people from all the oppressions of the devil, through the preaching of the Word of faith. God saw His people being beaten and battered under Satan's attacks. He saw they needed to be free. How did He go about it? He sent His tool for liberation the Word of faith. Faith is able to set free. It is God's instrument for liberation. No wonder the enemy works so hard to attack your faith.

Remember Peter? Jesus told him that the enemy desired to sift him like wheat, but that He had prayed for him; not for the enemy to run away or for Peter not to die, but for his faith to stand. Faith is for liberation; it is for exploits, battles and for living.

What is faith?

Now, we come to the big question. What is faith? Is it a figment of the imagination? Is it visible and tangible? Let us see our Master in action. Jesus and His disciples were on their way to Jerusalem. He was hungry and needed something to eat immediately. He saw a fig tree, but unfortunately, it had no figs. He cursed the fig tree saying:

...No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

Mark 11:14

The next day, on their way back to Bethany, His attention was drawn to the fact that the tree had dried up. Jesus expressed no surprise, because He not only knew the result before He uttered the curse, but He already HAD it. The disciples were amazed. They had never seen such a thing before. "How can a man speak to a tree and it obeyed him?" To them, this was impossible. But they could see the withered tree before them, so they had no choice, but to believe it.

However, an explanation was needed and Jesus readily supplied it in His next statement "Have faith in God." The literal translation of this statement is, "Have the faith of God." Jesus was telling His

followers to have God's kind of faith. This is the charge He is giving to all of us today. He Himself had it and demonstrated it with the fig tree.

What is this faith of God and how does it operate? In Hebrews 11:3, we are told:

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

God did not create the world from things that are seen. He created them from things, which were formed on His inside. Remember, His Spirit had been brooding upon the waters God then knew what He wanted. He knew the kind of earth He wanted. He already had it in Him. When He spoke forth, it manifested in the physical. The God's kind of faith *"calleth those things which be not as though they were"* (Rom. 4:17). This is why Hebrews 11:1 defines faith thus:

Now faith is the Substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen.

Faith then is tangible, but not in the physical realm. It is a substance of the unseen; it therefore has physical qualities. It is not seen with the physical eyes, but with spiritual eyes. Faith is the evidence of what you cannot see physically. This evidence is seen only with the spiritual eyes.

This is why many believers fail to make their faith produce. They want to see everything with their physical eyes before they believe. They fail to realize that the truths of God are perceived with the spiritual eyes before manifesting in the physical. They put the Word of God into action and wait for results, which never come. They keep wondering what they are doing wrong. In frustration, they keep on trying because, according to them, the Word of God says:

...Though it tarry, wait for it;

Habakkuk 2:3

They see everything turning upside down, and like Job, they say, "even if I die yet will I keep on believing Him." Some of them fail eventually and end up dying. They die out of ignorance. They fail to understand that words in themselves produce nothing; it is the substance on which they are based which produces the result.

There is the story of a man who wanted a wife desperately. Everyday he would remind God of his need. Years rolled by, he couldn't find anyone he really wanted. He would start relationships, which would eventually broke up because he always discovered the ladies were not what he was looking for. He got the understanding of faith one day and then really "saw" the kind of woman he wanted and prayed that the woman should come forth. Within three months, he was married to the woman of his choice.

You need to have the substance of whatever you are confessing before the words can produce. In Mark 11:23-24, Jesus explained how this operates.

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Faith is in the heart (your heart is your spirit). The heart is faith's medium of operation. If you are going to speak forth words, the substance of the words must first be in your heart. What you voice out with your mouth must undoubtedly agree with what is in your heart. So if you speak forth and you have no substance of what you say in your spirit, it means your spirit is not in agreement with your words; you are therefore releasing empty words. If you keep saying, *"By His stripes I am healed,"* and cannot "see" healing in your heart, you cannot be healed. You must have it in your heart before you can have it physically.

In the above Scripture, for instance, what you hope for is in verse 23 *"be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea."* This is the substance in your spirit, which you give voice to. This is what you hope for, what you see in your heart. So, when you give voice to it, it produces in the physical, because you

have conceived it in the spirit. What you desire or hope for must be conceived on your inside before your words can produce them in the physical.

This is the God kind of faith. This is the faith He expects you to have. The substance of what you hope for, the evidence of what you are yet to see.

It Is Yours

Many believers still wonder, even as the disciples did that day on the way to Bethany, "How can these things be? How is it possible for me to speak and have what I say?" They have so belittled themselves that no matter how much they know they think this kind of action is reserved for a special class of people.

You hear them say, "That great man of God performs so many miracles. When he speaks, it happens." It never occurs to them that the power at work in that man is also available in them. The God kind of faith is available to you. If it were not so, Jesus would not have told you to have it. By virtue of your new birth, you can have this power at work in you.

...God is no respecter of persons:
But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

Acts 10:34-35

God has no favourites. Since you are born of Him, having accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you can have the faith of God. He has given to you a measure of faith at new birth, which has to be built up. When your faith is built up to a point of having faith in your words, then you can have what you say. The faith of God is yours. Discover it and activate it.

If the faith of God is yours, then where is it? Where is your faith? This was the same question Jesus asked His disciples after He had rebuked the fierce storm. They were crossing over to the other side and there arose a raging storm, which almost overturned their boat. Meanwhile, Jesus was sleeping at the stern of the boat. In fear, they woke Him up, saying, ***"Master, Master, we perish" (Lk. 8:24).***

After He had calmed the storm, He asked them, "Where is your faith?" You see, their faith was sleeping in the stern of the boat. They called Him into action and they were saved. Their faith was in Jesus and Jesus is now in your heart. Therefore, your faith is in your heart.

The heart is the headquarters of faith. How is faith produced in you? Faith is produced in you through the Word of God. As food nourishes the body and gives it strength, so also does the Word of God nourish the heart and produce faith.

If your spirit is starved of the Word of God, you will remain in your infancy stage, unable to move even a pin with your faith. The Word is what produces substance, that force which is called faith. It is the spiritual force in you, which brings the power of God into a situation when you release the Word from your mouth. The Bible says:

...The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;
That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth...and shalt believe in thine heart...thou shalt be saved.
For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Romans 10:8-10

Let the Word of God produce faith (the force needed for exploits) in your heart. This is the foundation you need for a life of exploits and signs and wonders. Faith is produced in the heart. The only form of believing, which can yield result in God's system is that which is done in your heart, not in your head or eyes.

What one believes in one's heart can only become a physical reality when it is expressed. Faith has to be expressed before it can produce. If Jesus had kept what He wanted to happen to the fig tree in His heart, nothing would have happened. Also, if God had not spoken, the world would not have been formed.

Speak forth what you believe. Faith becomes a creative force when it is expressed through spoken words. If a decree is made in the natural world and it is not proclaimed publicly, nobody obeys it, because nobody has heard it. Apostle Paul in writing to the Corinthians said:

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

2 Corinthians 4:13

If you believe, then you must express your faith by saying what you believe. You have potent spiritual substance (faith) in you. When you speak it out, you release it into the atmosphere, to accomplish the spiritual things you have settled in your heart. Your mountains are removed spiritually when you believe, but are only manifested physically as you speak what you believe.

In Mark 11:23, Jesus says when you speak forth what you believe in your heart to obstacles and problems; you shall have what you say. You are demonstrating your confidence in God and also your persuasion that the Word of God will produce the expected results. No mountain can resist what you speak forth in faith.

Speaking to prophet Jeremiah, who had to face a lot of obstacles in his ministry, God said, *"...I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood and it shall devour them"* (Jer. 5:14). The Word of God in your mouth can devour anything that constitutes a hindrance in your way. Everything God does not intend for you is a hindrance and stranger, and Psalm 18:44-45 says:

As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.

The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.

When "strangers" around you hear your confession of faith, they have no choice but to disappear. This is faith in action.

You need to put your faith into action, for it to yield the desired results. Speak and act what you desire. This is the action God needs, to be able to bring you your desired blessings. For instance, when you speak forth the Word of faith, "By His stripes, I am healed", (Isa. 53:5) then get up from your bed, go about your business and your healing will manifest.

Another point you need to know is that faith is operated in the open. You believe in your heart, but your words have to be spoken for all to hear. When Jesus spoke to the fig tree, His disciples heard it. A lot of believers are ashamed to demonstrate their faith publicly. When in their rooms, they do all the speaking and think that is enough. But Jesus said:

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 10:32-33

When you keep asking yourself what people will think or say when you put your faith into action, then you are not ready for your desired blessing. In order to walk the walk of faith, you have to be immune to mockery, ridicule and scoffing. For instance, if you believe God for a baby, you go ahead and buy your baby things without shame.

The marriage feast in Cana is a very good example. Wine was exhausted and a lot of people were still demanding for more. The six huge water pots used for the wine were placed in a position where everyone could see them. Jesus asked the servants to fill them with water. What a ridiculous instruction, but the servants obeyed. Can you imagine the ridicule and scoffing they endured? But their action brought the expected result the water was turned into wine!

Also, at the raising of Jairus' daughter; when Jesus said, *"The maid is not dead, but sleepeth"*, we are told, *"They laughed him to scorn."* (Matt.9: 24). Jesus proclaimed His faith publicly by saying that the little girl was only sleeping and it aroused ridicule from the people. But this was faith and it produced the expected result.

Do you want the power of God to be made manifest in your life? Then go ahead and demonstrate your faith. Do not be afraid of mockery. Ridicule does not kill. Do not be afraid of failure. Go ahead and do your part, God will surely do His.

Why Faith?

Why do we need faith? Why is faith so necessary in our lives as Christians? Our God is a faith God. Everything He created, He created by faith. If our God is a faith God, and we are His children, then we must be faith children. Like begets like.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Hebrews 11:3

Everything we see today is as a result of the faith of God. His faith made you. Jesus came to demonstrate a life of faith. All His needs were supernaturally met. All the exploits He did were by faith. Thus, if you are born of God, and like begets like, then you are like your Father. You are a faith son or daughter. This is why Christianity is called "The faith." Often, when someone wants to say Brother X is a Christian or born again, he says, "Brother X is in the faith."

Christianity is a faith walk. When you become born again, you are born into the faith. You are in a new kingdom, the kingdom of God's Son, Jesus. In this kingdom, faith is an indispensable force for living and exploits in life and ministry.

Salvation is by faith. This is the new birth and the Bible says:

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Ephesians 2:8

Healing is by faith.

And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

Matthew 9:20-22

Victory in life is by faith.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

1 John 5:4

Living as a whole, is by faith.
...The just shall live by faith.

Romans 1:17

Your whole life, therefore, is a faith life. It is not only healing, prosperity, etc, you get by faith, but your whole life and daily business as a Christian should be one of total and constant dependence on God.

A major law in the kingdom is "according to your faith, be it unto you." In everything you do in the kingdom, your result is dependent on the measure of faith you have. If you are to be greatly used, you need to have great faith. The Bible drives home the importance of faith by affirming that anything done outside of it is sin. *"For whatsoever is not of faith is sin"* (Rom. 14:23).

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

All the patriarchs who obtained a good report listed in Hebrews 11, did so through faith. The exploits they did in their lives and ministries were done through faith. It was:

...Through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Hebrews 11:33-34

You have been programmed in such a way that you cannot do anything in life without faith. You will always need His help in the pursuit of your set goals in ministry. If you want a life of exploits, you have to remain attached to the Vine, to draw strength and all the nourishment that will enable you produce excellent results.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

John 15:4-5

How do you remain connected to the power source?

The Word: This is the food that nourishes your spirit and produces faith in you. Anything you accomplish in life depends on the amount of substance, power and nourishment you have drawn from your source. The substance in you determines the outcome of every situation.

Prayer: You secure power through prayer, which is only effective through faith; as it is the prayer of faith that will heal the sick.

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray...
And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up...

James 5:13,15

Praying in the Spirit is also another way of drawing nourishment from your source. When you pray in the Spirit, your understanding is unfruitful, but you speak mysteries in the Spirit, which help to build up your faith.

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

Jude 1:20

Paul said:

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself..

1 Corinthians 14:4

These Scriptures mean the same thing, because to build up your faith means to edify yourself. When you pray in the Spirit, your spirit does the praying with the assistance of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the One who teaches us the Word. He unveils mysteries embedded in the Word to us.

While praying in the Spirit, the Holy Ghost brings to your remembrance Scriptures that are relevant to your prayer point and unveils the mysteries behind them to you. But He can only bring to your memory those Scriptures you already know. This is why your constant reading and meditating on the Word of God is of paramount importance.

Prayer is communion with the power source, which can only be effective through faith. Every God-ordained task has always met with stiff opposition from the devil. The devil is our established adversary and is out to counter everything of God. That is why the Bible warns that we:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Whom resist stedfast in the faith...

1 Peter 5:8-9

Thank God, He has provided a way out of every attack. When troubles are mounting, the question you should ask yourself is, "Where is my faith?" Your faith is the way out. It is with it that you resist the devil. Faith is part of the Christian armour. The Bible says:

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Ephesians 6:16

The fiery darts include: diseases, sicknesses, want, poverty, losses, joblessness, broken homes, temptations, unbelief, and every other imaginable evil. They fly about every second of the day and you need faith to subdue them. Your strength cannot help you, because, *"By strength shall no man prevail"* (1 Sam. 2:9). Your connection, whom you know, will be of no use either. Your qualification and beauty cannot provide a way out. It takes faith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Faith is what you need to overcome. Every attack of the devil gives way to faith. Faith is always in command in every spiritual upheaval. The Word says: *"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"* (1 Jn. 5:4).

It is "whatsoever," not whosoever. This then includes you and everything that is committed into your hands. You are born of God; therefore, you are to overcome the world. Your home is born of God; therefore, it must overcome all attacks and stand fast. Your vision is born of God; therefore, it must stand, no matter the attacks. Your ministry is appointed by God; so, it will overcome the obstacles before it. God has given us the victory, the power to overcome through our faith.

Faith is the overcomers' armour. It acts as a shield, and is different from the natural shield used in battles, which only covers the front and leaves the back open to attacks. The shield of faith encompasses you about. It is spread all around you and leaves no access for the devil's arrows to reach you, no matter from which direction they are shot.

Put your shield of faith in place and it will be impossible for the devil to get at you. In fact, you will become a terror to the kingdom of darkness, and when they cry out, *"Jesus I know, Paul I know"* (Acts 19:15), they will add your name to the list.

Your Ground For Faith

Any house not built on a solid foundation is bound to collapse when floods and storms rise against it. How firmly a house stands depends on how solid the foundation is.

Your faith must have a solid foundation, for it to withstand all the attacks of the enemy. It must have a basis on which it stands, a reliable source, so that even when it is weak or failing, you can build it up again.

When Peter's faith failed him at the arrest of Jesus, he was at the height of despair. His faith could not stand the probing question of the little girl. He swore and cursed that he had never met Jesus in his entire life. This was like high treason. It was a betrayal. When Peter realized what had happened, he wept. He was ashamed of himself. He fell, but he got up again. What got him up?

It was the solid foundation he had that got him up and took him to greater heights. He had been with the Master. He had been very close to Him. Jesus was his foundation. This solid foundation made him to get up again when he fell.

On what ground is your faith built? Is it built on your strength? Or perhaps on the connection you have with great men of God? What is the basis for your faith? Is it based on what that man has done? You know, "if he can do it (and I know the kind of person he is), then I can do it better." On what is your ministry built? Is it built on your experience in occultism or in the world when you were in the camp of the devil? Is it based on your experience when you supposedly came from the dead?

You might be surprised at all these questions, but they are all valid. A lot of people have different grounds for their faith. They have different reasons, which, to them, are solid enough for doing what they do.

I know a woman who used to be at the highest echelon of affairs in the kingdom of the devil. She became converted and still thought she could use the spiritual experience she acquired when she was in the camp of the devil to set up a ministry. She failed woefully and died a most shameful death. But she needn't have died. All she needed to have done was to put away all her so-called experience and start a new foundation with Jesus.

You often hear a lot of believers making confessions of faith, but if you really probe deep, you will discover that the basis for their confessions is not God, but someone or something. A believer going for an interview might be saying, "I know I have passed, in the name of Jesus," but his faith is not on God's ability to help him. Rather, his confidence is in his uncle, who is the chairman of the interview panel. A minister might be confessing, "I believe I receive the 25,000 naira needed for the project, in Jesus' name," but his eyes and mind are not stayed on God for this provision, but on that rich man in the congregation. His faith and his confessions are based on the wealth of that man.

The Bible says we should continually examine ourselves, if we be in the faith. Examine yourself. What is your faith based on? On what or whom is the confession of faith you make based?

There is only one solid foundation on which faith can be built Jesus and what He has done. So for your faith to have a solid foundation, you need to know who Jesus is and know what He has done for you. Who is Jesus? He is the Word of God. It was through Him that the universe and all that are in it were made. All things are in His hands and He upholds them by the Word of His power. He is the Son of God.

...His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Hebrews 1:2-3

We are also told that Jesus is *"the power of God and wisdom of God"* (1 Cor. 1:24). Our minds are too small to grasp who Jesus is. He is the great I AM. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep. Jesus is everything to the believer. He is the source of our being. He is Life, therefore without Him you have no life. He is the reason why we live.

The Bible is the Word of God and the Word of God is Jesus. Get into the Word and dig deep and who Jesus is will be revealed to you more and more each day.

Knowing who Jesus is is not enough. You have to know what He has done for you. These together form the solid foundation on which your faith should be built. When you know these, then you can determine if the One you serve is big enough to help you or not.

Jesus took our place and died at calvary, so that we might be free from sin and Satan. He came and defeated Satan on our behalf, so we might have victory in life.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Colossians 2:13-15

These are what Jesus did. Everything the devil had written against you, He took out of your way. In place of sickness, He gave you health. For failure, He gave you success; for poverty, abundance; for weakness, strength; in place of the curses of the law, the blessings of Abraham; in place of sin, righteousness.

He defeated Satan and stripped him of all his authority over us; He gave us back the authority and everything we lost in Adam. By virtue of His death and His shed blood, He gave us access to God; and being sons, we have access to every privilege of sonship.

We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus, the only begotten Son. We have access to all that God has to offer power, mercy, favour, protection, provision, etc. We are backed up by Him in everything we do and know that in His infinite power and love, He is able and willing to help us. Now we know that with God we can triumph and excel in every situation, since all power belongs to Him.

Through Jesus, we have access to the Word of God, which can produce effectual results in our lives. After He ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to represent Him on earth. The Holy Spirit is the third Person in the Trinity, and is at work presently on earth. Through Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit working in us, for us and through us.

Also, by virtue of what Jesus accomplished on the cross, we have access to His name and blood. We also possess all the power that goes with them. The angels of God who excel in strength are also at our service.

With all these, you are on a solid rock; you have a solid foundation. Build on it. Even if your faith fails, it can be built up again.

Faith Supplements

This chapter on faith will not be complete if certain ingredients that are necessary for faith to operate are not mentioned. There are certain factors that help faith to be productive:

Love

Love is very essential in our faith walk. It is an attribute of God. All His dealings with mankind are rooted in love. The greatest of all, which is salvation, was motivated by love.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

God is love and wants to use us as channels of His love. He has given us faith, but He expects our faith to operate in love.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; But faith which worketh by love.

Galatians 5:6

Faith cannot work outside love. A believer who does not walk in love, will have nothing to show for his faith. If you bear grudges or harbour bitterness in your heart against someone, your faith will be of no effect.

If you want the vision of God's glory and power in your life to be made manifest, make love your cardinal principle of life. God can never operate in an atmosphere full of strife, selfishness, hatred and the like. Such an atmosphere can hinder the move of the Holy Spirit.

Keep To Your Source

It is important that you rely on God alone for all your needs. God is Jehovah El-Shaddai; He is all-sufficient. He is more than enough to meet your needs. He could choose to go through men or objects, but He is not necessarily bound to any. If you have an alternative source, God will not help you, because His glory He will share with no one. He is a jealous God. In Exodus 34:14, we are told that God's name is Jealous. Look absolutely unto God in all situations.

Righteousness

The force of righteousness makes faith to produce. If you want God's power to work through you, you have to abstain from sin. This is why the fear of God attracts blessings from Him, it entails having holy reverence for His Word. It is difficult for a man who has the fear of God to sin. A man can only fall into sin when he steps out of the fear of God.

Just as love is a fundamental prerequisite for one's faith to produce, so is sin a fundamental hindrance to the effectual working of faith. Paul by the Spirit of God commands:

...Come out from among them, and be ye separate...and touch not the unclean thing...

2 Corinthians 6:17

The unclean thing ranges from the smallest and seemingly harmless lie to murder. Every sin is sin, no matter how small or great it may be in the eyes of men. God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Purification of self is therefore another gateway to the effectual working of faith.

Be At Rest

Your attitude matters a lot in your faith walk. It is therefore necessary that you maintain the right attitude, if your faith must produce. Let anxiety and impatience be far from you, for they are marks of unbelief. Instead, have a relaxed attitude. Be relaxed in your expectation and maintain an atmosphere of praise to God. God inhabits the praises of His people. Praise brings God into a situation and moves Him to act. Maintain an attitude of praise and face every task before you willingly and gladly.

It is dangerous to complain, murmur or grumble; they will rob you of all your blessings. Those that murmured in the wilderness were not spared. Therefore be relaxed in your faith walk, giving praise to God. No matter the situation, serve the Lord with joyfulness and gladness of heart; otherwise, the Bible says:

Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;

Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

Deuteronomy 28:47-48

The importance of faith in a Christian's life and ministry cannot be overemphasized. It is the pathway to a life of exploits, so get on this pathway today. Let faith permeate every aspect of your life.

Chapter SEVEN

The Force Of Zeal

Zeal is one of the dynamic forces for accomplishment in life. A prominent place is carved out for this force in the Bible. God the Father is portrayed as a zealous God.

For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

2 Kings 19:31

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 9:7

Jesus, the Son of God, could not achieve His mission without zeal. He was a zealous Master.

For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

Psalm 69:9

...The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

John 2:17

What then is zeal? It can be defined as a driving force that propels one towards accomplishment in life. It is an essential tool for performance. It is no mere emotion; it is a tangible inner force, a drive that is required for any form of achievement in life. If zeal is a force for accomplishment, then there must be a mission, a course in view. Men of zeal are men with a mission. Zeal is the force that determines whether one will accomplish one's mission or not.

God never gives a task without giving the zeal to accomplish it. Though in itself zeal does not get the job done, yet it pushes one on to work at all cost, enduring all hardness for the sake of the mission. Zeal strengthens one for endurance.

With the force of zeal, mountains become plain grounds; obstacles give way. Zeal pushes one to accomplish the impossible. The force of zeal makes every impossibility become possible.

Jesus was eaten up with zeal for His mission. With the force of zeal in Him, the opposition of the Pharisees was reduced to nothingness, harsh living conditions meant nothing to Him, food was meaningless. What then?

...My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

John 4:34

Zeal is the force that pushes you on, in spite of all odds, to see the glorious end of your mission. You see the glory in front of you and the zeal burns in you, to bring it to manifestation. Jesus saw the joy of accomplishment before Him and it generated a force of zeal in Him that made every obstacle look like a toy.

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.

Hebrews 12:2

Zeal motivates bold steps. It puts off discouragement and distraction. It guarantees steadfastness and rejoices in hope. It is an inner fire that craves for results. Elijah was a zealous prophet; his hope and cause was to revive the true worship of God in Israel. For this cause, he faced a whole nation and its king.

Paul was a zealous apostle. Statements like these confirm it:

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Philippians 1:21

...Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

1 Corinthians 9:16

He had a mission, a cause. He embarked on the accomplishment of his task with all vigour. Seeing the Gentiles saved was his joy. His zeal knew no bounds. He faced every imaginable obstacle, but none could stand the force of zeal burning on his inside.

What is your mission? What is the joy you expect at the end of it. Fix your eyes on your glorious end and your zeal will know no bounds. A song writer paints this vital force of life this way: *"The zeal of God has consumed me, it burns in my soul; a driving force that cannot be stopped; a fire that cannot be quenched..."*

Yes, it is a fire that burns. It is a force that drives. When it burns, it cannot be quenched; when it drives, it cannot be stopped. If you cannot be stopped, and you cannot be quenched, you must of a necessity, end up a star.

Someone once asked me if I had ever encountered any problems in ministry. My swift reply was, "May be problems came, but I didn't know they were problems!" The zeal for accomplishment made me smile at the face of every obstacle.

Isaac Watts, who invented electricity, was said to have been asked how many times he had failed before eventually coming up with his desired result. He reply was that he didn't fail once, but only discovered how many ways it would not work!

Zeal never accepts failure. It sees every obstacle as a stepping-stone to the anticipated result. It is time you got clothed with zeal as with a garment.

One of the products of zeal is dedication. This is the act of total surrender and devotion to a particular cause. It is a major requirement in life, as it is required for progressive living. Dedication is unreserved commitment the giving of oneself to the pursuit of a mission. When you know your mission and you give it all it takes, you are said to be dedicated. It is the pathway to outstanding success.

If you want your vision on earth to produce the expected results, then you must dedicate yourself to seeing it come to pass. This calls for a complete identification with your ministry. Your eyes are fully focused on it. The Word of God says:

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Matthew 6:22

You have a responsibility to pursue your vision with singleness of mind and purpose, allowing no distraction. There will be a lot of other things and people clamouring for your energy and time, but refuse to be moved. Do not allow yourself to be shifted from the path of your vision. Esther was a woman dedicated to the cause of her people. When faced with a major decision, she considered not her own convenience. She gave up herself unreservedly for the cause. She resolved to perish if necessary (Esth.4). You and I know that she didn't perish, because God rewards total commitment to a God-given course.

Also Daniel, Shedrach, Meshach and Abednego were men who rose to great heights in a foreign land, due to their unreserved commitment to the worship of the only true God. Jesus emphasized this point in the New Testament:

He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Matthew 10:39

This means that anyone who clings to his life in this world, instead of facing up to the challenge blocking the fulfillment of his vision, will lose his life. On the other hand, a man who resolves to lose his life for the furtherance of his God-given cause; will find it in abundance, as Shedrach, Meshach and Abednego did.

Be fully dedicated to whatever vision you have been given. Half-heartedness leads to failure. There is no seed that becomes a fruit until it is committed to the soil.

...Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

John 12:24

Make all you have available for the execution of your vision. Pursue it with all your might. Put into it all your physical, mental, spiritual and material resources. Absolute surrenderedness to your course is the key to lifting in the kingdom.

How much you realize your vision is greatly determined by your level of commitment. So commit yourself to the purpose for which you are alive. Your commitment and zeal will draw the hand of God into your situation and He will lift you up to great and unexpected heights in Him.

Chapter EIGHT

The Force Of Confidence

Confidence occupies an unparalleled position in man's quest for excellence and exploits. We live in a world where the confident reign and the fearful are slaves.

Confidence commands authority. In the world today, confidence is what people understand and respect. When you are unsure of yourself and demonstrate a lack of confidence, people step on you. You are treated as an underling.

Ministers, more than any other set of people, need confidence to be able to set up enviable ministries today. You may wonder why. Ministry business has been one of the most disdained occupations in the world. Ministers are looked upon with utter contempt. They are held in derision and sneered at as paupers and beggars. The ministers of old earned themselves this attitude due to their life style.

The worst enemy of confidence is inferiority complex, and this was what those ministers carried around. As far as they were concerned, every other person was above them, they were mere pilgrims bound for their heavenly destination! As a result, nothing was of any importance to them in this world. They forgot that if Jesus had lived His life in this manner, He would have been killed before His time.

Jesus was the epitome of confidence when He was on earth. Why? He knew where He came from and where He was going. He knew what to do at all times and did it with confidence. He taught with authority, which commanded the respect of His listeners.

For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Matthew 7:29

He commanded demons with authority and they obeyed. He acted and spoke as if everything were a foregone conclusion. To the storm, He said, *"Peace be still"* (Mk. 4:39). To the fig tree, He said, "May you never bear fruit again" (Matt. 21:29). To the sick He said, *"Be it to you according to your faith"* (Matt. 9:29). He provided food for a crowd of 5,000, without fear of running short of supplies (Jh. 6:11). He walked on the sea as though it were dry land. Jesus never backed away from situations in fear and uncertainty.

Even at His arrest, He was the one who asked His assailants, *"Whom seeketh thou?"* And when they answered, *"Jesus"*, He didn't back away in fear, but looked at them and said, *"I am He."* His confidence helped to establish His position on earth as a man of authority. We need to have this confidence today in our ministries.

The Bible charges us to be imitators of Christ. Look unto Jesus and follow the example He has laid. Know who you are and let this cause confidence to well up on your inside. Every believer is peculiar. He has God, who is greater than the devil in the world, inside him. Let this permeate every inch of you. Walk in the reality of the power you have on your inside and nothing will rob you of your confidence. Without confidence, you will be relegated to the background.

The might of the Israelite army was crushed with the bold and confident stance of one Goliath. No one could lift a finger, none dared raise his voice; everyone's head was bowed in shame and defeat. The entire

army was both morally and militarily paralyzed with the bold declaration of one uncircumcised Philistine, an unbeliever, a dog as far as God was concerned.

In the midst of this ugly situation, there arose one named David. He brushed aside his age. His lack of war-experience was not considered either. He was short and ruddy, a mere youth of 17. But he exhibited a strange kind of confidence in God. His brethren misunderstood him. They thought he was proud, but nothing less could have brought Goliath down. Goliath was also baffled by the confidence David exhibited, that he must have died before he was actually killed.

Confidence is a war strategy. The enemy uses it to render believers spineless. Goliath's confident stance rendered the Israelite army powerless.

When a man's confidence is broken, his heart is broken; and if his heart is broken, he is a broken and defeated person. Rabshakeh, the commander of the Assyrian army, in his array against Israel, was aware of this. He knew that if the people's confidence were broken, they would become demoralized and seek for peace terms with the king of Assyria.

He tried to break the confidence of the people by speaking out loud in the Jewish language about the Assyrian exploits (which was true) and God's inability to help them. He quizzed, *"What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?"* He knew that if he could break their confidence, he would have his way.

Every man of exploits in the Bible was a man of outstanding confidence, men with hearts of "Lions." They were men who did not know how to turn back from challenges, but rather confront them.

Look at the line up of elders that obtained a good report in Hebrews 11. Each of these patriarchs of faith had confidence as his or her companion. Abraham could not have inherited the covenant without confidence. Think of this: A man of 75 embarking on a journey of undefined destination. He refused to be moved. He knew who had called him. His confidence got him his inheritance. This is why, I believe, the Bible says:

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

Hebrews 10:35

Confidence produces "great rewards", that make great men. There is no greatness without confidence. No ministry can stand strong without it. Confidence is the force behind every breakthrough.

Basis For Confidence

What then is the basis of our confidence? Is it based on our ability or acquisition? No! These are the bases:

The Ever-Abiding Presence Of God

A lot of us trust in the presence of people. There are women who cannot sleep with the lights off when their husbands are away. Parents also act as confidence boosters for their children. They are always at peace and at ease anywhere, provided their parents are with them.

As a believer, God does not want you to put your confidence in men, no matter how highly placed. He has decreed that a believer who puts his trust in man is cursed. He has been empowered to fail. That is what a curse stands for an overpowering force that lures one towards failure.

Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.

Jeremiah 17:5

Your confidence should be in God and in His ever-abiding presence. The Psalmist said:

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

There is nothing as comforting as knowing that God is with you even in your darkest moments. In all your battles of life, God is with you. Jesus said, *"Lo, I am with you always"* (Matt. 28:20). He is always with you and will never fail or forsake you. This should be your greatest confidence booster.

I remember those early days in school. If your schoolmate annoyed you in any way and you knew that you could stand him in a fight, you would lie in wait for him after school hours and deal with him. But when the person was bigger and stronger, you didn't dare utter a word until you got within earshot of your house; then you let loose. Why? Because you knew that your parents would save the situation in case it turned against you. The presence of your parents instills confidence in you.

So also should the presence of God embolden you. Now, let us suppose you have parents who are invalids, and as such cannot come to your rescue in any way; or maybe, they don't just care what happens to you. Then you will not dare lure anyone home for a fight. Those you cannot deal with, you will find ways to placate.

What am I saying? I mean that if God is with you and you don't know Him as one who can help you, then His presence is of no use to you. After all, God's presence is everywhere. Why then is everyone not saved? Why do people still die everyday? Why are there still accidents?

The presence of God cannot help unless you know and believe what it can do for you in your situation. For instance, a man who is sick unto death and keeps saying, "I thank You Lord, for You are with me", yet he doesn't know God as His healer, will surely die. The presence of God with a believer guarantees safety, assuring him of a way out. His presence is always with a believer for a purpose. For the Psalmist, the presence of God drives away all fear, no matter how thick the darkness around him (Ps. 23:4).

For the presence of God to instil in you the confidence you need, you need to know Him. Know who He is and what He can do. When you know Him and the power of His might, then you have a solid basis for confidence. The Bible says in 1 John 4:4:

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

This is the basis for your confidence in His presence He is greater than the devil. He is greater than every force that can be arrayed against you. If you know this and know that He is in you and with you, then there will be no room for fear or uncertainty of the outcome of any situation you find yourself; your victory is a foregone conclusion.

The Word of God

One thing every believer should know is that God never acts contrary to His Word. It does not matter how special or peculiar one thinks one's situation is. Once it is not in accordance with the Word of God, He will not act.

The Word of God is God's control valve. The Word controls His actions. It draws God into a situation and compels Him to act according to what His Word says. If the Word of God wields so much power, then it is enough for you. Remember the centurion, the Roman soldier who told Jesus to *"speak the Word only and my servant shall be healed."* His confidence in the Word brought him his desired miracle.

When you know what God has said about you in any situation you find yourself, then you have enough ground for confidence.

There is no power above the Word of God. There is no situation that the Word cannot deal with, be it physical (in the realm of the body), mental (in the realm of the soul) or spiritual (in the realm of the spirit). All things answer to the Word of His power. There is nothing too difficult for the Word of God. Hebrews 4:12 asserts:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Word of God permeates every realm of being, there is nothing hidden from it. There is no obstacle you will face in your ministry that does not answer to the power in the Word.

When sent out (uttered), the Word of God never misses its target. The Word is like soldiers in action. They obey to the letter. God wanted to create the earth and He sent the Word, *"Let there be light"* (Gen. 1:3). The Word leaped out of God's mouth, went and pressed the light switch (wherever it was) and there was light! It was uttered and it did that for which it was sent.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Isaiah 55:11

Notice that the Word prospers only where it is sent. The Word sent forth to produce light will not bring forth rain at the same time. If rain is needed, then another Word has to be sent to produce it. This is why the Scripture says God *"upholds all things by the word of his power."*

God created the universe with His Word and it is still being upheld by it. There has been light ever since God said, *"Let there be light"* (Gen. 1:3). Since He commanded man to *"be fruitful and multiply"*, there has been a compulsory multiplication of human beings on the earth. God does not take back what He has released. He cannot lie either. He cannot deny Himself. He watches over His Word, to make sure it comes to pass.

All these characteristics of the Word should build an unbreakable confidence in you.

Building Confidence

How then do you build your confidence? What do you do to be able to act as confidently as Jesus did?

Know Your God

The first way is to get to know God. Who is this God you are serving? What has He said about Himself? What has He done to prove His personality? When you know the God you are serving, you will be able to stand out confidently in any situation, for the Bible says:

...The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

Daniel 11:32

Exploits are for those who know their God. It is not for those who only have an idea of how He is.

Know the Word

You have to know the Word of God. Feed on it, digest it. Let it be in you. Use it in your daily battles and you will excel. No situation can resist the authority in the Word of God. The Bible says: *"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free"* (Jn. 8:32). It is only the truth you know that can set you free. Get hold of the truth and stand on it. Galatians 5:1 says, *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."*

Stand fast in the liberty and freedom which the Word has given you. Turn not away from it, otherwise you will become entangled again in bondage. When you stand fast in what the Word says about you, your liberty is maintained and guaranteed.

Fear Not

What does the Word say about your being confident? What has He said you should do when faced with a problem? Proverbs 28:1 says, *"The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are Bold as a lion."*

Are you righteous? Of course you are, for the Bible says we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, who by His blood, has made us Holy, unblameable and unreproveable in his sight (2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:22).

Since you are righteous, having been born again, God says you should be as bold as a lion. You should not run away from obstacles. Do not try to play it safe and find another way out. Confront it with confidence. It has no choice but to move. Confront your mountain. Know that every battle you are involved in is God's battle, not yours.

When you accepted Jesus and handed over your life to Him, you handed over everything else, including any battle you might have to face. In Exodus 14:14, the Word says, *"The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."* You see, God has undertaken to fight your battles for you. All you have to do is rest in what He has said and let confidence be in every step you take. This is God's recipe for strength. It is clearly stated in Isaiah 30:15, that *"in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."*

The time came, when the little kingdom of Judah received a terrible report. A group of nations with a multitude of soldiers had gathered against her. King Jehoshaphat had no army to match the strength of the opposing host, but he knew whom he had he had God. He turned to Him in desperation and God gave him this Word: *"Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's."* (2 Chron. 20:15).

Judah would not need to fight, they were to stand still and watch God exalt His name. The king rested on these words, and instead of taking weapons into the battlefield, he took singers. They matched on confidently to meet their assailants, singing praises to God; and the Lord fought on their behalf. Judah got her victory because Jehoshaphat trusted in God. He was confident that He would do what He had said. God rewarded his confidence.

Are you going to follow suit? Will you rely on the Word of God in every situation? This is the only way out. This is the only way to win life's battles effortlessly. Embrace it and fear not. Be confident. If God be for you, who can be against you? No one!

The enemy gets mad at believers who manifest confidence and tries to break them by instilling fear into them. A fearful believer is powerless to resist Satan's attacks. When you are fearful, the devil can make mincemeat of you. In 1 Kings 17 and 18, we are told how Elijah heard a message, which broke his confidence and he fled in fear. Confidence is the backbone of every successful ministry.

A minister, who lives in fear, will have a weak ministry, while the one, who exudes confidence, will have a successful ministry. This is why you have to resist fear anytime it tries to knock at your door. When fear comes, resist it and hold on the Word of God. Have confidence in the God you serve.

"Fear not", *"Be not afraid"* and *"thou shalt not fear"* are paramount orders to warriors. These charges appear about 365 times in the Bible. God is aware of the importance of your confidence, that's why He repeated this command so many times. It is like He has given one tablet of *"fear not"* for every day of the year. Take your dose of *"fear not"* every day, for a healthy, progressive and successful ministry.

If you will not fear, you will not sink. Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on water when the Lord asked him to; but when he looked at the waves and heard the roaring seas, he took his eyes away from Jesus and fear set in. He began to sink. Do not look at the intensity of the attacks you are facing. Keep your eyes on Him who has called you and you will not sink.

As fear has its reward in sinking, so does confidence have its reward in upliftment. Hebrews 10:35 admonishes: *"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."* Your confidence has a reward. God always rewards confidence in Him. Men of confidence are men of exploits; not by their own hands, but by the hand of the Lord in whom they have their confidence.

Daniel stood fast in his conviction, even after a decree banning prayers had been made. He knew the God he was serving; therefore, he was not moved by the threat that he would be thrown into the den of lions. His confidence in God saw him through. God delivered him from the lions and also promoted him. He became the next in command to the king, and all his enemies became food for the lions that day.

Similarly, Shedrach, Meshach and Abednego stood before the great king Nebuchadnezzar and said: *"O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up"* (Dan. 3:16-18).

Oh what confidence! What boldness! What powerful declaration! This is the kind of confidence God rewards.

Can you imagine, three lads standing before a king who calls himself the king of kings, and addressing him by name "O Nebuchadnezzar." I mean, they didn't say, "Your majesty" or "Your excellency", like most of us would have! They knew no fear, because of the backing they had, the God they served. If you bow to circumstances, you will burn. If you will not bow, you will not burn; rather, you will be uplifted. The three boys were not burnt but were uplifted and featured in the forefront of affairs in Babylon.

Be Courageous

The Bible enjoins us over and over again to be strong and be of a good courage. This charge was given to Joshua over and over again. The same goes for us even now.

Some time in the early days of this ministry, in 1984, I was sitting in my office when I was told that a man wanted to see me outside. When I went out to see him, what did I see? I saw a man with a stick of cigarette in his hand, letting smoke out through his mouth and nostrils, sitting in a government official vehicle. "What's the matter?" I asked. "I am here to inform you that your church is in a residential area and has got to move," he said. Christians in Northern Nigeria live with Islamic opposition and antagonism.

The Spirit of God in me arose, and I responded with a stern question: "Are your mosques in the bush?" The man was taken aback. He never expected such a bold response. Then I quickly added, "Is it because I am a pastor you thought you could harass me? The church is moving nowhere!" I headed for the government office and spoke vehemently to the officer in-charge, to warn his men against danger. That ended the threat. If you can't speak out boldly, you can't rule here on the earth.

Again, in 1987, a letter was sent to us from the city council, ordering us to move the church from its location within seven days or suffer being razed to the ground with bulldozers. After reading the letter, holy anger rose in me, and I told them that as the Lord lives, everyone involved in that plan would be dead within seven days, except they desist from that plan.

I spoke out at the top of my voice and my staff gathered around. The men were sore afraid. They got into their car and drove off. However, after a short while, they were back; this time, to beg, claiming that they were only acting on instruction. This was the last we heard from them.

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10). If you will be strong in the Lord and be confident in His ability to back up what you say, you will fulfil Scriptures everyday of your life by treading on serpents and scorpions.

Note that the Lord did not say that there would be no serpents and scorpions to contend with. They will be there, but you are empowered to step on them. Be strong in the Lord, not in yourself, for by strength shall no man prevail.

When the Lord is your strength, you are not fearful and disturbed in famine and drought. You do not fear or falter in the face of fierce opposition. You do not tremble and become terrified when trouble looms. The troubles will come, the challenges will be many and the opposition fierce but be confident. Stand strong. Speak out boldly and act with confidence, and you will see how fearful the devil is. He should be the most fearful being since he is the distributor of fear.

Examples In Confidence

Jesus has laid down an example for us to follow. He knew He had authority and He exercised it in everything He did.

Cast your mind back to the scene of the feeding of the five thousand men. There was a wide expanse of land. It was a wilderness, but one could hardly see the ground, because of the people who had thronged after Jesus to listen to Him and to get one miracle or the other. They had been following Him now for three days without food. He must have raised His eyes and seen some already lying on the ground from exhaustion, little children crying and mothers trying desperately to placate them.

The disciples had already written down reasons why it was impossible to feed such a crowd, but Jesus had the answer and told them what to do.

I am sure the disciples must have been saying within themselves, "The Master has bitten more than He can chew this time around. He is going to cause confusion, because there is no way these five loaves and two fishes can go round everyone. People are going to start rushing and they may stone us. Well, we will distribute them, and when there is no more, we will stop." But to their amazement, the five loaves and two fishes went round and baskets of remnants were gathered!

Also, at the graveside of Lazarus, the sympathizers, both the genuine and hired, were crying. The disciples were despondent. But, Jesus, after giving thanks, called out with authority: *"Lazarus, come forth."* (Jh. 11:43). Everyone around must have been wondering what was happening. Some must have said, "Maybe He is calling Lazarus' spirit, because his body is already stinking." But again, Lazarus came forth, spirit, soul and body!

When confronted with the fact that Herod was after His life, Jesus said, *"Go ye, and tell that fox, behold I cast out devils..."* Jesus knew the backing He had. He therefore went about everything He did purposefully and with authority. No one could stop Him from doing His work His Father's work. So also should no one be able to stop you from carrying out your Father's business.

Nehemiah could not have built the walls of Jerusalem without confidence. The opposition was fierce. Their adversaries were without number, but Nehemiah was confident that God who had called him to this task would see him through. He went ahead with confidence and encouraged the people by reminding them of the backing they had. *"Be not ye afraid of them:"* he said. *"Remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses"* (Neh. 4:14).

Apostle Paul also had confidence. He went through a lot of hardships because of the gospel, but in spite of it all, he could say:

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:24

He knew who was behind him. He said: *"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"* (2 Tim. 1:12).

He therefore was confident in every situation he found himself. Even when under arrest, he still spoke boldly. While in prison, his mouth was not shut. At sea, during storms, he was confident. He was in control. His words and actions portrayed confidence.

Note that God backs up not all words. It is only those spoken boldly and acted upon with confidence that work. It is when you demonstrate your confidence in God by your words and actions that God responds to you.

By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:

Psalm 65:5

It happened in the times of the apostles.

Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Acts 14:3

The disciples spoke boldly and this guaranteed the confirmation of their words. The Lord rewarded their boldness. The Lord has commanded us to open our mouths wide and He will fill it. He didn't just say, “open your mouth”, He commanded it!

...Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

Psalm 81:10

There are two parts here yours and God's. You are the one to open your mouth, speaking boldly and confidently; and the Lord's duty is to confirm what you say. He confirms the words of His servants. The Lord has nothing to confirm until you have spoken out boldly. Speak and act confidently and your enemy will flee. Step out in confidence and your enemy will step down.

In August 1984, I had a seminar, using the facility of a public institution, having obtained the necessary permission. On one of the days, as we were worshiping and praising God, a note was passed to me by one of the ministers on the platform. It was short and sharp: “Forthwith, stop this meeting and leave the premises immediately. 6:20 p.m.” I turned to the minister who was to teach along with me and said, “Let me go and speak to that fox.”

I headed for his office, which was in the next building. His secretary told him I wanted to see him and he screamed, “I don't want to see anybody!” He was bluffing, because he thought I was going to beg him. I brushed past the secretary and walked straight into his office.

He started to repeat that he didn't want to see me, but I cut him short with my question: “Do you know whom you are speaking to?” I held his hand and began to speak in tongues. He was greatly shaken, confused and confounded. Then I told him, “Even those who put you here cannot stop this meeting.” He was frozen in his seat. We stayed in that hall for the duration of the meeting. He neither spoke nor appeared again!

Isaiah 60:1 commands us *“Arise and shine.”* There has to be a rising before you can shine. So do not expect to shine until you confidently arise to the challenges of the day. Confidence is the word for winners. It is the overcomer's slogan. It is a prime mover for exploits. Get hold of confidence from God and His Word and cast it not away, for it shall bring with it great rewards. Paul had this to say:

And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

Philippians 1:28

Fearlessness on your part demonstrates two things: to your adversaries, their destruction and to the believer, evidence of salvation, which is from God. Your confidence marks your deliverance by God.

Friend, choose to be fearless and confident, and your deliverance shall come speedily.

Chapter NINE

The Force Of Meekness

Although so much has been said about the place of confidence in effective ministry, it must not be mistaken as the ultimate. Though confidence is needed, yet it should not be taken for rudeness, which only leads to pride.

Confidence must never result in pride. The Scripture is very clear on this. If any man needs to boast, it must be in the Lord; otherwise, it will amount to pride. God gives grace to the humble, but He resists the proud. Let your confidence therefore be rooted and established only in the Lord your God and in His Word, and not on your own natural abilities.

About the meek, the Bible says:

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth

Matthew 5:5

God takes such special delight in the meek, that He has reserved the earth for them. Your ministry is given to you from heaven, for no man can receive anything except it is given to him from above. Your ministry is from heaven, but it is for execution here on earth. Its aim is to give you a portion of the earth to possess. Since only the meek will possess the earth, it therefore follows that without meekness, you cannot fulfil your mission on earth. Meekness is a must, if you are to possess your possession and enter into your inheritance.

What Is Meekness?

Meekness is lowliness of heart. Meekness is of the heart, not an act or of the face. We live in a world where we have very humble looks, but very arrogant hearts. It is a joy to know that God, the rewarder of mankind, is only concerned with the heart. God is very much interested in the meek. He delights in them and reveals Himself to them. Moses was said to be the meekest man on earth.

Now the man Moses was very meek above all men which were upon the face of the earth

Numbers 12:3

God spoke with Moses face to face.

With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

Numbers 12:8

Revelation, which makes for a revolution belongs to the meek. When the truth of God's Word enters into a man, a revolution takes place. A revolution is a forceful turn around; thus, a supernatural, positive turn of events takes place with every revelation you get.

The days of God's wonders on earth are here, but only a man of revelation will partake of these wonders. God's secrets are handed down to those who fear Him and walk before Him in true lowliness of

heart.

God has not ordained you for labour and sweat. He does not want you to live by trial and error. He wants you to receive revelation for living from Him. This is what guarantees certainty in an uncertain world. *"The meek will he guide in judgement and the meek will he teach His way"* (Ps. 25:9).

Only those who admit that they know not can receive revelation from God. If you know what to do, then you have no need to be taught again. The student that will learn is he who will admits that he does not know. Meekness is admitting your incapability and allowing God to supply you His capability.

Peter had a lot of confidence in his abilities. He told himself that there was nothing that he had not experienced in this world. From his wide experience, he felt there was no devil that could make him deny his master. Jesus said, "Peter, you will deny me three times, you will even swear and curse." Peter said, "Over my dead body. Though heaven and earth pass away, yet I will not deny You." He had confidence in himself. He said, "I am able." But it took just a little maid to prove his frailty. If he had accepted his weakness at the beginning, I am sure Jesus would have given him His strength.

Self has to give way for true meekness to have its way in one's life. Only then will God manifest Himself in you. Humility and meekness are in the same class they qualify one for God's promotion. Jesus set an example for us to follow. The Bible says:

He made himself of no reputation...he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross

Philippians 2:7-8

What was the result of this action? The Scripture says:

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name

Philippians 2:9

This was Jesus' example. Since you have to follow it to receive the same result, you have to humble yourself, make yourself of no reputation. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and in due season, He will lift you. Serve God and serve Him with all humility. Wherever you are placed, work there in humility.

There were seventy elders in Israel at the time of Moses. Joshua was not even among them. Why then was the leadership mantle not passed on to one of the elders? Why was Joshua chosen? As Moses' servant, he humbled himself before his master and God; and in due season, God lifted him.

If you must go up the ladder, you must humble yourself and be of service. Everyone in the kingdom has an assignment to carry out. The way to attainment is the way of humility, the way of servant-hood. Ministry is not a cheap way of living. It is choosing the path of a servant carrying out the dictates of the Master, not yours. Jesus chose to lay down His life; no one forced Him to do so. Even God did not. Jesus, in true humility, subjected His will to that of His Father.

Ministry is servant-hood by the individual's choice to respond to God's call. Servant-hood is by choice, not by force; it is true humility. The meek shall lay hold of their inheritance; the servant shall ascend the throne. Do you know that Elisha was Elijah's steward and not his co-minister?

Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat which poured water on the hands of Elijah

2 Kings 3:11

Chapter TEN

The Force Of Help

One of the shortest cuts to failure is taking what does not belong to you. The act of stealing from man attracts penalty. The Bible says:

Men do not despise a thief, if he steals to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;
But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.

Proverbs 6:30-31

He who steals from man is punished when caught. What then happens to the one who steals from God? Such a person will always be caught, because God sees him each time he steals. The Word of God says a man who robs God is cursed.

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me...Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Malachi 3:8-9

It is dangerous for a man to rob God. One of the things that God guards jealously is His glory.

I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another; neither my praise to graven images.

Isaiah 42:8

God will not share His glory with anyone. It is, therefore, dangerous to take what God has not given you. Let us take a look at our Master, Jesus. He is the Son of God without question, yet He never attributed any miracle in His ministry to Himself. He said it to everyone who cared to listen; even when they were not ready to listen, He said it all the same. He always made it clear that on His own He could not do anything, except as He had received from the Father.

He acknowledged His source of help at every point in time. If Jesus has laid such example for us to follow, then we must follow devotedly. It is by following this laid down example that determines whether your ministry will remain or not. Anything done in the ministry God has placed in your hands is done to God Himself. Have you not read the verse, which says:

Faithful is he that calleth you who also will do it.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

God called you into the work of the ministry. For the purpose of achieving it, He puts His gift and power for accomplishment in you and prepares the way before you. This is why apostle Paul says:

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

2 Corinthians 4:7

It would have been stupid for the ass upon which Jesus rode to think that all the people shouting “Hossanah” were praising it. The glory goes to the rider, not to the ass. So also, the glory for every work done through your hands should go to God, not to you. He alone did it. You didn't help in anyway. The Word of God says:

And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you.

If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.

Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.

Malachi 2:1-3

It is dangerous to infringe upon God's glory. Anyone who does this is treading on dangerous grounds, because God will curse all your blessings and spread dung upon your face. He will bath you in shame and sorrow.

The Lord told me to open a Bible school to raise up end-time generals for the kingdom. I had never been to a Bible school before, so I sat down at God's feet and received a detailed outline of the core courses. Today, the Bible school is thriving very well. It would be stupid of me to say the Bible school is mine. I had little or nothing to do with its success. God did it all.

Never forget that you are just a vessel, an earthen one at that. If the earthen vessel forgets its position, it will be broken into pieces. Peter experienced a strange thing one day at sea. He had just come back from a terrible night of fishing. He was a fisherman from birth and had tried all the techniques of fishing that night, but none of them worked. He came back to shore tired and frustrated. Then came Jesus. After using Peter's boat for His crusade, He told him to launch out into the deep for a catch. Launch out into the deep for a catch in broad daylight! This is against all fishing principles. He paused awhile and said:

We have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net.

Luke 5:5

He did and had a net-breaking experience. Who brought the huge catch? Was it Peter? Was it his net? Was it his expertise? No! It was the Lord. Peter would have been very stupid if he had gone about telling people what a great fisherman he was.

Paul the apostle was very conscious of this fact. He never attributed any of the exploits done through him to himself. His words were:

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.

1 Corinthians 15:10

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.

2 Corinthians 3:5

Do you remember what happened to king Nebuchadnezzar? He got puffed up because of the mighty conquests he had supposedly made. He failed to acknowledge that it was God who had given him such a great kingdom. He called himself the king of kings. He boasted of his great power and might, and God reduced him. He was reduced to the level of an animal, eating grass in the fields with other beasts! He needed seven years to learn. So he went to school among the beasts of the earth.

Until thou know that the most high ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Daniel 4:32

God has said it and He will do it. If you don't acknowledge Him as your source of help, He will curse your blessings and spread dung on your face. He did it to king Nebuchadnezzar. Do not allow Him to do the same to you.

In everything you do, acknowledge God. Let it be known that He is the doer, not you. Say it with your mouth and mean it from your heart. When you do this, God will release more grace in your direction to do

more exploits.

Chapter ELEVEN

The Force of Wisdom

Everyone is born with natural wisdom: the kind that operates on sensual facts like touch, hearing, taste, smell, and sight. It is limited to sensual realities. But, there is another kind of wisdom, which is above the natural kind and is not found in everyone. It is supernatural the wisdom of God. This kind of wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, which in the New Testament language means the new birth.

The wisdom of God, which is what we are talking about here, is the principal thing. This is especially true in the work of ministry, which involves creating something from nothing.

Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established:

Proverbs 24:3

Wisdom is the ultimate in creation or building. It is a creative force that produces something out of nothing. The Living Bible renders Proverbs 24:3-4 like this:

Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts

Wisdom is a major asset and it guarantees successful living and a sweat-less ministry. God, the Father, created the world by wisdom.

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

Proverbs 3:19

Wisdom founded the earth and understanding established it. Wisdom and understanding go hand in hand. Wisdom creates, while understanding concretizes what has been created.

Every ministry is a form of a house or building. Apostle Paul referred to himself as a master builder. Without wisdom, no ministry can amount to anything. It is through wisdom that one experiences a breakthrough in ministry. Without it, the task becomes burdensome, because it is better than strength. Ecclesiastes 9:14-18 tells us of a poor man who saved a whole city through wisdom. If you want a successful ministry, get the wisdom of God, and with it, get understanding.

Jesus displayed a lot of wisdom and understanding in His ministry. It was built on wisdom. You too have access to the wisdom of God, because you have the mind of Christ. With it, you have the ability to create what you do not have. Jesus said:

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Luke 21:15

If you have received Jesus into your heart, then you have the wisdom of God in you; for, He is "the power of God and wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). He has been "made unto us wisdom" (1 Cor. 1:30). Stephen had the wisdom of God in him and it is written *"They were not able to resist the wisdom...by which he spake"* (Acts 6:10).

Wisdom is God's instrument for creativity. The human creative ability is tied to it and it resides in the mind. The mind is the seat of wisdom and understanding. If Jesus Christ is your Lord and Saviour, then you have that creative ability in you. Jesus was the principal architect of creation. He is the Word of God

and He is also the Wisdom of God. If He is in you, then the forces of creativity reside in you! They are in your mind (the seat of wisdom).

The Gift Of A Sound Mind

The mind is the instrument for creativity. You need your mind for a resourceful, progressive and innovative ministry. I see a lot of ministers going from place to place, seeking one form of assistance or the other.

The greatest assistance you need in ministry is the gift God has given you, and that gift is your mind. This is the greatest covenant asset for prominence, excellence and royalty. God knew before hand, all the obstacles you will face in carrying out your task. He therefore equipped you for the job by giving you a mind, which is not just an ordinary mind, but a sound mind

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

2 Timothy 1:7

Believers have the gift of a sound mind. Since your mind is a gift from God, it is forever. It is yours to use to His glory. It cannot be taken back, because the gifts and callings of God are without repentance (Rom. 11:29).

The Bible further tells us that the mind you have been given is the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). If you have the mind of Christ, then you should think and reason as He did. You should not go around *"as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding..."* (Ps. 32:9). You should use your mind to reason and work things out.

How did Jesus act? He was never stranded. There was never a time He didn't know what to do. He had the right answer to every question, He was perfectly in control of every situation. For example, there was a time the people wanted a case against Him and tried to lure Him into saying something against the government, so that they could have Him arrested and silenced. "Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar?" they asked Him. But as usual, Jesus knew what was in their minds and gave them an answer so full of wisdom, that the Bible says, *"When they had heard these words, they marvelled and left him, and went their way"* (Matt. 22:22).

At another time, His enemies wanted to make Him say a word against the laws of Moses, which was considered to be a very serious offence. One could be killed for it. A woman who was caught in the act of adultery was brought to Him in John 8. The Jews, tempting Him, asked, "Moses said we should stone to death anyone caught in adultery. But what have You to say about this matter? Do we stone her or not? Do we obey Moses or not?"

As usual, the answer Jesus gave sent all the woman's accusers away. His mind was so sound that He could discern what one was thinking about by merely looking at the person. He would usually ask, "Why are you thinking such thoughts in your mind?"

You too have the same mind as Jesus. He used it to the glory of God and was master of situations and circumstances. You can be the same, if you want to; but you have a duty to perform to make the gift of the sound mind in you function.

How do you make it function? The Bible gives us a ready answer:

...Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee...

2 Timothy 1:6

It is your duty to stir up your mind and use it to explore the commission God has placed in your hands, and you will find out that there is no end to sound and new ideas. Loose your mind for exploration and

productivity. Stir it up for maximum profiting. The tool for the stirring up the mind is the Word of God. Renew your mind with it. Get it stirred up by renewing it with the Word of God.

At salvation, new life is ignited into the totality of man spirit, soul and body; he, however, owes himself the responsibility of stirring it into action. He has given you His Word the tool for the reawakening of your mind.

...Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Romans 12:2

It is only if your mind is transformed that you can explore and prove what the will of God is. You can only have sound judgment and discernment through your renewed mind, so, stir it up with the Word of God. The Word is the rod of God. Micah 7:14 says, *"Feed thy people with thy rod."* Earlier on in chapter 6:9, we are told, *"Hear ye the rod."* It is your duty to listen to the Word and eat it, because the Word is food indeed. Feed on it and your mind will be built up to think and act like God.

A pitiable occurrence noticed in Christendom today is that of Christians trying to succeed with their spirit alone. Their main weapon, they say, is fasting and prayer. So they spend three quarters of their lives fasting. You often hear them say, "God has given me a commission to evangelize India, so every other week, I embark on a dry fast, to get Him to bring this commission to pass."

There is a place for prayer and fasting, and also a place, a highly prominent one at that, for reasoning and proving! God wants us to reason with Him when He gives us specific assignments. He calls us to come and reason with Him. "Let us plead together" in Isaiah 43:26 also means, "let us reason together." He expects us to come with sound reasoning based on His Word, for practical steps on how to carry out our tasks.

The man to evangelize India, for instance, might not have worked out any plan of invasion. He might not even know which continent India is located, let alone the airline to take him there. But there he is ignorantly waiting for God to dole out for him a special package on how to go about his task! God has never done that and will not start it with you. When He told Abraham to depart, He never told him where to go. He didn't tell him whether to pitch his camp on a tree or not. Abraham figured this out for himself.

God does not expect you to use common worldly sense, because He has called you out of that which is worldly. He expects you to use your redemptive sense.

Never turn faith into foolishness. Abraham is the father of faith, but he was never foolish. Many people think he just acted on blind faith when he went to sacrifice Isaac. This is a gross misconception. He was a man of faith, but he was neither blind nor dumb. He used his mind!

He reasoned within himself that God was able to raise up more sons for him. He didn't tell Sarah or she would have gone berserk. He didn't tell Isaac or he might have escaped. Neither did he tell the servants, because they would have thought him crazy. Abraham was not foolish! He had faith; but he also reasoned and acted wisely. The Living Bible version of Proverbs 24:3-4 says:

Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common (redemptive) sense and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts

Wisdom should be the basis for any commission or task God puts into your hands. With it as a base, you are billed to reign in life. When others are stranded, you will still be taking sure and purposeful steps. This is because you are putting the mind of God in you to maximum use. This is wisdom and the Bible declares, *"By me (wisdom) kings reign, and princes decree justice"* (Prov. 8:15).

When I was called into ministry to preach the Word of faith, I prayed for the fulfillment of the commission all right, but I also used my mind. First of all, I settled down with God to get some important and fundamental answers from Him. I asked Him: "Now that You have called me to preach, where will my food come from?" He answered: *"Ye shall serve the Lord thy God and he shall bless thy bread and thy water"* (Ex. 23:25).

Then I said, “Lord, I see a lot of people around me who serve You, but who go from house to house, begging for bread and water. You know I don't know how to beg.” And He told me, *“The labourer is worthy of his wages”* (Lk.. 10:7). So I said, “If my wages is in labouring, I will labour; but there are a lot of people who are labouring and are yet hardly getting sufficient nourishment for themselves.” He replied, “When you minister spiritual things, I will cause the recipients to minister material things to you. The material things you get will depend on the spiritual impact you have made.” This was in clear language.

My mind assessed it and took it in. It was proved and accepted. I now know how to get my food: making myself a spiritual bank, a reservoir for God's people. I got this into my system and it has been the basis for this ministry. We have never had to borrow and have never been in debt.

This is wisdom from above. It is deposited in you on the day you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour; for He is the wisdom and power of God, and in Him *“are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* (Col. 2:3).

Your spirit alone cannot carry out your commission. Man is a tripartite being, comprising the spirit, soul (mind) and body. They each have their parts to play in the moulding of a man's destiny. Your spirit receives heavenly ideas from God and drops them into your mind. Your mind analyses and gets an understanding of them. The members of your body then put into action what your mind has worked out. Your spirit cannot carry out the ideas from God and cannot reach your body except through your mind.

A lot of ideas are deposited in some people's minds by the Spirit, but they write them off as impossible. Know this: you serve a God who specializes in impossibilities. So, do not write off any idea from Him as impossible. Use your mind, and as you explore it, more ways of achieving it will be opened to you.

Beloved, your mind is very important and crucial in the achievement of your objectives. It therefore needs to be developed.

And the child (Jesus) grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Luke 2:40

And Jesus increased in wisdom (mentally) and stature (physically), and in favour with God and man.

Luke 2:52

Jesus grew in the three realms of being. His Spirit, mind and body developed. Man must grow in these three dimensions also.

The ball is in your court; God has done His part, you do your own. Shedrach, Meshach, Abednego and Daniel developed themselves. They developed in the three dimensions spirit, soul and body. They refused to defile themselves with the king's delicacies and refreshments. Instead, they gave their minds to learning and studying. They got to know God in His power and might. They had an understanding of who He is and what He can do. They explored and God gave.

The Bible says, *“God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom”* (Dan. 1:17). This brought them to limelight. They were lifted into prominence. The king found that they stood out among their mates, they excelled above them all. They were found to be ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers (Dan. 1:20). This is dignity. No wonder they were lifted to the highest echelon in the kingdom. What a promotion! What an lifting!

Wisdom is a tool for promotion and honour. Joseph was called upon to interpret Pharaoh's dream. God gave him the interpretation and also dropped the solution of the problem into his spirit. Joseph could have rejected the idea and written it off as impossible, but he didn't. He explored it in his mind, saw it was workable and went ahead to tell it to Pharaoh. Pharaoh recognized the heavenly origin of the idea and asked his people:

...Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

...There is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

Genesis 41:38-39

He was given the task of storing food for seven years, the period the famine lasted. He had no chemicals. He had no knowledge of the modern storage facilities we have now. Food storage is still a major problem in many third world countries today. When food is in season, there is plenty, but once it is out of season, it becomes scarce, due to lack of proper long-term storage facilities.

Imagine then what it was like in Joseph's time. We are talking about thousands of years back. Joseph had this task before him. He knew he could handle it and that he must make a success out of it. You see, when an assignment becomes a task, the senses come alive. Joseph's mind rose up to the challenge and he was able to devise a means of storing food for fourteen years! This is almost incredible, but it is true.

This singular act took him to the highest position in Egypt: he was next to Pharaoh. A slave, a foreigner, became a prime minister in a foreign land! Think about it! This could be you, but the Bible says we belong of a better covenant. You have in you the ability to do better than Joseph did.

Peter's excellent sermon at Pentecost must have been a product of a sound mind. Also, Stephen summarized a comprehensive history of God's covenant with Abraham and his seed, including man's redemption by Jesus Christ in impeccable diction. He spoke with great wisdom:

And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

Acts 6:10

This is in fulfilment of what Jesus said in Luke 21:15:

For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Wisdom is deposited in your mind; explore it for maximum profiting. The devil knows that you can only enter into the glorious aspects of the gospel through your mind, so he seeks to frustrate this by using one of his deadliest weapons the blindfolding of the mind.

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

2 Corinthians 4:4

Do not allow the devil to blindfold you. When the mind is blinded, the gospel becomes reproachful. You cannot enter into the glorious dimension of the gospel with your mind blinded. You need a healthy mind to enjoy the purpose of Christ's coming to the earth. Your mind is your secret for promotion and upliftment. This is what brings you honour, excellence and royalty. Loose your mind from the devil's grip.

Stir up the resources God has deposited in you. You are a creative being. You have God's ability to create in you. Explore it. Spread it out by making effective use of your mind. You have all it takes to become the best that God wants you to be.

Resourcefulness

Resourcefulness is a key word in the ministry business. Being in ministry is a business. It is God's business. Jesus Himself said, *"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"* (Lk.2: 49). If it is God's business, then it must be progressive; it must be creative, because God is a God of progress and creativity. Ministry business must be forward looking. It must be enterprising and original.

Resourcefulness is making things happen in spite of limited resources. It is the ability to use what you have to get what you want. It is being innovative, being inventive. Many ministries are still as dormant as they were when they first started. May be there was an initial increase of one hundred members in two years and they called that progress. If God were that slow, then He would still have been creating some stars or maybe He would have just been half way through creating the moon by now! Do not treat ministry business casually. If you do, there will be no room for growth.

Some ministers give the location of their churches as an excuse for their lack of progress. Others blame the cities where they are. They even go to the extent of putting the blame on fellow ministers. They

go about looking for someone to blame, just as Adam and Eve did in the garden of Eden.

Adam blamed Eve, who in turn blamed the serpent, although they were the ones who gave in to the serpent's wiles. They were the guilty ones. If your ministry is not growing, if it is not shooting forward, no matter the situation you are in, you are to blame, because you are not resourceful enough.

There is always a way out of every situation. Creativity is the key. Be resourceful, be creative, be inventive and imaginative, and God will grant you increase. The big ministries you see today did not start where they are now, they also had small beginnings.

Archbishop Benson Idahosa (of blessed memory) once pushed truck for survival. But it was hard to believe that he went through all that, because he pushed ahead with new ideas every day of his life.

The growth of our ministry is a thing which has baffled a lot of people. But it has not always been like this. In the beginning of this ministry, the office and meeting place was in a games room, where we all used to sit round a table tennis board. We were happy, but we surged ahead to achieve the purpose for which we were called.

One thing motivates creativity. It is having well defined objectives. The Lord does not call without giving a specific commission. He always calls people to minister to specific needs in the body of Christ. Some ministers say God has called them to preach the whole Bible. Beloved, you are too small to preach the whole Bible! God never calls vaguely; He calls with specific messages.

What has God called you to preach? Is it healing, prosperity, faith or holiness? Whatever He has given you is your message. Your objective should be in taking this message to the body of Christ. When you have a well defined objective, you will surely look for avenues to fulfil your commission.

Our ministry, which today has spread all over Nigeria and abroad, moved upwards from a games room office through constructive creative reasoning geared towards achieving our set goal. We pressed on. We looked out for avenues to reach the people, because we knew our message was not just for those coming to the church alone, but for the whole world.

The commission is: “The hour has come to liberate the world from all oppressions of the devil, through the preaching of the Word of faith.” It was very specific, so there was no missing it. The time was defined, the purpose was well spelt out to liberate the world from all oppressions of the devil. The target is the world, and the tool is the preaching of the Word of faith. I had my goal clearly set before me; therefore, I was not moved by anything. Psalm 16:8 says:

I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

If you have the job God has given you always before you, nothing will move you. The city in which you are situated can be the valley of the shadow of darkness; you will not be moved. There might be lots of vandals around; you will not be moved. Your location might be in a city where every house has its god; you will not be moved. You have your target, you have your tool and you have God backing you.

When we first arrived in Kaduna city for ministry, quite a number of people were skeptical about our mission. Some felt I was overambitious; others were convinced that the northerners would not receive our message. But I knew my mission. I knew that God sent me there. I knew the message He gave me to preach, so I despised the negative reports and challenges.

We pressed on, organizing a lot of seminars with attendance ranging from seventeen to forty. The people were reached, the news went round and things began to change. The light had come, darkness receded.

Jacob had the most treacherous master in the Bible. He was as treacherous, if not more, than Jacob himself. There were a lot of odds against Jacob, he had nothing of his own and had to sweat for fourteen years before he got the woman he loved. Laban really dealt with him. His wages were changed several times. He knew there was no way he could get around Laban. He wanted to be a man standing on his own, providing for his household. He knew he had to do something. He was a covenant son.

He found a way where seemingly there was no way. God opened his eyes to the art of breeding cattle (Gen. 30:31-43). He determined his wages (which to Laban, was very foolish) and went ahead to put into action his creative ideas. The Bible tells us the result in Genesis 30:43:

And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.

Jacob became very rich by being creative. He was very resourceful and this brought him his desired wealth and riches. He could now provide for himself and his household.

Is your ministry static? Does there seem to be no way out? Are you not making headway? Look back. Search yourself. What is your goal? What has been your target? How far have you gone towards reaching it? Have you spent all your time pursuing other seemingly more important goals, which the Lord has not given you, but in which others seem to be doing excellently well?

Take your eyes from what God has not called you to do. Fix them instead on your target and with time, ways for reaching it will come to you. Do not turn to the left or to the right. This is the easiest and most subtle way Satan uses to make men of God derail. He brings something else, which seems to be working for other ministers and plants it in a minister's mind. If he is not wise, he gets off the track before he even realizes it. Look at Deuteronomy 5:32-33:

Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

The Lord has made it clear do what He has asked you to do, do not add your own. Do not turn to the right or to the left. This means that you should neither add to it nor subtract from it. Do it as raw as He gave it to you.

Fix your eyes on your commission, and as you continue to seek direction from Him, He shall open the windows of heaven and rain down upon you heavenly ideas. When you are not distracted from your calling, necessity will be placed upon you to expand just where you are. Necessity breeds challenges, challenges breed inventions and inventions lead to profiting.

Do not be distracted from your goal. Place it continually before you. It does not matter how unpopular it may seem. It does not matter how those in other areas are making it. Do not switch. Do not try to help God by adding what you think is good.

Saul was sent to completely destroy the Amalekites, not sparing anything at all, be it man or animal. He did as he was told, but he also thought he could please God by taking the best sheep and oxen to sacrifice to Him. Of course, sacrifices are good. But in this case, Saul was sacrificing in disobedience. He was acting contrary to God's instructions and he was rejected from being king over Israel. What matters to God is obedience. Samuel said to Saul and to us too (for all things are written for our example):

...Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

1 Samuel 15:22

Obey God. Pursue your commission, and He will show you ways to progress. He will show you how to enlarge your coast on all sides. He will teach you the way to follow for accomplishment. With God, there is always a way.

Wisdom is knowing which way to go. It is knowing how to handle situations, making them produce the desired results. Wisdom is knowing the way to make it in life. You are not created to live an ordinary life by following ordinary ways. You are created to live an extraordinary life, through the active use of heaven's wisdom on earth.

It is an asset that requires maintenance to be in top form. If your wisdom level runs down or if you lack wisdom in any given situation, the Bible tells us in James 1:5:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

The Lord is always ready to give you the wisdom you lack when you ask in faith and singleness of purpose.

Wisdom is also maintained and increased by meditation on the Lord's commandments:

Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies...

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

Psalm 119:98-99

Wisdom has to be activated, to keep it flowing. It can only be activated through constant use, which leads to maturity.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Hebrews 5:14

Wisdom is activated when you promptly respond to challenges of life. The hurdles that come your way are for you to overcome putting to active use the wisdom of God in you. You will surely encounter some hurdles where you are placed. But look at the challenges as doors of opportunity to progress. They are stepping-stones to victory. It is written:

...God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape...

1 Corinthians 10:13

Look for a way out by the ability of God inside you. It is only by overcoming challenges that one becomes great. The bigger the challenge, the greater one becomes. No ministry can grow bigger than the challenges it encounters and overcomes. Greatness is not transferable; it is earned. People who run away from challenges do not mature to greatness.

Do not be hedged in by tradition. Be confident. Break loose and manifest the wisdom God has deposited in you. Free yourself from the fear of failure and you will find it easy to manifest the wisdom of God in your ministry.

No matter how great a vision is, except the wisdom of God inside the visionary matches the vision, the vision will die. No ministry will ever be greater than the wisdom of God. It is advisable therefore to receive the wisdom of God for a breakthrough in your ministry.

Chapter twelve

The Force Of Diligence

Diligence simply means hardwork. Vision is not for the idle. Ministry is not for the lazy. Progress in life calls for a pressing. Every prize demands a press. Great success is recorded on diligent pursuit. Diligence involves investing your abilities, strength and all you have into the pursuit of your mission.

Whatever God has called you to do, go about it diligently. Pursue your vision with all diligence. Success will not come to meet you in the house, you have to go looking for it.

Imagine a man who has been called into the work of the ministry, but who is still in his pyjamas at 11 a.m., blowing some tongues! When he finally decides to leave the house, he goes pursuing people in their offices. After office hours, he targets some others in their homes. What is he looking for? Assistance, money, etc. He believes that the success of a ministry depends on the people one knows. This is a lie of the devil. The success of a ministry lies in God who has called you and your diligence in the pursuit of that which He has committed into your hands.

On the day I was commissioned into ministry, I made a statement, which I believe must have offended some people, judging from the reactions that followed.

I narrated an encounter I had with God while praying. He had told me, "My son, you have two eyes. Can you make one to look up and the other to look down?" I tried it (I had never given it a thought before) and discovered it was not possible.

He then said: "Whenever you are looking unto man, never claim you are looking unto Me; and whenever you are looking unto Me, you cannot be looking unto man. But they that looked unto Me are lightened and their faces are not ashamed (Ps. 34:5). Look unto Me and you will not be ashamed. If you look unto men, you will fail. I am your source, I am your strength for the battle. I am all that you need, I am your sufficiency. The moment you start looking to any other source for help, you will fall woefully."

So when I rose up to speak, I declared emphatically, "God warned me not to rely on you." It was too sharp, but thank God it is the truth, and it has been proved today!

God also told me, *"The labourer is worthy of his wages"* (Lk. 10:7). So what do I have to do to receive wages? I labour. I work hard, I press forward each day. That was why immediately after the commissioning ceremony, I set up an office. I could only lay hold on a games room, where we all sat round a table tennis board, but it erased from people's hearts the idea that we were at a funfair. It was a business and we approached it in a business-like manner. No one was permitted to be late.

Each day, I would have a list of things to accomplish and there was no going home until they were all settled. I knew I had to labour. I knew I had to work and I pressed hard at it. I got to the office before everyone and was always the last to leave.

Ministry is not for the idle. An idle minister will end up as a beggar.

By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

Ecclesiastes 10:18

Lazy and idle people never make any headway in life, because they are not operating God's formula for successful living diligence. Their closest companion becomes failure and defeat. Do you want to be successful? Then, be diligent.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Proverbs 22:29

Truly, God has said you will be the head and not the tail, you will be above only and not beneath; but the only way to get there is through a diligent pursuit of your goal. Only the diligent will rise to the top. Only the diligent will stand with kings.

Our covenant fathers were not idle people. They were not lazy workers; they were hardworking and resourceful. When God called Abraham, He didn't tell him to rear cattle. Abraham could have relaxed and said, "I am called, so I don't need to work hard; I will still make it." He would have ended up a pauper. But Abraham laboured and God prospered him. God can only prosper the works of your hand, not your calling. He prospers your calling through prospering your efforts.

Where do you think Isaac would have been if he had told himself, "God has told me to remain in the land of the Philistines and that He will bless me here, so I don't have to work. I will sit down and await His blessings"? He would have waited in vain. Maybe sudden death would have overtaken him, because of the harsh famine. But Isaac did not do this. Praise God! The Bible records: *"Isaac sowed in the land"* The ground was tough, there was no rain in sight. His hands were sore and bleeding, the sun refused to cheer him up because it was harsh and scorching. But Isaac still sowed in the land. What happened next? The Bible says he:

...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.

Genesis 26:12-14

God prospered his hard work, not his begging or idleness. There is no way you can impress God with idleness. Idleness is a carrier of poverty and it has no remedy. Invest in labour and reap the harvest.

He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.

Proverbs 12:11

Backbiters are idle workers. It is only when you have no work to do that you sit down to talk about other people's shortcomings. Do you know it is only when you have stopped singing that you can know the person who misses his lines? Learn to work hard and stop spending time backbiting. Hard work will take you to the forefront, where you will not be able to see people's backs.

Laziness is a destroyer. It puts a man in a perpetual state of want, while the diligent never lacks. Hardwork is the pathway to progress. The more you apply yourself to hardwork, the better you become. Hardwork will take you to the top. A hard worker presses on in spite of all odds. Apostle Paul in one of his epistles stated:

...How I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you,

Acts 20:20

It was the same Paul that said:

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

1 Corinthians 9:24

He said run; not sit, think, wish, seek help, analyze. RUN! If you will not run, then you will not have the prize. The prize is for those that will run.

Many have had visions of various magnitude and dimensions, but nothing has come out of them. The Word says you should write the vision and read, and as you read it, run to obtain; run to receive the prize, run to attain unto it. Spectators or commentators take nothing home after a competition. Prizes don't belong to them, but to the active participants, *"So run that ye may obtain."*

There is a time to write the vision, a time to read it, talk it, share it, and a time to run with the vision. The running phase is the winning phase! *"So run that ye may obtain."*

The running stage is like the planting and watering stages in farming. All the preparatory processes of the seed for planting can be likened to the writing, reading or sharing of vision. But no matter how viable seeds are for planting, until they are actually planted and watered, no harvest is to be expected. If you expect an harvest, then plant like Paul and water like Apollo; that way, you have opened the way for God to bring the increases (1 Cor. 3:6).

Yours is the task of planting and watering (running); God's business is to bring the increases. His is to promote you. The emphasis is on the doing, not on the writing or the reading and sharing of the vision. It is the doing, the running. In Paul's epistle to the Philippians, we see Paul's approach to ministry:

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.

Philippians 3:13-15

A longing for more is the secret of Paul's success in ministry. He was never satisfied! He looked forward perpetually, though without anxiety, to better days ahead and brighter results to come. Hear this apostle of renown: "I count not myself to have apprehended." No wonder he kept on pressing! If you get tired of the press, you won't receive the prize. This is why the Bible says:

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion...

Amos 6:1

Everyone that will receive the prize requires an inner drive for an outward mark. It's time to challenge yourself towards landmark attainment. Press on, be diligent. If you will not run, and if you will not work, then you will not eat, neither will you be promoted.

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

2 Thessalonians 3:10

The basis for increase is output. Learn to work and invest your labour positively. God will surely reward the diligent. Those who press will surely obtain the prize. Those who run will definitely get the increase. So run that you may obtain!

Part 3: The Ladder Of Exploits

Chapter thirteen

The Law of Total Abandonment

After Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler, Peter asked Jesus a very fundamental question. He said: *"Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?"* Many ministers of the gospel have left nothing to follow Jesus, yet they want to excel in ministry. Jesus' response to this question is quite interesting.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Matthew 19:28-29

Probably for emphasis, this is repeated in Mark 10:28-30 and Luke 18:28-30. What this means is that until you have left all, you may never excel in ministry. Unfortunately, many in ministry today are only there for themselves; they have not given up anything. Rather, they are looking for how to have everything.

"We have left all and followed You, what shall we have therefore?" (Matt. 19:27). This law is the first law that must be fulfilled in your quest for excellence in any divine mandate. Have you left all? Until your life becomes a seed, excellence in ministry is not in view. Like the apostles, I too can say that by the grace of God, I have left all and have followed Him. There was an attack on my wife's health in year 2004. But right in the middle of that attack, I visited 27 nations on mission assignments. While she was dying at home, I was going about pursuing the ministry. I left all, because if I had stayed behind, I'm not the one to heal her; I am not the Healer. My job is to obey Him, and then He will take care of what remains, which He did, as my wife is back on her feet today, pursuing and excelling in her ministry assignment!

This may sound strange to you, but because of this law of total abandonment, if ministry crashes today, I will crash along with it, because I have no security anywhere else. My security is my confidence in the Caller. If ministry sinks, bless God, I sink along with it, and if it rises, He takes me up along with Him. I have been invited to be a member of many boards, but I have sat on only one board in my life - the Ministry Board. I believe the reason for the challenge of many ministries today is that they have left nothing. Most have left something, but very few have truly left all. If you have truly left all, then you will fulfil your ministry in a grand style.

I have never been to a place to minister and think of what they may give to me as honourarium. Rather, I am constantly thinking of what He will want me to give to them from the treasure He has given to me. If you are in ministry for your personal aggrandizement or gains, then you have missed it. If ministry is to meet your family needs, live in a big house and ride a big car, you are not in ministry, but are heading for misery. Leaving all to follow Christ is what makes the difference between a ministry that excels and one that doesn't.

When he was called into ministry, Elisha slew the oxen he was ploughing with, said bye-bye forever to his old job, and went after Elijah in order to fulfill his ministry. The law of total abandonment requires that your life becomes *"a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your only reasonable service"* (Rom. 12:1).

When the Lord relocated us to the "bush" where Canaan Land, our international headquarters is located, many thought I was crazy. This is because it is about 30 kilometers from where our Lagos church was situated, and in Ota, a town in the middle of no where and leads out of Nigeria. Many wondered, "How could he come to this bush and expect people to follow him? Let's see who will follow him there." I am not bothered about who is following me, but Who I am following. I am following the Lord, Who said, "*Follow Me and I will make you.*" True to His nature, in less than three weeks after we moved here, everybody had gathered, and church was full! Why? I would rather sink following Him than shine following myself. "What if ministry crashes?" you may ask. Then we crash together. "What if nobody comes?" I know the One I am following, and I will keep following Him.

I once told the Lord, "Even if You say there is no more heaven, I will still follow You. Anywhere You go, we go together. If You stop answering my prayers, I will still keep following You." Until you abandon yourself to the Caller, you cannot excel in ministry. But the big question is, "How many are willing to abandon all?" A song writer wrote: "Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey." A very interesting stanza of that hymn states thus: "We can't tell the delight of His love until all on the altar we lay. For the favour He shows and the love He bestows are for them who will trust and obey."

Chapter fourteen

The Law Of Absolute Dependency On God

Someone once asked me: “Brother David, what is the secret of the exploits in your ministry?” Without hesitation, I replied, “Absolute dependency on God.” This is built on three scriptural philosophies. I have come to a point in life where I have resolved that:

Whatever God cannot do, let it remain undone.

Whatever God cannot give me, may I never have it.

Wherever God cannot take me to, may I never get there.

Absolute dependency on God! God only and God for ever! Let the happenings in your life be always traceable to God. Our ministry has a network of about 300 churches in 300 towns and cities in Nigeria. It also runs nursery and primary schools across the nation, along with a secondary school. It recently ventured into the university education by building the Covenant University, which is reputed to be a model university in Nigeria today. It is worth noting that all the resources to do these came directly from God.

There are certain statements made by many ministers around the world today that may sound polite and diplomatic, but which can be very destructive. You hear them say things like, “We thank you very much. If you were not there, this ministry would not be here.” I believe this will be annoying to God, because every time you share His glory with anyone else, you annoy Him. God can use anybody to accomplish His purpose, and thank God for using the people. But the thanks and glory should go to the One using them, not to the vessels being used. This is the undoing of ministries that hang only on people; that is why they can only go as far as the people can take them.

If we need a million dollars to get one or two things done, we will first declare it to the people that the ministry serves, which primarily in our own case is the church. But much more importantly, you are to connect to the One Who sent you by telling Him, “My Father, You are required to pay so much this coming week. Lord put it in Your schedule this coming week. Thank You Lord. Amen.” This may seem primitive, but it is a powerful law which has never failed in my hands. For example, one week to the dedication of the Faith Tabernacle, our 50,000 seat capacity sanctuary, we needed about $1.5 million to complete the project. This need was not announced, yet it was met! Absolute dependency on God!

God said to me, “You are not sent by the people, you are sent to the people. The people are not responsible for your going; I your Caller am the One responsible for your going. Don't make the people look like your caller.” Truly, if the whole of Canaan Land was built without looking unto people, there is nothing God want to do in your life and ministry that He cannot do by Himself.

A notable minister of the gospel, who is also a friend of mine, came to minister at the Faith Tabernacle. As we drove round the university, he asked, “Brother David, now tell me precisely, how do you pay for all these things?” I looked at him and said, “Faith!” I tried to explain to him that faith is a universal currency which holds the same value in every nation of the earth. Why? Faith brings the all-sufficiency of God to bear upon our human limitations, and also taps into God's Omni potency to meet our needs.

Think of what Jesus said to His disciples in Luke 10:4: *"Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way."* What that means is: "Lobby around no man's resources. Don't lobby around any elder in your church or core groups in your church. Salute no man on the way, and carry no purse or scrip; I don't need your savings, I'm solely responsible for you." Later, Jesus asked His disciples:

And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

Luke 22:35

Thomas the doubter was there, so if they had lacked anything, he would have raised his hand to say, "Master, we lacked food and transport fare." But he didn't, because they lacked nothing; God was their only and sufficient source of supply. In 1996, when God needed an aircraft for the advancement of His work in our ministry, we took just one offering for it at a Saturday morning service. All we said was, "It is time to buy the aircraft, so let everybody give as God has blessed him." What was given was more than enough to buy the aircraft. In fact, we still had excess funds at the end! When we bought the second aircraft in 2004, we didn't need to take any offering for it, yet it was fully paid for in cash!

God is big enough to meet all the needs in the ministry He has given you. Every divine vision is naturally eligible for divine provision, as God is eternally committed to anything He has commanded. In 1983, while in a prayer session with members of staff, the Lord asked me a humorous question. He said: "My son, you have two eyes; can you make one to look up and the other to look down?" I tried it and answered, "No." Then He said to me, "Any time you are looking unto man never claim you are looking unto me. They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed" (Ps 34:5).

This birthed an irrecoverable revolution in my life, particularly in the pursuit of the work of the ministry, such that in over 25 years in ministry, God has been my all-in-all, and has proved to be more than enough in all situations and circumstances. Remember that the Bible says:

Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Jeremiah 17:5-6

Truly, it's so sweet to trust in Jesus.

Chapter fifteen

The Law Of Divine Commandment

Somebody asked me years ago, “Brother David, how do you get things done so cheaply in this ministry?” Without hesitation I answered, “We do nothing except it is commanded.” When you operate as commanded, you are always in command! This was the case with Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones. He simply prophesied as he was commanded, and God went into action. If it were not commanded, there is no way I could have led God's people into the “forest” where our headquarter church is located. Humanly speaking, it is very crazy to move from the city into a wilderness and expect people to follow you there. But because it was commanded, the church grew and multiplied there!

The law of divine commandment puts you supernaturally in command because the Commander is always backing you up to effect or enforce His Word. You shouldn't just pack up your ministry and go to another city because you feel it is a better place. If it is not commanded, you will be stranded there, because the One backing you will not follow you there! You shouldn't pack your luggage from one country and go to another because you feel it is a greener pasture. Otherwise, before you know what you are doing, you will be on the floor.

Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?

Lamentations 3:37

If it is not commanded by the Lord, no man can bring it to pass. Jesus said, *“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just”* (Jn. 5:30). All through His earthly ministry, Jesus operated perpetually as commanded by the Father. When you operate as commanded by God, you will never be stranded. One may visit Canaan Land and see the massive setting of the Covenant University, but that does not automatically confer on you a calling to build a university. If you do it without being commanded, that singular act may erode all the many years of labour in your life.

There is no way we could have gotten to this point if it were not commanded, because it would have been impossible to fund the projects without a bank cover. The funds all came via supernatural supplies, because the Commissioner of the project is committed to funding it. We are not owing anybody or institution under heaven any amount; there are no bank overdrafts or materials that would be paid for in future. Everything on Canaan Land is 100% paid for. What's more, there is no stress of any kind on anyone: the pastor is not under stress, neither are the team members or church members. Why is this so? Before we came here, I asked the Lord, “Is this Your commandment? If it is not, then I don't need it.” The Lord said, “It is My commandment.” That's why we are here. If you don't want to be stranded, operate only as commanded.

There are so many motivational speakers today who tell you that anything you can conceive, you can deliver, and many are frustrated today because they start conceiving what God has not ordained for them. Their pregnancies then become perpetual pregnancies which never results in a birth. But *“who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?”*

When the accreditation team from the National Universities Commission came to accredit our programmes at the Covenant University, one of the professors said the equipment at our engineering

department alone is more than what is in all the Federal Universities in Nigeria put together. We've had a number of American academics attend conferences and workshops at the Covenant University, and one of them said, “Even by America standards, what is happening here is a miracle.” And this is in black Africa! Why? The hand of God! The hand of the Commander is visible on whatever He has commanded.

So, don't see your friend building a 5,000 seat auditorium and you go and lay a foundation for a 6,000 seat auditorium, because you are older than him. You may end up confounded. Don't see another brother building a hospital as commanded by God and say, “Well, if he's building a hospital, then I will build a specialist hospital.” You may be the first patient to be admitted there! Operating as commanded is what puts you in command and cause you to excel in ministry.

These are fundamental laws that cause one to excel in ministry if practiced and obeyed. People only talk about prayer and fasting in fulfilling ministry. But they have prayed and fasted, and nothing is happening. If God has not commanded it, prayer and fasting won't change anything; it will only add to the frustration. So, beware!

Chapter sixteen

The Law Of Love

People attended Jesus' crusade and stayed with Him for three days. At the end, He said, “Now brethren, the meeting is over; everybody be on your way home.” It then occurred to Him that they had been there for three days and had not eaten, that they might faint on their way home. He said to His disciples, “Let's look for something for them to eat.” A critical look at Jesus' ministry would reveal that it rode on the wings of compassion. Faith can get things done, hope can inspire people, but only love can truly impact them. Faith, hope and love are three forces that rule destiny; but the greatest of them all is love (1 Cor. 13:13).

There is a common saying: “People don't care what you know until they know how much you care.” You can inspire people with faith and motivate them with hope, but you can only impact them with love; and only imparted people can impart the ministries they belong to, and only blessed people can bless the ministries they belong. If the people you are pasturing are not imparted and blessed, they cannot positively affect your ministry or bless it, as only blessed people can be a blessing. God told Abraham, *“I will bless you, and thou shall be a blessing.”* Except people are blessed, they cannot be a blessing, and it is compassion that draws your soul out to bless another.

Jesus was always moved with compassion; no wonder His ministry constantly experienced expansion. In the same way, if you operate ministry with compassion, you will never lack expansion. When our church just began, every time I sat down in that little sanctuary and watched the people praising the Lord, I always looked out for and noticed that person that was not moving well or was not praising the Lord well. I then would tell one of my associates, “Look at that man, he's number three on the fourth row, get him for me after service.” If as we continued praising the Lord I saw somebody else who is looking rejected and dejected, I'd still send people after them. I began to share with them out of the little that God gave us, and the church began to expand.

Without a heart for people, you cannot attract them; you can pray for hours, but they won't come near you. You can't love people without them knowing it, because love is a spirit. The Bible says, *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”* (2 Tim 1:7). Love is a spirit, and can be sensed by people, because human beings are spirits. When you are born again, your spirit comes alive, so it can always identify love wherever it is found. Only compassionate ministers end up with great ministries.

Jesus always had compassion on the people, He saw them as a sheep scattered about without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36). Compassion was what moved Him to begin healing the sick (Matt. 14:14). He said, “1 won't let them go hungry less they faint on the way,” and the miracle of multiplied bread and fishes came to be. Compassion will always culminate in supernatural manifestations; you can't have compassion and lack miracles. It is the compassion of your heart that works out the miracles by your hand.

A great man of God named, John Alexander Dowie, saw people around him dying from a plague, and he was burying people in his church every day. This provoked him, and he went into a closet and said, “God, enough! Lord, enough!” And suddenly, Acts 10:38 exploded in his spirit, and one of the greatest healing ministries in the history of the Church was born. It is compassion that entitles you to unction. A

man who had lost his kidneys came to me one day. He was on dialysis and was dying. He was a medical doctor, and his trouser was hanging from his body. I didn't know him before, but he's a child of God, a believer who Satan wanted to kill with my eyes open. I grabbed him and pressed him hard against my body. All I said was, “Jesus, heal him,” and that was it! The kidneys came back to life! Compassion is what entitles you to the flow of unction.

There are too many compassionless ministers on the streets today; all they are looking for is their personal interests. They are only out to use people, not to raise them. They are using people to meet their personal needs, and that's why they are always in need. A woman met me many years ago after service and burst into tears. I said, “What is it?” She said, “What we will eat when we get home, we don't know.” I reached my hand into my pocket and placed some money in her hands and said, “This hand will never know dryness again.” Six months later, everything had turned around supernaturally for her, and she now had an international business. She brought me a large sum of money as offering.

One day, I was passing by the office area and saw a vehicle parked. I asked, “Who brought this vehicle here?” and was told it was an offering brought by a widow. “A widow? Call her for me!” I said. The widow dropped the vehicle as a seed for the expansion of the kingdom of God, and had no other means of taking her children to school. I said to her, “Woman, your seed is accepted by God, just like Isaac was accepted and given back to Abraham. Take this car back; it is the beginning of a new walk of prosperity in your life.” In less than six months, the heavens over her opened! I couldn't imagine her struggling to get her children to school by public transport after she had dropped her car in honour of Jesus. The car was given back to her, and yet the heavens opened over her life and her business began to flourish.

It's time ministers of the gospel stopped using people; if you don't stop using them, they will all soon leave you. Stop using people! It's only a heart for people that attract them. If you don't have a heart for them, they will never be attracted to you. You will recall how a leper came to Jesus and He had compassion on the leper, touched him and immediately the leprosy was over. Likewise, many years ago, while ministering at a village crusade, a big boy that was taller than me, deaf and dumb from birth, was brought to me, and the Lord said to me, “Place your tongue on his tongue.” I didn't know him before then, but I grabbed his head and reached out my tongue and touched his, and immediately, Samuel's ears were opened and his tongue was loosed!

Compassion guarantees expansion. If you don't want your ministry to suffer stagnation, then let compassion rise in your heart. Love is not a gift, but a choice; it is a choice of the wise. The greater your love for God, the greater your destiny becomes, and the greater your love for people, the greater your ministry becomes. Jesus asked Simon Peter, *“Lovest thou me more than these?”* Peter replied, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you” (Jn. 21:15-17). Love is a choice. The greater your love for God, the greater your future; and the greater your love for people, the greater your ministry becomes.

Apostle Paul's ministry was also characterized by compassion.

But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

If people are not dear to you, you can't go far in ministry. Paul said, “We are not just out to teach you, we want to pour our souls out to you, because you are dear to us.” This is what builds great ministries. As a pastor of pastors, I've come across many pastors that don't have any heart for the people; they are “professional pastors”. The things they do eventually reveal that they didn't have a heart for the people, as they will hurt anybody to have their way!

Let me tell you the secret behind the blessing members of my congregation enjoy. Somebody once asked me, “What is the secret of prosperity in your ministry? Do you plant trees that bear money as

fruits?" I smiled and said, "Do you want to know?" He said, "Yes." "When I bless the people, I bless them with the whole of my heart, with everything inside me poured forth as water in blessing them" I told him. One day, I said to God, "If You will not bless this people, stop blessing me. I don't want to be tagged a fake prophet." A ministry where only the minister is being blessed is a fake ministry.

Our church body alone is responsible for building the infrastructure at the Covenant University. They are blessed people, so they can be a blessing. Throughout the length and breadth of this nation, wherever our church is mentioned, it is known as the church of blessed people. Also in the various nations of Africa where our mission stations are, wherever our church is mentioned, it is termed the church of blessed people. Why? Because, they are dear to our hearts!

Recently, a boy shared his testimony in church, saying that when I laid down on the bare floor on the altar in church, before the people at the Faith Tabernacle, he also laid down, and an invisible hand slapped him and a cool breeze went into his ears; his tongue was loosed and his ears were opened! God had told me, *"Except a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies it brings forth much fruits."* About three years ago, He commanded me to, "Lie down here, and whatever I have put into you, those who believe in it can draw from it." There is nothing the people have that I need; they are the ones who need what I have, so let me give it to them. I don't want them to have it after I am dead, let them have it now that I am alive. Let them be greater than me now. Let them touch God more than I have touched Him now. That's where my heart is.

A heart for the people will give you access to unlimited expansion. It may not sound like a modern-day approach to ministry, but it's a Bible-based approach. Do you really have a heart for the people or are you merely taking advantage of them? You are the best one to answer that question. When you have made a choice to love, the Holy Ghost empowers you to love more and more. The Bible says, **"The love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit that is given to us"** (Rom. 5:5). The Holy Spirit causes the love of God to explode in us; and if we give Him room, excellence in ministry is guaranteed.

Chapter seventeen

The Law of Continuous Learning

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

1 Timothy 5:17

It takes a studious life to secure a glorious ministry. If you are not studious, you are heading for shame, as a preacher who is not a reader will soon preach himself out. That is why Paul told Timothy:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

To avoid shame in ministry, study! Nobody ever comes to the end of a studious life. One of the most influential pastors on earth today, David Yonggi Cho of South Korea said he spends 75 per cent of his time preparing sermons. That is, 75 per cent of his time searching the scriptures, while many other ministers spend that time in chatting, and walking dry to the altar. But it takes a studious life to secure a glorious ministry.

Paul the apostle, one of the greatest men that ever walked on earth said:

The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

2 Timothy 4:13

Paul was a student of the Word; he was a learner. He had books and notes his parchments which he studied regularly and couldn't do without. If you are not a learner, you will never become a leader, as those that take the lead are committed learners. If you can't see beyond what others have seen or better and farther than those you are leading, nobody will follow you.

There are people who read the Bible for fun, and there are those who read it to learn. If you are not a writer, you are equally not a learner, as the lessons you learn are to be documented. If you want to enter into the realm of rest in your ministry, then you must labour in the Word of God and in anointed books. You must engage your time, energy and resources in expanding your knowledge base. Someone has said, "If you want to hide a thing from a black man, write it in book." This should not be viewed as an insult, but rather a wake up call.

Without a functional library, you can't generate extraordinary results. Jesus was a perpetual learner. Speaking about Him in prophecy, the Bible said, *"The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned"* (Isa 50:4). Jesus was constantly learning at the Father's feet. He said, *"1 can of my own self do nothing, as I hear so I judge."* If you must become a great leader, you better become an addicted learner.

Daniel was an addicted learner, even though he was endowed with wisdom by God. He said, *"1 Daniel understood by books"* (Dan. 9:2). You can't go far if you are not a friend of books. I maintain a

highly functional library, which I think might be one of the largest private libraries in our land, because of my appetite for knowledge.

The scripture says, *"Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises"* (Heb 6:12). It takes hard work to become a high flyer. But there are too many lazy people on the pulpit today, who are only having fun with religion and not imparting lives, because they are not willing to pay the price. The great man of God, T. L. Osborne is quoted as saying, "When you stop learning you start dying." If you are not a reader, you will never become a leader, because what you don't have, you cannot give. So, sit up! There is no future for an idle man; no, not in the ministry! Double honour is a product of dogged commitment to a studious life. The more committed you are to a studious life, the more glorious your ministry will become.Chapter 18

The Law Of Imagination

No matter your area of calling, what you cannot see today will never become real in your life tomorrow. In order to deliver Abraham's inheritance to him, God said to him:

…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 for ever.

Genesis 13:14-15

Many have received visions from the Lord, but are not able to perceive the extent of the vision. If you are Abraham's seed, you are called to do the works of Abraham. The question then is: *"What seest thou? What do you see? What future do you see in the ministry God has given you?"* The Lord said to Jeremiah, *"What seest thou?"* and he replied, *"1 see a rod of an almond tree."* God then said to him, *"Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it"* (Jer. 1:11-12).

What you are not able to see, God is not committed to perform. "What do you see concerning your ministry?" God called Jeremiah in chapter 1:5 "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." Despite this heavenly call, Jeremiah still had to visualize his assignment. We live in the dreamers' world. Until you become a dreamer, no matter how heavenly your call or vision, it will be limited. The extent to which you can see is what determines what becomes of your calling. That's why this chapter is called the law of imagination.

I've often said that I'm not surprised at where we are today; I would have been surprised if we hadn't gotten here, because I was walking in its reality many years before they began to manifest. I was walking in the reality of my future long before they materialized. I was sweating and screaming while teaching one day in church in Kaduna in 1984. Then I paused and said to the people, "Wait a minute, don't think I am crazy. I'm speaking to the large crowd of people I see outside this small building that you cannot see." That's why no matter how big our church building is today, people will always be outside! I saw multitudes when we were still very few. The day I was screaming at the top of my voice while preaching, we were less than thirty. I was screaming and the microphone was cracking. I needed to scream for those I could see outside with my mind's eye to hear me. Nobody inside that day understood why I was screaming to an invisible crowd; but what I saw in the invisible has become visible today!

A dream is a spiritual requirement for creating your desired future. Your calling notwithstanding, it is your sanctified dreams about your calling that determines its ultimate fulfillment. If you can dream big dreams from scriptures, though your beginning be very small now, yet your latter end shall be greatly increased (Job 8:7).

I saw myself talking to presidents and prime ministers of nations long ago. In 1986, I told the congregation that Nigerian presidents would come to the altar of our church and shout, “Praise the Lord!” The country's leaders were all muslims then, and everybody was wondering how it would happen. But one of the fellows who heard me say that in 1986 was in church the day the President of Nigeria came to the service, and when he was given the microphone, the first thing he said was, “Praise the Lord!” This person started crying where she sat, because she was there when I said it in 1986.

A dream transports you to the reality of your future before you arrive there. I was in a foreign country, and the president of that country was so excited that I came to his country, that he decided to attend one of our services. When I said, “Stand up,” he also stood up with the congregation, and when I said, “Lift your hand to Jesus,” “Say, 'Jesus, I love You'” he did as he was told.

It takes a sanctified dreamer to fulfill and excel in his ministry; it takes a sanctified dreamer to fully deliver the mandate of God upon his life. It takes a sanctified dreamer to make full proof of his ministry. The future you cannot see, you will never live in the reality of it, as a dream is the mental picture of your future. Even God acknowledged the power of imagination.

And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

Genesis 11:6

Your imagination determines your destination. The Bible says, *“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he”* (Prov. 23:7). What you think determines what you take. Whatever is too big for your mind is too big for your hands. Whatever your mind cannot handle, your hand may never realise. Whatever becomes of your tomorrow begins in your mind today. Some people are so busy thinking poverty that there is no way they can mistakenly stumble into prosperity. They think so much of poverty that it becomes their natural companion.

I was in the US about 20 years ago, and a very interesting thing happened. After an opportunity to share God's Word at a particular conference, a man walked up to me and said, “Bless God for your life. What needs have you in your ministry?” I reacted immediately and very violently, “Our ministry has no needs; we only meet needs.” The man blushed in embarrassment. I didn't mean to insult him, but I just couldn't identify with the thought of poverty. My royalty mentality had overtaken me, such that I couldn't be made to think poor. Black is not synonymous with lack. You can't think poor and mistakenly become rich, for as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

When I talk about sanctified dreams, I mean Bible-based dreams; dreams born out of scriptural revelations. When God told Abraham to look toward the north, the north could represent the book of Genesis, while the south the book of Malachi. The east, Matthew, and the west, Revelation. The north is the city of the great King, while Jesus the Son of righteousness rose from the east (the book of Matthew) and the sun sets in the west, book of Revelation. Whatever you can see from Genesis to Malachi, Matthew to Revelation shall be yours. That's what I call sanctified dreams - dreams born out of revelations of the truth and the Word of God.

For example, my Bible says in Proverbs 22:29:

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

By this scriptural discovery, I'm assured that a commitment to my task qualifies me to sit before kings. If I remain diligent and productively committed to my task, therefore, I know I have a future of royalty. Also as a committed tithe payer of over 25 years, I can dream of an open heaven order of prosperity. To walk in the reality of kingdom prosperity, then you must first walk in the reality of covenant practice by doing your part, which then commits God to do His part. If you want to avoid shame in your ministry, study. You can't be sleeping all day and expect to be enthroned. No! When you understand what God is

saying from His Word and you line up yourself with them, then you have committed His integrity to make it happen.

This is what I mean by sanctified, revelation-provoked, and spiritually responsible dreams. These are what propel you to excellence in ministry. Unfortunately though, there are many idle and balloon dreamers on the streets. They see themselves walking in prosperity without doing what makes people prosper. They are idle dreamers, as their daydreams will never come true.

Before I got married, my then fiancée and I went to a very loving father in the faith for counseling, and he asked me, “David, what do you see happening in your marriage?” I replied, “I see a hitch-free marriage.” He further asked, “How do you mean?” and I replied, “We have been in courtship for about four years now, and it's been wonderful.” Then he said to me, “It is easy not to step on each other's toes when you are not living together, but when finally you start living together, it would be impossible not to step on each other's toes.” I immediately said to him. “Sir, you and I are sitting on the same sofa, why am I not stepping on your toes? For two reasons: I'm not blind and I'm not wicked.” He then nodded his head. True to my dreams, we've been married for over 24 years now, and we have enjoyed a hitch-free married life all the way. Nobody has had the opportunity to come settle any quarrel in our home.

What you see today is what you become tomorrow. What the Bible says is, “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the Church.” Don't document all her faults, but forgive her in advance even for the offense she would commit tomorrow. That way, you'll live well! To the wives He said, “Obey your husbands in everything.” He did not say, “Provided your husband loves you in return.” If you truly obey your husband in everything, without any prayer you will win his love. A hitch-free marriage is not for irresponsible Christians. Some Christian marriages are stormier than those of pagans. Why? Both parties have not accepted their covenant responsibilities. Some ministers' marriages are very stormy as a result of their irresponsibility. When they should attend to their family needs, they claim to be on their knees praying! Meanwhile, God is saying to them, “Look, you will destroy your family with your own hands on your knees.”

Destiny is a race of responsibility; if you don't want to end up as a liability, then accept responsibility today. Dream Bible dreams and picture your tomorrow today.

Chapter nineteen

The Law of Discipline

Paul the apostle said:

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

1 Corinthians 6:12

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

1 Corinthians 10:23

It takes discipline to be distinguished. If you leave your life to chance, you won't stand a chance of excelling in ministry. If you operate by whatever comes your way, then you won't accomplish anything at the end of the day. A disciplined person or minister places greater value on essentials, orders his priorities intelligibly, operate by schedules, functions without requiring supervision, and makes the most of his time.

Discipline makes you keep a schedule that depicts a man on a mission. The schedule tells you when time is up, and what you should be doing per time. Somebody once asked me, “How do you get time to read?” I answered him, “How do you get time to eat?” How can you schedule your eating time without scheduling your reading or prayer time? Discipline puts you on a lifestyle of schedules: you know what it takes to excel and consciously work at it.

Former United States President, George Washington, said, “Discipline is the soul of an army; it makes more numbers formidable, it procures success to the weak and esteem to all.” Discipline is the soul of an army. No matter where you are today, discipline can transform your destiny. The reason for some students' failure in schools may not necessarily be because they are poor, but because they are disorganized and don't have an orderly and practical study schedule. They do things as they come, and nothing great happens that way. You never find a distinguished man who is not disciplined.

Paul said, all things are lawful, but not all things are expedient. That is the law of discipline. In all our churches worldwide, our services take off on schedule. If a service is scheduled to start at 8 a.m. then at exactly 8 a.m. you'll find a pastor come up on the altar and say, “Let's us all rise up to praise the Lord.” It takes order and an orderly lifestyle to command progress.

Chapter twenty

The Law of Diligence

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.

Proverbs 22:29

A man that is diligent in his business has a place at the top. You need to get on the flight of diligence in order to move from where you are to a higher place. This simply translates to hard work. Jesus said, "I must work!" If success in ministry is your goal, then you can't be exempted from diligence. Not even Jesus the Messiah and Paul the apostle were exempted.

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

John 5:17

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.

1 Corinthians 15:10

You can't get out of life what you are not willing to invest into it. Paul said, *"I laboured more abundantly than they all."* The law of diligence is one of the ways of gaining prominence in your field. Whatever a man sows is what he will also reap. So, don't just carry a title; be set to accomplish your task, as there is no entitlement in titles! Don't just carry a title; strive to accomplish your mandate, as your mandate is more important than your title. Too many are over relaxed in fulfilling their ministries, but the Bible says, *"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion"* (Amos 6:1).

Jesus said:

I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?

But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

Luke 12:49-50

If your ministry does not stretch you, it cannot impact the world. It is the stretching of your mandate that impacts people in your ministry. Every minister you see that moves about town daily greeting people won't accomplish much in ministry. It is time to stretch yourself in order to deliver your mandate. We have a popular term in our ministry called "Labour baptism." Any new person that comes on board, no matter where he is coming from, must lose some weight after a month with us. As a woman, there is no way to give birth to a child without first going through the labour room. In like manner, you can't deliver your mandate without going through the labour room of diligence; otherwise, your mandate will perpetually remain at pregnancy stage. Jesus said, *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work"* (Jn. 9:4). May the effect of your labour keep speaking many generations after you are gone!

John D. Rockefeller said, "When work goes out of fashion, civilization will totter and fall." That is, when work goes out of fashion or people device shortcuts to getting results without having to work, then advancement would cease. It takes work for things to keep working. Paul said, *"I laboured more*

abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." It takes grace to work hard to get results.

Solomon the wise said:

In all labour there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

Proverbs 14:23

The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute.

Proverbs 12:24

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

Proverbs 13:4

If you are not a hard worker today, you are sure to become a beggar tomorrow. One disease that God has not succeeded in curing in my life is the disease of staying long at work. Everybody, including my enemies, knows that I am always busy. Even the devil knows that I am always very busy. My being busy is not to be regretted, as I see the fruits everyday. Receive that grace today, in the name of Jesus!

He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he that followeth vain persons is void of understanding.

Proverbs 12:11

Would you stay on your job? That is what makes it work. If you don't want to end up as a beggar tomorrow, then become a committed worker today. The Bible says, *"And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"* (Ps. 1:3). That is the source of your wages in the ministry, *"For the labourer is worthy of his hire"* (Lk. 10:7).

Chapter twenty-one

The Law of Focus

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Matthew 6:22

And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver.

And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.

1 Kings 20:39-40

There are so many "here and there" people, who do just anything that comes their way per day. They always follow the vogue of the day "What are they preaching now? Let's go along with it." "What's the hot cake in town now? Let's key into it." A lack of focus can make you lose your ministry, whereas the more focused you are, the more fruitful your ministry will become.

The great man of God, Kenneth E. Hagin, was still running his all-faith crusade a week to when he went to be with the Lord. He stayed on his assignment till the end. Billy Graham has stayed focused on the message of salvation God gave him from the beginning; he has not drifted an inch from it. When the wave of the healing ministry came, he didn't join them. Then the wave of Church growth ministries came along as well, and yet he didn't join them. He has remained focus on his God-given assignment. What a joy today that he is listed among the six people that changed the last century all from staying on a simple message of salvation! Whereas you may not catch any revelation in his message, but that is the one he was given, and he has stayed with it, saying the same thing over the decades, with abounding results!

During His earthly ministry Jesus was meeting the needs of the people, and they wanted to make Him a king. But when He perceived that the people were coming to make Him an earthly king, He fled, because that was not where He belonged. He stayed true to His mission till the last day (Jn. 6:15). Someone gave Billy Graham a large parcel of land for the Billy Graham University. Graham kept struggling with it until when God said to him, "This is not part of your assignment," and he dropped it. He had a crowd thick enough to make it happen; everybody thought he must build a university, and they were all making money available to make it happen. But then he discovered that it was not part of his assignment, so he stayed focused on his soul-winning platform.

Billy Graham had an unusual time with former US President, Richard Nixon, and that relationship almost destroyed his ministry. From that time on, he kept a long distance from the White House, only going there to pray, preach and go away. But what do we have today? All some ministers do is to run around government quarters. Beware, because that might ruin your ministry in no time. Jesus said:

…To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth…

John 18:37

Jesus stayed with the one reason for which He came to the earth. Focus would make all the difference in your ministry. I have never gotten into anything in the past 25 years other than the pursuit of my heavenly vision, and it shows!

Chapter twenty-two

The Law of Spiritual Impact

It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Romans 15:27

When you impart people's lives spiritually, they will of necessity respond to you materially, because thou shall not muzzle the ox that threshes the corn. The ox that is threshing the corn is entitled to the proceeds of the field (1 Cor. 9:9-10). The Bible also says in 1 Corinthians 9:11:

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

The quality of your spiritual impact is what determines the material returns that attend to you. Many years ago, a man that was under a lot of stress in his business read one of my books, Born to Win. According to him, he was weeping as he read the book, and made a covenant with God that as he puts the things he read from the book to work and they produce, then certain percentage of the proceeds of the first business that came his way would go to the author of the book. He didn't know who the author was, except the name and post office box that was written in the book.

Later when I went to the city he was for a seminar, he saw my name on the banner and said, “Ah, this must be the author of that book.” He trekked to the seminar, because he had no car then. Thereafter, God visited him with a turnaround, and one day he came to service with a briefcase filled with money for me. When he handed it over to me, I said, “What is this?” Then he told me his story. He said, “I read this book and it turned everything around in my life. What I covenanted with God for the author is what I have brought.” He gave me the money and the briefcase. That is a genuine spiritual impact!

See what happened in Jesus' ministry as well:

And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

Luke 8:1-3

Their lives were spiritually imparted, so they ministered to Jesus out of their substance, not from their leftovers. It takes spiritual impact to enjoy material returns. If you must have your wages, labour in the Word and in prayers to impart the lives of men positively, and they will respond gladly by ministering their substance to your life and ministry. This is the way it works, not the other way around.

Note that all biblical laws are universal, and they deliver at the same rate in every nation. Don't say, “Oh, I wish I were living in that country or city, it would have been different. But I am in a village; how would it ever happened here?” Note also that it takes a spiritual man to impart people spiritually. A carnal man cannot impact people spiritually. Not every preacher, pastor, bishop or founder of ministries is

spiritual. That is why the Bible says to be spiritually minded is life and peace, whereas to be carnally minded is death. You are either spiritual or carnal, you cannot be neutral.

How spiritual is a pastor that is stealing church money? How spiritual is a pastor that is planning to break up his church or one that is doing politics in the church? How spiritual is a pastor who enjoys tribalism or one that neither prays nor reads his Bible? Every minister is his worst enemy, and there is no one against you as yourself. You will see how weak the devil is when you do what you should do.

The Lord said to me: “Don't raise money, raise men; and you will have more money than you will ever require for ministry.” But the vogue in ministry today is raising money rather than raising men. There are specialist money raisers that go from church to church, pressuring people to give and milking the sheep dry. What a shame! The effect of raising men rather than money abounds in our ministry. I believe members of our church are the most excited givers in the world today. Nobody is coaxed or prophetically harassed to give. Everybody gives as they are blessed of the Lord, with joy and gladness. Don't raise money, raise men! If your ministry is a men-raising ministry, then you will never lack money or resources for the work of the ministry.

The testimony of changed lives is the cheapest way to grow a church. There was this story of a muslim landlord whose tenant had a problem and couldn't pay his house rent. The landlord said to his tenant, “I see everybody coming out of this church (referring to our church) smiling everyday. Now that you have this problem, why don't you go there?” The man came and Jesus touched his life, and few months later, he was celebrating his birthday and now had a car! When the next tenant had a problem, the same landlord told him, “Go to that church.” The tenant came, and he also had a transformation in his life. The landlord then said to himself, “I'm going there too!” He came, gave his life to Christ and became a member of the church. He's still a strong member of our church.

Publicity is not what grows a church, but transformed lives. Raise men! It is humanly impossible to drag people from town to the very far place our church is located; but they still come. That means they must have enough reasons to make them come that far. They might even have enough reasons to convince them that it is not far at all, because everybody that comes to our headquarter church has to travel to make it there. Not only is the church located way out of the city, but service there starts at 7 a.m. which means you must leave your house latest by 5 a.m. to get there early. Buses move out of Canaan Land as early as 3 a.m. to the designated bus-stops, and the people are already on line waiting for the buses.

There is no scientific strategy for growing a church. The blind man said about Jesus, “Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see” (Jn. 9:25). That is why you must strive to impart the people spiritually. As changes occur in their lives, members of their families and friends will start coming with them to church, and before you know it, your church will start filling up. We heard the testimony of an 87-year-old muslim woman in our church in 2005. Something undeniable had happened to her son, and she saw it. This led her to say, “Though we are not Christians in our family, I will follow you to worship your God.” She is now a strong member of our church. Testimonies of changed lives are what birth great ministries!

A pastor once asked me how our church was growing since it wasn't on TV or on radio. I smiled and said, “The growth of a church is effected by members whose lives have been touched. They tell others, 'Come and see. You know we all used to be sick and were in the same sickness association before. But I'm no longer there; so come and see. We were all on the floor together before, begging for food to eat. But see, God has taken me up! Come and see.' It is the testimony of changed lives that causes church growth, not television, newspaper or radio advertisement. There are too many on the streets.”

Whenever you are going to minister to the people go with a heart ready to impart spiritual things to them, and you will see how quickly your church will start growing.

Chapter twenty-three

The Law of Sowing and Reaping

The prosperity of a ministry is different from that of its' pastor. What the pastor sows is what he will reap, like any member of the body of Christ. Likewise, what the ministry sows is also what determines what it reaps. The subject of sowing and reaping as it relates to ministry is not about prophets' offering. Many ministries are not involved in seed sowing at all, and that is why many of them are financially stagnant. Many ministries are under financial pressures because they have not discovered the mystery of seed sowing.

On September 4, 1987, while in my hotel room studying my Bible, I stumbled on a mystery in Hebrews 7:7-8. I heard the Lord say to me, *"And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better."* And I asked, "What does this mean?" He replied, "Let your ministry begin to sow seeds to higher ministries, and as you keep sowing seeds, you will be moving higher in your pursuit." He then said, "Begin to sow into higher ministries and see how I will bless your ministry."

There are things you do because you consider them convenient, but there are other things you do because you see them as commanded. We were sowing seeds before, but I discovered that we needed to establish a better approach to our seed sowing. We do not sow to ministries in need, but to higher ministries, because without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.

One of my sons in ministry came to me to say, "Can you please tell us the secret of the financial abundance of this ministry?" I said, "I hope you will not be offended if I do?" I then went on to ask him, "Does your ministry pay tithe? My Bible says, 'All the tithe of the land is the Lord's, it shall be holy unto the Lord' (Lev. 27:30). Again the Bible says, *'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it'* (Mal. 3:10).

Believe me, what our ministry experiences financially today is the reality of open heaven blessings. There is no traceable pressure anywhere. I knew where we were financially, when He gave me this commandment, and I know where we are today by His grace. Our financial strength annually then is less than what we spend in a week today. The higher ministries don't need your seed; you are the one that needs their grace. We send out seeds in dollars from our ministry here in Nigeria to other parts of the world in obedience to the law of sowing and reaping. Going around preaching to collect offering won't build your ministry. Without an open heaven, your ministry will remain under financial stress perpetually.

It is better to start from where you are now than to think of starting later when your finances might have increased. Starting now is the only way to increase at all. Paying tithes on the offerings your ministry receives opens the heaven over it; and you can't be living under an open heaven without people around you knowing it. I decree that every financial struggle in your life and ministry comes to an end now, in Jesus' name!

The pastors who don't pay personal tithes are usually the ones that need members of their church for survival. But note that the law of tithing is not only for members of your church, it is also for you. Some

pastors even raise offerings in church with their hands empty; there's no seed in it! Don't be deceived, whatever a man sows, that also shall he reap. An empty hand will reap empty returns. If you are not a giver, then you are not permitted to prosper. My prayer is that you will not remain a pauper!

If our ministry has gotten to the level it is today without a dime from America, a penny from UK, and one yen from Japan, then there is nothing God has told you about your ministry in which ever country or city He has deployed you that He cannot accomplish right where you are. All you need do is to obey these spiritual laws, and you will be in command. The truth is that without an open heaven, there will never be enough money to fulfill and excel in your ministry. Jesus needed a bag carrier for His money in order to fulfill His ministry. As anointed as He was, money was still crucial to the accomplishment of His mission here on earth. You too need money, and the way to get it is what I have just shared with you: be a giver as a minister and let your ministry also be a giving ministry; be a tither as a minister and let your ministry be a tithing ministry as well. This way, your heaven will remain open and everything will start working by the hand of God for you.

I don't have any financial stress on my life because I'm enjoying the reality of an open heaven through covenant practice. The Lord said, *"Prove me now, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, such that there will not be enough room to contain them."* Over to you; the choice is absolutely yours.

Chapter twenty-four

The Law Of Mentorship

Great leaders are mostly recognized after they are dead, and I believe this must be the work of an evil spirit. They are victims of castigations, character assassinations and all sorts. This is why many don't have mentors. I suppose nobody seems to be qualified to speak into their lives. Therefore, they live mentor-less lives, and by living in such a way, they are never able to realise and exploit their potentials to the fullest. But God has arranged men on our paths, designed to bring out the best in us.

No man is an island unto himself. The Bible says:

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

Jeremiah 6:16

Show me a man without a mentor, and I will show you a man that may never bear any trace of leadership. This is because every great leader is an offspring of another. If you don't have any man that you are following, there may never be any man following you. The Bible recognises the role and need for mentors, that's why the writer of Hebrews admonished us thus:

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Hebrews 6:12

That is, there are people who have obtained what you are trying to obtain, so try to discover their secrets, engage those secrets in your pursuits, and you will soon be there. When the Lord called me into the ministry and I was about taking off full-time, the Lord said to me, “I will not have you go as others have gone, I will have you laid hands upon according to Deuteronomy 34:9, and you shall be filled with the Spirit of wisdom.” I said to the Lord, “Who have You appointed to lay hands on me?” and He said, “Send for my servant Adeboye (the General Overseer of The Redeemed Christian Church of God) and he shall lay hands on you, and you shall be filled with the Spirit of wisdom.”

I am aware that I'm not operating by natural wisdom, but by the Spirit of wisdom, and this is because God connected me to a human source through whom He released that deposit upon my life. There are certain deposits that God has for you, but which will only be channelled through certain human vessels. If you despise them, you may live without such deposits all through your life. Having been a student of Kenneth E. Hagin for over 20 years, and excitedly following his ministry through his books, one day the Lord showed me a picture of Hagin while in my study room at about 5 a.m. and said to me, “Look at this man,” and I looked up. He then went on to say, “Pattern your ministry after this man.”

God has put people ahead of you that are to help you take the most appropriate steps in your life. I craved the unction upon Hagin so badly that when I was at his meeting in 1986, I said, “Lord, whatever makes Hagin Hagin, I want it. I want his serenity, the calmness of his ministry and the noiselessness of his effect.” I knew that one didn't have to make noise to make news. Hagin was sitting in a little comer from where he was turning the entire world around by the Spirit of God. So I said to God, “I desire this.” As I was looking at him ministering from the gallery where I sat, the power of God fell on me! I broke down in

tears, weeping profusely and uncontrollably, and the Lord said, “My son, David, the baton has been passed over to you.”

There is no race you are running in the world today that someone else doesn't have a baton for it already. The truth is that where Hagin stopped is where the second faith movement is starting; and our ministry is not just a ministry, but a movement. It's a movement that is influencing nations of the earth. Many churches across the nations of the earth are currently patterned after what the Lord is doing in our ministry today. Hagin led a faith movement in the first order, and God has given me the baton to lead the faith movement for the second order. I believe in Kenneth E. Hagin, I believe in his God and in what he carried. As a result, God said, “Okay, partake of it.”

This generation must understand and partake of the benefits of the law of mentorship. If you don't have a mentor today, your tomorrow is very uncertain, as mentorship guarantees your future. Hands are laid on me every year by men God has arranged on my path; that is why my head is never dry of oil. A week to Shiloh 2005 (the annual gathering of Winners worldwide at Canaan Land), one of my mentors poured oil on me afresh, and said, “Go forth and see God's hands the way you have never seen it before.” And that was exactly what happened!

Many have never had hands laid on them since they were ordained into ministry, no wonder the oil on their heads ran dry long ago. The Bible says, “Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment” (Eccl. 9:8). That is, “Let the oil upon your head stay fresh.” The last prayer Kenneth Hagin prayed for me before he left was, “Fresh oil, fresh oil. Lord, keep it ever fresh. Fresh oil!” That prayer is speaking till now. Unfortunately, great men have passed in front of many people without them recognizing and appropriating the blessings they carry.

Part 4: The Structure of Ministry

Chapter twenty-five

The Business Approach!

Without a doubt, one of the reasons why most ministries ordained of God fall short of expectation or collapse completely is due to their unbusiness-like approach to ministry. Many ministers still think that ministry is just going to church on Sunday to preach well-prepared messages.

The only day they appear busy is on Sundays, when they come up in their stage-managed roles. This is not ministry. Ministry is essentially a business. Jesus said:

...Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

Luke 2:49

Ministry is the Father's business. It is God's business, not the Father's religion. It is neither funfair nor another way of life. It is not a political institution or party "You know, you either beat them or join them." No! Ministry is business. It is not a place for idlers. It is a place for those who face challenges with one aim to overcome them. It is a place for only those who are ready to press for the prize; for everyone who wants to succeed in ministry must press into it.

Ministry is a place for those who want to make satisfactory progress, those who are ready to explore the unlimited possibilities they have in Christ Jesus. These are the ones who stay on in ministry and take it to the enviable position it ought to be.

Those without a business perspective cannot make ministry produce. The slothful cannot make it, neither can those who wait for manna to drop from heaven.

We have been accused of turning ministry into a business. But that is not true. We met it as a business. Jesus, the Author and Founder of ministry, told us it is a business. He started it. He is the chief cornerstone of the foundation. We are building upon it. It is what we have learnt of Him that we are now doing.

Why is ministry a business? What is this business perspective we are talking about? What does it involve? Business normally involves investment and profiting. In business, one always looks for investments that will bring profit. So one invests to profit.

This is exactly what ministry is. It involves investments that lead to profiting. When you invest correctly, your profiting must appear for all to see. Your profiting will constitute an attraction, which will draw all manner of men to you.

Businessmen in the world make use of all their faculties to enable them make profit. They invest their being in it. Their spirits are dead since they are not born again, but they use their minds and bodies to the utmost. You see them running to and fro, trying to succeed. They don't sit down in their houses and wait for their businesses to run themselves.

If spiritually dead businessmen can make it, how much more then can a spiritually alive believer, who has all his faculties open to God, flourish when he puts ministry in its proper perspective. He has to go into ministry with all of himself. He has to invest himself: his life and his all, for his ministry to produce.

Partial investment produces partial results. What you sow, you must surely reap. To succeed in ministry, therefore, he has to sow his life as a seed into it. This means his spirit, soul and body have to be

completely involved in the ministry. He has access to divine ideas from God through his spirit. These ideas go into the mind for analysis and acceptance and he uses his physical frame for exploration and possession.

Jesus' ministry followed this pattern. He heard from the Father, planned practical means of attaining what He had heard and His body pressed on tirelessly to achieve the goal. When God gives a ministry, He doesn't always tell you in minute details how to run it. Most often, He will tell you the end. It is then your duty to work out all the details by yourself. To make sure you succeed, He gives you a sound mind and a healthy physique to be able to carry out your task.

When God called me into ministry, He didn't tell me to open an office or employ staff. I worked that out by myself. The Monday after the commissioning of the ministry, an office was opened. This was quite unpopular at that time, because no one thought ministry needed an office.

Since its inception, every action has been carefully documented. Income and expenditure are well marked out. Expenditure has never been above income. We always have something left over, because we cut our coats according to our cloth, even while we continue to press on to greater heights. We plan and invest tirelessly, and it has produced results and is still producing. Ministry holds profit for those who understand that it needs a business-like approach.

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it

Hebrews 4:2

There is profit in the Word of God. So, your ministry, which is based on the Word, must produce results. 1 Timothy 4:8 tells us:

For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

You can now see that ministry business, which is part of godliness, is profitable unto all things. It holds a two-dimensional future for the saints. There is both earthly and heavenly profiting. All you need is to give your ministry a business approach and invest all of yourself into it. Ministry is not just an involvement, it is an appointment.

After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them...

Luke 10:1

Nobody comes into ministry because he wants to involve himself in God's business. No! You have to be appointed. God is the One who appoints you and puts a specific task in your hands.

In government, when appointments are made, the people appointed would have been screened, to see if they would be able to perform or not. Nobody takes an illiterate from the village and appoints him to be a minister. Also, God will not appoint you to a ministry without first being sure that you can make it. This is not in terms of natural qualifications as in the world system, but in terms of availability and commitment to His cause. He knows your abilities, since there is nothing hidden from Him. Until He is persuaded you can run a ministry, He won't put it into your hand and say “Go.” Ministry is not just a commitment; it is a commission. The Lord has to say “Go” before you can venture into it.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...

Matthew 28:19

When the Lord says “Go” to you, your ministry becomes a commission. It becomes a task that must be accomplished. In that word “Go” is all the enabling and backing you need for a successful ministry. God who has said “Go” to you will also teach you to profit.

...I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.

Isaiah 48:17

The Lord would not ask you to go where would not profit you. He believes in making profit. If He didn't, He wouldn't have sent Jesus. In the beginning, He had Jesus, His only Son and express image, who Himself is God, with Him. But He sent Him to come and physically execute the plan of redemption. In fact, God Himself came down! He invested Himself and what happened? He had His Son back with Him in a position of honour and dignity. And in addition, He has millions of other sons, and many more trooping in everyday.

God does not harbour waste. Everything He does has an expected end, an end of glory, an end of upliftment and an end of positive increase, for:

Whom he foreknew, he also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...

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.

Romans 8:29-30

Ministry is a business. Take it as such and you will see it produce results. It will flourish and will attract others into it. If it were not a flourishing business, how then could it have attracted people from different professions in the Scriptures? Luke was a noted physician. He left his profession when he was called into ministry business. Matthew was a civil servant, a tax collector, which was a dubious but flourishing business then. When he was called into ministry, he left all and followed Jesus.

Paul was one of the most learned men in his days. He was a political activist. When the Lord told him "Go," he left all and answered the call of God. Peter, James and John were in the fishing business, which they left when the call into ministry came. They left their businesses and followed Jesus.

Why did all these leave their various professions to follow Jesus? Do you think they were stupid? Christianity does not mean blind followership. These men didn't follow as fools. They knew what they were doing. They must have seen the attraction in Jesus. They must have had a vision of the position of glory reserved for them at the end. Just to make sure anyway, Peter wanted to clarify issues beyond doubt, so he said to Jesus, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee."

And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Mark 10:29-30

Jesus did not shun the question like most of us would have done. He did not say, "Peter, you are worldly. It shows that you are not really born again. You only want profit." No, He didn't say that. Rather, He gave an answer, which was more than satisfactory to Peter and us too. Jesus' answer shows He believes in making profit. Can you imagine you invest one and get a hundred? No earthly business can beat that!

We can boldly say that a call into ministry is a business deal. It is like a bond, an agreement between God and the called. It is not foolishness to answer a call into ministry. It is simple covenant wisdom. When I was called into ministry, I didn't like it, because I hadn't seen anyone who had succeeded in it. My head was already stuffed with a thousand and one ways of making it in life. By the world's standard, I had everything it takes to succeed. The capital and the connections were there and I knew my determination would see me to the top. Therefore, I didn't feel good about leaving all these for the kind of life I saw the ministers of old live.

I acted like Peter. I went to the Lord to get clarification on two issues. I said, "Lord, the ministers I see around seem to have no work to do except on Sundays, when they preach. You know I don't like idleness; do You have enough work for me to do?" The Lord opened my eyes to see the magnitude of the work I had to do and I was satisfied.

I then asked again, “Lord, where is my food supposed to come from?” He told me this very clearly. I have been doing this and have not once regretted it. I do my part and He does His part.

Friend, a call is a deal. Handle your ministry as the business it is meant to be, and you will never have a cause for regrets.

Chapter twenty-six

The Rewards Of Service

Every appointment has its terms and benefits of service. Every business enterprise, no matter how small, has its conditions and rewards of service. A man working in an office without an appointment letter stating the terms and benefits of his service will most likely not get paid at the end of the month, because from all indications, his name is not on the staff list. He is just doing voluntary service, which attracts no remuneration from the office, since there is no appointment binding them.

For one to be recognized as a worker, he has to have been appointed. He must have a letter of appointment. So it is in ministry. A call to ministry is an appointment. Every calling of God is an appointment; therefore, it has its conditions of service or guiding principles.

When God called Abraham, He told him:

Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

And I will make of thee a great nation,

And I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 12:1-3

This was Abraham's appointment letter. Every detail of his life was taken care of in it. His part was to depart and keep his faculties stayed on God, so that God could show him where He wanted him to be. This was his service. His salary or reward was that he was to become a great nation. He was to receive an abundance of blessings that would enable him bless others and his name was to become great, that he would be heard of in every nation of the world.

That was not all. God's insurance department insured his life. The policy was that anyone who blessed him got blessed by God, and anyone who cursed him was cursed by God. He had a covering from all attacks.

He must have considered his letter and said, “Well, I think this is a good deal. It is a good business; I will take up the offer.” He had a choice after having considered the stated terms and benefits, to either reject or accept the offer. He accepted it, played his part and got all the benefits.

The callings of God have always followed this same pattern. He gives you a task and also states the benefits. A call to ministry is a task. It is an appointment. Be conscious of this.

A call to preach is an enlistment into God's army. Whatever your area of calling is, you are enlisted into God's army and are entitled to whatever benefits go with your task. No soldier goes to war at his own charge. He must be given a charge by a superior officer. In ministry, there is only one who gives the charge God. He is the One who calls. Your calling is your task; when you do it, you receive your wages.

Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charge? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

1 Corinthians 9:7

God's terms of service are very distinctly stated in His Word. They always have two parts. There is what to do and what to get after doing what you have been given to do.

And he that reapeth receiveth wages...

John 4:36

...Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn...

1 Corinthians 9:9

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

1 Corinthians 9:11

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:14

...For the labourer is worthy of his hire...

Luke 10:7

As a minister, what do you do to ensure you get your wages? God says, “reap”, “tread out the corn”, “minister spiritual things”, “preach” and “labour”. This is your part. The harvest is ripe, you can see multitudes of unsaved and unreached people looking for a way out of their miseries. Go to them. Harvest. Reap them into the kingdom and you will receive your wages. The corn is ready to be threshed. Thresh it, that you might partake of it. Minister spiritual things to the people, feed them spiritually and they will minister carnal things back to you.

You don't have to go begging. Do your job. Preach the gospel, labour in it and you will get your wages. In essence, whatever your calling, take it up as a task that must be done. Do it with all your heart, mind and might and your benefits will surely follow.

A soldier at war does not have to worry about his salary and entitlements being paid or not. He knows they will be paid. He also knows that if he gets recognition through an outstanding performance, he will be greatly rewarded. So he goes about his task with one goal in mind that of excelling.

Similarly, as a soldier of God, your food is in doing the task on hand. Unlike in the world, where the incompetent may get high wages, God's benefit system cannot be faulted. He rewards according to what has been done. He sees all. All things, including the thoughts and intents of the heart, lay bare before Him. He knows exactly what your input is and rewards you, using the same measure “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (Matt. 7:2). He rewards according to your works.

Your input determines your earnings. The benefits are for the soldier at war alone, not for those who don't engage in battles. You know that not every soldier fights. There are those who dodge for one reason or the other. There are those who just pretend to be busy working, while in actual fact, it is just camouflage. There are soldiers who do a lot of eye-service. When their boss is around, they are excellent, but as soon as he departs, they go back to their normal lazy ways. In God's army, there is no room for dodging. There is no room for slothfulness or eye-service. He sees all and knows all.

Only those, who are really at their tasks receive the benefits. The wages are for the reapers of harvest. The ox that will eat is the one that threshes out the corn. Many are called, but few are chosen. Not all those called will live by the gospel, only those who preach the gospel. God is watching, He is counting, He is rewarding. You may fool human beings, but you cannot fool God.

What you receive depends on the spiritual impact you make. Spiritual impact is the key to material miracles.

...For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Romans 15:27

This is the key to supernatural material miracles in ministry. You don't have to go begging from house to house before you can eat. When you do what you are supposed to do, there will be no need for special appeals for money. Your food is not in going overseas to foreign countries. No! Anywhere you find

yourself is a good ground, so sow! Minister spiritual things to the people, not your own things. Get spiritual substance from the source (God) and dish it out to the people. Know that everywhere, every hour, there is a specific message from God for the people.

Wherever you are, get the spiritual food the people need from God and dish it out to them. It is only when you make spiritual impact on them that you are sure to receive miraculous material supplies from them. Your business, therefore, is to make yourself a spiritual tank of goodies to the people to whom you are sent.

Get out on the field of your calling and labour. Do not be a supervisor or an overseer. In God's system, the supervisor or overseer doesn't have any wages to earn other than their titles. It is only the labourer who earns wages. I got an understanding of this early in my ministry and it has delivered me from begging and borrowing. What I need, I always get when I go about the business my Father has put into my hands. What I don't get, I believe I don't need, so it doesn't bother me. Since the inception of our ministry, we have never borrowed. We have always used what we have to get what we needed.

Do you want to earn wages? Then preach! Do you want to receive supernatural material supplies? Then minister spiritual substance to the people!

In ministry business, nobody puts you on any grade level. You are the one to determine your level of benefit. What you earn is not in God's hand, neither is it in the hands of the devil or your enemies. What you earn is determined by you! Determine your own salary grade level today with God. Labour in that assignment which He has given you; for the labourer is worthy of his wages.

Chapter twenty-seven

The Organizational Structure

The strength of any ministry is largely dependent on the efficiency of its organizational structure. It takes more than anointing to succeed in ministry. No ministry succeeds without a good administration.

Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established.

Proverbs 24:3

Nothing takes the place of planning for productivity and profitability in ministry. A good administration is the number one wisdom seed for productivity in ministry. Once this seed is sown, it cannot but bear fruits.

What is administration? This is the integration of goals and objectives into functional and profitable units. By this we mean, putting things in their respective places in order to achieve an ultimate goal. Where good administration is lacking, good results will also be lacking.

Have A Goal

The first step in any good administration is to have a goal. Without a goal, there is no administration. Administration is working towards a well defined goal. What is your organization's goal? What are you aiming at?

Every ministry must be set up in such a system that will make it work. Each should have its own goal, therefore, its own way of achieving it. What is your goal? Identify it and set up your system to achieving it. What business has a man called into writing ministry with crusade team? Be specific about your goal, focus on it and the system to make it work will come to you.

My mission in ministry is to liberate the world through the preaching of the Word of faith. My goal therefore is to get the Word of faith into every nook and cranny of the world, for that is my target audience. My administrative structure therefore has to be in line with this set objective.

Identify Your Medium

After identifying your goal, go on to pinpoint the different objectives needed to achieve it. You need to identify the medium of operation needed for maximum accomplishment. I know that my mission is preaching the Word of faith to the whole world, but what is my medium of operation?

The Word of faith can be effectively preached in churches worldwide and also through crusades and seminars. It can also be done through the printed pages and electronic media, and also through training up would-be ministers in a Bible School geared towards fulfilling this mission. These and others are my identified media of operation. They are all geared towards fulfilling the mission given to me by God.

Create Departments

After identifying your objective, go ahead to break them up into functional units. Create departments, each having its own objective.

In our ministry, for instance, there are many departments, each having its own objective. There is the Outreach Department, responsible for seminars and crusades. The Publications Department is responsible for spreading the Word through printed and other related materials. The Missions Department takes charge of planting new churches, while the Bible School handles the training of ministers. These departments are the functional units of our organization.

Develop Your Structure

You have a responsibility to break your objectives up into functional units. From there, you go ahead to develop your structure. Each unit should be headed by someone, with others working under them and individual assignments well defined. These heads should have a general overseer to whom they report.

The strength of a system is determined by the people who make it up. Men are assets to success. Know those God has provided you with and deploy them to where they are best suited. A good leader should have the ability of making men produce results. The only way for maximum yield is to recognize the talents of those in your ministry and effectively utilize them.

Leadership is not getting things done by yourself, but the ability to get others to do assigned jobs with good results. A good organization should have a clear definition of people's responsibilities. A clearly written out job description is of great use if conflicts are to be avoided.

Many ministers make the mistake of filling up vacancies in their offices with their blood relations. This is not the best and should be avoided. If a relation of yours has to be employed, make sure he is better than every other person interviewed. It is very important for the quality of staff employed to be controlled. Quality staff produce quality results.

Avoid overstaffing. Employment should not be on the basis of sympathy. Always make sure there is need for a new staff before employing one. It is more difficult to send an employee away after being employed than to tell him right at the beginning that there is no vacancy. Let your promotion policy be clear. Have clear performance criteria and use it in promoting the staff.

Promotion should not be on impulse, but on a good evaluation of a man's overall performance. Before promoting anyone, ask yourself, “How effective is he in his assignment?” “What results has he achieved?” “Has he produced more tangible results than the others?” If these questions can be answered favourably, then promotion should be considered. Promotion should not be done based on a person's facial appearance, neither should it be based on how good individuals are at lobbying. It should primarily be based on one's input to the organisation.

There are times when reshufflements are needed. This is mostly introduced when new challenges spring up. Be sensitive. Know when to make necessary structural adjustments to accommodate current challenges. Also, let the limits of authority be well defined. A case of one person taking instructions from two bosses leads to conflict.

A good leader is a motivator. The men below him are executors. Apart from coordinating and controlling affairs towards achieving the desired goal, he also has a responsibility of motivating his staff. He must learn to appreciate the staff by way of words and action. The leader must also be able to make disciples out of his executors. He should make them believe in his spiritual authority and social integrity.

The best way to raise executors is by letting your spirit loose upon them. Impart your life to them by speaking to them often. Create an atmosphere of fellowship. Minister to them by laying hands on them or anointing them with oil.

A good administrative set up is a pearl of unspeakable value. It takes diligent search and a deep insight of your mission to purchase it. The wisdom that you need to build your house is in your administrative set-up.

Through an organizational structure, a system is productive and by effective understanding, it is established. The message I am given to proclaim could have died without the church I pastor. Only by an effective organization is it now reaching the wider audience effectively, reaping an harvest for the kingdom of God.

The man of God, Billy Graham, has been preaching John 3:16 all his years in ministry. This glorious salvation message has been preached all around the world, without losing its power. Due to a good organizational structure, this simple message is getting hotter and hotter every day.

Wisdom is the principal thing, and with all thy getting, get understanding.

Proverbs 4:7

Thank God for the anointing. Thank God for the healing power, thank God for miracles. But thank God much more for wisdom. The force of wisdom is an unbeatable force. You may have all the anointing, but without wisdom, your ministry can fall apart. The strength of your ministry lies in its organizational structure. Get organized!

Chapter twenty-eight

The Printed Page

The Word of God on the inside of a man is a life force that knows no barrier. The Word of God, we know, is quick and powerful. It is sharper than any sword you can imagine. It has power both in the natural and in the supernatural. It excels wherever it goes. Hebrews 4:12 tells us so.

No wonder then that the man that will be victorious is the man who has the Word of God on his inside. The man who will constantly have light and have no occasion to stumble is he who will not depend on bread and butter, but on the Word of God. Entrance into the miraculous is through the Word of God. This was why the last instruction Jesus gave to His disciples before He was caught up to heaven was:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...

Matthew 28:19

...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Mark 16:15

But ye shall receive power...and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea...

Acts 1:8

The Word of God has been released: "Go." This is the great commission and every child of God has this mission on earth. But how do we go? Do we go by word of mouth only? Can the gospel be preached otherwise? This is where the media come in.

One of the instruments that has been very effective in the spread of the gospel is the media. This includes both electronic and print media. One of the forces that brought about the breaking down of the iron curtain in Russia was the printed Word of God. The relentless influx of printed materials into the country, in spite of all the checks and boundaries involved, was a major contributing factor to the collapse of communism. Where human legs could not reach, due to human restrictions, the Word of God in the printed form went and won the victory!

Look at apostle Paul. He was beaten and bound in chains in several cities. He was continually being locked up in prison cells. The prison almost became his second home. When he was not in prison, he was under guard. He could not get to many of the cities he would have wanted to visit. They needed his instruction and correction in many places. But where he could not get to physically, he sent the Word of God in written form. Half of the New Testament was written by Paul from the prison cell. As he rightly puts it, "*the word of God is not bound*" (2 Tim. 2:9). He was bound, he was in chains and restricted in prison cells, but the Word of God went forth and produced the desired results. The Word of God cannot be bound.

Do not be bothered about your inability to be in certain places. Where you cannot get to physically, send the Word, and it will surely prevail. Even though the results tarry, wait for them, they shall surely shoot forth.

John the apostle was exiled to the lonely island of Patmos. This was where the Lord Jesus Christ made His last recorded appearance to His disciples in the Bible. He appeared to John, not as a Lamb or

as a mere man, but as a mighty conqueror. He appeared as One who has dominion the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He appeared as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who has conquered all. The King of kings appeared in power and gave His last instruction: Write!

...I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, Write in a book, and send...

Revelation 1:11

Getting the Word across to people has been the Lord's heartbeat and still is. The Word of God must be preached to every creature and the role of the media in this commission cannot be overemphasized. I personally have had series of personal encounters with God through the media.

In July 1976, I was reading a book written by the great man of God, T. L. Osborn, titled, The Purpose of Pentecost. I got so captivated by the revelation in it, that I couldn't stop reading until I finished the book. I was drunk, literally intoxicated by the knowledge of the power God has put in man. I was on fire and immediately, I had an urge to go and minister to some people.

When I got there, I discovered they had moved, so I said to the Holy Spirit, "I am not going to ask anyone for direction. If what I have just learnt about You is true, then tell me where these people are." I started out on my way, and for the first time in my life, I heard the audible voice of the Holy Spirit giving me instructions. He directed me to a very lonely place out of town. There was no one around that whole area.

Each time I argued, He stopped talking, and when I submitted, He resumed giving me instructions. I got to a house and the first indication I received was that I saw some familiar clothes of the people I was looking for hung on the clothes-line outside!

There is someone I can never forget in my life. I never met with him personally, but he made a great impact on my life. His name is A. A. Allen. I listened to one of his tapes in 1979, titled, The Other Side Of God. As I listened, I imagined the might behind his words. These words came like fire into me: *"The Lord killeth and maketh alive, he maketh poor and maketh rich, he bringeth down to the grave and lifteth up."*

This ignited a mighty force on my inside. It gave me all I needed to start off a ministry in Kaduna, an Islamic city in the north of Nigeria. When I had this encounter, I never knew I was going to Kaduna, the city of persecution. But the Lord knew and prepared me for it.

In 1985, I was watching one of Archbishop Benson Idahosa's videotapes. It was one of his powerful ministrations during a crusade held in Ibadan, Nigeria. After watching it, I sat down to meditate on what I had seen. Then suddenly, there was a glorious presence all around me, and I heard the steps of the Master. He came to me and gave me a pat on the back. With that one glorious touch, the fire in me was rekindled. It burnt with greater intensity than ever before!

There is power in the Word of God, no matter the form it comes in. The media publish the Word. They send the Word where human vessels cannot reach. They send the Word where you never ever imagine to visit all your life. They extend your ministry and cause it to reach a wider audience than you are aware of, or even capable of reaching.

The Word, whether in the printed form or through the electronic media, is a powerful tool for evangelism. It goes before you, to the nooks and crannies of the world, preparing a way for your personal ministry to follow.

The man of God, Evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, came to Kaduna, Nigeria, in 1990. A lot of people had never met him before, but he drew a crowd of over 500,000 at a single meeting! What brought about the explosion? His audio and visual tapes had prepared the way for him. The Word of God through the media had reached the people before him. The Word went round and the crowd came.

Coupled with being inexpensive, the published Word is extremely portable and can be distributed in large quantities. Often, in places where the preaching of the Word and churches are banned, some

Christian literature is still allowed, because of its non-threatening nature. And before one becomes aware of it, the seed has been sown, and it grows and matures and mighty things start to take place.

The published Word is as anointed as the spoken Word. It carries the same anointing with it all over the world. We have heard of people who received miracles through the published Word. A man ridden with AIDS received his healing by merely touching the television screen during one of Benny Hinn's ministrations. Kathryn Kuhlman's daily radio programme is known to have brought healing, deliverance and salvation into homes across the United States.

Besides, the man of God, the vessel used by God, may go to be with the Lord, but his ministry lives on after him through the published Word.

The published Word is permanent. It endures from generation to generation, along with its anointing. Do not let your stewardship of the mysteries of God die with you. The Bible says, *"The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it"* (Ps. 68:11). The great ones are those who publish the Word of God given to them. Join the company of the great ones today. Here are a few testimonies to encourage you:

A young housewife had had polio for years. She had been on crutches for six years and was confined to the wheel chair. She was in her laundry sitting in her wheel chair, reading Bob Mumford's book, Face Up With A Miracle. As she read, the Word of God entered into her and without realizing it, she started walking around the house! The Lord had healed her through the anointing that flowed through that book!

I was speaking on the subject, The Majesty Of His Voice at a convention. During the ministration, I gave an illustration and said: "You don't just pack your things and go to Germany when the Lord has not sent you there, otherwise, you will end up being frustrated."

There was this brother in church that day, who also bought the audio tapes of the messages and took them along with him on his business trip to Germany. While in Germany on a trip that was far from being successful, he unknowingly slotted in this particular tape The Majesty Of His Voice, and in the course of listening, came the dagger, "You don't just pack your things and go to Germany when the Lord has not sent you there, or you end up frustrated."

What a direct hit! He had just done that (packed his things and gone to Germany)! The trip was a failure, the Word of God was proved! He remembered that he did not take orders from the Lord before embarking on the trip. He came back disappointed, but instructed! He acted on the Voice and returned home and he had his breakthrough!

A man was listening to one of my messages on tape in his roadside shop, when a well-known mad man walked by. The mad man stood and asked the man, "Who is speaking there?" The man playing the tape was frightened. He gathered up some courage and responded, "Bishop David Oyedepo." Then the mad man questioned, "Can I hear the other side?" He was obliged and he received his deliverance on the spot!

A very dynamic pastor in this country was reading one of our books, The Miracle Seed, as an unbeliever. But in the course of reading the book, he got saved and baptized in the Holy Ghost, and began speaking in other tongues even before he finished reading the book!

A man, a long time victim of high blood pressure, got hold of our book, Keys To Divine Health. He received his healing while reading the book, when the sentence "the devil is not a gentleman" entered into him.

These are just a few. Great things happen through the published Word. It is a commandment from the Lord: "What thou seest, WRITE; that which thou receiveth, WRITE; publish it and feed the hungry souls all over the world."

Part 5: Financing the Ministry

Chapter twenty-nine

The Fundamental Requirements

I believe the subject of financing the ministry is very important if one truly wants to excel in ministry, because many ministers have sold their birthrights and that of their ministries in their quest for finances. Many have lost their bearing because of this need.

Let me say this categorically: it's not money that makes a ministry; rather, it's ministry that makes money. So let no one say, “If only I had a lot of money, then I would have a great ministry.” This is a wrong assumption. A great ministry is what opens the door for great finances, and not the other way around. Therefore, in this section, I would like to address what it takes to access the finances we need to run the ministry God has given us.

Everything in the kingdom of God operates on keys; if you don't have the right key with which to open any door, access will be denied you. But with the right key in your hand, access to the room is as cheap as breathing. I want to put in your hands the keys to ministry finances, so you won't ever need to struggle with it. God gave us these keys in our ministry, and we have enjoyed the reality of supernatural supplies by simply following them. Our ministry has never received any aid from any nation of the world; we have simply stayed under the shower of God's blessings such that many of our ministry friends, including great teachers on the subject of prosperity, have paused to ask us, “How did you get this done?”

Let me start by stating categorically that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). Your being in a “disadvantaged country” is not the reason for your struggles with finances, as you will enjoy financial abundance if you do what it takes to command it, no matter where you are located. Everyone (the nation notwithstanding) who works according to the rules of the game will be in command. The base of our ministry is located in Nigeria, seen as a poor third world country. But we are not indebted to anybody: we do not owe any bank, individual or supplier. Everything you see wherever any of our churches is located is fully paid for. And guess what? The supplies are not coming from here, but from heaven!

I have never written an appeal letter for help to any organization, ministry or friend, though I am privileged to have highly placed and very influential friends in all kinds of places. Many presidents of nations are my friends and I have their private telephone numbers, but I have never called on any of them for help, nor have I knocked on any man's door to say, “Can you be of help?” I'm saying this in case you are thinking, “But you have a lot of friends and contacts that can help you.” Let me show you my contact. The Bible says:

…The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

Daniel 11:32

That is my greatest contact He is the most dependable, effective reliable contact.

Are You Sent?

When Jesus sent out His twelve disciples in Luke 9, He said to them:

…Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

Luke 9:3

In other words, "Don't take anything with you as you go. As long as I am the One that has sent you, I am committed to your welfare." The pursuit of any God-given assignment always commands His provisions, as God is committed to providing for you when He is the One that has sent you. God has enough to meet all your financial needs as long as you are on His mission. But the question is: "Are you on His mission or are you running with your self-appointed mission?"

No matter how many people God sends out, He has more than enough to meet all their needs. Think about this: in Luke 9, He sent twelve out and told them to carry nothing as they went. And again in chapter 10, He sends out the seventy with the same command. They all went and came back celebrating and rejoicing. Luke 22:35 summarizes what the two groups He sent out encountered on their way:

And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

The operational word here is: *"When I sent you…"* If you are not sent by Him, don't expect Him to finance your ministry. But as long as you are on His assignment, He is committed to meeting all your needs as you go. Don't start your own project and expect God to finance it. For instance, don't see your friend being used mightily by God on the crusade ground and tell yourself, "I am more anointed than he is, so I will also start an international crusade." Or maybe a colleague of yours has been commanded by God to build a hospital, and you say, "I am more mature than he is in ministry, and I have management expertise, so I am going to start my own hospital." You may be the first patient they would admit there, because if the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do? God is permitted to provide only for those He has sent.

Ministry has no regards for your expertise or educational background, neither has it anything to do with what you can do. To excel in ministry and to guarantee God's supernatural supplies in running your assignment, the determining factor is mainly what you are called to do. If you called yourself, then get ready to pay the bills by yourself. All He calls never lack while on the assignment; their supplies are guaranteed.

What Is Your Message?

To guarantee supernatural supplies in the work of the ministry, after establishing that you have been called for the assignment you are pursuing, the next question is: "What message are your bearing to the people?" This is very important because you are supposed to be a messenger sent as an agent to meet the needs of mankind. When Jesus sent the twelve disciples out, He sent them with a message:

And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

Luke 9:2

They went forth with a message directed at meeting the specific needs of the people; therefore, God also was working with them, confirming their words with signs following. Isaiah 40:6 says, "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field."

The supply is not guaranteed just because you are called, but because you are doing what you are called to do. Your primary task is the message you are bearing to meet the needs of mankind. When you are able to identify this and are running with it, then you have fulfilled a basic requirement for accessing heaven's resources for your assignment.

The message is the core assignment of your ministry. The strength of every ministry lies in the depth of your commitment to your core assignment. Your supply is guaranteed when you are committed to your core assignment. Even in the natural, you are not paid just because you have been employed; you are paid for doing what you are employed to do. So, the depth of your commitment to your core assignment is what determines the extent to which God will commit His resources to your ministry needs. Even Jesus was not exempted from this rule. Heaven's supplies only answered to Him when He was found pursuing His assignment.

And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

Luke 8:1-3

Jesus went into all the cities and villages preaching and staying focused on His message, therefore heaven's resources kept pouring in, and the women ministered to Him of their substance. The strength of any ministry, therefore, is not in its spread, but in its depth; so, preach the Word! That's why the Bible admonishes us to be instant in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4:2). Don't let anything take you off your core assignment, as your commitment to your core assignment is what determines your overall success in ministry.

Ministry is all about meeting the needs of mankind through the Word of God. If the people have any other reason for coming to your church other than to hear and be fed with the Word of God, you do not have a strong church, but a market church. They will come when it is convenient and stay back when it is not. Paul knew this so well that he was focused on his assignment. See what happened in Acts 13:44 as a result:

And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

As Paul continued on his assignment, we are told that the Word of God grew so much that it prevailed over every devil in the vicinity! I remember holding a sixteen-week-long seminar at the onset of our ministry, and at the end, the church soared from about twenty to ninety-nine! The effect of the Word began to grow, until the church grew up to one hundred, and then to five hundred, one thousand, two thousand, and on and on. Our ministry grew absolutely because of the Word that was preached to the people.

Ministry means a minister bearing a message that meets the needs of mankind. David Yonggi Cho said he spends about 70% of his time preparing his message, and the result was that his church grew to become the largest church on the planet earth. No wonder 1Timothy 5:17 says:

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Preaching the Word is what makes ministry, and ministry makes money. The Word is what determines the quality of your ministry, which in turn determines the quality of supply you enjoy. Billy Graham has been bearing the simple message of salvation all these years, and it is still effective even after 60 years; people are still listening to him. So to enjoy a ceaseless flow of finances in ministry, identify the message that God has given you for the people, and pursue it with a sense of mission.

Seek To Be Impactful

…For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Romans 15:27

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

1 Corinthians 9:11

Your spiritual input or impact is what determines the level of material means that will flow into your ministry. In other words, only people that your ministry impacts are permitted by covenant to give into your ministry; and impact occurs as a result of the quality of revelation you receive form God and in turn feed the people with. That is why you need time to receive from the Lord, because as you receive from heaven and translate it to the people, the end product will be impact and ceaseless flow of finances to run the ministry.

I call it the impact-input cycle: you impact the people and they input materially and financially to your ministry, and then you impact them again and they input their means again, and on and on. The impact-input cycle goes on and on until you stop impacting the people. That is only when you compel the people to stop inputting to your ministry.

What members of our congregation give is amazing! They give in such unbelievable way because their lives have been unbelievably transformed! The Word is turning them on day and night, so with utmost excitement and unbelievable zeal, they keep sowing back into the ministry. Their excited giving is unending, because the Word they are being fed with is intoxicating, and its effect is visible in their lives. Strangely, I have never once prayed, "Oh God, let them give." Yet we receive calls from all over the place, from people who ask, "Tell us where to send offerings, we are eager to send something to you."

In 2004, we bought one hundred additional buses to our fleet for transporting the people to church. That same year, we bought a new airplane, at the same time that the Covenant University was still being built. As if that was not enough, forty-four new churches were also completed in Nigeria in the same year. We had projects going on in 201 towns around the nation that same year! Impact is the greatest mystery behind supernatural supplies in ministry.

I'd like you to be impact crazy after reading this book! Don't just look for how to impress people, but think of how to impact their lives. Only what can stop your impact can stop their input. Note that the input from them to your ministry is their covenant duty apportioned them by God. Impact is what transforms a large church into a great church. A great church is one where someone comes in as a pauper and is transform into an industrial giant, he comes in as a beggar and in no time becomes a major distributor. It's a place where the homeless in no time becomes a landlord by reason of the impact of the Word that is taught. Jesus left 120 people in the upper room, and they turned the entire world upside-down. So build a great ministry by giving great attention to the Word of God.

That is why the Bible says:

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.
Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.
For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.
Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

Proverbs 4: 20-23

"My son, attend to my words," not "Attend to your dresses or musical instrument." Ministry has no worth without the Word of God. The Word, not music is what attracts men to you. The only thing that attracts the sheep 24 hours of the day is food. So borrowing money to buy musical instrument is not ministry. The Word is at the centre of every great ministry. Word time is the most sensitive time at such places. Whenever T. L. Osborn is to minister, he doesn't come out all day long, but stays in the room by himself reading through the gospels, worshipping and praying, reading and searching, praying in the Spirit and in his understanding. No matter where you are writing me from, I don't read letters on Saturdays; that is my day of absolute concentration, a day I devote to cooking and preparing Sunday's menu.

Always remember the impact-input covenant cycle; it will help you sit up in the pursuit of your ministry. It is God's system for meeting and supplying your needs in ministry. The Word was being preached to the point that God began to wrought special signs and wonders by the hands of Paul.

Therefore, sit up! Stop looking for people to send you something, and start seeking ways of impacting more people. Study to show thyself approved!

Nothing great happens by chance. If you live your life to chance, then you won't have a chance. So, make your choice. I made my choice for impact and have not regretted that choice ever since. I earlier in this book told the story of the man who brought me a briefcase full of money, being proceeds of a business he did after reading one of my books. Impact! The devil that can't stop your impact can't stop the inflow of finances, so you don't have to play financial games to have financial resources.

Your resources are not in the hands of the people, but in His hands. The people did not send you; rather, you are sent to the people. They are not your employer, so your resources are not from them. God only moves on them to give to your ministry as channels that have been blessed by your ministry. That is why God said to me, “Don't raise money; raise men, and you will have more than you ever require for ministry.” Let your congregation always look forward to what they would benefit from God every time they come to church. They are coming with burdens, don't add to their burdens. Let every first timer be as comfortable in church as those who are matured in God.

The day you start having human sponsors for your ministry is the day God will stop being your sponsor. Human sponsors will pocket and limit your ministry. When you go to human beings for help, before you know it, they will start telling you, “We will try to help you, but don't preach that kind of thing you preached last Sunday again; it's affecting some of us.” They will then start giving you preaching outlines. Don't allow any small businessman pocket your ministry because of one dirty car he gave you. The Psalmist said, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills from whence cometh my help.” Your help comes from the Lord, which made the heavens and the earth, and He is a good God. No matter the needs of your ministry, God has all it takes to meet them all. So stay tuned to Him!

Chapter thirty

Covenant Demands For Supernatural Prosperity

For thus saith the Lord of hosts; yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;

And I will shake all nations, and the desires of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

Haggai 2:6-8

God believes in the place of silver and gold for impactful ministry. An earth-shaking ministry will require earth-shaking resources to make it happen. You cannot use prayer and fasting to shake the world, it will be inadequate. Anointing without resources cannot shake a community either; it takes supernatural resources to shake your world.

God asked the people, "Who among you saw the glory of this house in its first state? How do you see it now? Is it not as compared to nothing? But yet once a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth; the silver is mine and the gold is mine to carry out this awesome assignment." That means God also believes that the glories of the latter house will require massive inflow of financial resources to make it happen. The Covenant University, for instance, is impacting Nigeria much more than the church is doing. This is not just because of its academic programme, but because of the massiveness of investment in it. That is why I said every earth-shaking ministry requires earth-shaking resources.

Our ministry would have been limited in impact if it didn't have resources to match the anointing. Though the anointing may be heavy, but if the resources are not as heavy to match, the anointing would soon become a weight. Oh thank God for the anointing in this part of the world, and thank God for the weights of revelation in all nooks and crannies of this country. Also, thank God for the awesome callings, visions and revelations in this continent. But until we are able to access resources to match, the weights of revelations and visions might culminate in frustrations.

The subject of kingdom wealth is built upon the platform of the covenant. Therefore, we need a proper understanding of covenant details, in order to maximize our heritage in the covenant of prosperity. What must I do to access supernatural prosperity in ministry? Like I very often say, any faith that makes God absolutely responsible for the issues of your life is an irresponsible faith! There is always what you must do for God to step in and act on your behalf. As free as salvation is, there is what you must first do in order to be saved. On the day of Pentecost, the people asked Peter and the other apostles, *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* Peter did not say to them, "Do nothing." No! Rather, he said, "Repent" (Acts 2:38-40).

In the same way, there is what you must do to be healed. Jesus saw the blind men and asked them, "What do you want me to do for you?" They said, "That we may receive our sight," and He said to them, "Do you believe that I the son of man am able to do this?" and they replied, "Yea, Lord." He then said to them, "According to your faith, be it unto you." Why? You need your faith to connect with healing. Just as

there is what you must do to be saved and healed, there is also what you must do to prosper, and in this context, to prosper in ministry.

I also often tell people that knowing what God has promised is information, but knowing what to do to actualise it is revelation. Too many are dancing around what God can do, but cannot see it happening, because they are only celebrating information, which they have mistaken for revelation. In the preceding chapter I emphasized that in order to enjoy finances for running your ministry then your calling must first be certified, you must have a message that meets the needs of the people, and that you must strive to be impactful. Your core assignment as a minister is the ministry of the Word: providing answers to the woes of this world from the Word of God.

The question you must now ask is, “What must I do to prosper in ministry?” There is what you must do to walk into this earth-shaking dimension of prosperity I've been talking about. Every heavenly vision is run by heavenly provisions; and without an understanding of how to access heavenly provisions, you may die in frustration.

The Tithing Obligation

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

Malachi 3:8-11

The tithing obligation does not only apply to individuals, but also to institutions, organizations, companies, and even churches as well. Any church that spends all its income without separating the tithe is only blocking its access to supernatural resources. In the above scripture, God said “this whole nation is under a curse.” That means institutions, organization and even churches can come under a curse when this all-important covenant obligation is ignored.

A very mysterious and unique thing about the tithe is that Christ in heaven is the One that receives it.

And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

Hebrews 7:8

The tithe is a heavenly transaction. So when you pay your tithe as a ministry, it is literally like placing the five loaves and two fishes into the hands of Jesus, which was more than enough to feed five thousand people! Jesus lifts up your ministry's tithe to the Father, Who in turn multiplies it back to you in torrents by meeting all your needs in ministry.

Our ministry pays the tithe on her income. As a result, it lives under an open heaven of ceaseless flow of finances for getting the job done. If your ministry does not pay its tithes, and correctly too, it is knowingly or unknowingly living under a curse. Fulfilling the tithing obligation is the right step to enjoying supernatural supplies in ministry. The Bible says:

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD.

Leviticus 27:30

This includes the tithes of ministries too, because they are operating on the earth. I discovered that the secret behind some great names and families in the last century was this covenant key of tithing. Economic giants in the west like John D. Rockefeller, the Colgate family, the Heinz family, and the Kraft family were all tithing families. John D. Rockefeller gave about 500 million dollars within a period of time, and when they asked him why he did such a thing, he said God gave him the money, and so he was free to do what he pleased with it. A remarkable thing about these tithing families was that they left great fortunes behind for generations yet unborn to benefit from.

Do not kill that church or ministry; pay your tithe! Let every ministry pay its tithes to higher ministries, ministries you desire to be like and want to tap into the reward they carry and are enjoying. The minister is to be led by the Spirit of the Lord in determining where his ministry's tithes should go. As you pay your

tithe correctly, your ministry will begin to enjoy sweat-less increases because of the mystery of an open heaven under which you now operate.

Tithing is a non-negotiable covenant obligation for individuals, families, institutions, organizations and ministries. It is God's grand design for the security of your destiny, that's why He said, “Prove me now, if I will not open the windows of heaven and rebuke the devourers for your sake, and your resources will no longer be allowed to be wasted.”

This is a very difficult subject to teach ministers, but I have been teaching it for years. However, teaching it is not what makes it work, but doing it. Mary the mother of Jesus said to the men at the marriage feast, *“Whatever He tells you to do, do it”* (Jn. 2:5). So I encourage you to put this missing link back in place; enough of all the struggles! Operating under an open heaven is what makes the ministry journey exciting. I decree that your obedience would be fulfilled today, in Jesus' name!

Please note that it takes a tithing pastor to have a tithing church (Hos. 4:9). It is like people, like priest. Only a prosperity-oriented pastor can grow a prosperous church. What your members give is not equal to supernatural prosperity, because you might need more resources than what they are giving. What comes from above to your ministry is supernatural prosperity. Don't be deceived by motivational speakers; supernatural prosperity is a reality! Don't turn your church to an organization, by using the world's management skills and principles to run a divine task; it won't work. Tithing is your access to supernatural prosperity. God's Word remains true: when your obedience to the tithing rule is in place, then prove me now, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, till there be not enough room to take the blessings.

While driving around our campus with a very dear friend in ministry one day, he asked me, “Brother David, tell me how do you pay for all these?” I said, “Faith!” He said, “Faith?” I replied again, “Yes, faith!” Faith is the hardest currency, yet it holds the same value in every nation of the earth. Faith is bringing God's hand to bear on human circumstances; it is moving God's hand to do only what God alone can do among men. But first, you must do what God has asked you to do, so He can be committed to confirm His Word.

A friend of mine asked one of my associates as they flew together on the plane, “Please tell me, what the source of the Bishop's prosperity is, because he says he doesn't earn money from his books?” That is true, I have not earned any money from all my books, and there are more than four million copies of the different titles in circulation! To the praise of His name, we even allow free access to all our titles on the Internet. Somebody once said, “Let them pay for it,” but I said, “No, we have more than enough money to handle it; we don't need money from it. Let them duplicate it, download it, share it, whatever, because they are published to bless the world, not to make money from them!” The secret of my prosperity is absolute trust in the God of the whole earth and a practical obedience to all His covenant demands.

Many pastors don't pay their tithes; they are self-made Melchizedeks - they are the high priests of the world. They wait for tithes to be brought to them. Unknown to them, the more they collect from the people without paying theirs as well, the more they reduce. God's laws are universal; tithing is a covenant obligation for all. I have been paying my personal tithes since I knew its importance, and have never felt a pinch doing it. I do it with all delight and excitement. I pay the tithes in whatever denomination I receive the offering and on whatever I receive that can be tithed.

Let me stress once again that without access to supernatural prosperity, your ministry will be limited to where you are now. But note much more that everywhere abundance is mentioned, obedience is demanded. If you will hearken to the voice of your God and observe to do what He says, then He will bless you in the city and outside the city. Obedience is the covenant demand for abundance, not intercession, supplication, prayer of agreement or fasting. Every time abundance is declared, obedience is demanded.

Meet The People's Needs

"What else must I and my ministry do to access supernatural prosperity?" Your ministry must be committed to meeting the needs of mankind. The first Church was a centre of distribution: as people were bringing to the Church, the apostles were distributing what was being brought in to those who needed them. The more they brought, the more God blessed them, and the more God blessed them, the more they brought and the more the apostles were distributing, until distribution time was taking up their preaching time (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-37; 6:2-4). That was a perfect example of a prosperous Church.

If your ministry is involved in tithing, the heavens over you will be open. You are then expected to use the blessings from the open heavens to engage in good works. That is what Paul told Timothy to tell the people:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

God's riches upon your ministry are for judicious distribution; they are to be used in servicing the needs of humanity. A giving church is a growing church, and a distributing church is an ever-increasing church. Why do the blessings of some churches reduce? They do not care for the suffering among them. The Bible says:

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.

Proverbs 28:27

Many ministries are in lack because they are not giving to the poor. Every church must have a budget for the welfare of the needy in the church and outside it. The Bible says:

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:9-10

Our church has a budget for the people's welfare needs. We sent a shipload of relief materials to Rwanda during the Rwandan war. We also sent three separate shipments of relief materials to Liberia. Our first shipment was to the nation, then we sent to the body of Christ in that land, and then we sent a third time again. During the bomb blast in Lagos, Nigeria, our relief effort to the victims was noted by the International Red Cross.

One day, a young missionary, my son in the gospel, came visiting. While we were chatting, he told me that people went blind between the ages of 35 and 40 in community where he was serving, because of a water-borne disease that was ravaging the place. I immediately said, "Never. Water! We will sink boreholes for them; we will tap into clean water for them." Then he also mentioned that the people went about naked. Again, I said, "Never, it cannot happen here; we will clothe them. And if they do not go to school, we will build schools for them." To the glory of God, a school is standing there today, they have functional boreholes and good health care facilities, and the once naked people are well clothed. The water blindness has been sent back to the devil, and the people now live healthy lives because of clean water! It was a joy to see children from that community well clothed and reciting scriptural verses in well delivered English language during our twenty-fifth anniversary celebration in May!

Within the body also, our mission runs a thirty-million naira budget on scholarship to indigent students alone. That is apart from what goes to orphans, children of widows, widows and the aged in our midst.

Orphanage homes and the likes are also beneficiaries of God's blessings through us. With all these in place, the heavens over our ministry cannot be shut, neither can the blessings stop flowing. The Bible says:

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Luke 6:38

As you give to others, and help out those in need, financial resources for the work of the ministry can never cease flowing into your ministry. Make sure you are doing what you should be doing with the blessings you receive. Many ministries need to put dispensaries and cottage hospitals in places to service the needs of the dying in their midst. Some others would need to rise up to be part of the educational crusade that is now going around in Africa, to re-structure the educational system so as to give birth to people of worth. Some would need to get involved in building orphanages, old peoples' homes, clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, providing shelter for the homeless, etc.

What are you doing? What is your ministry contributing to the society it belongs to? You need to be busy occupying the earth till Jesus comes. Any ministry that has no outlets would soon have their inlets closed; you need an outflow in order to maintain the inflow. This is because every living thing must contribute its quota to staying alive, including plants and animals. They too are involved in the giving cycle that guarantees their survival. Plants give out oxygen, which is needed for animal survival, and the animals in turn give out carbon dioxide, which plants need to produce their food and for survival. This cycle must continue for as long as any party wants to stay alive. Anyone of them that gets tired of giving automatically dies.

Giving is living! When you stop giving; you start dying. Look at the community your church is located and begin to influence it for Jesus, let the church be practically involved in influencing the society. Let the church membership feel a touch of compassion for the society it belongs to and be committed to servicing the needs of the needy there. That is the way to guarantee that your church or organization will never be in need. Ours is a needs-free church; we are not in need, but meet needs.

What is your church doing? The suit a pastor wears is not what makes him a shepherd, but the needs he and his ministry are meeting. The seat you occupy in the church does not make you a shepherd, but the needs of the flock you are meeting. I was glad when I saw the video of relief materials being distributed to the people! I saw the effect of the gospel reaching out, the joy on the faces of the recipients; I saw the people jumping up when they saw fresh water and clothes being brought for them. My heart rejoiced because others were happy, because needs were being met.

God never makes mistakes; kingdom wealth is entrusted to those He can trust to judiciously use it. The question is, “Can He trust you to use His riches to accomplish His purpose?” If He can, then He would keep releasing it. But until He can trust you and me, He will never release His riches upon us. May your ministry be found worthy of that trust!

What tithing does is to grants you access to supernatural ideas: the heaven over you opens and the rain comes down. The rain represents the anointing that quickens your understanding. God wants to do great exploits by your hands; please be open for Him to do it! Lead your flock into realms of exploits by fulfilling covenant demands. Ministry is designed to meet the needs of the people; may your ministry not fail! May the blessedness of the mystery of this covenant begin to manifest in every aspect of your life and ministry! I pray that neither you nor your ministry will ever be seen as a liability anymore. I loose the grace for access to supernatural prosperity upon your life and ministry, in Jesus' name!

Part 6: Relationship and Ministry

Chapter thirty-one

The Power Of Relationships

Relationship in life is not optional; it is obligatory, for maximum results. It is possible one gets some results without relating, but one gets better results when one does.

Do you know one of the reasons why the work of creation is outstanding? It is because God the Father worked together with the Son and the Holy Ghost. He didn't do it alone. This is the reason why it is recorded:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...

Genesis 1:26

God made man in His own image and likeness. Man therefore is God-like. But why did God have to make somebody like Himself? After all, He is God and doesn't need anyone; He can do all things by Himself. God needed companionship, someone to relate with Him, for service and to serve His wonderful, infinite purposes on earth. Man was to serve as the connecting rod between God's earth and heaven, where He dwells.

In His omnipotence, He needed to relate with man. God provides all man needs. Man draws inspiration from God, to enhance and embellish the rest of His creation. God's joy in His creation was great, and He loved to communicate and to reason with him.

I can imagine Him coming down in the cool of the day to talk with Adam in the garden. How He must have looked forward with anticipation to the discussions they would have; perhaps wondering what name Adam had given to some of the animals and how he was doing in his job as a keeper of the earth. If God, the Creator, needed to relate, how much more does man need to relate with fellow human beings in this world.

Of course, the greatest relationship one can have is one's relationship with God. But relationship with fellow men is very needful for the activation of one's goal in life.

Relationships are vital to man's ultimate achievement in life. God, who knows what is most needful for man, said:

...It is not good that the man should be alone...

Genesis 2:18

Most people ascribe this loneliness to man's need for a woman. Yes, God recognized this; but He also recognized the need for the man to have other men to relate with. The woman God made was to serve a dual purpose: provide companionship for man (in herself) and also to bring forth others, who could relate with him outside the home. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 4:9-10:

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

A lot of suicide stories we hear these days stem from one major fact loneliness. Suicide victims are people who have been alone for too long. Have you ever been frustrated due to consistent failure in a particular project and got to the point of really being disgusted with yourself, wanting to give everything

up? What's more, you are alone and nobody seems to care one jot about what you are going through. The thoughts that go through your mind at such times will be quite scandalous if written.

Now, imagine a friend coming in at such a time. Not just any friend, but a very close friend. He takes one look at you and says, "Man, what's up?" He speaks a few words to you and you feel some spark come back into you. It is as if your fire was rekindled; you are brought back from the depths of depression and possible suicide, to the top again.

If you had been left alone, you might have sought for relief in many other ways; you might have ended up finding faults with everybody that day. Your wife would have had to keep a safe distance from you. You would have sunk very low into doing all manner of things, which normally, you wouldn't even think of, if you weren't alone with your depressing thoughts.

It is said that without a vision, the people perish; but someone once stated that without the people, visions perish also! No one can make full proof of ministry in isolation. The Bible says:

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Proverbs 27:17

Contact and interaction between people is relationship. To relate means to be in touch, to contact, to be involved one with another. Relationships are crucial, vital and very needful in realizing one's goals and objectives in life. One must then be very selective in the relationships one contracts. A wrong relationship can be devastating, heartbreaking, dream-killing and vision- destroying. Abraham's relationship with Lot marred his vision. He could neither see nor walk into his inheritance in God.

And the Lord said unto Abram, After that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art ...

For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

Genesis 13:14-15

Though God had told Abraham to leave his country to a land, which He would show him, yet it wasn't until Lot left him that God showed him the land. Also Rehoboam, king Solomon's son, fell a prey to his young friends and thereby brought about the division of the nation of Israel. The friends of the prodigal son helped him out of his plenty, into abject poverty. Similarly, Ammon's friendship with Jonadab led him to the sin, which eventually took his life.

On the other hand, David's throne was preserved through his relationship with Jonathan. Elisha's relationship with Elijah gave him an unparalleled ministry. We can therefore conclude that there is one major thing about relationships they either make or mar you.

A wrong relationship is detrimental to progress and success in life. It can break you altogether; your gift, expertise and divine grace notwithstanding.

The Corinthian Church was the most gifted of the early Churches. They were not behind in any gift of the Holy Spirit, but Paul wrote to them, earnestly warning them:

Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

1 Corinthians 15:33

If you really want to be blessed and retain your blessings, the onus is on you to make quality choice of relationships. Psalm 1 clearly defines the responsibilities of a man who desires to be blessed:

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.

Psalm 1:1-3

A man who keeps good company will never run dry, he will never wither. He will constantly be refreshed and fulfiled. Proverbs 10:22 says, *"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no*

sorrow with it."

If you want sorrow-free progress, then seek to be blessed of God, by being highly selective of the company you keep. This is the reason why many hardworking, Bible-believing saints make no headway in life. Jesus warned us:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Matthew 7:6

Your goals and objectives in life are precious to you and to God. You should therefore mind who you share them with. Hezekiah led the king of Babylon round his kingdom and showed him all his treasures. Not long after, he lost all the gold in the temple and in the king's house to him. Whose fault? It was not the king of Babylon's fault; he saw, desired and being of greater might, he possessed! It was Hezekiah's fault. All the confidential talks you hold with sinners are traps in disguise. Watch out! The forces of hell are spying out on your gold, your future; don't let them in. They can also rob you of your ultimate in the kingdom.

The choice of company is your responsibility. No relationship takes place without agreement between the two parties involved.

Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Amos 3:3

However, that one agrees with you is not enough; you must also agree with him/her for a relationship to start. Iron sharpens iron.

Right relationships are supposed to result in progress. This is the acid test for right choice. Wood does not sharpen iron; so any iron that relates with wood becomes blunt and the wood also suffers reduction in size, as it is chopped off.

None of the parties involved in a wrong relationship profit in any way. Negative influences have greater power of pulling people down. The law of gravity naturally causes a pulling down of everything towards the earth. Negative influences darken great futures. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20).

So, make your choice.

Levels Of Relationship

Three levels of relationship are strongly recommended for speedy, healthy and proven ministry. They are:

1. Relationship with a superior for counselling
2. Relationship with a colleague for sharing
3. Relationship with a younger person for sowing

Relationship With A Superior

This is a kind of master-servant relationship. Purposes are defeated without counsel. If you look carefully around you, you will definitely see people who are conspicuously above you in your field of endeavour or calling. This distinction is not necessarily by reason of age, but by proven results. The time of starting out notwithstanding, every other human yardstick has to bow to the superiority of results. It is just as James told us in his epistle:

...Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.

James 2:18

As faith without works is dead, so also ministry without proven results is stagnant. Examine yourself. What have you achieved in ministry? How much impact have you made? Now, compare your results with the results of others in your area of specialization. There must be scores of them who are quite ahead of you. Some have done ten times over and above what you have done.

What do you do about this? Are you going to run them down or follow them? This is where a lot of people miss it, especially ministers. Instead of following the footprints of those ahead of them, they find faults with them. You, who are finding faults with your superiors and criticizing them, are you perfect? NO, none is perfect. We shall only come to perfection when immortality swallows up mortality, when we see Jesus face to face.

Search the Scriptures, for they were written for our examples. Which of the patriarchs of faith was perfect? Was it Abraham or Isaac? What about Jacob? Or was it David, the man after God's own heart? None of these were perfect, but the Bible says we should follow them:

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Hebrews 6:12

If those whom you have been asked to follow were not perfect and you are not perfect yourself, why then do you demand perfection from others? Perfection is not the yardstick for followership. What matters is, “does the one you are following have results you need to see happen in your own ministry?” If he does, then thank God for him; follow him to learn what you need from him. Follow his good points and leave the bad ones alone. It is not your responsibility to run him down.

If perfection was the yardstick for followership, then Elijah would have been the last person anyone would follow. The Bible has it that he was a wild man and did whatever he wanted, irrespective of what people thought. No wonder there was found only one prophet in Israel who saw something good in him and who closed his eyes and ears to all other things, just to follow him.

Thus, while other prophets were castigating Elijah, Elisha followed him, and followed through. His followership earned him a double portion of Elijah's anointing. The others who were the castigators, the backbiters, the mockers, later became his servants.

And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

2 Kings 2:15

Be determined not to be a backbiter, but a follower. The footprints of those higher than you are to lead you to higher planes than where you are. The Bible says you should follow them, not run them down or castigate them.

The key word is follow, not wish their fall. If you cannot follow those ahead of you, who you see and can relate with, how then are you going to follow those whom you have only read about. The only wise thing to do is to follow them and follow through.

Exploits always have human points of reference. Every outstanding figure today lays claim to some inspiration from one person or the other ahead of him. The latter rain anointing is going to be mainly transferred through human vessels.

There is no new ministry under the sun. No matter your gift or calling, someone has been there before you and explored it to high profiting. This is very important. The devil knows it, so when he identifies your source, he tries to destroy it through evil stories, so you can disconnect from the anointed one whom you are following.

The devil spreads devilish spirits of insubordination around, which have made many decide to either make it by themselves or never make it at all. They hate to make reference to men ahead of them and close

their minds to any inspiration from such sources. They take their books and scan through them with disdain. When they listen to their tapes, it is to find faults that they can use to justify their lack of followership.

On February 5, 1985, the Lord said to me concerning Archbishop Benson Idahosa, “Arise and meet My servant in Benin, for I have things for you there.” I didn't understand, so I did some complaining. I said, “Lord, I have heard so many terrible things about this man, what could you possibly want me to do with him?”

All the same, I went. The man of God himself opened the door for me. We had never met before then, yet he told me the Lord had told him He was sending me to him for specific reasons. Well, I settled down to hear what I needed from him. I collected what I lacked. I closed my ears to every other thing. I wasn't looking for faults. I submitted myself to his tutorship and until his call to glory; there was a very unusual and binding relationship between the two of us.

How we need to locate and follow the footprints of those ahead of us today! Then only will we arrive faster at our ultimate. Even in the academic field, a reference library is a great asset. All works of life are built on the previous works of successful men in those fields. No research work succeeds without a list of references of past works in the same field.

Show me a man who is making satisfactory progress in life and you have seen one who takes delight in following after those ahead of him in his area of specialization. This is simply common sense, and because it is founded in the Scriptures, it makes covenant sense to adapt it.

Relationship With Colleagues

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Proverbs 27:17

There are people with whom you engage in the same assignment, people with whom you are confronted with the same tasks. Relationships between people of this sort is referred to as friendship. It is both complementary and competitive. The parties involved challenge one another to progress. The one coming to the aid of the other in the hour of need, sharing intimately without one dominating the other.

This is a most exciting and resourceful level of relationship. One shares discoveries, which prompt the other party to burn the midnight oil in search of another discovery to match. The purpose of competition here is to provoke one another to attain the highest they can go. It is a healthy competition.

For instance, I have a companion in the ministry like this. A testimony from him stirs me up. I rejoice with him, and I want to be the one to share the next testimony. We share intimately, heart-to-heart and by the grace of God, the two of us have made our humble, but notable contributions respectively. Every iron should look for another iron to relate with, it pays off at the end.

Relationship With A Younger Person

The mind feels most comfortable with this level of relationship, because he delights in being the boss. He wants to be recognized as the leader, so he blows up. He puffs up. He lashes out the instructions. He carries a club in one hand, waiting and wishing for the next mistake. His carnal mind makes him feel fulfilled as he works in this deceptive step of the devil.

But relationship with a younger person can be very profiting when entered into the way God wants it to be. What readily comes to mind is the relationship between Paul and Timothy and that between Jesus

and His disciples.

The benefits of this kind of relationship are obvious. The older person is to serve as a teacher and a leader. He sows or invests his knowledge in the younger one, who in turn receives it for his benefit. The older person is rewarded with the satisfaction he gets when the younger person performs excellently well. In addition, he also gets back what he sows from higher vessels, because the Scriptures cannot be broken: *"Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap"* (Gal. 6:7).

The younger person, on the other hand, gets directed in his path. He is made through accurate application of what he learns from the older. His faithful followership also singles him out as a leadership candidate, because quality followership produces quality leadership.

This third level of relationship is therefore primarily directed at the upliftment of the younger person, and at the same time enhances the position and ministry of the older person, if he is actually lifting the younger one from his heart into all he knows and has received.

These three levels of relationship form an interesting cycle. It draws inspiration, shares with colleagues and passes on to a younger one.

We are in a race, therefore, we should be on the track, running always. This race will not end until one dies or Jesus comes to take us home. One of the things that can help one surge forward in this race is the relationship one maintains and how successful one is in operating the three levels of relationship.

Relationships are not permanent. Your level of attainment per time always determines the type of relationship you maintain with individuals. Since you are pressing forward daily, this increases your results and the individuals you relate with also change.

Mr. X has a ministry and used to be very close with his colleague, Mr. Y, when they first started. After a few years, Mr. X, due to the impact he has made, moved up to another level of attainment, X1.

Meanwhile, Mr. Y is still where he was at the beginning. The relationship between Mr. X and Mr. Y has to change from that of colleagues to the third level (relationship with a younger one). Mr. X now has another relationship on his level with Mr. P. If, however, Mr. P moves up and leaves Mr. X behind, their relationship will have to change. He gets one on his level to relate with. It goes on and on like that. Your level of success determines the level of relationship you have with others at any given time.

Relationships are like water: they seek their own level. Mr. Y can now only go to Mr. X for advice and counsel, because Mr. X is now on a higher level. Also, Mr. P when he gets to P1 shares and interacts intimately with Mr. A, who is on the same level with him. This is why everyone should press on in his assignment and seek out avenues for improvement.

All that are in a race run, so keep on running. Do not slow down or stop; otherwise, those behind you will catch up with you and overtake you. A runner in a race who talks about the "K-legs" of the one in front of him and listens to comments from spectators is not likely to win, because talking and listening to side-talks slows down his strides. So, fix your eyes on your target and press on. Run that you may obtain!

Chapter thirty-two

The Minister And His Family

A successful ministry is highly dependent on a successful family life. The minister and his ministry cannot be dissociated from his family. A man who has strife and division in his family is most likely to have hot disagreements and factions within his ministry.

Someone said, “Behind every successful man is a woman”, and I say, “Behind every successful ministry is a successful family life.” The family, as far as God is concerned, is a single unit. Marriage was ordained for one principal reason to make life better for the man God made. An understanding of God's marriage institution will go a long way in helping you to build a successful life and ministry. Let us go back to the garden of Eden and see what happened there.

The first human being God created was Adam the man. The man was made and a garden was planted for him. This was his ministry. The man went about his work vested with the power and authority of the Most High. He was happy. He never thought there could be anything better than that. Then the woman was made from the man and for the man, not vice versa.

The role of the man is clear. He is the head of the woman and the head of the home. His role and the woman's role are clearly stated. Neither of them should subvert God's order. Any attempt to do this will end up in confusion and possible disintegration of the family.

The first home instituted by God in the garden of Eden failed because the man failed to play his part. He never took his responsibilities as the head of the home seriously; he failed in his responsibilities and this led to the fall.

Adam represented God on earth. He was to look after God's creation. He was commanded not to eat of the forbidden fruit ever before Eve came along.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Genesis 2:16-17

Adam was the head of the government and God presented Eve to him, to be under his government. He, however, as the head, did not tell Eve of the gravity of the instruction passed down by God. Instead, he allowed her to do whatever she liked. No wonder she walked freely and carelessly about, and got trapped in a conversation with the devil, which eventually led to their downfall.

There is more to the responsibility of the husband as the head than is practised today. Many problems in the home today are largely caused by the loose grip the husbands have over their wives. They allow their wives to buy whatever they like, dress anyhow and go all over the places as though they didn't have a head.

The husband should lead the wife in every aspect of life, even to the type of friends she keeps. This is biblical and anything outside of it is wrong. The wise grip of man on his home paves way for wise

decisions even when he is not there. There are certain actions women take in the absence of their husbands, which cause the whole family to suffer. This was what happened to Adam and Eve.

The roles of the man and the woman are stated clearly in Ephesians 5:22-25:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

In God's family government, the man is the head, while the woman is the neck.

One of the qualifications of a man occupying any office in God's house is that he should be able to rule his house.

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

1 Timothy 3:4-5

The man is given a divine grace to rule his household. He is to love, instruct, correct and rebuke with firmness. The man who will play his role well has to be in constant communion with the throne of grace. A man's rulership of a home should be done in love. Husbands are not meant to be taskmasters. They are to be examples of loving leaders.

Instructions, rebukes and corrections are to be motivated by love. Their purpose must always be to have God glorified and His kingdom established in the home. The fear of the Lord should be the driving force that directs every action of the husband as the head of the home. The home is to be governed in the fear of the Lord.

A minister who wants a successful ministry must wake up to his responsibilities in the home. Rise up and carry out your responsibilities in your home as a loving leader. Rule your home in love and establish God's eternal purpose for the family in your life.

The woman also must awake to her responsibilities. Her role is to be a helpmate to the man. She is not to lord it over him in any way. She is meant to help her husband in carrying out his God-given commission on earth.

Know this: God is not the author of confusion. He will not give the man a commission to go to New Zealand and ask his wife to go to the United States. A woman who supposedly has a vision, which is miles apart from that of her husband, has not seen well. Let her look again and God will give her His perfect vision for her life. A wife's vision should complement her husband's, if not directly under her husband.

God instituted the home to further His plans and purposes on earth, even as He made Eve for Adam, to help him in the fulfilment of his life's mission in the garden.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Ephesians 5:23-24

The woman is to be subject to her husband in all things, even as the Church is subject to Christ. Total submission is the word. Take a look at the Church in relation to Christ. With Jesus as head, there is neither argument nor debate. He gives the orders. He is the Head and rules the Church in love. All the Church does is to obey.

We are all soldiers, subject to Christ. So also the woman is subject to her husband. The only way to a fruitful marriage is total submission on the part of the wife, and selfless love from the husband. Submission cuts across all spheres of life. A woman who refuses to submit to her husband is disobeying God, and the man who fails to cherish his wife in love is out of the will of God.

As a wife, you might be a minister of the gospel and your husband is not, but the Word of God says, *"Submit to your own husband."* You might be earning more than he is or be more highly placed than he is, but this does not in any way make the Word of God of no effect. Submit to him in action, in word, looks, etc. Apostle Peter puts it this way:

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands...

1 Peter 3:1

The woman is to be subject to her husband. A successful home is dependent on total adherence to biblical marriage principles. The Word of God does not grow old. If it worked for them in Bible days, then it will work now.

Note that subjection without meekness is fake. It takes meekness to be submissive. A meek and quiet spirit is the backbone of total submission. Submission is from the heart. Therefore, if you are haughty and full of pride in your heart, you cannot be truly submissive.

Sarah is a perfect example of a woman whose submission to her husband was total. When he told her to tell inquirers that she was his sister, she readily complied. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, took her in. She was in danger, but she stuck to her husband's command. God was moved. He came down and intervened (Gen. 12:10-20).

God can only intervene in your home when His instructions are being adhered to. A woman should be submissive to her husband in all things, not only when he is good to her. A submissive woman is precious in the sight of her husband. My wife respects and believes in everything I do. She never raises an eyebrow over any decision I take. This is the reason she is enjoying the rewards of total submissiveness today. She does not need to ask for anything before she gets it from me. I give her all the love and honour due to her also.

Your home is expected to be run in accordance with God's Biblical instructions. This is the only way to bring down God's glory in your life and ministry.

It is a new era. The time of failure is past. God has given you a mission on earth. Do not destroy your destiny by disregarding His commandments as they relate to your home. If you are too smart to obey God, you will be too smart to enter into your covenant inheritance.

Let us rise and establish God's kingdom in our homes. Let the husband play his part and the wife also play her part. Let us rise and work together towards a harmonious flow of God's power in the fulfilment of His commission in our hands. Let us establish a garden of Eden with a new order, where no one touches the forbidden fruit.

This is the secret of marital bliss in life. It is the secret of a successful ministry. Two are better than one, for they have a good reward for their labour. The good reward can only manifest when the two join hands together, walking in the light of God's Word!

Chapter thirty-three

Coping With Persecution

Several things accompany success. Success brings fame and glory. It brings material abundance and fulfilment also. But such achievements cannot escape the whip of persecution. Yes, success must necessarily be accompanied with persecutions.

Stars are going to rise in every realm of kingdom endeavour. God is raising a people in every sphere of life. Soon it shall speak. The jewels of God will arise as spiritual giants and succeed in a world formerly reserved for unbelievers, causing them to marvel. The half-baked believers are going to be highly displeased. Those of them who have refused to move with the cloud of glory, and having been left behind, will be highly indignant. Then the stage will be set. The persecution will begin. The backbiting will start. But let this not be news to you when it comes, for thus saith the Lord:

The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

Isaiah 42:13

The going forth of the Lord will automatically stir up jealousy. If the Lord must go forth in your affairs, then jealousy must rise against you. If you want the success, then you must also prepare for the jealousy and hatred it will arouse.

Every lifting from God is enveloped in persecutions from the world. Hear what Jesus said:

And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, With persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Mark 10:29-30

There is lifting in the kingdom. There are rewards in ministry. But every reward has persecution attached to it. The hundredfold returns attract a hundredfold persecutions as well. The degree of returns you receive determines the amount of persecutions you get. The Lord Jesus made it clear that there is no successful kingdom-committed man that will not receive his own share of persecutions.

Persecution is indignation without justifiable cause. It is the unjust treatment of the progressive. It is the misrepresentation, castigation, and backbiting, the running down of those who are ahead. It is a weapon of self-defence for the defeated. The backward and unfulfilled justify their position by persecuting the front liners.

Nobody bothered about Isaac while he was just like the Philistines, trying to make it through harsh famine. Isaac must have even told some people that he was God's covenant son. I can imagine them laughing at him and telling him, “Show us what you are worth, God's covenant son indeed!”

The famine bit harder. Isaac wanted to flee. He wanted to give up. But God told him to stay. He stayed and sowed, while the Philistines laughed at the crazy man who was sowing when there had been no rain and none in sight. Isaac was not moved. He pressed on. Then the rewards came. He received the

hundredfold returns and the hundredfold persecutions came with it as well! The Philistines were so afraid of his greatness that their king had to drive him away.

Persecution is a human factor of progress. When this ministry first started, I told those working with me, “Now that we are all at the same level, you had better do what is being preached, so that you will not fall behind among the castigators later, when we start succeeding.” If you are not among the frontliners, it will take extra grace from God for you not to persecute those in front of you.

Years ago, I was driving with one of my associate pastors in my Volkswagen beetle car. I had a mighty boil in my upper thigh. To sit down was an agony, but the trip had to be made and I pressed on. On the narrow bumpy road, I told the pastor, “No one sees us now under these hard conditions. Tongues will only begin to wag when the grapes of success come to us.” This is true in every endeavour in life. Anointing will not save you from persecutions.

You are not more anointed than Jesus. He received more persecutions than any man alive. While He was in the carpenter's shed, he faced no angry Pharisees (I am sure He was the darling of everyone). Then came a day, His shooting forth came and He began to preach and to heal. His success knew no bounds, but so also was the persecution that followed. Seeing Him alone almost made some of the Pharisees want to commit suicide.

When Nehemiah was a slave boy in exile, no one bothered about him. As soon as he rose to the top, the Sanballats and the Tobiahs rose up against him. The persecution was great, the opposition was fierce, but God was with him. He was on God's assignment, so he prospered.

Persecution is not affliction; it is a proof of promotion. Persecution is a privilege that all successful men must enjoy. You must not allow it to deter your progress. There is nothing you can do about it. It is a normal course of life. I was asking the Lord about this one day and He said to me, “Son, you must allow those behind you to do their job. Their job is to see your back and talk about you.”

Persecutions are traps of the devil to keep you from your goal. They are meant to distract and weary you, so you may give up from pursuing your vision. Watch it. The devil is out to weary the saints of God and persecution is one of his weapons. Do not fall into the devil's trap. Do not give in to the pressures of persecution. Set your face towards the pursuit of your goal and persecution will give up on you. The Bible says that all persecutions will bow down to you because God Himself shall prevail against them.

If Moses could persevere, if Nehemiah could press on and succeeded in his mission, then you can face persecution and win. Jesus, our chief example, persevered and came forth shining. Follow in His stance therefore, and press on for greater attainments in the kingdom.

Know this: anyone who finds faults with front liners is automatically enlisted in the company of failures. It might not have been done publicly, but God responds to whatever a man sows in secret. Remember Miriam. She, together with Aaron, spoke against Moses behind his back. Though Moses wasn't aware of it, God heard and rewarded Miriam openly with leprosy.

If it is God that has called you, He will always persecute your persecutors. Do not go fighting back at your backbiters. When any report comes to you, block your ears to it. Do not let the report bother you. Forgive your persecutors and bless them. God will surely intervene on your behalf promptly.

God is determined to stir up jealousy by releasing His blessings upon you. Allow Him do it. Persecutions will come. Look forward to them with excitement, since you know it is your heritage. As they come, endure them as part of your package of blessings.

Chapter thirty-four

Give It All It Takes!

And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

Colossians 4:17

That you have received a ministry from the Lord doesn't guarantee its fulfillment or that you will excel in it. "Take heed" means, "get to know what it takes and give it all it takes to fulfill the ministry you have received from the Lord." That, I believe is all I have tried to do in this book. It is my prayer that you will put all you have learnt from it to work.

Also remember that you cannot attain excellence in any ministry you have not received from the Lord. This is because God is not committed to what He has not commanded. So, if the vision is not from the Lord, you will be the one to power and fund it. But if it is from Him, then all you need do is to simply position yourself and do what He tells you to do, and then He will step forward to empower you for excellence in it. Therefore, don't mistake ambition, passion and impressions for a vision. They are all different issues. A need is not equal to a calling. That you see a need for something, say an orphanage, is not equal to God calling you to that ministry; He might have someone else in mind for it.

That was what happened to me in 1991. I had made a mission trip to Japan and was gripped with compassion for the people. I felt God wanted us to be involved in building His body in that nation, but the Lord said to me, "Even though there is a need in Japan, you are not the one I'm sending." An open door is not equal to a vision; therefore, take heed to the ministry you have received from the Lord, that you fulfill and excel in it.

Excellence in ministry begins with knowing that that ministry is from the Lord, as you can't excel in it if it is not from Him. God said in Jeremiah 23:21: *"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied."* Today, more than in any other time in history, there are people who are running a race they have not been assigned to; no wonder they are not excelling in ministry! They are like the athlete that goes ahead to create a ninth lane for himself in an eight-track race. He runs along with those officially assigned to run, and in fact, wins the race! Unfortunately, however, despite all his effort and sweat, he is not crowned the winner. Why? He was not enlisted in the race! All his sweat came to a waste.

The term, "Take heed" also suggests that you give the ministry you have been called into all it requires to succeed. Note that there are fundamental requirements that must be fulfilled in order for you to excel in ministry. Apostle Peter charges the brethren thus:

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

2 Peter 1:10

Many have received very true visions from the Lord, but it does not seem to be coming true, and they are wondering, "Could it be the Lord that has spoken?" Yes, it is. Even when a vision is from the Lord,

there are requirements you must meet to fulfill that vision and make it work. Peter listed a few of those requirements:

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;
And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.
For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:5-8

These are vital forces to engage in order to excel in ministry. Paul knew this, and so admonished Timothy thus:

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.
And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

2 Timothy 2:3-5

There are laws, rules and regulations that will make you excel in ministry if adhered to. For instance, no ministry can fulfill itself, no matter how heavenly it may be. It takes diligence to make one's calling and election sure. There is no future for a lazy man in ministry. If you are not a hard worker, you can never become a high flyer in ministry. Jesus said, *"I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work"* (Jn. 9:4). Ministry is not a calling unto slothfulness; even the Messiah had to work to excel in His ministry! Paul also laboured in order to excel. He said, *"I laboured more abundantly than they all…"* (1 Cor. 15:10).

After over 25 years of working to fulfill and excel in the mandate of liberation delivered to me, it is my prayer that you too will excel in ministry after putting to practice the time-tested and biblical principles shared with you in this book. Excellence in ministry is not so much of getting results, as getting results that match what the Caller (God) expects from you; for unto whom much is given, much is also required.

Though based in Nigeria, our ministry has church networks in about 40 nations around the world, and also has a great church in South Carolina, USA. By the measure given to us, if we had only 20 churches, we would be termed to have failed, because the Giver has given us more than that. If Covenant University were not built today, we would have failed His expectation, because it was part of God's agenda for our Commission. We may not know it here, but when we get up there, He would have said to me, "My son, this was part of your assignment, but you went to sleep and never actualized it, because you wanted to be comfortable." So, it is important to stay spiritually awake, because He will require fruits from you to the level which He has placed seeds in your hands.

Attaining excellence in ministry is possible, and you will make it, in Jesus' name! Excellence in ministry is attainable if you put all you have read in this book to work. And when we appear before Jesus, you will hear the Father say to you, "Well done thou good and faithful servant!" I see God appoint unto you a kingdom, in Jesus name!